



# Purchase Decision Influenced by Brand Ambassador, Korean Wave, Brand Image Mediated by Buying Interest

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**Abstract.** This study aimed to determine whether purchasing decisions can be influenced by brand ambassadors, Korean waves, and brand image and can be mediated by the interest in buying Scarlett Whitening products among students in Surakarta. This research is a quantitative study using a non-probability sampling technique using a purposive sampling method by distributing questionnaires in the form of Google from university students in Surakarta. Data was successfully collected, which met the qualifications of 217 respondents—processed using Smart-Pls 3 software. In this study, data management was carried out, namely validity testing, reliability testing, and hypothesis testing. There were 10 hypothesis testing with the results of brand ambassadors, brand image, and purchase intention directly influencing the purchasing decision of Scarlett whitening products. Meanwhile, the Korean Wave had no effect either directly or indirectly on interest and purchasing decisions. The role of mediation in this study shows that brand image is the only one that is successfully mediated by purchase intention. The results of this study can be used as a reference for Scarlett whitening product marketing so that they can continue collaborating with brand ambassadors to attract consumer attention and increase sales. Purchases because consumers are usually more concerned with the product's image than trends or figures who become brand ambassadors.

**Keywords:** Brand Ambassador · Korean Wave · Brand Image · Buying Interest · Purchase Decision

## 1 Introduction

The trend of buying beauty products is increasing due to the covid-19 pandemic, which makes most Indonesians do beauty treatments. This is also influenced by changes in lifestyle and new trends in society (Adisty, 2022). According to the Statista report, the value of revenue from the beauty industry in 2020 is US\$7 billion or Rp. 100.02 trillion, This Industry Revenue is expected to increase by 7.26%, reach US\$8.6 billion in 2023 and continue to grow by 5.64% to \$9.07 billion in 2024 (DataIndonesia.id, 2022). With this opportunity, many young Indonesian entrepreneurs are running a business in the beauty sector, one of which is Indonesian artist Feliciya Angelista, who has a beauty business with Scarlett Whitening products, which was founded in 2017 and has been

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certified by BPOM, so it is safe to use every day. Scarlett whitening products consist of three types, namely facial care products, body care and hair care products.

To remain consistent in selling products, companies need to know about consumer behavior so that companies can create appropriate communication patterns through advertising (Lestari et al., 2019). Advertising is a medium to build brand awareness and provide consumers with information (Wang & Hariandja, 2016). This is one of the reasons companies give a budget for advertising. To promote products, companies can use brand ambassadors to increase sales widely. The marketing strategy of working with brand ambassadors is not new. This strategy has been used for a long time and is effective for many companies to launch a product (Lestari et al., 2019). In the modern era, without a brand ambassador, it isn't easy to sell products so that consumers can remember products. Marketers determine the right people for the right products and in the right market so the brand can maintain stability in a competitive global (Wang & Hariandja, 2016). A Brand Ambassador must have positive behavior at work and in the community because they will affect a brand's personality. This will affect the public's perception of the brand image.

Brand Image includes the number of opinions, experiences, and attitudes of consumers towards a company or organization and its brand relative to its competitors. Brand image is significant because it affects consumer preferences and buying interest (Shahram Gilaninia, 2012). According to (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2015), Purchase intention is a model of human attitudes toward goods that is suitable for measuring attitudes toward specific groups of goods, services, or brands. Purchase interest can also influence purchasing decisions, meaning that the higher the consumer's buying interest, the greater the purchase decision. Consumers make purchasing decisions when they have confidence in the product. However, if the impulse does not match the consumer, they will consider an alternative before making a purchase decision (Dewi, 2019).

Scarlett whitening products marketing uses Korean actors as their brand ambassadors to attract consumers' attention. Scarlett whitening has worked with South Korean actor Song Jong Ki and TWICE grub as brand ambassadors for Scarlett whitening products. This is based on the fact that most Indonesian people face the Korean Wave (Hallyu) phenomenon. This phenomenon began around the 1990s when South Korea became an ally of the Republic of China. Meanwhile, the Korean Wave's influence emerged in Indonesia in the early 2000s (Rahmawati, 2020). Using a brand ambassador and taking advantage of developing trends will form an image of the brand, which ultimately encourages consumer interest to purchase.

