

The Influence of K-pop Brand Ambassador BTS and Brand Image on McDonald's Purchasing Decisions: Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) as a Mediating Role

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Abstract

McDonald's leveraged popular culture trends through collaboration with BTS (K-Pop idol group) by launching the BTS Meal, successfully capturing the attention of global consumers including those in Indonesia. This phenomenon demonstrates the role of brand ambassadors, brand image, and psychological factors such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The objective of this research is to examine how BTS, acting as a brand representative and shaping the brand's image, impacts the choices customers make when purchasing McDonald's items. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) will be considered as a mediating factor. The study is prompted by the partnership between McDonald's and the popular South Korean group BTS, which caused excitement among consumers worldwide, including in Indonesia. The research method used is a quantitative approach, conducted through a survey of 246 respondents who are McDonald's customers and BTS fans. The results suggest that having BTS as a brand ambassador positively affects the fear of missing out (FOMO) and buying choices. Furthermore, the brand's image is also shown to have a positive influence on FOMO. The study also reveals that FOMO plays a crucial part in connecting BTS as a brand ambassador, brand image, and purchase decisions. This study implies that strategic collaborations with global celebrities can enhance brand appeal and drive purchasing decisions through psychological mechanisms such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Therefore, companies should take into account the emotional aspects of consumers when designing marketing strategies.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, BTS, McDonald's, Purchasing Decisions, Fear of Missing Out.

1. Introduction

McDonald's is a multinational fast-food company that has become a global icon in the modern culinary industry. With strong and innovative marketing strategies, McDonald's has been able to attract various market segments, especially young people, through pop culture approaches, ease of access, and product consistency. McDonald's has a brand image as a practical, modern, family-friendly fast-food restaurant that adapts to trends, particularly among young consumers. Despite facing challenges related to health and environmental perceptions, McDonald's remains one of the most recognized and sought-after brands globally (Goodstat, 2025).

As shown in figure 1, McDonald's being among the biggest global fast-food chains and having numerous outlets across Indonesia, is the preferred choice for a majority of teenagers (46.6%). Subsequently, McDonald's launched the global "BTS Meal" campaign, partnering with BTS or *Bangtan Sonyeondan* (K-Pop idol group) as their brand ambassador. This collaboration received an extraordinary response from consumers in various countries,



including Indonesia, and became one of the most phenomenal examples of collaborative marketing.

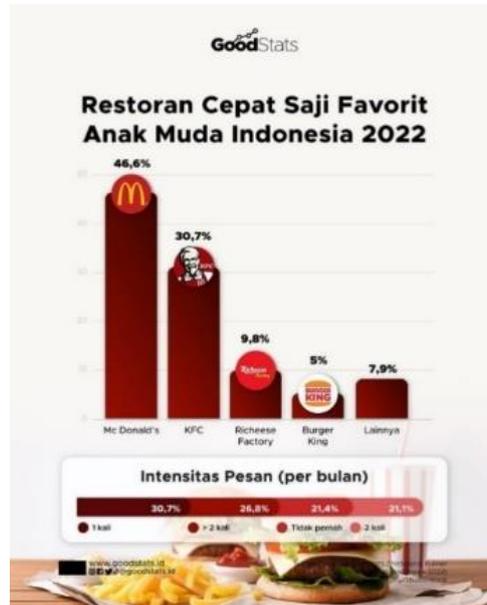


Figure 1. Data on Favorite Fast-Food Restaurants Among Young People
 Source : Goodstats.id (2025)

In the era of globalization and rapid development of information technology, marketing through social media and influencers has become a highly effective strategy. One phenomenon that has attracted attention is the use of brand ambassadors from the celebrity sphere, particularly from the K-pop industry, such as BTS. BTS is not only known as a music group but also as a cultural icon with significant influence over consumer behavior, especially among the young generation in Indonesia.

