

Analysis The Sales Dynamics of Lemonilo Noodle Products in Partnership with NCT

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ABSTRACT

One of the foods that people in the world are interested in and love is instant noodles. One of them is Lemonilo noodles. In this case, Lemonilo chose NCT as a Brand Ambassador by utilizing celebrity image and the Korean wave. The purpose of this writing is to describe the Brand Ambassador functions carried out by Kpop idols, especially NCT Dream. Previous research is quite relevant to explain that Brand Ambassadors are communicators who play an important role in explaining the message of a product given to consumers so that consumers buy their products or influence purchasing decisions. The research method we use is a descriptive qualitative method. This article attempts to explain how to interpret the role and function of NCT as a Brand Ambassador to influence consumers towards Lemonilo products, as well as study the increase in awareness of the Lemonilo brand among NCT fans and the general public. Apart from that, this research aims to provide a reference for brand ambassadors so that they can successfully promote their products, such as the way NCT does with Lemonilo products.

Keyword: *Brand Ambassador, Korean Wave, Strategy Marketing, NCT Dream*

INTRODUCTION

The Limited Liability Company (PT) Lemonilo Indonesia Sehat or Lemonilo was established in 2016 by Shinta Nurfauzia, Ronald Wijaya, and Johannes Ardiant. The Lemonilo company produces various healthy and natural products, one of which is Lemonilo noodles in 2017 (Lemonilo, 2023). Lemonilo instant noodles are produced with spinach as the basic ingredient in the noodles and apply the concept of healthy ecosystem. Innovatively, Lemonilo noodles consist of Lemonilo Instant Noodle Spicy Fire, Lemonilo Instant Noodle Curry, Lemonilo Instant Noodle Onion Chicken, and others. Even so, Lemonilo noodles have not attracted many consumers, because they have to compete with other products, such as Indomie and Mie Sedap, which are already well-known. So, one of the ways Lemonilo is trying to introduce its products is by utilizing the rising Korean wave. Korean wave is a term to explain a phenomenon of the spread of South Korean culture through music, products, lifestyle, or even through drama (Idola Per dini Putri, 2019). Korea itself has been synonymous with Korean pop

music which is favored by the public, especially among teenagers. The number of Kpop idols favored by Indonesians indicates that the Korean wave is accepted by Indonesian culture.

Lemonilo decided to take advantage of this, collaborating with one of the Korean pop (Kpop) idol stars, Neo Culture Technology (NCT), which was chosen as the Brand Ambassador (BA) for Lemonilo noodle products. In addition, NCT itself is a boy band from South Korea that is now on the rise and is favored by the public, especially among teenagers. As the BA of Lemonilo noodle products, NCT performs its role quite well, namely promoting Lemonilo noodle products to increase sales. Lemonilo became more recognized by the public because NCT performed its function as BA effectively.

The previous studies in the case study of Kpop NCT as BA Lemonilo noodles only focused on consumer purchase interest (Wibowo, 2022). Previous studies only discuss the effect of NCT as BA Lemonilo on purchasing decisions and consumer buying interest (Andi Juliadi, 2023). Meanwhile, this paper will focus on discussing how NCT performs its function as BA of Lemonilo noodles. In other words, this paper is expected to provide a reference for those who take the BA option as a means of marketing strategy in promoting their products. So, this paper is expected to explain how the role of Kpop NCT performs its function as a BA of Lemonilo noodles.