Several studies have successfully examined the variables of brand ambassador, Korean Wave, brand image, and purchasing decisions (Setyani & Azhari, 2021) researched to know the effect of the Korean Wave on the intention to buy Korean skin-care products (Lestari et al., 2019) conducted research intending to see the impact of the Korean Wave, brand ambassadors and brand image on purchasing decisions with objects the original Korean brand, Innisfree, (Azzahra & Sudrajat, 2021) researched the influence of the attractiveness of Korean idol brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions for nature republic products. Some of these studies used products from Korea as research objects to strengthen the influence between variables, while this study used the original Indonesian brand Scarlett Whitening as research objects. Tests on Scarlett whitening

products have been carried out (Aliffia & Purnama, 2022) with the title the influence of brand ambassador Song Jong ki on the brand image of Scarlett whitening products. I added independent variables and used different samples and locations. So the purpose of this study is to determine whether purchasing decisions can be influenced by brand ambassadors, Korean waves, and brand image and can be mediated by interest in buying Scarlett Whitening products among students in Surakarta.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Buying Decision

Purchase decisions are a series of physical and mental activities experienced by customers when purchasing products (Wibowo & Priansa, 2017). In this stage, the consumer has identified the product, and the company needs to develop an overall purchasing decision structure to assist consumers in purchasing. The key to purchasing decisions is when someone faces a problem related to unfulfilled needs and desires. After knowing the problem, the individual collects various information about what he is looking for or what the problem is. Then the individual has alternative options to overcome the difficulties and make judgments against different issues. The individual makes a purchase decision with alternatives that have been collected, and the behavior showed after the purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

According to (Swastha, 2008), purchasing decision indicators are decisions about the product type. Before making a purchase, consumers identify whether the product they buy is suitable and follow their needs. Decisions about brands several factors that influence consumers in making purchasing decisions, one of which is the brand image attached to the consumer's memory of the product brand. Because providing a positive impression on the product can build consumer confidence and encourage purchases. Decisions about the product's shape and attractive product packaging usually attract consumers' attention. Decisions about places of sale, in the digital era like now, consumers tend to choose to shop online so that business actors can take advantage of technological advances so that consumers get convenience and comfort in buying products. Decisions about the number of products purchased, product variations, and product quality determine the number of consumer purchases with various product variations. Decisions about the time of purchase, consumers usually buy products according to their wishes and needs, so business actors are required to meet consumer needs anytime and anywhere. In decisions about payment methods, business actors must know what methods make consumers comfortable and easy. Product variety and quality determine the number of consumer purchases with various product variations, and consumers tend to be curious about other products. Even though the product does not have product variations, business actors can take advantage of the advantages of these products so that consumers can buy more than one product. The decision to buy a product gives the impression that the product is already known to the broader community, and this goal encourages consumers to trust the product.

## 2.2 Buying Interest

According to (Kotler & Keller, 2016), Purchase interest is a behavior that occurs in response to an object that supports some input information, brings consumers to the stage where a person is interested in a product, and shows an individual's desire to make a purchase decision. Before deciding to buy a product, consumers see the value of the product they are interested in, if the product has significant benefits compared to their efforts to get the product, the consumer will be compelled to make a purchase, and vice versa if the help of the product is not commensurate with the effort, the consumer is reluctant to buy the product.

In measuring purchase interest, transactional interest is a person's tendency to buy a product. Buying interest arises after an alternative evaluation process consisting of a series of choices regarding a product or service to be purchased. Referential interest, namely the tendency of someone to refer a product to others, consumers who are satisfied with the results of a product tend to recommend it to the people around them. This phenomenon is usually called word of mouth and will continue to flow, making the product more widely known. The behavior of a person with a primary preference for a product is known as preferential interest. This preference cannot be altered unless the desired outcome occurs. The behavior of a person who is always looking for information about the product he is interested in and looking for information to support the product's positive characteristics is referred to as exploratory interest. The information consumers want to know can be seen from the ratings obtained. The greater the rating of a product, the more excellent the opportunity to appear on the first page of a search on Google so that consumers can quickly get the information they want. This shows that the product's popularity or value will affect the interest in buying a product. In addition, consumers can find quality information when deciding to purchase products through online customer reviews, which consumers usually give after getting and using the products that have been purchased.

