UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF BRAND IDENTITY TOWARDS BRAND ADVOCACY (CASE STUDY: SOMETHINC)

Dr. Scherly Hansopaheluwakan, SE., MIB[1,*], Ratu Allysa Hayanimasy[2], Vannessa[3]

[1]*BINUS University, Tangerang*
[2]*BINUS University, Tangerang*
[3]*BINUS University, Tangerang*
e-mail: nscherly@binus.edu ratu.hayanimasy@binus.ac.id vannessa@binus.ac.id

Abstract

This study seeks to examine the impact of Brand Ambassador, Brand Credibility, and Brand Love on Brand Advocacy within the cosmetics industry, with a particular focus on Somethinc serums. Using quantitative methods, data was collected from those aged 18-34 years who had previously purchased and used serum from Somethinc. The sampling technique used Hair theory where data was collected from 110 respondents with an observation period of two months which took place in January-March. The analytical techniques employed in this research encompass construct reliability and validity tests, inner model tests, and hypothesis tests, facilitated by SmartPLS 4.1.0.1 software. The results of this research show that 2 (two) variables, Brand Ambassador and Brand Credibility, have a positive and significant influence on Brand Advocacy. Meanwhile, the Brand Love variable does not have a positive and significant influence on Brand Advocacy with the bootstrapping test results obtaining a p-value of 0.440.

Keywords: Public Awareness, Technological Progress, Skincare, Somehinc, Quantitative

1.   Introduction

Indonesian people's awareness of the importance of using skincare to take care for their skin is increasing. Based on the sales research results of the Indonesian Digital Marketing Association Team (2020), beauty care products occupy the first position, with total sales reaching 33.4 million pieces. The Cosmetics Industry is one of the priority industries included in the Mainstay Industry group where this industry is considered to be able to meet domestic needs and imported substances, it has a high level of potential for domestic growth, strengthens national economic connectivity so that it has a comparative advantage, mastery of raw materials and technology (Ministry of Industry Republic of Indonesia, 2015). The increase in the use of social media is in line with massive technological developments, which have created various new skincare brands that have given rise to brands that were already competing.

Somethinc is an Indonesian local brand of skincare founded in March 2019. It manifests in the founding team's commitment to overcoming every challenge to provide something meaningful for consumers. They liken this to an expression*, "So, we will always get Something from you."* Irene Ursula, one of the Founders, had the primary motivation for starting this brand: a love of skincare that contains active ingredients. Based on data from databoks.katadata.co.id, Somethinc serum is ranked first in the Top 10 Best Selling Facial Serums in E-commerce in the June-August 2022 period.

The application of digital marketing with the help of social media can maintain brand awareness of the products they sell. E-commerce is also a strategy that can help a brand survive the COVID-19 pandemic because the reach of e-commerce is more comprehensive than conventional models (Santoso, 2020). Recently, many brands have massively marketed their products online, which has increased public awareness of these brands. The increase in the use of social media is in line with technological developments, which are massively creating

various new things for skincare *brands* that give a stir to brands that already compete—encouraged by the influence of influencers who play a role in educating consumer mindsets and lifestyle changes, especially in urban areas, where healthy skin and appearance have become an integral part of the concept of healthy living which encourages excellent demand for the use of *skincare.*

More research is needed on brand credibility and brand ambassadors with brand advocacy. Nonetheless, the relationship between brand credibility and brand advocacy can be characterized as trust in a brand, which is essential for brand advocacy. However, there has yet to be a specific discussion regarding the correlation between brand credibility, brand ambassadors, and brand advocacy. Brand ambassadors can significantly influence brand advocacy by positively influencing consumer perceptions and trust in a brand. When perceived positively and authentically, their endorsements can increase brand advocacy because consumers are more likely to trust and be influenced by them. Although the direct relationship between brand ambassador and brand advocacy is not explicitly discussed, existing research suggests its potential influence on brand advocacy through consumer perceptions.

The intricacy of the relationship between brand love and brand advocacy is that many scholarly publications have traditionally utilized brand love as the dependent variable. However, in our research, we have chosen to approach the situation from a different perspective, where brand love serves as the independent variable. This shift in perspective allows us to explore the influence of brand love on brand advocacy from a unique angle, potentially uncovering new insights and discoveries. This research aimed to analyze how brand ambassadors, brand credibility, and brand love contribute to the formation of brand advocacy to consumers in the context of the cosmetics industry, especially in Somethinc's serum. It aims to provide readers with insight into the relationship between brand ambassadors, brand credibility, and brand love towards brand advocacy. Hopefully, this research will provide manufacturers with a clearer view of skincare locally to improve marketing strategies, strengthen customer relationships, and increase competitive advantage in the skincare market.