The development of marketing strategies in the modern era demands innovative approaches to capture consumer attention and increase brand loyalty. One strategy proven effective by major global companies is collaboration with brand ambassadors, especially celebrities with strong influence in the entertainment industry. The collaboration between BTS and McDonald's through the launch of the BTS Meal successfully attracted the attention of many consumers worldwide, including in Indonesia (Inak, 2021).

According to The Korea Foundation, BTS fans number 178 million people globally. The popularity of BTS has led many large companies in Indonesia to select BTS as brand ambassadors. The collaboration between BTS and McDonald's through the BTS Meal has had a significant impact on McDonald's revenue, both globally and in Indonesia. Although exact data has not been published, it is estimated that revenue from the BTS Meal in Indonesia reached tens of billions of rupiah within just a few weeks of its launch. This success clearly demonstrates how effective it is to use global celebrities like BTS as brand ambassadors, as they can draw consumer attention and drive a significant increase in sales (Mutiah, 2021).



Figure 2. Data on BTS Fans in Indonesia
Source : Goodstats.id (2022)

This phenomenon is interesting to study further because it shows how powerful the influence of a brand ambassador can be in shaping consumer perceptions of a product. BTS, as one of the K-pop groups with a very strong global fanbase (ARMY), has had a major impact on McDonald's brand image, especially among the younger generation. The BTS Meal campaign not only created a unique consumption experience but also strengthened McDonald's image as a brand that is relevant and keeps up with pop culture trends.

Brand image is a crucial aspect of a company's marketing plan, impacting how consumers view and choose to buy products. McDonald's, a leading global fast-food chain, uses its strong brand image to connect with customers through concepts of quality, convenience, and value. Apart from considering the brand ambassador and brand image, it is important to recognize the psychological aspect of consumer behavior known as the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). In the context of the BTS Meal campaign, many consumers were driven to purchase the product not merely out of necessity but out of fear of being left out of a trend or not being part of a viral phenomenon. The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has grown in significance as it can impact how brand ambassadors and brand image affect consumer choices.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a psychological phenomenon describing an individual's anxiety about missing out on something perceived as valuable or exclusive. In the context of McDonald's and BTS, FOMO arose from the limited nature of the BTS Meal and the desire not to miss out on a trend popular among the public. This event is believed to greatly influence the decisions individuals make when making purchases, particularly among youthful customers who are deeply engaged in social media and the fascination with celebrities.

Prior studies have analyzed the impact of brand ambassadors, brand image, and FOMO on buying behavior. However, findings indicate that brand ambassadors such as BTS primarily influence consumer awareness and interest levels, rather than directly affecting purchasing choices (Awuy et al., 2024; Ummat & Hayuningtias, 2022). New studies have shown that FOMO plays a crucial role in linking brand ambassadors and brand image to consumers' buying choices (Dinh & Lee, 2024; Bartosiak et al., 2025; Patrisya et al., 2025). However, studies that specifically examine the mediating role of FOMO in the context of the fast food industry, particularly regarding the phenomenon of McDonald's BTS Meal campaign in Indonesia, remain limited. Therefore, this research is important to fill that gap by highlighting

the interaction between brand ambassadors, brand image, and FOMO on the purchasing decisions of the younger generation in the digital era.

The purpose of this research is to investigate how the use of BTS as spokespersons for a brand and the image of McDonald's impact consumer choices, while also looking into the influence of FOMO as a connecting factor. This study aims to offer fresh perspectives on marketing strategies that cater to the preferences and mindset of today's digitally savvy generation, taking into account the growing influence of social media on consumer behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Brand Ambassador

According to Royan (2004) in Mardiana (2019), many brands opt for popular Korean celebrities to endorse their products as they have the ability to sway and convince consumers into using the brand's offerings. Thus, a brand ambassador is typically a well-known individual who embodies and represents a brand, with the goal of capturing the attention of customers and promoting interaction with the product. The involvement of brand ambassadors greatly influences the choices consumers make when buying products, mainly due to the persona they project.