The difference between buying interest and purchasing decisions is in consumer behavior. If someone is interested in a product but does not carry out the buying process, this is referred to as buying interest. In contrast, someone who is interested in a product and makes a buying process is a buying decision. Buying interest and purchasing decisions are related to one another. Usually, before making a purchase decision, consumers are first interested in or intend to buy the product. This is supported by research (Solihin, 2020) which states that purchasing interest positively affects purchasing decisions. From this statement, this research implies that:

**H7: There is a significant influence between the variables of buying interest on purchasing decisions.**

## 2.3 Brand Ambassador

A brand ambassador is the tool companies use to communicate and connect with the public and how they leverage sellers (Lea-Greenwood, 2012). There are four indicators of brand ambassador according (Royan & M, 2004). Visibility is the level of popularity of the brand ambassador. This popularity is essential. Usually, someone famous has many fans in the real world and cyberspace, so the more popular a brand ambassador is,

the more widely the product is promoted. Credibility is a way for a brand ambassador to convince consumers of the advertised product. The brand ambassador is the first person to shape consumer perceptions of a product buying decision. Attraction is the nature and appearance of a customer brand ambassador who considers a superior product quality because their favorite personality has supported it. Customers start this support as an indicator of exceptional quality so that consumers are interested in the products offered. Power is the strength that exists within a brand ambassador. For example, a brand ambassador is considered to have an attractive appearance, such as healthy and clean skin, so they will usually promote skin care products with the aim that consumers will follow what is worn by a brand ambassador in the hope that their skin will be clean and healthy. Brand memory too.

The success or failure of a brand ambassador in conveying information about a product depends on each person's perception. The role of the brand ambassador is to encourage product involvement by enabling customers to try, touch, taste, and select samples to take home to try the product. In addition, customers can get to know the products offered to buy (Wang & Hariandja, 2016). Using Brand Ambassadors helps consumers identify and differentiate brands. Usually, ambassadors use well-known artists, celebrities, influencers, singers, and athletes. Brand ambassadors ensure that the products used are always superior so that consumers perceive what they wear or buy as good items to arouse consumer interest. But sometimes, the end of the brand ambassador's contract with a product can create a negative response to the product. A study (Azzahra & Sudrajat, 2021) revealed that brand ambassadors significantly influence purchasing decisions. The research was supported by research from By (Kharisma & Hutasuhut, 2019). This study shows that the brand ambassador variable positively and significantly influences buying interest. Therefore, brand ambassadors can influence consumer interest and purchasing decisions (Boswarva, 2012). From this statement, this research implies that:

**H1: There is a significant influence between the Brand Ambassador variables on purchasing decisions.**

**H2: There is a significant influence between the Brand Ambassador variables on buying interest.**

**H8: There is a significant influence between the Brand Ambassador variables on the purchase decision mediated by buying interest.**

## 2.4 Korean Wave

According to (Prasanti & Dewi, 2020), The term "Hallyu," or Korean Wave, describes the global spread of South Korean culture to various countries in the world in the early 1990s. Hallyu means flow/wave. Hallyu contains much cultural content, including K-pop, K-pop, TV dramas, movies, cooking, beauty, literature, language, local culture, and fashion. Culture is one of the factors that can influence consumer behavior, so business actors must follow the flow of cultural developments and consumer behavior to innovate in the marketing process. There are three indicators of the Korean Wave, according to (Lita & Cho, 2013). Namely, understanding is the process of finding out the extent of one's understanding of the Korean wave phenomenon, which is included in this understanding is whether someone knows that the K-pop drama and music that they have seen/heard is one of the spreads of the Korean wave culture. Attitude and behavior,

namely finding one's mood and behavior towards the Korean wave phenomenon, whether they study this phenomenon after they hear or see Korean music and drama or become connoisseurs without wanting to know this phenomenon further. After studying Korean culture, someone usually follows the lifestyle of Korean people, such as food, drinks, clothes, and body care products. This is the concern of the company to make updates in the field of marketing and product development on the phenomena that are trending in the community. Perception (perception), that is, finding out one's opinion about the Korean wave phenomenon. This perception can be positive and negative, for example, someone thinks that the Korean wave phenomenon is unique and interesting to study further, then this perception is positive and vice versa, if someone considers this phenomenon unattractive and unimportant, then perception it is negative.