2. Literature Review

Brand Advocacy actively provides recommendations and support for a brand and ignores other brands in the same industry (Biltro et al., 2018). According to Kotler (2019), Brand Advocacy is an active promoter who voluntarily recommends a brand they like. Successful brand advocacy requires a variety of brand management skills from the organization. Organizations need to develop the capabilities of their customers. Additionally, successful brand advocacy requires developing communications to enable customer participation in brand conversations (Adelabu et al., 2021). Brand Advocacy has a positive impact on companies because it can help expand market research support to describe consumer interaction activities with a brand in the form of customer feedback (Knox & Lawer, 2020).

Advertising is one of the tactics that can be used in Marketing. Advertising is one of the legitimate marketing campaigns carried out by businesses to educate the public about a product and arouse their interest in making a purchase (Kim & Hwang, 2022). Businesses use brand ambassadors as a marketing tactic to promote their products. Wardah, one of Indonesia's local cosmetics companies, uses well-known celebrities as its brand ambassadors and intermediaries between internal and external brand management (Sadrabadi et al., 2018). Brand Ambassadors seek to increase the reach of the target market and increase the attractiveness of the product by projecting the image of well-known celebrities; because brand Ambassadors

must represent the image of the product the company is targeting, careful filtering is required when selecting them (Utami et al., 2020). Brand Ambassadors significantly influence how consumers view a product brand by associating it with its reputation (Sadrabadi et al., 2018).

Martin-Consuegra et al. (2018) concluded that Brand Credibility is essential in influencing consumers. A brand can be successful if it succeeds in gaining the trust of its consumers (Amed et al., 2019). Research conducted by Shams et al. (2017) and An et al. (2019) shows that brand credibility positively affects purchase intention and positive WOM. It is also known that there is a correlation between positive word of mouth and brand credibility, which makes it a valuable predictor of consumer loyalty (Folkvord et al., 2019).

Brand love is a consumer's positive feeling that reflects emotional attraction to a brand (Ferreira et al., 2020). Research conducted by Coelho do Vale (2020) elaborates on the results of implementing brand love, which can increase brand loyalty because brand love has a positive impact on marketing and the level of repurchase of an item and has a positive effect on word of mouth which influences consumers in making decisions. Brand Love influences positive reactions and brand evaluations. Brand love generated by consumers is one of the crucial things that cannot be replaced by anything (Ruslim et al., 2021).

3.   Research Method

This research was conducted using quantitative descriptive research. According to Sugiyono (2018), quantitative descriptive research is an analytical technique used to analyze data by elaborating on the collected data as it is without intending to draw conclusions that apply to the public. This research was conducted using SmartPLS 4.1.0.1 software with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) data analysis techniques.

The data collection technique researchers use is primary data, carried out by distributing online questionnaires. The Likert scale, a valid measurement method according to William G. Zikmund et al. (2013), is employed by the author as a questionnaire tool. This scale, ranging from 1 to 5, allows respondents to effectively answer the provided question. The number of samples was taken using Hair Theory, according to which the minimum number of samples that should be used is 10 times the number of all indicators (Hair et al: 2017). In general, a sample size of more than 100 is better, but samples smaller than 100 are acceptable, depending on the research background (Hair et al: 2018). This study has 11 indicators, so the required sample size is 110 samples aged 18-34 who have purchased and used Somethinc serum.
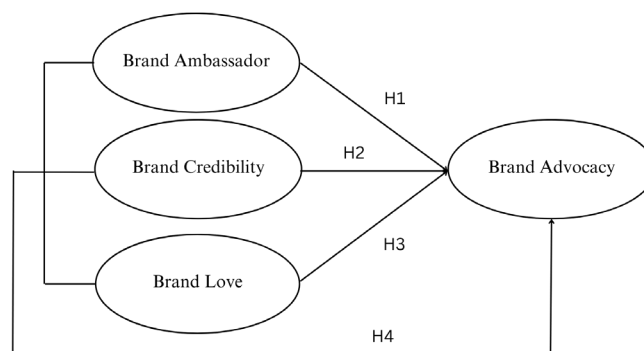

Figure 1. *Research Model*

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From the diagram above, the hypothesis obtained in this research is

H-1= Brand Ambassadors have a significant influence on Brand Advocacy
H-2= Brand Credibility has a significant influence on Brand Advocacy
H-3= Brand Love has a significant influence on Brand Advocacy
H-4= There is a significant influence between Brand Ambassador, Brand Credibility, and Brand Love on Brand Advocacy

