



The Effect of Social Media Interaction on Repurchase Intention: The Mediation Role of Parasocial Interaction & Celebrity Attachment. Study on BTS and Samsung Smartphone

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Abstract. Celebrity influencers currently play an important role in marketing by introducing endorsed products to their audience. Hence, this study seeks to focus on the parasocial relationship of celebrity influencers on Instagram that can affect the smartphones industry. More precisely, this study aimed at identifying how brand credibility, brand trust, and brand attractiveness from celebrity endorsement affect consumer repurchase intention. This study used celebrity influencer BTS (*Bangtan Sonyeondan*) and Samsung as the case study objects. The data collection was carried out using an online survey of Instagram users aged 18–40 years who had used Instagram for the last 3 months, had used Samsung brand, and were BTS Army (fans). This study was based on Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory to capture the attitude and behavioral intention of BTS Army. Data collected from 400 respondents, after that it will be processed with PLS-SEM method. The results of this study show that BTS as an influencer can affect repurchase intention on Samsung smartphones. This indicates that social media interaction role through parasocial interaction and attachment in celebrities has an effect on repurchase intention.

Keywords: Parasocial interaction · Celebrity influencers · Repurchase intention · Social media interaction · BTS and Samsung Smartphones

1 Introduction

Social media is a tool designed for online interactions, which is growing rapidly in today's modern society, used by almost all people, from young to old and poor to rich [1]. The We Are Social Institute revealed that, in Indonesia, the active users of social media in 2021 amounted to 170 million people or around 61.8% of the total population, with an average usage time of 3 h and 14 min. Information can be delivered quickly with the role of social media [2]. Furthermore, social media activities can be part of marketing activities. Many marketers use social media to sell and introduce their products with the help of

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celebrities. Celebrity image will foster its uniqueness in the minds of consumers, and this uniqueness will grow certain consumer perceptions and affect the imaginary relationship between consumers and celebrities. An imaginary relationship between a person and a celebrity endorser can be called a Parasocial Relationship [3]. This relationship can lead to a person's interest in what the celebrity has or conveys.

Hallyu stars are celebrities from Korea that include both actors and pop singers who have played big and well-known roles in the entertainment industry. The use of Hallyu stars as celebrity influencers or brand ambassadors in marketing activities is being widely carried out in Indonesia. Their role as brand ambassadors for brands in Indonesia is inseparable from the current peak wave of Korean culture, where elements of South Korean culture enter Indonesia through drama and music/pop stars. BTS is an example of a popular boyband group from South Korea. BTS or Bangtan Sonyeondan is a Hallyu star who has become a brand ambassador for various large companies, including Samsung, Hyundai, Louis Vuitton, McDonald's, and Kookmin Bank. The use of BTS as an influencer is due to the massive fanbase of this boyband, which reaches 90 million people all over the world. Taking this into account, it is apparent that BTS is a celebrity that can influence millions of fans around the world.

2 Theoretical Development

2.1 Social Media Interaction

Social media can be used as a place for social interactions [4]. Building relationships through social media is done by doing social interaction between individuals, and this can be referred to as social media interaction [5]. According to [6], in addition to individuals, brands and celebrities can also interact through social media to communicate and form deeper relationships with consumers. The relationship between consumers and celebrities that is formed through social media interactions create an imaginary closeness between consumers and celebrities [7].

2.2 Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial relationships are long-term and emotional relationships between consumers and celebrity endorsers [3]. According to [8], parasocial relationships are the relationship between the audience and media characters that simulate imaginary interpersonal relationships. Research conducted by [3] found that parasocial interaction leads to parasocial relationships, where the parasocial interactions/parasocial relationships provide a significant picture of consumer relationships with celebrities [9]. Parasocial interaction is an illusionary experience of consumers interacting with personas (celebrities, influencers, and characters) so that they assume they are directly involved with the personas [7].