The Korean Wave phenomenon can touch emotions such as empathy and sympathy, and this emotional touch has brought a positive image of the product being promoted. This is supported by several researchers, such as research conducted (Sagia & Situmorang, 2018). Based on the regression analysis, the Korean Wave variable has a positive and significant effect on the purchasing decision variable. This shows that the Korean wave phenomenon can influence consumer purchasing decisions. Research conducted by (Oscar & Keni, 2019) shows that the Korean wave variable affects the consumer buying interest variable. People's buying interest is driven by a developing trend based on their needs related to the ongoing trend. It encourages people to make purchases to follow the style of their idol. From this statement, this research implies that:

**H3: There is a significant influence between Korean Wave variables on purchasing decisions.**

**H4: There is a significant effect between the Korean Wave variable on buying interest.**

**H9: There is a significant effect between Korean Wave variables on purchasing decisions mediated by purchase intention.**

## 2.5 Brand Image

Brand image can affect consumer judgment because of the public's perception or perception of the brand (Siregar & Simanjuntak, 2020). According to (Takaya, 2019), the brand image represents all recognized brands. It is built from data, past brand experiences related to brand image, actions in the form of belief, and empathy for the brand. Products with a positive brand image tend to encourage consumers to make purchases. There are three indicators of a brand image according to (Sutisna, 2003). Corporate image is a collection of consumers' perceptions about the company's attributes. Before buying a product, consumers usually see what company produces the product they want. If consumers already have a good image of the company they will trust and make a purchase.

User Image Before buying a product, consumers usually look for information about the product by asking people around who have used the product or find out from social media. In addition, if the product has good results for consumers, it can build a user image. Product Image is the most crucial thing in product marketing. Usually, consumers ignore the company's and the user's image but cannot overlook the product's image because this product directly deals with consumers. The positive image attached to a product

certainly describes the benefits and quality of the product. This makes consumers feel confident and believe that the product can provide help to consumer desires. Consumers not only use the brand as a name, symbol, or term, but consumers also use the brand as a distinguishing element between one product and another (Putri & Harti, 2022). Usually, consumers make purchasing decisions based on the product’s brand image. Furthermore, consumers will prefer a brand whose image matches their own self-concept. According to self-concept theory, a person’s self-concept is a collection of perceptions about himself, including characteristics, abilities, shortcomings, personality, and appearance (Wang & Hariandja, 2016).

Research conducted by (Siregar & Simanjuntak, 2020) shows the Brand image variable positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions. Researchers suggest that companies pay attention to the brand image factor because it is essential in attracting consumer interest, especially in terms of brand characteristics that are easy to pronounce so that it is easy for consumers to remember. Research conducted (Takaya, 2019) shows a positive influence on the brand image variable on buying interest. This study’s results support Kotler and Armstrong’s theory that brand image conveys high product quality to consumers. Shoppers who always buy the same brand can learn about the same features, benefits, and rates every time they purchase. Consumers who have a positive image of the brand are more likely to buy. A product with a good idea in the community will undoubtedly attract consumers. From this statement, this research implies that:

**H5: There is a significant influence between brand image variables on purchasing decisions.**

**H6: There is a significant influence between brand image variables on buying interest.**

**H10: There is a significant influence between brand image variables on purchasing decisions mediated by purchase intention (Fig. 1).**