4.   Results and Discussion

In this research, two tests must be carried out, Outer Model Testing and Inner Model Testing.
4.1 Outer Model Analysis

In SmartPLS, the Validity and Reliability Tests are included in the Outer Model. The Validity Test aims to determine the validity of the questionnaire used by researchers in measuring and processing research data from respondents. Meanwhile, the reliability test is used to prove the instrument's accuracy, consistency, and correctness when measuring a construct. Good data used as a research instrument is data that has passed the Validity Test and Reliability Test. Validity testing was carried out using Convergent Validity research (Chin & Dibbern, 2010), with the AVE value having to be > 0.50 to meet the test criteria.

The table below shows that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each variable were 0.635, 0.656, 0.519, and 0.513, all the numbers shown more than 0.50, which means that all constructs in this research are reliable.

Table 1. *Validity Test*

No	Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Critical Value	Evaluation of
1	Brand Advocacy	0.635		Valid
2	Brand Ambassador	0.656	0.5	Valid
3	Brand Credibility	0.519		Valid
4	Brand Love	0.513		Valid

From the test results, the Composite Reliability (rho_c) value for each of the Brand Advocacy, Brand Ambassador, Brand Credibility, and Brand Love variables is 0.874, 0.905, 0.882, and 0.838, which is more than 0.70, so it can be concluded that all constructs have high reliability.

Table 2. *Reliability Test*

No	Variable	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Critical Value	Evaluation of
1	Brand Advocacy	0.874	0.7	Valid
2	Brand Ambassador	0.905		Valid

3	Brand Credibility	0.882	Valid
4	Brand Love	0.838	Valid

4.2 Inner Model Analysis

In the SmartPLS application, the multiple regression approach starts with PLS Algorithm calculations and Bootstrapping. The PLS algorithm will produce information in the form of construct validity and reliability (convergent), discriminant validity, r-square, f-square, SRMR (model fit), and multicollinearity. Meanwhile, bootstrapping is a non-parametric procedure to solve abnormal data, especially if the sample is small. The purpose of this calculation is to answer whether the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable directly.

4.2.1 Multicollinearity

Hair et al. (2006) explained that multicollinearity can be recognized through the tolerance value or variance inflation factor (VIF). Tolerance value is a measure that indicates the extent to which other variables in the regression model cannot explain an independent variable. If the VIF value exceeds 10 and the tolerance is less than 0.1, multicollinearity occurs. Conversely, there is no multicollinearity if the VIF value is less than 10 and the tolerance is more than 0.1. In the table below, it is stated that the results of the VIF value show that multicollinearity occurs.

Table 3. Multicollinearity

Variable	VIF
Brand Ambassador $\rightarrow$ Brand Advocacy	2.026
Brand Credibility $\rightarrow$ Brand Advocacy	2.249
Brand Love $\rightarrow$ Brand Advocacy	2.090

4.2.2 R Square

Hair et al. stated that an R square value of 0.75 is in the strong category, an R square value of 0.50 is in the moderate category, and an R square value of 0.25 is in the weak category (Hair et al., 2011). The results of the r-square test stated that the contribution of the influence of the independent variable to the dependent variable or simultaneously was 0.752, which is included in a robust model.

Table 4. R Square

	R-square Adjusted
Brand Advocacy	0.752

4.2.3 Goodness of FIT

The model will be considered a good fit if the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value is below 1.00 (Hair et al., 2014). The table below states that the SRMR result is 0.11,8, which means that our research model is a fit.

Table 5. Goodness of FIT

	Saturated Model	**Estimated Model**
SRMR	0.118	0.118
d_ULS	3.228	3.228
D_G	1.496	1.496
Chi-sqaure	775.661	775.661
NFI	0.559	0.559

4.2.4 F Square (Effect Size)

Hair et al. (2017) stated that an F-Square with a value of 0.02 indicates a small effect, 0.15 means a medium effect, and 0.35 indicates a significant effect. In the table below, it is stated that the independent variables (Brand Ambassador and Brand Credibility) impact the dependent variable (Brand Advocacy). In contrast, the independent variable (Brand Love) does not affect the dependent variable (Brand Advocacy).