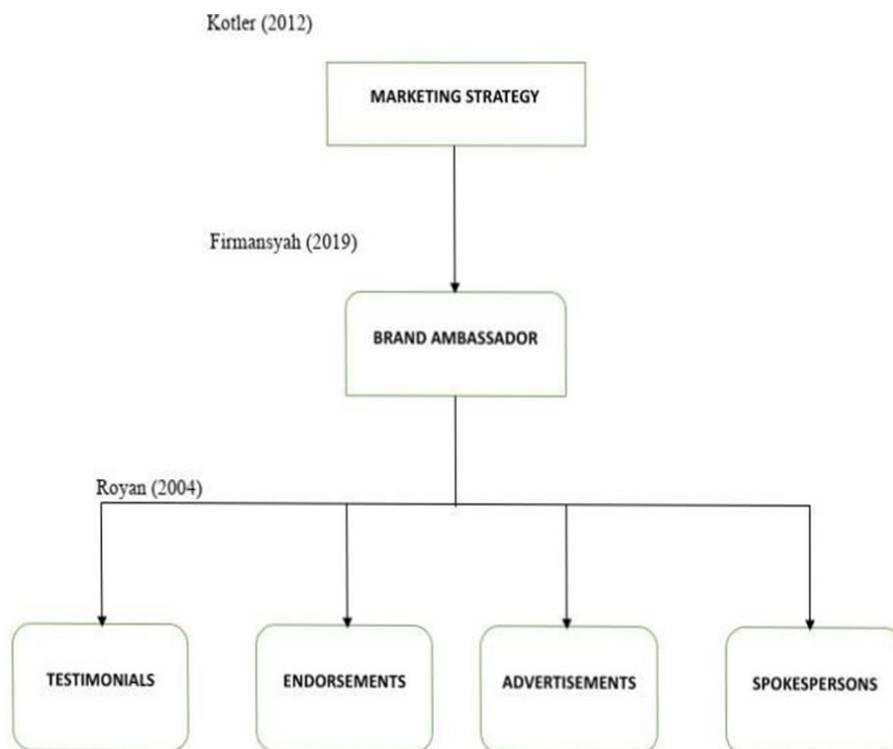
THEORICAL FRAMEWORK

Marketing Strategy

According to Kotler (Kotler, 2012), marketing strategy is a way or strategy that companies do in running their business to create value or attractiveness for customers. This is necessary so that both companies and customers benefit to each other. The purpose of a marketing strategy is to try to increase the profits and revenue of a company. There are several strategies to promote a product, namely direct marketing, social media marketing, and brand ambassadors.

Brand Ambassador

According to Firmansyah (Firmansyah, 2019), Brand Ambassador (BA) is someone who has popularity such as celebrities, athletes, influencers, and idols who are currently loved by the public. This can make the identity of a brand or product by doing a certain strategy. The strategy is in the form of promotions or advertisements that can attract the attention of consumers to buy products continuously (repeat orders). In this case, there are four functions that Brand Ambassador can do, namely as testimonials, endorsements, advertisements and as spokespersons (Royan, 2004).



Based on the framework that has been assembled by the author, it can be seen that when a group is referred to as a BA, the group must be able to perform at least one of the BA functions. The BA functions that must be carried out are testimonials, which provide testimony or assurance. Then, providing recommendations even though they are not experts in the field of the product being promoted (endorsements). Finally, conducting promotions (advertisements) and becoming a company spokesperson (Royan, 2004).

METHODS

This paper will use qualitative data analysis methods, which with qualitative methods, the data taken can be examined comprehensively, both data found through research journals or mass media. Then, the purpose of qualitative data analysis is carried out to live and study the meaning of an event of behavioral interaction of the object under study based on the perspective of the author as a key instrument in collecting data (Gunawan, 2013). Meanwhile, the range of this research is from 2022 to 2023 and only focuses on explaining the BA function. Then, the type of research used will be packaged descriptively in the hope of providing a detailed description of the data that has been analyzed. In other words, this paper aims to describe in more depth the function of NCT Kpop as Lemonilo Brand Ambassador who is successful in promoting Lemonilo noodles.

The data collection carried out in this paper comes from primary data and secondary data. The primary data collection technique that we collect is through direct interviews

with Lemonilo noodle consumers. As for other primary data, we will get it from the primary website or the original account of Lemonilo noodles and Kpop NCT. Meanwhile, the secondary data collection techniques that we collect are taken through literature studies such as journals, scientific articles, and comments from posts on Lemonilo's social media platform accounts such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Brand Ambassador as Testimonials

According to Royan, testimonials are one of the functions of Brand Ambassador by providing testimonials that guarantee the promotion of the superiority of a product. Brand Ambassadors serve the important function of providing testimonials that enhance the perceived value of a product. Testimonials from reputable and well-known brand ambassadors are expected to elicit a positive response (Royan, 2004). Kpop NCT's endorsement of Lemonilo noodle products aims to assure consumers of the product's delightful taste, health benefits, nutritional value, and suitability for consumption. This is evident in the endorsements by several NCT members across digital platforms, including the official Kpop NCT and Lemonilo accounts. NCT's testimonials have a positive impact on Lemonilo noodle products by generating consumer interest and expanding market reach. Simply by conveying that Lemonilo noodles offer a unique taste compared to other instant noodle products, NCT effectively fulfills its testimonial role. The endorsements provided by NCT enhance consumer trust in Lemonilo noodle products, adding significant value to the brand. Consequently, this can contribute to increased sales of Lemonilo noodle products in the international market.

The testimonials provided by NCT contribute to building a favorable perception of the Lemonilo noodle product. Leveraging NCT's widespread popularity can significantly enhance the public's perception of the products they endorse. In reality, if the power by a person or group is harnessed effectively, the influence wielded by individuals or groups can yield substantial positive outcomes. Through NCT's testimonials, implicit insights into the quality and unique attributes of Lemonilo noodle products are communicated including provided information regarding the quality of Lemonilo noodle products and what makes Lemonilo noodle products different from other noodle products (Dinny & Purwanto, 2022).

