

FAN PERSPECTIVE ON BTOB'S YOOK SUNGJAE'S CREDIBILITY AS SOME BY MI BRAND AMBASSADOR

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ABSTRACT

The Korean wave has caused several impacts to occur. An example of the impact of Korean wave in global society is the use of K-Pop idols as brand ambassadors to represent their companies in public. One example of a company using K-pop idols as brand ambassadors is Some by Mi. Some by Mi officially announced that BTOB's Yook Sungjae became the brand ambassador on 11th of January 2019. The purpose of conducting this research was to describe how fan's perspectives on the credibility of BTOB's Yook Sungjae as brand ambassador of Some by Mi. This research also uses several theories and concepts as a basis for research, such as communication, sources or communicators, brand ambassadors, characteristics of brand ambassadors, S-O-R theory, and fan's perspectives. This research approach uses a qualitative approach and uses a case study research method. The author obtains the data and information needed by conducting participant observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study. The results of the research that has been conducted by the authors show that from the perspective of Melody, Yook Sungjae is credible as the brand ambassador of Some by Mi when viewed from the four characteristics of a brand ambassador because he has credibility, popularity, attractiveness, and strength. According to perspective of Melody, Yook Sungjae has those brand ambassador characteristics. Although Yook Sungjae had the credibility to be a brand ambassador, Yook Sungjae also had disadvantages of being a brand ambassador Some by Mi due to Yook Sungjae's entry into the military which made some activities as an ambassador brand inefficient in promoting products, representing the company Some by Mi in public, to built product brand image and branding activity.

Keywords: Brand ambassador, fan's perspective, source of credibility

1. PREFACE

The Korean Wave, or what is often referred to as the Hallyu Wave, defined by Han & Lee as a trend that brings various kinds of popularity to South Korean culture, such as music, drama, fashion, food, and films, which have spread to other countries, including in Asian countries (Astari, 2019). In other words, the term Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave can be used to define the spread of South Korean popular culture, which has succeeded in entering other countries, including Indonesia.

With the current rise of the Korean wave in various global regions, there is a big opportunity for several companies to use K-Pop idols as brand ambassadors. The underlying thing for using K-pop idols as brand ambassadors is a marketing communication strategy aimed at branding activities. The development of the Korean wave at this time has made K-pop culture known to the global community, which is considered to be able to introduce the company's products to be more widely known by using a brand ambassador, a K-pop idol. And with this, of course it will increase brand awareness and public trust in using products from companies that use K-Pop idols (Salsabila et al., 2022). One of the company sectors that uses K-Pop idol brand ambassadors the most is companies in the beauty sector. There are many big beauty companies from South Korea such as Some by Mi, Innisfree, Nature Republic, The Saem, Laneige, Etude House, Nacific and others. Apart from communicating and representing the company's products, the use of brand ambassadors is also to maintain the image or maintain the brand image in the eyes of consumers.

In this research, the author uses the concept of source credibility. Source credibility is an assumption that states that someone is more easily persuaded or persuaded if the source of persuasion (brand ambassador) has credibility. Information or messages conveyed by credible sources will make audiences trust the information or messages more when compared to those who do not have credibility in their field. Sources with high credibility have a big impact on forming public opinion (Jurnaiti et al., 2017). To become a brand ambassador, you must have sufficient credibility to become the face of the product or an individual who represents the products offered by the company. At least the job or profession of the brand ambassador must be relevant to the product being offered, have extensive knowledge about the product being offered, and the personal suitability of the brand ambassador with the brand or product he represents.

The author found the fundamental problem of this research, namely regarding the perspective of BTOB fans or those with the fandom name Melody on the credibility of Yook Sungjae, who is a member of the boy group BTOB as a brand ambassador for skincare Some by Mi. And this research aims to describe Melody's perspective on the credibility of BTOB's Yook Sungjae as the Some by Mi brand ambassador.

In this research, the author also includes several theories and concepts contained in the realm of Communication Science as research references to make it more theoretical and structured. Some theories and concepts from Communication Science that the author uses include:

Communication

The definition of communication, if viewed according to Wursanto in Oktavia, means an activity process that aims to convey a message that has a meaning from one party to another in order to gain mutual understanding. (Oktavia, 2016). Overall, communication is a process of interacting by sending messages to each other.

Communicator/Source

The term communicator here is defined as the party who conveys the message or information to the communicant or the party who receives the message (receiver). Therefore, the term communicator is also usually referred to as source, sender and speaker. (Rahmah, 2013).