The celebrity endorsement theory suggests that celebrities with high credibility and strong appeal can enhance the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. BTS serves as a prime example of this. A study by Anggraeni et al. (2023) demonstrates that purchase intent is greatly impacted by brand representatives. Social media testimonials play a role in purchase intention, and when considered together with other factors, they contribute to about 59.3% of their impact on purchase intention.

2.2. Brand Image

The impression and connection that customers form with a brand is known as brand image. This perception is shaped by various elements such as personal experiences with the product, the communication style of the brand, visual elements such as logos and packaging, and the quality of customer service offered. Brand image often reflects consumers' self-perception or the identity they aspire to present. In today's competitive market, brand image plays a crucial role in helping businesses stand out and secure a position in consumers' minds. Therefore, it is essential for companies to consistently build and maintain a strong brand image to remain relevant and competitive.

A study by Rumaidlany et al. (2022) shows that both brand image (X1) and brand awareness (X2) play a critical role in influencing purchase decisions (Y). The positive impact of brand image is supported by a coefficient of 0.409 and a significance level of 0.000. In comparison, brand awareness has a higher coefficient of 0.586 and exerts an even more powerful influence with the same level of significance. Together, these factors significantly and positively shape consumer purchasing behavior.

2.3. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is the unease or apprehension that occurs when people feel excluded from stimulating or worthwhile activities that others are participating in. This phenomenon is commonly triggered by social media, where users are constantly exposed to real-time updates about trends, activities, or purchases from both peers and public figures (Milyavskaya et al., 2018). In marketing, FOMO is often utilized to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity, particularly with limited-time offers or exclusive collaborations, such as the

BTS Meal launched by McDonald's. This strategy drives consumers to make purchases not out of necessity, but from the fear of missing out on a trend or socially relevant experience.

2.4. Purchase Decision

The decision to buy a product or service is known as a purchase decision. This process may vary in complexity depending on the influencing factors. At times, decisions are rational, driven by actual needs; at other times, they are emotional, influenced by trends or external persuasion. In marketing, understanding consumer decision-making is vital. By identifying what influences their choices, companies can develop more effective marketing strategies. According to Kotler & Keller (2017), the process of making a purchase usually consists of five steps: recognizing a problem, searching for information, evaluating different options, deciding on a purchase, and feeling satisfied or dissatisfied after buying.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Approach

This study employs a quantitative methodology utilizing an associative approach, focusing on analyzing the connections and impact among multiple variables. In accordance with the positivistic paradigm, quantitative research emphasizes hypothesis testing through numerical data that is analyzed statistically.

3.2. Population and Sample

In line with Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research is rooted in the positivist paradigm, emphasizing the examination of defined populations or samples through random sampling techniques. This study focuses on all the individuals in Indonesia who frequent McDonald's and are knowledgeable about the BTS Meal partnership initiative. This population is not limited to BTS fans (ARMY), but also encompasses the general public who were exposed to the campaign through various media, including television, social media, and digital advertising. Due to the difficulty in accurately determining the exact population size, this study will utilize a purposive sampling method to select respondents who are familiar with the BTS Meal promotion and have made purchases at McDonald's during the promotional period. Based on these criteria, 246 respondents were collected.

3.3. Data Collection Technique

This research project made use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data collection process included distributing online surveys on a variety of social media channels. The questionnaires were structured based on indicators from each research variable using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The brand ambassador variable was measured through dimensions of popularity, credibility, attractiveness, product compatibility, and consumer trust. The brand image variable was measured based on consumer perceptions regarding McDonald's quality, reliability, modern image, innovation, and global reputation. Indicators such as anxious feelings, immediacy, exclusivity, and the desire to stay current were used to measure the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) variable, while the purchasing decision variable was gauged using indicators such as recognizing needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making a purchase decision, and assessing satisfaction post-purchase. The research gathered secondary data from a variety of sources including literature, research journals, online news, and reports on the fast food industry in Indonesia.