Certainly, the involvement of well-known brand ambassadors like Kpop NCT can significantly influence public trust and perception of the products they endorse. When esteemed public figures endorse a product, it tends to have a substantial impact on public trust in the promoted product, thereby positively shaping the brand's image (Andi Juliadi, 2023). In the instance of Kpop NCT endorsing Lemonilo noodles, their enthusiastic endorsement and positive testimonials have evidently contributed to an increase in sales, indicating the effectiveness of their role as brand ambassadors for Lemonilo.

The Role of Brand Ambassadors as Endorsements

At this time, of course, promotions such as endorsements are often heard by the general public. Starting from Instagram influencers who like to "endorse" a product, whether on Instagram stories or other platforms. From this incident, we should have understood the purpose and purpose of the endorsement (Afandi, 2021). As a BA, the Endorsement function means providing a recommendation in which the BA is required to become an advertising star in a promotion. This recommendation was carried out by BA, even though he personally did not have the expertise in the product field he was going to promote (Royan, 2004). This is the same as Kpop NCT who has no expertise in the food sector but can promote Lemonilo noodles by taking advantage of its popularity.

This is proven by NCT fans who end up trying a product just because it stars their idol. These are all initial tools for consumers to recognize Lemonilo noodles and in the end will make consumers buy Lemonilo noodles not because of their idols, but because they have already experienced the enjoyment of the product. This is what we can call the endorsement function carried out by BA, so Lemonilo's decision was right to appoint NCT as BA. Utilizing NCT's popularity, it can help increase exposure and awareness of the Lemonilo brand among NCTzens. Moreover, with support from a well-known BA, it will really help the product name reach a wider market, as well as having high value and creating a healthy noodle jargon that has a different taste to Lemonilo noodle products.

NCT took advantage of its popularity to promote Lemonilo noodles. Even though NCT is just a boyband group that understands singing and dancing, and is not skilled in the culinary field, if NCT is able to utilize the endorsement function as BA for Lemonilo noodles, then NCT can influence the general public to compete to buy Lemonilo noodles. Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it appears that NCT as the BA of Lemonilo noodles has proven to be successful in carrying out its endorsement function. It can be seen that people don't really care about NCT's capacity to assess food, but rather people only believe NCT's words that Lemonilo noodles are delicious, delicious and nutritious noodles.

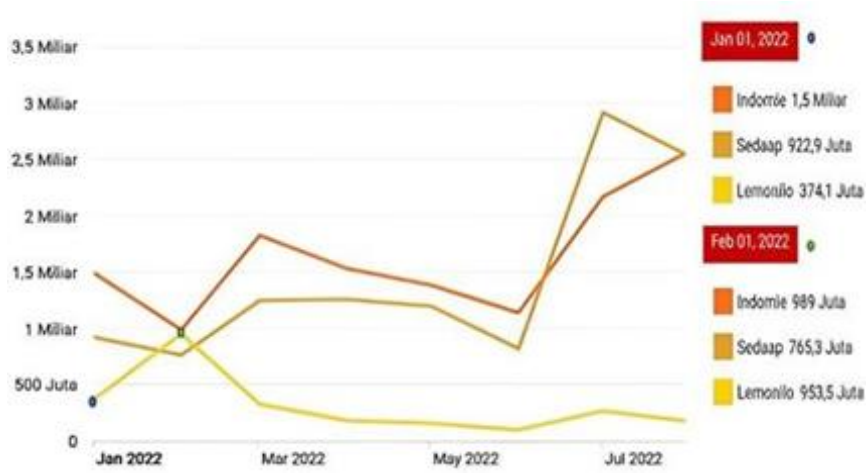
This can all be seen from the public's response in the comments column of the Lemonilo noodle channel's YouTube channel when they released a video advertising Lemonilo noodles promoted by NCT. In the comments on the YouTube channel video, many people reacted positively and were happy that Lemonilo noodles were being promoted by NCT.

As a result of NCT's endorsement by taking advantage of its well-known popularity, sales of Lemonilo noodles have increased. So, it can be said that by simply utilizing its popularity as a BA endorsement function, NCT has succeeded in influencing consumers to believe in wanting to buy Lemonilo noodle products. Basically, consumers buy Lemonilo noodles not because they really like Lemonilo noodles or see the nutritional content in Lemonilo noodles, but are influenced by NCT's Kpop endorsement.