Source Credibility

Source credibility according to Goldsmith et al can be defined as the level of a person's trust in the source of the informant who provides a certain amount of information to the audience. The impact resulting from the credibility of a brand ambassador can influence purchasing interest, brand image and attitudes towards advertising (Fikadiyanti & Sudrajat, 2020). A credible communicator will convey his opinions, beliefs, attitudes and behavior through the messages conveyed by the communicator (source).

Brand Ambassador

A brand ambassador is a person who supports or represents a brand and comes from a widely known public figure. Brand ambassadors are usually public figures who are popular among the public. (Dewi, 2019). Reporting from Rossiter and Percy, brand ambassadors have four characteristics that have been developed in a model, namely VisCap (visibility, credibility, attraction and power) (Frederica & Utami, 2022).

S-O-R theory

The S-O-R theory or Stimulus – Organism – Response is a branch of mixed science from Psychological Science which later became a branch of Communication Science. The S-O-R theory assumes that mass media has an effect that can influence audiences. The effect that arises from this theory is that there is a special response to a special stimulus which causes a person to be able to predict and expect a match between the message (stimulus) received and the reaction of the communicator (organism). (Krisdianta, 2021).

Perspektif Penggemar

Fan perspective consists of two syllables, namely perspective, perspective is a perspective or point of view of every human being (Komang et al., 2018). Meanwhile, fans are individuals or individuals who have an interest in a cultural product by causing consumptive actions to own products from that culture (Rahmawati, 2018). So the author concludes that the fan perspective is the fan's point of view or way of thinking about a phenomenon or event that occurs around fans and their idols.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In the author's research, the author used a qualitative approach. Then the method used is to use case studies. In this research, there are also subjects and research objects. The research subjects in question are Sungjae BTOB fans who also use Some by Mi skincare products. Meanwhile, the object of the research studied was Melody's perspective on Yook Sungjae's credibility as the Some by Mi brand ambassador. For data collection, the author used primary data collection methods such as participant observation and interviews as well as secondary data collection methods such as documentation and library research as research literature.

Researchers conducted interviews with four informants, namely Khofifa Sri Pratiwi, Valerie Santi, Valensia Tanius, and Jennifer Alvionita based on the criteria that had been created in the informant selection technique, namely being a fan of BTOB (Melody), liking Yook Sungjae, knowing that Yook Sungjae was the brand ambassador for Some by Mi, have used or are currently using Some by Mi products, women aged at least 20 years. To find informants who fit the author's criteria, the author applies observation techniques carried out within the scope of the Melody chat group on WhatsApp. The author conducted an interview with Melody as an informant using unstructured or free interviews because the author could go deeper in finding out information from the respondent so that he could get satisfactory interview results.

The data processing and data analysis techniques in this research were also carried out in three stages, namely, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. After all the data was processed and analyzed, the author also carried out data validity techniques, namely through source triangulation. The author chose to conduct interviews with various sources such as informants and triangulators (expert informants). For the triangulator, the author conducted an interview with Debora Basaria S.Psi., M.Psi., a psychologist who is a lecturer in the field of Communication Psychology and a psychologist at several consulting bureaus.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Yook Sungjae's credibility as Brand Ambassador for Some by Mi

Information regarding Yook Sungjae's credibility or ability as a brand ambassador for Some by Mi was obtained during an interview with informant I, namely Khofifa, Yook Sungjae's skills as a brand ambassador are very good, Yook Sungjae, who is an idol and actor, is certainly very used to it. to appear in public and be a representative of a brand. Yook Sungjae can maintain the Some by Mi brand image. Then further information was conveyed by informant II, namely Valerie, that

Yook Sungjae's credibility was very good in terms of building a positive image for Some by Mi and how he represented Some by Mi's products. According to Valerie, Yook Sungjae's positive image will certainly increase his skills in becoming a brand ambassador.

The next information during an interview session with Valensia as informant III regarding Yook Sungjae's credibility as a brand ambassador stated that Yook Sungjae has credibility because he can build loyalty and trust among consumers towards the Some by Mi brand. Valensia explained that Yook Sungjae's trustworthiness as a brand ambassador can make consumers believe that the Some by Mi skincare brand is a brand that has a positive impression in consumers' minds. The latest information obtained from Jennifer as informant IV regarding Yook Sungjae's credibility as a brand ambassador said that Yook Sungjae has very great credibility. Jennifer revealed that Yook Sungjae has been the brand ambassador for Some by Mi since the beginning of 2019 and is still a brand ambassador now, of course this is a factor in Yook Sungjae's credibility so that Yook Sungjae is still the brand ambassador for Some by Mi.