2.3 Celebrity Attachment

Pleasant experience of customer can be provided through social media with the help of celebrity and parasocial interaction [6]. Research conducted by [10] supported this

by concluding that parasocial relationships can affect celebrity attachment. Specifically, the results of their research reveal that parasocial relationships increase celebrity relationships with brands.

2.4 Repurchase Intention

Someone who have purchase a new product or sevicees from the same company are the meaning of Repurchase intention [11]. This is reinforced by the results of research conducted by [12] who found repurchase intention does not only come from personal experience but also from social media contents by individuals who have purchased the products/services.

[12] states that repurchase intention are more profitable than purchase intention because it will indicate the consumer continuous purchase behavior in the future.

2.5 Social Media Interaction Role in Influencing Parasocial Interaction and Celebrity Attachment

Relationships are often associated with the duration and frequency with which interactions occur. The higher the exposure of the celebrities, the greater feeling of closeness the consumers feel to the celebrities [6]. Social media interaction can be seen from the interactions of consumer with the celebrities. The exposure is then obtained by consumers through the celebrities' posts on social media as means to get to know the celebrities better [13]. Based on this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Social media interaction positively affects parasocial interaction.

Celebrities use social media to promote their films and concerts in addition to many of them using social media for personal communication without marketing purposes. Social media allows celebrities to engage in conversations with many of their fans easily and quickly. Attachment can grow when there are continuous interaction. Based on this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: Social media interaction positively affects celebrity attachment.

Parasocial interactions substitute deficiencies in real-life socialization where a sense of closeness usually takes place and leads to attachment. Parasocial interaction creates relationships between consumers and their favorite celebrities [6]. Research conducted by [10] supported the effect of parasocial relationships on celebrity attachment by identifying that parasocial relationships increase celebrity relationships with brands. Based on this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H3: Parasocial interaction positively affects celebrity attachment.

2.6 Celebrity Attachment Affects Brand Credibility, Brand Trust and Brand Attractiveness

A study conducted by [17] revealed that celebrity endorsement can increase the choice of the brands that are endorsed. Through endorsement, celebrities can connect with and be tied to the brand that is being endorsed [6]. Celebrity endorsements are carried out by marketers to convey the credibility, trust, and value of a brand or product [15]. According

to [16], trust is formed through relationships and interactions and past experiences. For brands, trust can be formed through attachments and brand relationships on social media. In doing so, celebrity endorsement can be used to convey trust to the endorsed brand. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H4: Celebrity attachment positively effect brand credibility.

H5: Celebrity attachment positively effect brand trust.

Brand attractiveness is a positive experience of brand identity that can evoke certain feelings that satisfy the wants and needs of consumers [17]. The response.

from consumers is influenced by the perceived attractiveness of the product [17]. Furthermore, social interaction between consumers and brands can increase brand loyalty [18]. Therefore, brand attractiveness can increase when consumers feel that the brand provides social interaction with the consumers [18]. According to [19], positive attitudes towards product and brand can be form because attachment of image product on celebrity. Based on this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H6: Celebrity attachment positively effect brand attractiveness.

2.7 Brand Credibility, Brand Trust and Brand Attractiveness Affect Repurchase Intention

Brand credibility is the feeling conveyed by a brand through product information; the more credible a brand, the higher the perceived brand quality [20]. Perceived brand quality also comes from the consumers' sense of trust in the brand, which will lead to confidence in the consumers [21]. Brand credibility, brand trust, and brand attractiveness are components of brand equity where, according to [22], brand awareness and brand attitude play an important role in explaining repurchase intention. This is supported by the results of research conducted by.-, who found that perceived brand equity positively affects repurchase intention [23]. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H7: Brand Credibility Will Have Positive Effect on Repurchase Intention

H8: Brand Trust Has a Positive Effect on Repurchase intention

The success of celebrities depends on their ability to establish themselves as attractive to consumers [16]. For companies, brand attractiveness can be useful for their profitability through the level of recommendation and customer loyalty. Loyalty will take place when consumers have used a product and get experience from the product. [18] measures brand loyalty through repeat purchases, which is how often and how much customers buy a brand. Based on this, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H9: Brand Attractiveness Has a Positive Effect on Repurchase Intention