3.4. Research Instrument Testing

Initial validation procedures were implemented to verify the research instrument's validity and reliability characteristics. Convergent validity evaluation involved analysis of outer loading values, with indicators considered valid when achieving values exceeding 0.6. Discriminant validity assessment was subsequently performed through examination of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, requiring values greater than 0.5 for acceptance. Reliability testing utilized Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) measures with a minimum criterion of 0.7. Results indicated that all indicators fulfilled both validity and reliability requirements, establishing their suitability for hypothesis testing applications.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

The analysis of data was carried out with the help of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) utilizing Partial Least Squares (PLS) via SmartPLS 4.0 software. This particular technique was selected due to its ability to examine intricate connections among hidden variables within samples of modest to moderate size, its flexibility concerning normal distribution assumptions, and its applicability to both exploratory and confirmatory studies. The analysis stages include evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) to assess construct validity and reliability, as well as evaluation of the structural model (inner model) to test the strength of relationships between variables by examining R², predictive relevance (Q²), and bootstrapping results. Hypothesis testing was conducted with the requirement that t-statistic values must be greater than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

The research involved the examination of theories through the utilization of Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis with the SmartPLS 4.0 software. Below is the graphical depiction of the PLS model that will be explored:

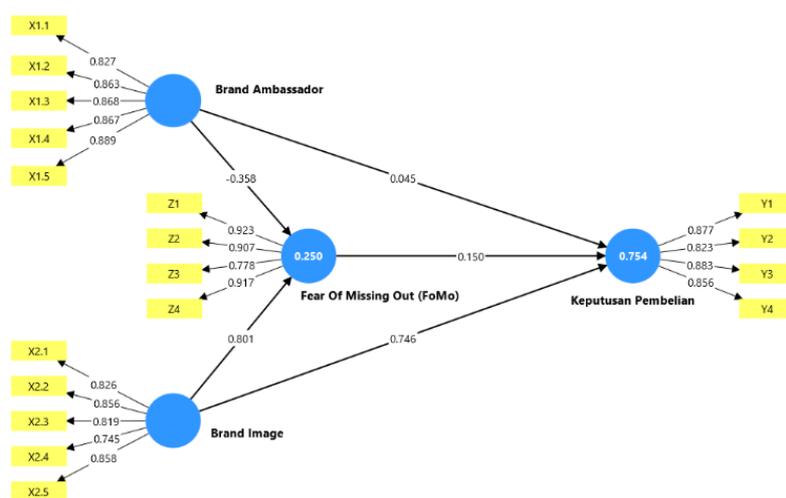


Figure 3. Evaluation of the Outer Model

Source: SmartPLS Data Processed, 2025

4.1.1. Convergent Validity

The evaluation of convergent validity involves analyzing the outer loading or outer factor value of an indicator. A strong demonstration of convergent validity is indicated when the outer loading value of an indicator is greater than 0.6.

Table 1. Convergent Validity Results

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Description
Brand Ambassador	X1.1	0.827	Valid
	X1.2	0.863	Valid
	X1.3	0.868	Valid
	X1.4	0.867	Valid
	X1.5	0.889	Valid
Brand Image	X2.1	0.826	Valid
	X2.2	0.856	Valid
	X2.3	0.819	Valid
	X2.4	0.745	Valid
	X2.5	0.858	Valid
Purchase Decision	Y1	0.877	Valid
	Y2	0.823	Valid
	Y3	0.883	Valid
	Y4	0.856	Valid
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	Z1	0.923	Valid
	Z2	0.907	Valid
	Z3	0.778	Valid
	Z4	0.917	Valid

Source: SmartPLS Data Processed, 2025

4.1.2. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where values exceeding 0.5 demonstrate the reliability of the indicators. Once validity is confirmed, the measurement instrument's reliability is evaluated through tests such as Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE, as indicated in the table provided.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reability dan AVE

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Description
Brand Ambassador (X1)	0.914	0.936	0.745	Valid & Reliable
Brand Image (X2)	0.880	0.912	0.676	Valid & Reliable
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) (Z)	0.907	0.934	0.780	Valid & Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.883	0.919	0.740	Valid & Reliable

Source: SmartPLS Data Processed, 2025

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability scores for each construct exceed the threshold of 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs surpass 0.50. These findings suggest that the constructs demonstrate adequate levels of internal consistency and convergent validity, thereby justifying the progression to the assessment of the structural model.