Based on all the information obtained from the four informants, the author has good credibility as a brand ambassador. This is proven by Yook Sungjae being able to maintain the brand image of Some by Mi which is always positive, successfully convincing consumers that Some by Mi products are good, and Yook Sungjae has been the brand ambassador of Some by Mi for more than 3 years, which of course really shows credibility. which is in Yook Sungjae.

Yook Sungjae's Physical Attractiveness and Attractiveness as Brand Ambassador for Some by Mi

According to Information from informant I, namely Khofifa, Yook Sungjae's attractiveness really reflects the Some by Mi brand image. Because based on what Khofifa read on one of the K-Pop portal accounts, it was explained that Yook Sungjae's face is very proportional and has a perfect face. This has even been recognized by plastic surgery doctors in Korea. According to Khofifa as Melody, Yook Sungjae's attitude and behavior explained that Sungjae has a professional nature in becoming the Some by Mi brand ambassador because he is used to dealing with cameras and speaking in front of large audiences. Then informant II, namely Valerie, Yook Sungjae's physical attractiveness is very good and meets Korean standards, has clean, well-maintained skin, and within the BTOB group, Yook Sungjae was chosen as the visual of the group who is the center or center of attention in the group. Apart from that, Yook Sungjae also has many fans thanks to his good looks. When talking about Yook Sungjae's attitude and behavior, Valerie revealed that Yook Sungjae has a cheerful and friendly personality. This makes it easy for Yook Sungjae to adapt to the surrounding environment. Yook Sungjae's overall attitude and behavior can maintain the good name of the Some by Mi company so that Yook Sungjae's personality and attitude and behavior reflect the image of a skincare company that has a bright impression.

Furthermore, informant III, Valensia, revealed that Valensia in an interview said that Yook Sungjae's physical attractiveness, such as visuals and appearance, were very good. Valensia revealed that Yook Sungjae's bare face was perfect even when he didn't use any makeup at all. Sungjae has smooth and radiant facial skin. In terms of attitude and behavior, Yook Sungjae is an entertainer who has a good attitude and behavior and never behaves in a negative way if you look at the variety shows that Yook Sungjae has been invited to as a guest star.

Apart from that, Yook Sungjae has never been caught in a scandal or case that would tarnish the good name of BTOB's agency company, namely CUBE Entertainment and bSome by Mi. Furthermore, informant IV, Jennifer, explained that Yook Sungjae's physical and non-physical

attractiveness reflected the brand image of Some by Mi as a large company in the beauty sector. Jennifer revealed that Yook Sungjae's appearance and visual appeal are very good and he has a well-maintained face and body. Yook Sungjae has a perfect physical appearance including a handsome face, tall body, and proportional body shape. Yook Sungjae also always looks charming in whatever clothes he wears. Apart from that, Jennifer also thinks that Yook Sungjae's attitude and behavior are professional and positive. Jennifer added that Yook Sungjae has a style that gives the impression of being very natural and not awkward when in front of the camera.

Based on the results of interviews with the four informants, all informants thought that Yook Sungjae's physical and non-physical attractiveness reflected the characteristics of the Some by Mi brand. Physical attractiveness, such as Yook Sungjae's face, is attractive and meets the standard criteria for idols and actors in South Korea. Yook Sungjae also has clean, smooth, well-groomed and radiant skin, which really reflects the brand image of a large company operating in the beauty sector. Yook Sungjae's attitude and behavior is very positive and professional in carrying out his duties as the Some by Mi brand ambassador to create a positive image in the eyes of consumers.

Yook Sungjae's Popularity as Brand Ambassador for Some by Mi

Based on what Khofifa has gained, Yook Sungjae's current popularity is able to reach many audiences because based on what Khofifa has seen and experienced at work, many of his office colleagues don't like K-Pop but know Yook Sungjae because they often see the actor Yook Sungjae starred in several Korean dramas. According to Khofifa, more of his colleagues like K-Drama compared to K-Pop. That is why in Khofifa Yook Sungjae's work circles, he is more famous as an actor than as an idol in the boy group BTOB. The information obtained from Informant II Valerie regarding Yook Sungjae's current popularity is very good and can reach a large public audience. Valerie explained that Yook Sungjae, who is very active in the entertainment world, such as starring in several variety shows, dramas, films and as an idol, will certainly make Yook Sungjae even more popular and better known to the wider public or not just known to BTOB fans and other K-Pop fans.