2.8 The Moderating Role of Need to Belong

Someone with high belongingness is more care about others opinion [6]. Other than that, the need to belong is used to highlight celebrity attachment effects on brand [6]. Based on previous research conducted by [23], consumers who have a high need to belong tend to look for brands that are endorsed by celebrities to meet their needs. Additionally, research conducted by [6] found that the.

higher the need to belong, the stronger the celebrity attachment relationship to the brand. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H10: Need to Belong Will Strengthens the Effect of Social Media Interaction on Parasocial Interaction

H11: Need to Belong Will Strengthens the Effect of Celebrity Attachment on Brand Attractiveness

H12: Need to Belong Will Strengthens the Effect of Celebrity Attachment on Brand Credibility.

3 Method

To test the hypotheses, the data was collected from respondents who is the millennial generation, which includes those who were born in 1981–2003 in Indonesia. The samples were taken using a purposive sampling technique, namely a non-probability sample that met certain criteria [24]. The sample criteria in this study were the millennial generation aged 18–41 years, BTS fans, had used Samsung smartphones, and had used Instagram for the last 3 months. Respondents that met the criteria filled out a Google Forms questionnaire distributed via Instagram, Twitter. and ArmyBTS WhatsApp group. The forms covered the issue of social media interactions, need to belong, Celebrity Attachment, Parasocial Interaction, Brand Credibility, Brand Attractiveness, Brand Trust, Purchase Intention, and Repurchase Intention, and present them using a Likert scale of 1–7.

An initial testing of the questionnaire was carried out before carrying out the main test to see whether the construct on the questionnaire could be used or not. After developing the questionnaire, the researchers conducted a wording test on five respondents. It was conducted to identify whether or not the questions were understandable. Following that, a pre-test or initial test of the questionnaire was conducted. This was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire to eventually determine whether the questions were usable or needed editing. After the pre-test, the next step was the main test or main research. The validity and reliability of the data was done using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 software. Figure 1 is the framework for the research model.

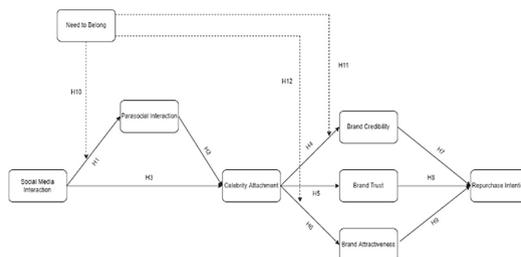


Fig. 1. Research Framework

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Measurement Model

In this study, validity and reliability tests were used to see whether the questions were valid and reliable. If there were invalid questions, the questions were excluded from the study. The validity was measured using factor analysis method by looking at Kaiser-Mayer-Olskin (KMO), Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, and Factor Loadings. According to [25], data can be considered valid if the Kaiser-Mayer-Olskin (KMO) is 0.5, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 0.05, and the Factor Loadings is 0.5. Moreover, [26] states that the Loading Factor value of 0.3 can be considered significant, 0.4 can be considered important, and 0.5 can be considered very significant. Meanwhile, the reliability test is considered valid in 0.6 of Cronbach's Alpha. In this study, SEM was a suitable tool to predict purchase intention and repurchase intention when the requirement of the data is considered difficult for social science disciplines [25].

This study contributes in parasocial interaction literature. In addition, we believed that the findings of this study contributes to the literature. Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a relationship method to see each other in a model [25]. The convergent validity was used to extract (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) with value of CR are greater than 0.7 and AVE 0.5, and the reliability test is considered valid [26] when the value is 0.6 of the Cronbach's Alpha [25]. The validity and reliability in this study were seen through the value of Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and AVE, which is presented in Table 1.

Based on the table below, it can be seen that all constructs have met the criteria of validity and reliability, this indicates that the constructs are reliable and valid, so that no constructs were deleted in this study.