4.1.3. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The coefficient of determination (R-squared) quantifies the proportion of variability in the response variable that can be explained by the predictor variables included in the statistical model. A larger coefficient of determination suggests an enhanced capacity of the model to elucidate fluctuations in the variable of interest. Referring to Chin (1998), a strong R² value is

typically seen as 0.67, while a moderate value is around 0.33, and a low value is approximately 0.19. Consequently, R² is crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of the structural model and the predictive power of relationships among variables.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R²) Test Results

Dependent Variable	R ²	Description	Category
Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	0,250	25% of the variation in FOMO is explained by BTS Brand Ambassador and Brand Image. The rest (75%) is influenced by other factors outside this model.	Low
Purchase Decision	0,754	75.4% of purchasing decisions are explained by BTS Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, and FOMO together. The rest (24.6%) from other factors.	Strong

Source: SmartPLS Data Processed, 2025

According to the data provided, we can infer that the impact of the BTS Brand Ambassador and Brand Image on the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is somewhat limited, yet deemed satisfactory in the realm of consumer behavior studies. Meanwhile, the combined influence of BTS Brand Ambassador, Brand Image, and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on Purchase Decisions is considered strong, indicating that this research model is capable of significantly explaining a large part of the purchase decision variable.

4.1.4. Predictive Relevance Q²

The Q² value is a popular metric for assessing how well a model can forecast actual data and determine parameters. A positive Q² value suggests that the model is successful in prediction. The equation for determining predictive accuracy (Q²) is provided below:

$$Q^2 = 1 - ((1 - R^2 \text{ Fear Of Missing Out}) \times (1 - R^2 \text{ Purchase Decision}))$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - ((1 - 0,250) \times (1 - 0,754))$$

$$Q^2 = 0.1845$$

The result shows Q² > 0, indicating a good predictive model.

4.1.5. Hypothesis Test

By utilizing hypothesis testing standards, we can decide if a proposed idea is either approved or dismissed by considering the t-value and p-value. At a significance level of 0.05, if the obtained t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the corresponding p-value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis will be supported. Acceptance of the hypothesis indicates a significant connection between the IV and DV.

Table 4. Direct Effect Result

Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Brand Ambassador → Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	-0.358	-0.357	0.113	3.172	0.002
Brand Ambassador → Purchase Decision	0.045	0.046	0.088	0.517	0.605
Brand Image → Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)	0.801	0.803	0.114	7.051	0.000
Brand Image → Purchase Decision	0.746	0.746	0.082	9.076	0.000
Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) → Purchase Decision	0.150	0.149	0.038	3.952	0.000

The results of hypothesis testing in this study can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Hypothesis 1 is supported, as the BTS K-Pop Brand Ambassador exerts a positive and significant effect on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This is evidenced by a t-statistic of 3.172 and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05).
- 2) Hypothesis 2 is not supported, since the BTS K-Pop Brand Ambassador does not significantly influence Purchase Decisions at McDonald's (t-statistic = 0.517; p-value = 0.605 > 0.05).
- 3) Hypothesis 3 is supported, showing that McDonald's Brand Image has a positive and significant impact on FOMO (t-statistic = 7.051; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05).
- 4) Hypothesis 4 is supported, confirming that McDonald's Brand Image positively and significantly affects Purchase Decisions (t-statistic = 9.076; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05).
- 5) Hypothesis 5 is supported, as FOMO significantly contributes to Purchase Decisions at McDonald's (t-statistic = 3.952; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05).