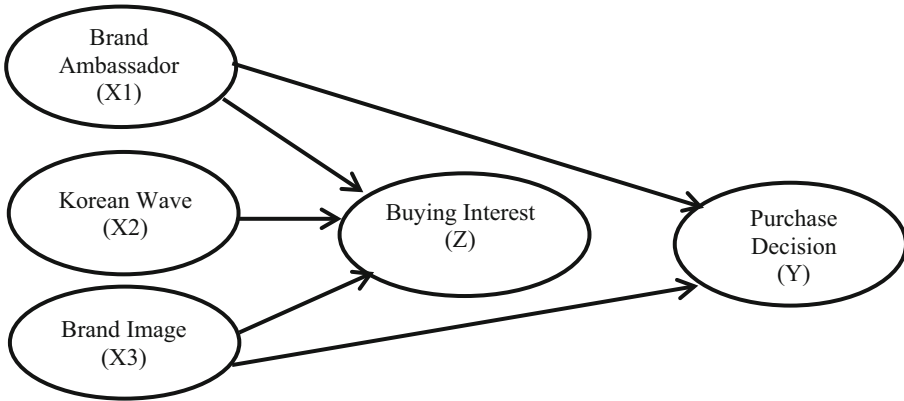


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model

### 3 Research Methods

This research is a survey research with a quantitative approach. The survey is a primary data collection method where researchers have prepared several questions for respondents (Suhartanto, 2014). In marketing, the survey method is popular because this method can collect standardized raw data. For example, researchers can obtain specific and accurate data (Suhartanto, 2014). For structural equation modeling using SEM-PLS analysis, All bootstrap indices applied for statistical significance and path coefficient analysis were measured using SMART-PLS 3 software. All indicators were analyzed and tested against the specified threshold (Mangifera & Mawardi, 2022).

Variable is a concept that has at least two variations in value (Suharjo, 2013). The variables in the study are divided into three, namely, the independent variable, the dependent variable, and the mediating variable. Respondents in this study were student consumers of Scarlett Whitening products in Surakarta. The measurement scale used is the Likert scale. The Likert scale is the most popular data collection technique in research, and the Likert scale is designed to measure how strongly the subject agrees or disagrees with 5-point scale questions (Kussudyarsana et al., 2019).

The population is the total number that includes all the members studied (Kussudyarsana et al., 2019). The people in this study were all student consumers of Scarlett whitening products in Surakarta. The sample is a part taken from the population. The model selects elements from the people (Kussudyarsana et al., 2019). The sample in this study was 217 respondents, according to (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). In determining the sample size, more than 30 and less than 500 samples are considered suitable for most studies. The sampling technique in this study is non-probability sampling with purposive sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling method based on specific criteria. The respondents' criteria in this study were consumers of Scarlett Whitening products who were currently studying at one of the universities in Surakarta.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

The results of this study were in the form of responses to a questionnaire totaling 217 respondents from student consumers of Scarlett Whitening products in Surakarta. The profiles of respondents in this study were divided into gender, age, and income. Respondent profiles can be seen in Table 1.

Based on the data obtained, respondents who filled out the questionnaire were predominantly female with a presentation of 91.2%, while men were 8.8%, respondents aged 17–20 years were 24.9% old, 21–25 years 68.2%, and age >25 years by 6.9%. The monthly income or pocket money of students in Surakarta also varies from <500,000 with a percentage of 43.8% and 500,000 to >1,000,000, each having the same rate of 28.1%. Initially, respondents knew Scarlett whitening's products varied from friends, advertisements, and social media to beauty vloggers.



**Table 1.** Respondent Profile (n = 217)

No	Category	Classification	Amount	Percentage
1.	Gender	Woman	198	91.2%
		Man	19	8.8%
2.	Age	17–20	54	24.9%
		21–25	148	68.2%
		<25	15	6.9%
3.	Income	<500,000	95	43.8%
		500,000–1,000,000	61	28.1%
		>1,000,000	61	28.1%
4.	Origin of Knowing Scarlett Whitening Products	Friend	88	40.6%
		Advertisement	102	47%
		Social media	174	80.2%
		Beauty Vlogger	131	60.4%
		Etc	9	4.1%

Source: Primary data processed (2022)

## 4.2 Data Analysis Results

Structural assessment begins by examining the R-squared value of each endogenous variable value as the predictive power of structural models (Saputra, 2018). Changes in R-squares (R<sup>2</sup>) values can be used to determine the magnitude of the variance in latent variables in explaining indicators (Kicky Camallya Arista & Khusnul Fikriyah, 2022). The results showed that R Square Adjusted was greater than 0.5, which means good. Buying Interest Analysis offers the R-squared value of 0.704 and the purchase decision R-squared value of 0.616. This shows that purchase intention has a strong influence on purchasing decisions (Table 2).