4.2 Structural Model

Structural model is used to see and evaluate the multicollinearity or relationship of each variable/construct that exists in the research model framework. The results of hypothesis testing in this study is presented in Table 2 below. As shown in Table 2, the results of the hypothesis show that there were 4 unsupported hypotheses, namely H9, H10, H11, and H12. These results indicate that brand attractiveness did not affect repurchase intention, then need to belong did not strengthen social media interaction effect on parasocial interaction, they also did not strengthen celebrity attachment effect on brand credibility and brand attractiveness. In Hypothesis 9, we can see that the variable brand attractiveness did not affect the variable repurchase intention. The researchers suspect that the differences in the results were caused by the differences in the context of this study and previous studies. Research conducted by [6] used low involvement products as objects, namely juice drinks, while this study used high- involvement products as objects, namely Smartphones. This means that, when someone likes and is interested in the products, only some can immediately spend money to buy the high-involvement products. Furthermore, in H10, the need to belong did not strengthen social media interaction effects on parasocial interaction. The researchers suspect that the need to belong the interaction by consumers in this context was not hindered by the distance

in friendship, or it was not a problem in interactions. Thus, the need to belong did not strengthen the long-term imaginary relationship between consumers and celebrities through social media interactions. Research conducted by [6] concluded that need to belong affect social media interaction and parasocial interaction. The research found that stronger parasocial relationship can be formed from consumers need to belong with celebrities. However, research conducted by [23] found that someone who has a low need to belong the interaction tends not to pay attention to their relationship with celebrities and they tend to distinguish between brands and celebrities. Finally, in H12, attachment on celebrities cannot strengthen the attractiveness even though with help of need to belong. The researchers suspect that this happened because, in the repurchase intention response, the respondents did not pay attention to and distinguish between the attractiveness of products advertised by the brand ambassador. After obtaining the results of the hypothesis testing, the next step was to look at the path coefficient of the model framework. Figure 2 is a path analysis (path coefficient) in the study.

In this study, the path analysis can be described as follow:

Social Media Interaction > Parasocial Interaction > Celebrity Attachment > Brand Credibility > Repurchase Intention

Social media interaction affected parasocial interaction when consumers or respondents can easily provide opinions for personas and exchange opinions and share information with others. This means that BTS's social media platform can be used to exchange opinions and share information with others. Furthermore, parasocial interaction affected celebrity attachment when consumers feel that celebrities are their friends and self-image. Following that, celebrity attachment affected brand credibility, and brand credibility affected repurchase intention. This means that BTS as brand ambassadors who carry promises and statements from Samsung smartphones will make consumers have the intention to repurchase Samsung smartphones. The intention to repurchase arose when BTS did advertising for Samsung smartphones. This means that there was an attachment of fans to BTS when they met and saw BTS in the advertisements.

Social Media Interaction > Parasocial Interaction > Celebrity Attachment > Brand Trust > Repurchase Intention

Table 1. Validitas dan Reliabilitas

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Social Media Interaction	0,884	0,926	0,806
Need to Belong	0,944	0,951	0,660
Parasocial Interaction	0,913	0,928	0,590
Celebrity Attachment	0,746	0,854	0,665
Brand Credibility	0,875	0,908	0,667
Brand Trust	0,836	0,900	0,749
Brand Attractiveness	0,862	0,905	0,704
Repurchase Intention	0,910	0,937	0,787

Table 2. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1: SMI → PSI	2.227	0.013	Supported
H2: SMI → CA	1.294	0.098	Unsupported
H3: PSI → CA	14.178	0.000	Supported
H4: CA → BC	2.702	0.004	Supported
H5: CA → BT	3.127	0.002	Supported
H6: CA → BA	2.892	0.002	Supported
H7: BC → RPI	3.965	0.000	Supported
H8: BT → RPI	3.817	0.000	Supported
H9: BA → RPI	1.387	0.083	Unsupported
H10: NTB → SMI*PSI	0.103	0.459	Unsupported
H11: NTB → CA*BC	0.283	0.388	Unsupported
H12: NTB → CA*BA	0.188	0.188	Unsupported