Based on information obtained from informant III Valensia during an interview, even though Yook Sungjae has more popularity than other BTOB members. This is proven by Yook Sungjae's followers on Instagram, which reached 3.7 million followers compared to other BTOB members who only have around 1 million followers. Furthermore, information obtained from informant IV Jennifer regarding the popularity that Yook Sungjae had when he was the brand ambassador of Some by Mi was very popular among the wider community. Jennifer said the same as Valensia that Yook Sungjae is the BTOB member who has the most fans. This was proven by Jennifer that when BTOB released merchandise such as photocards, polaroids, and others, the photocards or Sungjae merchandise would definitely sell the fastest. The price of Yook Sungjae merchandise is also quite expensive due to high demand which will cause the price of the merchandise to be more expensive than other BTOB members' merchandise.

From the four informants, the researcher concluded that Yook Sungjae's popularity had very positive benefits for Some by Mi by making Yook Sungjae a brand ambassador. Yook Sungjae, who has high prestige, will make Some by Mi more noticed and known by various groups of people, such as BTOB fans and other K-Pop fans, K-Drama fans, and also known by fans of Korean variety shows because Yook Sungjae often appears as an idol. as well as actors.

Kekuatan Yook Sungjae Sebagai Brand Ambassador Some by Mi

Through information obtained by Informant I Khofifa, it was stated that Yook Sungjae has strong power to encourage audiences to use Some by Mi products. According to Khofifa, Yook Sungjae's popularity and physical attractiveness will certainly make the public interested in trying to use Some by Mi products. Like the public will be interested in trying to use Some by Mi products because they see Yook Sungjae's very good looking visuals. Valerie regarding Yook Sungjae's power to encourage audiences to use Some by Mi because Yook Sungjae has a lot of fans, so of course, many of these fans are interested in using Some by Mi products. Informant II Valerie juga menjelaskan bahwa adanya faktor psikologis yang makes fans want to try Some by Mi products because that way, fans who try using Some by Mi will feel happy and proud because they have a special similarity with Yook Sungjae. Informant III Valensia explained that Yook Sungjae's strength can also encourage the public to use Some by Mi products by releasing several official merchandise from Some by Mi with Yook Sungjae as benefits and prizes obtained when purchasing certain products from Some by Mi. The same information was obtained from informant IV Jennifer regarding Yook Sungjae's strength in encouraging the public to buy Some by Mi products, namely the merchandise issued by Some by Mi. In her interview, Jennifer mentioned that recently Some by Mi held an event to get a Sungjae photo card with a minimum transaction of 30,000 Won.

In interviews with the four informants, the author obtained some information that Yook Sungjae, as the Some by Mi brand ambassador, has the power to move or encourage the public to use skincare products from Some by Mi. Yook Sungjae's strengths are divided into several factors such as visual factors and attractiveness, popularity factors, internal fan factors, and also the benefits that consumers will get.

Fan Perspective

The term fan perspective can be said to be the perspective or way of thinking of each individual or group of individuals who have a passion and love for a particular field. Or it can also be said as a point of view or way of thinking that arises in fans regarding a phenomenon or event that occurs around fans and their idols. The perspective that arises among fans is certainly due to a symptom that is occurring. In this research, the author analyzes the perspective or point of view of BTOB fans (Melody) on the credibility of BTOB's Yook Sungjae as the Some by Mi skincare brand ambassador. If you look at the four characteristics that a brand ambassador must have, the four characteristics of source credibility will give rise to a fan perspective that is different from one another. The perspective that arises among fans is certainly due to a symptom that is occurring. In this research, the author analyzes the perspective or point of view of BTOB fans (Melody) on the credibility of BTOB's Yook Sungjae as the Some by Mi skincare brand ambassador.

The process of forming a perspective among fans is very closely related to using the S-O-R theory. This was also proven by conducting interviews with triangulators to explain the perspective process that occurs among BTOB fans regarding the credibility of BTOB's Yook Sungjae as the Some by Mi brand ambassador. Apart from that, when conducting a joint interview with the triangulator, namely Debora Basaria, S.Psi., M.Psi., the psychologist also explained how the process could be formed if we looked at the author's research case using the S-O-R theory. The formation of the perspective process as a response begins when the organism receives the message conveyed by the stimulus. In this case, the organism will receive a message regarding the credibility of a brand ambassador. The Melody as organisms will observe the credibility aspects of Yook Sungjae BTOB as a brand ambassador, which include ability, attractiveness, attitude and behavior, and strength.