Then it can be continued to the next test, which is to determine the value of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE in order to know that the construct is reliable. A construct that can be said to be reliable must have a value of 0.7. This can be seen from the value of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE. The results obtained from this study, namely Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, have a value of 0.7, meaning that the existing constructs have a high or reliable correlation. Then the results of the AVE value that is >0.5 means that the error level in each variable is low for clearer results, The results of this study obtained Cronbach's Alpha value

**Table 2.** Structural Model Representation

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Buying Interest (Z)	0.704	0.700
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.617	0.610

Source: Primary data processed (2022)

from brand ambassadors of 0.905, Korean Wave of 0.894, the brand image of 0.867, purchase decision of 0.857, purchase intention of 0.896. Composite Reliability Value Brand ambassador 0.923, Korean wave 0.917, Brand image 0.896, purchase decision 0.891, purchase intention 0.918. While the value of the AVE brand ambassador is 0.603 Korean wave is 0.612 brand image is 0.521 purchase decision is 0.538 purchase intention is 0.616. From these results, it can be concluded that all variables are reliable because the value of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability has a value of  $\geq 0.7$  and the AVE value is  $> 0.5$ , meaning the level of error in each variable is low, which can be seen in Table 4 (Table 3).

As shown in Table 5, discriminant validity is used to measure how far a constituency differs from other constituencies. The results of Collinearity Statistics (VIF) test the multicollinearity test using the unique effect of each VIP variable. 5 Avoid violating the multicollinearity test.

**Table 3.** Measurement Model and Construct Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Ambassador	0.905	0.923	0.603
Korean Wave	0.894	0.917	0.612
Brand Image	0.867	0.896	0.521
Buying decision	0.857	0.891	0.538
Buying Interest	0.896	0.918	0.616

Source: Primary data processed (2022)

**Table 4.** Discriminant Validity Representation using Fornell–Larcker Process

	Brand Ambassador	Korean Wave	Brand Image	Buying decision	Buying Interest
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0.776				
Korean Wave (X2)	0.787	0.782			
Brand Image (X3)	0.697	0.621	0.721		
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.656	0.552	0.717	0.734	
Buying Interest (Z)	0.627	0.561	0.837	0.742	0.785

Source: Primary data processed (2022)

Hypothesis testing can be seen from the value of the t-statistic and the probability value. To test the hypothesis using a statistical value, the alpha is 5% with a t-statistic value of 1.96%. In the structural test, all independent variables can be accepted if they have a t-statistics value t-table 1.96 and a P-Values value of 0.05.

Table 5 shows that construction has both direct and indirect effects. With t-statistics of 3.519 and p-values of 0.000, it can be concluded that in the H1 test, brand ambassadors have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. As a result, H1 is accepted because ambassadors directly impact purchasing decisions. This supports the research done by (Kicky Camallya Arista & Khusnul Fikriyah, 2022) and (Rahmadhani et al., 2022). The results of the H2 test. The test between brand ambassadors on buying interest has no direct effect with t-statistics of 0.786 and p-values of 0.432, which means that brand ambassadors do not directly affect buying stake, so these results do not support research (Kharisma & Hutasuhut, 2019) where the study states that the brand ambassador now has a positive effect on purchase intention. The results of the H3 and H4 tests, namely