The Role of Brand Ambassador as Advertisement

Advertising is the promotion of a product to inform consumers that the advertised product is a product that is suitable for consumers to purchase. According to Royan, BA's function in advertising is to be an actor who advertises a product it represents and carries out promotions for that brand in the program (Royan, 2004). Usually, advertisements can be seen on the internet or television as a visual promotion that can be displayed as attractively as possible and can be seen repeatedly by consumers. When NCT became BA of Lemonilo products, they carried out promotions which have seen a very rapid increase in sales. Therefore, Lemonilo became known to the public not only covering the domestic area, but it has expanded to international markets. This is because NCT has a big influence on product sales.

The advertising carried out by Lemonilo to attract consumers is advertising on social media by choosing NCT as BA which is also widely spread on Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. NCT advertises Lemonilo noodle products interestingly and creatively so that many consumers are interested in buying Lemonilo noodle products. In this case Lemonilo also creates interesting promotions, including giving away exclusive photocard gifts. However, not all Lemonilo noodle product packaging has photocards inside. This is an effort by Lemonilo's marketing strategy to attract many consumers, especially NCT fans, namely NCTzen, to buy repeatedly until they fulfill their desire to collect idol photocards, his favorite. Talking about popularity, in the process of advertising Lemonilo noodles NCT is able to attract many consumers and influence consumers to trust the information that has been provided by Lemonilo using NCT as BA. This can increase sales of Lemonilo products by 154.9% or equivalent to RP. 765,000,000 after collaborating with NCT Dream (Databoks Katadata, 2022).



Picture 1.1 Increased sales of Lemonilo Noodle products
 (Source: databooks.katadata.co.id, 2022)

The graph shows that NCT is used as BA for Lemonilo products has a positive impact on the company, because it can increase noodle sales Lemonilo. In January 2022, Lemonilo products were able to increase sales amounting to Rp. 374.1 million and in February 2022 sales of Lemonilo Noodle products amounting to Rp. 953.5 million, which is the result of collaborating with NCT (Sabrina, Agustin, Gaida, & Wanandi, 2023). So, it is concluded that in January 2022 the product Lemonilo was able to increase sales by IDR. 374.1 Million as well as in February 2022 sales of Lemonilo Noodle products will be IDR. 953.5 million which is the result of collaboration with NCT (Databoks Katadata, 2022). The purpose of advertising is to inform new products, provide knowledge about functions, and benefits, give a good impression, and reduce consumer doubts about switching to Lemonilo's instant noodles (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008).

Designing objectives and planning for advertising will be greatly simplified if BA understands, the company can also take advantage of the popularity of people or other groups such as NCT to advertise Lemonilo instant noodle products. Concluded that Kpop NCT as BA Lemonilo noodles successfully carried out the advertising function for the product Lemonilo noodles. This can be proven by the way they made Kpop NCT the star of the Lemonilo noodle advertisement from a program on the Kpop NCT and Lemonilo YouTube channel. There are more than 1 million views of 3 YouTube videos regarding noodle promotions Lemonilo. Based on this, Kpop NCT is considered successful in carrying out its advertising function as BA Lemonilo noodles. This can all be seen from the increase in sales of noodle products Lemonilo, positive consumer response, and consumer trust in the promotions carried out by Kpop NCT as BA Lemonilo noodles.

CONCLUSION

From the statement above, it can be seen that the role of BAs, such as NCT in promoting Lemonilo noodle products can be seen through three main functions, namely testimonials, endorsements, and advertisements. In the testimonial function, NCT guarantees that Lemonilo noodles are delicious and healthy, thus increasing consumer confidence in the product. Direct testimonials from NCT members form a positive image and influence consumer buying interest. NCT's success in carrying out the testimonial function can be seen from the increase in sales of Lemonilo noodles, including expansion to international markets. In the endorsement function, NCT utilized their popularity to increase Lemonilo's brand exposure and awareness among fans, especially NCTzen. Although NCT has no expertise in food, their popularity and endorsement succeeded in attracting consumers to try Lemonilo noodles. The success of this endorsement is also evidenced by the significant increase in sales of Lemonilo products after NCT's campaign as BA. In the advertising function, NCT played an important role in the visual promotion of Lemonilo noodles through various social media platforms and television. Creative and attractive advertisements, as well as marketing strategies such as exclusive photocard giveaways, successfully attracted consumers' attention and increased sales. Data shows a significant increase in sales after NCT became BA, demonstrating the effectiveness of their advertising campaign. Overall, the collaboration between Lemonilo and Kpop NCT as BAs shows that utilizing the

popularity and endorsement of a well-known public figure can have a huge positive impact. This success underscores the importance of a proper and effective marketing strategy in utilizing the role of Brand Ambassadors.

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