Yook Sungjae is a source who must have credibility to be able to encourage the public to buy products from the Some by Mi company. Meanwhile, the S-O-R theory is divided into 3 parts consisting of the stimulus (message), namely about Yook Sungjae's credibility, the organism (communicant), namely BTOB fans, and the last is the response (response), namely the perspective generated by Melody about Yook Sungjae's credibility. In the S-O-R Theory, Yook Sungjae's credibility as a message received by Melody can give rise to a positive or negative perspective. This is based on how Yook Sungjae's own credibility will make a reaction in response to the stimulus, namely Melody's perspective. In this research, the perspective response that emerged from Melody was very positive, so it can be said that Yook Sungjae has credibility as the Some by Mi skincare brand ambassador.

Brand Ambassador Credibility

Brand ambassador is an application of marketing communications that uses the trustworthiness and credibility of a person appointed as a company brand ambassador to communicate everything about the product to consumers so that consumers have their views on the product. Brand ambassadors can be said to be sources or communicators because brand ambassadors are spokespersons or those who communicate information about a product or brand to the public.

The credibility of a brand ambassador can be said to be a trust that arises based on several aspects of the personality of the person who is the source or communicator to the communicant (consumers and potential consumers). In an interview with triangulator, Ms. Debora explained that a brand ambassador must have several aspects, which are divided into internal and external factors. These internal factors include the attitude, personality, and manner of a brand ambassador. Brand ambassadors must have good behavior and not only on camera but throughout their life they must have a good personality. Then the brand ambassador's way of thinking, the brand ambassador's knowledge about the company's products, and also public speaking skills or the brand ambassador's ability to communicate all information about the product and company to consumers and potential consumers. Then, external factors such as the situation and place where the brand ambassador communicates information about the product and company to the public. So, these internal and external factors are a unity that cannot be separated. These two factors are very closely related to each other.

As a public figure who has the credibility to become a brand ambassador, Yook Sungjae also has his own shortcomings. Based on the results of observations made by the author, Yook Sungjae began becoming the Some by Mi brand ambassador on January 11 2019. Then Yook Sungjae entered military service on May 11, 2020, or 15 months after Yook Sungjae became the Some by Mi brand ambassador. The author feels that the brand ambassador activities carried out by Yook Sungjae are inefficient, such as promoting Some by Mi directly, representing Some by Mi to the public, and raising the image and brand awareness in front of the public, especially consumers. Apart from that, Yook Sungjae also rarely attends or holds events together with Some by Mi to increase his reputation and as a direct promotional activity and branding activity.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Fans' perspectives regarding the abilities and skills of brand ambassadors who are K-Pop idols are considered very capable and professional as brand ambassadors. According to the fan's perspective, the fame that a brand ambassador has is the ability to become a brand representative who can reach the public, especially if he has a career as a member of a K-Pop boy group and is also an actor who often stars in various dramas. The fan's perspective regarding physical attractiveness, such as visuals and appearance, as well as the non-physical attractiveness of a brand

ambassador who is a K-Pop idol, really supports him to become a brand representative in front of the general public.

According to a fan's perspective, the power of a K-Pop idol as a brand ambassador to encourage audiences to use the product is also very large because of the K-Pop idol's power which is divided into several factors such as visual factors and attractiveness, popularity factors, internal fans, and also the benefits that consumers will get. Even though K-Pop idols have very good credibility in carrying out their duties as brand ambassadors, K-Pop idols still have shortcomings such as conflicting schedules between personal activity schedules, group schedules, and also brand ambassador schedules which will cause brand activities and activities. ambassador will be hampered.

Academic suggestions are aimed at future researchers who will conduct research on similar topics and titles, can conduct research and measure more deeply the fan's point of view or perspective regarding the credibility of a brand ambassador by conducting research with quantitative methods and approaches so that it can complement the author's research. Practical advice for companies when they want to choose a brand ambassador to be a representative or face of the brand must be reviewed based on the characteristics of the source credibility of the brand ambassador which includes credibility (ability), attraction (attractiveness), popularity, and also strength.

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