**Table 5.** Hypotheses Acceptance Summary

Hypothesis	Variable Relationship	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P Values	Information
Hypothesis 1	Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	0.303	3,519	0.000	Supported
Hypothesis 2	Brand Ambassador → Buying Interest	0.064	0.786	0.432	not supported
Hypothesis 3	Korean Wave → Purchase Decision	0.000	0.002	0.998	not supported
Hypothesis 4	Korean Wave → Buy Interest	0.031	0.468	0.640	not supported
Hypothesis 5	Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.506	8.142	0.000	Supported
Hypothesis 6	Brand Image → Buying Interest	0.773	12,636	0.000	Supported
Hypothesis 7	Purchase Interest → Purchase Decision	0.435	4,435	0.000	Supported
Hypothesis 8	Brand Ambassador → Buying Interest → Purchase Decision	0.028	0.776	0.438	not supported
Hypothesis 9	Korean Wave → Buying Interest → Purchase Decision	0.013	0.436	0.663	not supported
Hypothesis 10	Brand Image → Buying Interest → Purchase Decision	0.337	4.040	0.000	Supported

Source: Primary data processed (2022)

the Korean Wave on purchasing decisions and the Korean Wave on buying interest, both have no effect with t-statistic values of 0.002 and 0.468 while the p-values are 0.998 and 0.640, which means that the Korean Wave does not directly affect interest and interest. Purchase decision, so H3 and H4 are rejected. This supports research from (Lestari et al., 2019) which states that the Korean Wave hurts purchasing decisions. Testing H5 and H6, namely brand image on buying interest and brand image on purchasing decisions, directly have a positive effect with t-statistic results of 8.142 and 12.636 with p-values of 0.000 which means that brand image can directly affect consumers' interest and purchasing decisions, so that H5 and H6 are acceptable. This supports research from (Rahmadhani et al., 2022) and (Dewi, 2019).

Testing H7, namely buying interest on purchasing decisions, directly has a positive effect with t-statistics of 4.435 and p-values of 0.000 which means buying stake can directly influence purchasing decisions so that H7 is accepted. This supports research (Solihin, 2020) which states that purchase intention positively affects purchasing decisions. H8 testing is the mediating role of buying interest on the influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions with t-statistics of 0.776 and p-values of 0.438, which means buying stake cannot mediate brand ambassador variables on purchasing decisions, so H8 is rejected. These results do not support research (Kharisma & Hutasuht, 2019) which states that there is a mediating role of buying interest on the influence of brand ambassadors on purchasing decisions. The H9 test is the mediating role of buying interest on the effect of the Korean Wave on purchasing decisions with the results of t-statistics of 0.436 and p-values of 0.663, which means that buying stake cannot mediate the Korean wave variable on purchasing decisions, so H9 is rejected. The H10 test is the mediating role of buying interest on the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions with the results of t-statistics of 4.040 and p-values of 0.000, which means buying stake successfully mediates the impact of brand image on purchasing decisions, which means H10 is accepted, so these results support research from (Purwati & Cahyanti, 2022).

## 5 Discussion

Based on the results (Fig. 2), the brand ambassadors chosen by Scarlett whitening products, namely Song Jong Ki and TWICE, can directly influence student consumers in Surakarta to make purchases of Scarlett Whitening products, which means that the public recognizes the popularity of Song Jong Ki and TWICE and even their names have been known before becoming brand ambassadors in Indonesia. Indonesia. The information conveyed by the brand ambassador can be accepted and trusted by consumers. Besides that Song Jong Ki and TWICE are also suitable to be brand ambassadors for Scarlett whitening products. So, one of the reasons consumers buy Scarlett Whitening products is knowing Song Jong Ki and TWICE as brand ambassadors. This shows that promoting products through brand ambassadors needs to be done to market the product widely.