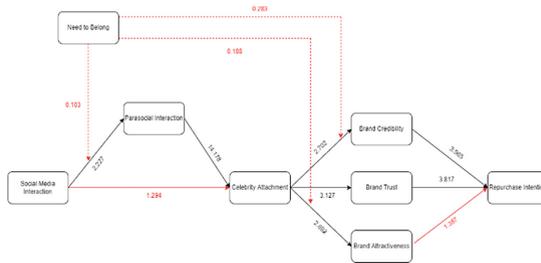


Fig. 2. Path Coefficient

Social media interaction affected parasocial interaction when consumers or respondents can easily provide opinions for personas and exchange opinions and share information with others. This means that BTS’s social media platform can be used to exchange opinions and share information with others. Furthermore, parasocial interaction affected celebrity attachment when consumers feel that celebrities are their friends and self-image. Following that, celebrity attachment affected brand trust and brand trust affected repurchase intention. The attachment of fans to BTS raised trust about whatever is conveyed by BTS. This means that trust in advertisements done by BTS will lead to repurchase intention.

Social Media Interaction > Parasocial Interaction > Celebrity Attachment > Brand Attractiveness

Social media interaction affected parasocial interaction when consumers or respondents can easily provide opinions for personas and exchange opinions and share information with others. This means that BTS’s social media platform can be used to exchange

opinions and share information with others. Furthermore, parasocial interaction affected celebrity attachment when consumers feel that celebrities are their friends and self-image. Following that, celebrity attachment affected brand attractiveness but brand attractiveness did not affect repurchase intention. Although the attachment of fans to BTS affected the attractiveness of the Samsung brand, it did not affect the consumers' intention to repurchase. Brand attractiveness is a fundamental aspect of the identification process when consumers have positive evaluation towards brands [18]. In repurchase intention, the identification process through affection/feeling represented by brand attractiveness, where consumers like and are interested in a product, is not enough. Moreover, the object of this research is Smartphones, which are considered high-involvement products. Low-involvement products are products that can be purchased by consumers through quick decisions, while high-involvement products are products that are purchased by consumers through various considerations and take a long time to reach a buying decision [27].

Social Media Interaction > Celebrity Attachment

Social media interaction did not directly affect celebrity attachment. This was because, without a relationship between consumers and celebrities, consumers only know the persona as a celebrity figure without having an attachment to that persona. Research conducted by [6] explained that the construction of parasocial interactions is different from celebrity attachment. To have an attachment to the persona, there are cognitive, affective, and behavioral parasocial interactions that are formed through social media.

5 Conclusion

The results of this study explain and answer the research questions regarding celebrity attachment that arises through parasocial interactions between personas and consumers on social media. Brand credibility and brand trust are the main factors in positively affecting repurchase intention. However, brand attractiveness is not a factor in positively affecting repurchase intention. On another note, parasocial interaction can be positively affected by social media interactions. Similarly, social media interaction can affect a person's repurchase intention. Furthermore, using celebrity influencers or brand ambassadors can encourage a person's repurchase intention of Samsung smartphones through brand credibility and brand trust, but brand attractiveness cannot. This supports the findings of [6], which is that brand credibility conveyed due to attachment to celebrity influencers can lead to purchase intention. Therefore, it can be concluded that repurchase intention on Smartphone products can be positively affected by brand credibility and brand trust advertised by celebrity influencers who perform parasocial interactions on social media, but it is not positively affected by the brand attractiveness of the smartphone itself. In addition, companies that use celebrity influencers to display brand credibility and brand trust from products can increase consumer loyalty by looking at the repurchase intention response from consumers.