Table 6. F Square

	Brand Advocacy
Brand Ambassador	0.267
Brand Credibility	0.548
Brand Love	0.006

4.2.5 Bootstrapping

The bootstrapping test is carried out to see the significance of the independent variable on the dependent variable partially, the parameter coefficient value, and the t statistical significance value, which must be greater than the t-table (1.98). From the test results above, the t-statistic value for Brand Ambassador on Brand Advocacy is 5,085 > 1.98, and the p-value is 0.000 < 0.05. In this case, it shows that Brand Ambassador has a significant influence on Brand Advocacy. Which is in line with research conducted by Sagia, A., & Situmorang, S. H. (2018) which states that Brand Ambassadors have a significant influence on Brand Advocacy. The t-statistic value of Brand Credibility on Brand Advocacy was 7,285 > 1.98, and the p-value was 0.000 <

0.05, which shows that Brand Credibility significantly influences Brand Advocacy. Then, the t-statistic value of Brand Love on Brand Advocacy was 0.773 < 1.98, and the p-value was 0.440 > 0.05, which shows that Brand Love has no significant effect on Brand Advocacy. This contradicts research conducted by Rahmawati et al. (2023), which states that Brand Love, the Wardah Skincare product range, has a positive and significant influence on Brand Advocacy.

Table 7. Bootstrapping

No	Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
1	Brand Ambassador → Brand Advocacy	0.361	0.355	0.071	5.085	0.000
2	Brand Credibility → Brand Advocacy	0.545	0.549	0.075	7.285	0.000
3	Brand Love → Brand Advocacy	0.053	0.055	0.069	0.773	0.440

5.   Conclusion

Based on the research and discussion results, it can be concluded that the data collected is valid, accurate, and consistent in meeting the criteria for use as a research instrument. The results of this research show that Brand Ambassador and Brand Credibility have a significant influence on Brand Advocacy (0.000). In contrast, Brand Love does not substantially influence Brand Advocacy (0.440). The strong things that support brand ambassadors and brand credibility can influence brand advocacy, such as the following values: word of mouth, consumer behavior, brand signal, attractiveness, conformity, and power of the ambassador. Key factors supporting the influence of Brand Ambassadors and Brand Credibility on Brand Advocacy encompass various values, including word of mouth, consumer behavior, brand signaling, attractiveness, conformity, and the ambassador's perceived power. The reason why Brand Love has an insignificant impact on Brand Advocacy lies in the fact that individuals who lack affection for the brand are not captivated by it and do not establish a sense of comfort with it. The author offers recommendations based on the outlined conclusions. For business stakeholders, the research findings are anticipated to yield benefits and should be considered when making decisions and formulating policies, particularly in addressing intricate competitive scenarios. it is hoped that readers can utilize the outcomes of this research as a framework for future investigations.

APPENDIX

Table 8. Appendix

Variable: Independent Variable – Brand Love		
No.	Statement	Indicator

1.	Purchasing Somethinc serum makes me happy	Love the Brand
2.	When looking for Serum products, the Somethinc brand came to my mind first	
3.	The main uniqueness of Somethinc serum lies in the ingredients that provide additional value and differentiate it from other products on the market	Amazed by the Brand
4.	Somethinc Serum has a unique and strong image	
5.	The packaging design for Somethinc Serum is considered practical and easy to use	Feel Comfortable by the Brand
Variable: Independent Variable – Brand Credibility		
6.	Recommendations have a big influence on the decision to purchase a product	WOM
7.	Making recommendations of Somethinc can help other consumers	
8.	There was interest in buying Somehinc serum after reading direct reviews from other consumers	
9.	Do some research or read reviews before deciding to buy Somethingnc serum	Consumer Behavior
10.	It's important for me to have a good first impression when purchasing a new product	
11.	Somethinc has good traction in its serum product line	Brand Signals
12.	Marketing tools (Social Media) are able to attract interest in buying Somehinc serum	
Variable: Independent Variable – Brand Ambassador		
13.	The right use of ambassadors attracts consumers to buy Somethingnc products	Attractiveness
14.	Content shared by Somethinc Brand Ambassadors is often seen on social media and other platforms	

15.	The consistency of Somethinc serum in following beauty trends gives me a feeling of confidence	Conformity
16.	Somethinc serum promotions adapt to trends and lifestyles	
17	Vidi Aldiano as Brand Ambassador is effective in representing the Somethinc brand	Power of the Ambassador
18.	Somethinc Serum recommended by Brand Ambassador provides satisfaction	
Variable: Dependent Variable – Brand Advocacy		
19.	Somethinc Serum recommended by other consumers is satisfactory	Customer Satisfaction
20.	Using Somethinc serum provides satisfaction that can be shared with other consumers	
21.	Consider or try products recommended by reviewers that consumers are interested in before purchasing	Communicator/ Reviewer
22.	Somehinc serum customer reviews reflect positive usage experiences regarding the product's characteristics, including texture, and the results provided	

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