Table 5. Moderation Effect

Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Brand Ambassador -> Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) -> Purchase Decision	-0.053	-0.053	0.021	2.542	0.011
Brand Image -> Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) -> Purchase Decision	0.120	0.120	0.036	3.301	0.001

Source: SmartPLS Data Processed, 2025

The results of mediation testing in this study can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Hypothesis 6 is supported. The results show that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) mediates the relationship between the BTS K-Pop Brand Ambassador and McDonald's Purchase Decisions, as evidenced by a t-statistic of 2.542 and a p-value of 0.011 (< 0.05).
- 2) Hypothesis 7 is also supported. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) significantly mediates the effect of McDonald's Brand Image on Purchase Decisions, with a t-statistic of 3.301 and a p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05).

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Effect of Brand Ambassador on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

The presence of a Brand Ambassador has been shown to greatly influence the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) according to statistical analysis, with a t-statistic of 3.089 and a p-value of 0.002, which is less than 0.05. The presence of BTS can trigger a fear of missing out among consumers. As a globally popular K-Pop idol group, McDonald's collaboration with BTS creates social urgency, making consumers eager to own the promoted product before it sells out.

The study outcomes coincide with the work of Dinh & Lee (2024) which found that exposure to social media influencers positively triggers FOMO and subsequently influences conspicuous consumption behavior (acquisition of conspicuous products). This is supported by research by Bartosiak et al. (2025) which shows that parasocial interactions between consumers and influencers become an important pathway through which FOMO is formed and influences consumption decisions. Therefore, McDonald's collaboration with BTS as

brand ambassadors has the potential to create collective social signals that strengthen FOMO among consumers who want to experience the social experiences they see others doing.

The subsequent psychological effects can be understood through the concepts of perceived scarcity and temporal urgency in marketing campaigns. When products are communicated as limited or special edition, conditions that often accompany celebrity collaborations, consumers are driven to act quickly to avoid missing the opportunity. As revealed by Liu (2025), when consumers feel a high level of serendipity, the relationship between FOMO and purchase intention becomes stronger. Therefore, BTS's presence not only triggers FOMO through social exposure and parasocial relationships, but also through scarcity communication strategies that strengthen the psychological urgency to immediately join in purchasing the product to avoid being left behind by trends.

4.2.2. Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decision

According to the findings, the presence of the Brand Ambassador (BTS) does not seem to influence purchase choices in a statistically significant way, based on a t-statistic of 0.520 and a p-value of 0.605 (greater than 0.05). Although BTS is a public figure with massive influence, their presence alone is not strong enough to directly drive consumers to buy McDonald's products. This suggests that purchasing decisions are influenced by many other factors, such as brand perception and emotional motivation.

These findings are consistent with the research results of Awuy et al. (2024) that Brand Ambassadors do not have a significant effect on purchase decisions among Gen Z Nature Republic consumers in Manado, while Brand Awareness has a real influence. This is also supported by research by Ummat & Hayuningtias (2022) which shows that Brand Ambassadors are not significant as a single variable in influencing purchasing decisions.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through the Hierarchy of Effects Model, which states that consumers go through stages of awareness, interest, evaluation, and purchase decision. The presence of BTS as Brand Ambassadors in this research is proven to only play a role in the initial stages, namely creating awareness and interest, but has not been able to significantly influence the evaluation and purchase decision stages. This is in line with the view of Kotler & Keller (2017) that purchasing decisions are more determined by brand image, product quality, value perception, and product suitability with consumer needs. Hence, the role of Brand Ambassadors is complementary and requires support from other strategies, such as strengthening brand image, improving product quality, and setting competitive prices, to be more effective in driving consumers to the final stage of decision-making.