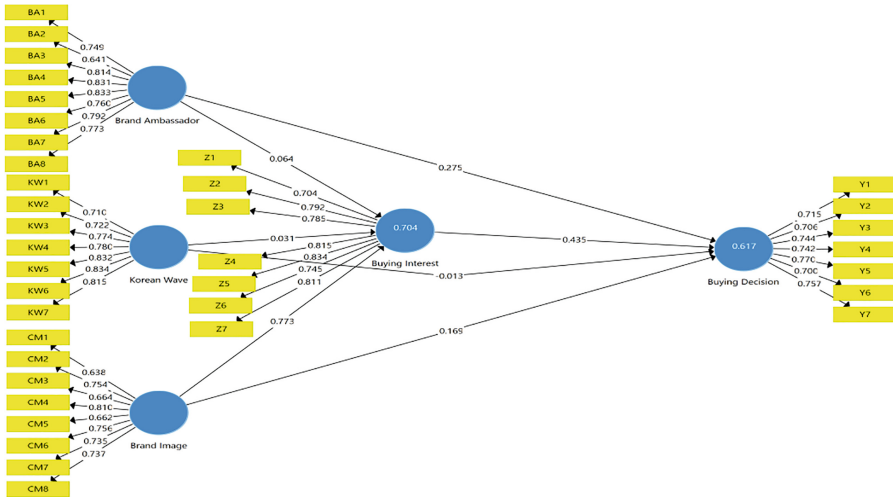


Fig. 2. Equation results. Source: Primary data processed (2022)

This can happen in testing the Korean Wave on purchasing decisions and intentions because some respondents do not understand that K-pop dramas, movies, and songs are a core part of the Korean Wave, even though they often see/hear dramas and movies. And Korean songs, some respondents think that the Korean Wave is not related to Korean culture. Some respondents believe that Korean culture is not unique and interesting to study further, so they enjoy it. So that consumers in this research are consumers who are smart in making purchasing decisions because they are not solely influenced by phenomena that are trends in society.

In testing the brand image hypothesis on interest and purchasing decisions, there is a positive influence both directly and indirectly, which means that respondents agree that the Scarlett Whitening brand has high popularity and is the best beauty brand in Indonesia because it has many benefits for skin health. The Scarlett Whitening product’s brand image is improving because there has been no bad news about the product, so consumers are increasingly convinced to buy the product. Marketing of Scarlett Whitening products is prioritized for teenagers to adults because, at this time, skin health is considered a significant thing. Besides that, the marketing of Scarlett Whitening products is more focused on social media so that consumers can easily find information.

In testing buying interest, respondents are interested in Scarlett whitening because it has a variety of products so that consumers do not get bored quickly. Respondents also agree that the Scarlett whitening product is quality and encourages consumers to recommend it to the people around them. The ease of obtaining products and providing various payment methods encourage consumers to make purchases. Buying interest directly affects purchasing decisions. Besides that, the mediating role of buying interest applies to the influence of brand image on purchasing decisions, which means that without buying a stake, if the brand image of a product is good, it will attract consumers to make purchasing decisions directly.

## 6 Conclusion

The findings of this study have a direct positive influence on brand ambassador purchasing decisions but are not mediated by purchase intentions. This can benefit business actors in the beauty sector to be more selective in choosing the exemplary brand ambassador for their products. Korean Wave does not influence buying decisions and cannot be mediated by buying interest. This shows that most of the Scarlett Whitening consumer students in Surakarta are savvy consumers in making purchasing decisions because they are not solely influenced by phenomena that are trending in society. They buy Scarlett Whitening products because of the superior product quality they experience. Brand Image has the most substantial result in this study. Therefore, companies must maintain their already-established image because consumers are usually more concerned with quality products rather than trends or figures who become brand ambassadors. Brand image can be formed by improving product quality and ease of transaction so that products can be owned by everyone, as well as innovating in the beauty field so that consumers are more interested and can compete with similar competitors. Purchase intention has a direct positive effect on purchasing decisions, meaning that someone who has an interest in a the product tends to make a purchase.

### 6.1 Limitations and Future Research

Research on purchasing decisions influenced by brand ambassadors, Korean waves, brand image, and mediated by buying interest in consumer students Scarlett Whitening in Surakarta was only conducted in one city with a sample of 217 respondents, so the results of this study cannot be generalized to groups of subjects with a large number of respondents. A suggestion from a more extensive researcher could use several different venues with a larger sample size and other variable indicators. The results obtained in this study are not necessarily the same if done elsewhere with different products or variables. It is hoped that future research can use more samples and other objects. The lack of awareness of the respondents in this study to fill out the questionnaire adequately caused the data obtained to be less than optimal so that further researchers could assist respondents in filling out the questionnaire. Some of the shortcomings of this study are expected to be perfected by further research by including other variables, such as consumer loyalty to a product and customer satisfaction in a product.

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