5.1 Managerial Implications

The results of this study can be beneficial for company management in marketing high involvement products. In addition, this study can also be useful for influencers in the marketing process. The following are implications that can be applied. For managerial parties, this study focuses on a smartphone brand that already has a good reputation, so that consumers' choice of smartphones is not based on brand attractiveness, but rather on brand credibility. In addition, because smartphones are high-involvement products, brand credibility is a major consideration for consumers when buying the product compared to brand attractiveness. In line with brand trust, consumer trust in the brand is no longer a consideration when buying the product, because the brand reputation of the product is already quite good. Nowadays, many smartphone marketers use Hallyu stars or artists & boyband/girlband from Korea to advertise their products. The results of this study indicate that attachment to celebrities can encourage consumers' repurchase intention through brand credibility and brand trust of the advertised products. Looking at the value of outer loading on the brand credibility and brand trust variables, the indicators that affect brand credibility are the statements and promises made by the Samsung smartphone manufacturer in accordance with reality. Meanwhile, the brand trust indicator is consumers who rely on Samsung smartphones, or it can be said that they are consumers who have experienced and used Samsung smartphones. In using celebrities as brand ambassadors, marketers can emphasize the statements and promises of the marketed brand, as well as emphasize the reliability of the product. Reliability is the level of product consistency in carrying out its functions within a certain time in the eyes of consumers. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, consumer attachment to celebrities occurs through social media interactions with the help of parasocial interaction as a liaison. If marketers use celebrities or brand ambassadors to advertise their products, then marketers can use social media as a place to market their products. However, there are some things that marketers should pay attention to. In this study, the value of outer loading in interaction on social media, parasocial interaction, and attachment to celebrities show indicators that might be of interest to marketers. Indicators that affect social media interaction are social media platforms that can allow consumers to give and exchange opinions with others easily. Furthermore, an indicator that affects parasocial interaction is when consumers see celebrities as friends and as self-images, and an indicator that affects celebrity attachment is when consumers can meet celebrity figures both online and offline. Therefore, marketers can use social media platforms that have comment sections, which is necessary to exchange opinions. On social media, advertising on Instagram posts is more profitable because it has a comment section, unlike flyers/banners on the Instagram Stories. In addition, with the comment section, marketers can find out the level of fan attachment based on how fans see their persona.

For influencers, the research results show that parasocial interaction can affect consumer engagement with celebrities. In this study, the value of outer loading on parasocial interaction and celebrity attachment variables can be used as insights for celebrity influencers. An indicator that positively affects parasocial interaction is how celebrities can become friends or role models for consumers. Furthermore, the indicator that positively affects celebrity attachment is how consumers can continue to meet celebrities. Based on

this, celebrity influencers can use their social media to interact positively with the audience so that the celebrities can become role models for consumers. In addition, celebrities can post more often on social media or use the live streaming feature on Instagram to meet their consumers and develop consumer attachment. By doing this, the consumer attachment can be further increased and the celebrities can increase their engagement, which will be a consideration for companies to hire them as brand ambassadors or influencers to advertise their products.

5.2 Limitations

In this study, there were several limitations and obstacles found by the researchers. First, while the study targets millennials or generation Z and generation Y, the majority of respondents end up being generation Z, so the data may not represent generation Y. Second, while the study targets BTS fans from all over Indonesia, the respondents were less spread out and mostly located in Greater Jakarta.

5.3 Future Research Sugesstions

The researchers realize that there are still many shortcomings in this study, so the researchers suggest several improvements for further research. First, this study focuses on well-known and global celebrities, so it does not represent what local celebrities/influencers will do in their advertising activities. Second, this study focuses on respondents of generation Y and Z and BTS fans in Indonesia, but respondents are only mostly located in Greater Jakarta, so it would be better for future research to have more spread-out respondents or target one of the large archipelago areas in Indonesia. Finally, this research focuses on Instagram even though there are many other social media platforms, such as TikTok or LinkedIn, so further research can be done on those other social media platforms.

Authors' Contributions. F.A. and K.A. designed the model framework and analyzed the data. F.A. and K.A. carried out the implementation. F.A. performed the calculations. F.A. took the lead in writing the manuscript.

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