4.2.3. Effect of Brand Image on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

McDonald's brand image, already ingrained in consumers' minds, also significantly triggers Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), with a t-statistic = 5.951 and p-value = 0.000 (< 0.05). A strong brand image can create the perception that limited-edition products like the BTS Meal are exclusive and must not be missed. This illustrates how brand perception can generate emotional pressure in consumers. This is in line with research by Sitorus et al. (2024) which confirms that brand image plays an important role in influencing consumer behavior, because a good image creates confidence and emotional attachment to products.

In the context of trend-based marketing, strong brand image not only builds trust, but also creates psychological pressure in the form of anxiety about being left behind, as reinforced by a study by Bartosiak et al. (2025) which found that FOMO can be mediated by brand perceptions that are credible and relevant to consumer lifestyles. This relationship shows that when a brand already has an established image and is trusted by consumers, the effects of exclusivity and the perception that opportunities to own products are limited become very

strong. Consumers do not only respond to promotions or endorsements rationally, but also react based on emotional factors, namely social anxiety that they will be left behind or lose experiences or status if they do not participate. Therefore, brand image is not just a passive aspect, but a strategic element that can be used to strengthen psychological drives in marketing limited edition products like the BTS Meal.

4.2.4. Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions

The results of the research suggest that the image of a brand greatly influences the decisions consumers make when choosing what to purchase, as shown by a t-statistic of 4.915, with a p-value lower than 0.05. McDonald's positive brand image such as its global reputation, consistent quality, and product innovation makes consumers feel confident and encouraged to buy. This confirms that a strong brand image is a major driver in the consumer decision-making process.

These findings are consistent with research by Rumaidlany et al. (2022) which confirms that brand image has a positive effect on consumer purchasing decisions at McDonald's in West Jakarta, where positive consumer perceptions of the brand create stronger trust and preference for the products offered. The research indicated that a robust brand perception, interacting with cost and presentation elements, exerts a notable impact on consumer contentment and acquisition choices regarding retail goods within the Indonesian market. Theoretically, this aligns with the concept of brand equity proposed by Erb et al. (2013), which emphasizes that brand image plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions of product quality, credibility, and relevance. Therefore, brand image can be said to be one of the determinant factors that drives purchasing decisions, as it is able to provide a sense of security, emotional value, and suitability with consumer needs.

4.2.5. Effect of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on Purchase Decisions

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) has a significant effect on purchase decisions with a t-statistic = 4.397 and p-value = 0.000 (< 0.05). Consumers who experience FOMO tend to make faster and more impulsive purchases. This shows that marketing strategies emphasizing urgency and exclusivity are highly effective in triggering purchases, especially among young people active on social media.

These findings confirm that consumers who experience FOMO tend to make purchases more quickly and often impulsively. This condition can be explained through consumer psychology theory, where FOMO creates emotional pressure that drives individuals to buy immediately so as not to be left behind from popular social experiences. Bartosiak et al. (2025) proved that FOMO triggered by influencers and social media content has a significant impact on young people's consumption behavior, even having implications for their social and psychological aspects.

Marketing strategies based on urgency and exclusivity have proven to be very effective in stimulating consumer consumptive behavior, especially among young generations who are active on social media. Sofiana & Hayu (2025) confirm that FOMO built through exclusive promotions and online trends can significantly increase purchase intentions among Indonesian Gen Z. Similar findings were also found in research by Dinh & Lee (2024) which shows that FOMO triggered by influencer exposure and scarcity messages strengthens conspicuous consumption behavior among young consumers. Therefore, it can be concluded that FOMO is an important psychological mechanism that bridges trend-based marketing strategies with purchasing behavior, so marketers need to consider this aspect when designing campaigns targeted at young consumers.

4.2.6. Effect of Brand Ambassador on Purchase Decisions through Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

After conducting the analysis, it was found that the t-statistic is 2.542 with a p-value of 0.011, which is below the threshold of 0.05. This suggests a notable indirect influence of the BTS Brand Ambassador on consumer purchasing choices via the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). This means BTS triggers FOMO, and it is this FOMO that drives consumers to make purchases. This confirms that emotional aspects (FOMO) are the key link between celebrities and actual consumer buying behavior. The presence of BTS as a global figure with a large fan base creates emotional drive for consumers not to be left behind by trends, and ultimately this drive triggers purchasing decisions. These findings are consistent with research by Patrisya et al. (2025) which shows that FOMO mediates the relationship between influencers and purchasing decisions, where the presence of public figures increases FOMO which then drives consumer purchase intentions.

Celebrity involvement in marketing strategies does not always directly influence purchasing decisions, but often works through emotional mediation factors. Bartosiak et al. (2025) confirm that FOMO triggered by parasocial interactions with influencers plays an important role in shaping young people's consumption behavior. This aligns with the study by Dinh et al. (2024) which found that influencer exposure and scarcity messages create FOMO that significantly strengthens young consumers' consumptive decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the emotional factor of FOMO is the main link between celebrities as brand ambassadors and purchasing decisions, so collaborations like this are effective not only because of celebrity popularity, but because of their ability to create strong emotional drives in consumers.

4.2.7. Effect of Brand Image on Purchase Decisions through Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

The statistical analysis yielded a t-statistic of 3.301 and an associated p-value of 0.001. As these values are below the conventional significance level of 0.05, the findings suggest that Brand Image exerts an indirect effect on consumer buying decisions, mediated by the construct of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). A positive Brand Image creates urgency and emotional attraction, which then motivates consumers to make immediate purchases. This outcome bolsters the proposition that in promotional endeavors, the apprehension of being excluded (FOMO) functions as a significant intervening variable linking brand perception and consumer buying behavior. Specifically, in the case of McDonald's, its worldwide standing and sustained product development engender perceptions of uniqueness regarding the BTS Meal campaign. This, in turn, activates FOMO as a psychological process that expedites consumer purchase behaviors. This aligns with the findings of Bancin et al. (2023), which revealed that good brand image can increase consumer urgency in purchasing, especially when combined with promotions that emphasize scarcity.

Furthermore, these results reinforce the view that brand image operates not only at the cognitive level, but also at the affective level which is closely related to consumer emotions. FOMO acts as a catalyst that bridges rational perceptions about brand quality with emotional drives to buy immediately. An international study by Bartosiak et al. (2025) confirms that FOMO-based emotional experiences can increase impulsive consumption behavior among young generations who are active on social media. Similarly, Dinh et al. (2024) show that exposure to brand campaigns emphasizing exclusivity increases consumers' tendency to make immediate purchases. Therefore, it can be understood that marketing strategies that leverage brand image not only build trust, but are also effective in creating emotional pressure in the form of FOMO that significantly strengthens consumer purchasing decisions.

5. Conclusion

The findings of the study suggest success in achieving the research goal of examining how BTS as brand representatives and the brand image of McDonald's impact consumer purchasing choices, with FOMO playing a role as a mediator. The results show that BTS as brand ambassadors significantly influences the emergence of FOMO, but does not directly influence purchasing decisions. Conversely, McDonald's brand image has a significant influence on both FOMO and purchasing decisions. Furthermore, FOMO is proven to play an important role in mediating the relationship between brand ambassadors and brand image with purchasing decisions. Therefore, this research confirms that emotional aspects such as FOMO are key factors in driving consumer decisions, especially among young generations who are active on social media.

Thus, companies need to consider marketing strategies that not only rely on public figures as brand ambassadors, but also strengthen brand image and utilize consumer psychological aspects, particularly FOMO. The recommendation that can be given is that companies should design collaboration campaigns that combine the popularity of brand ambassadors with strong brand image and exclusivity elements to trigger consumer urgency. Additionally, further research can expand other variables beyond brand ambassadors, brand image, and FOMO, such as consumer loyalty, product value, or the influence of digital communities, so as to provide a more comprehensive picture of consumer purchasing behavior in the digital era.

6. References

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