The Effect of Source Credibility on Lemonilo Brand Loyalty Through Parasocial Relationship

Diddo Adding Adove¹, Imam Suroso², Sumani³

1.2.3</sup> Management, Economicand Business Faculty, University of Jember

Kalimantan 37, Jember 68121

Abstract:

Background: The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of source credibility consisting of source expertise, trustworthiness, and source attractiveness on consumers' parasocial relationships with NCT Dream, as well as the effect of source expertise, trustworthiness, and source attractiveness on Lemonilo brand loyalty.

Methods: The population of this research is all lemonilo consumers who consume lemonilo products when PT. Lemonilo Indonesia is collaborating with Korean artist NCT Dream as a brand ambassador. In this study, the samples obtained were 235 respondents. The data analysis method in this study uses SEM analysis with the help of the AMOS 24 application.

Results: The results showed that source expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness significantly influenced parasocial relationships. In addition, source expertise and trustworthiness have significantly influencenilo brand loyalty, while source attractiveness has no significant effect on brand loyalty. The effect of parasocial relationships on brand loyalty has also been significant. The indirect effect test found that the parasocial relationship did not act as an intervening variable on the influence of source expertise and trustworthiness on lemonilo brand loyalty. Still, parasocial relationships worked as an intervening variable on the influence of source attractiveness on lemonilo brand loyalty.

Conclusion: Parasocial relationship is essential in building loyalty to the brand Lemonilo.

Keywords: Source expertise, trustworthiness, source attractiveness, parasocial relationships, and brand loyalty.

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I. Introduction

Social media's emergence impacts the relationship between consumers and celebrities and the nature of *celebrityendorsement*. Through social media, consumers can develop stronger bonds with their favorite celebrities. Companies are increasingly using celebrities strategically through endorsements promote a product and act as a spokesperson for the company and even business partners. One of the reasons why *celebrity* Effective *endorsements* are their ability to create favorable attitudes towards the advertistoward,d which can improve purchasing decisions. The relationship between fans and celebrities on social media is an "imaginary one," which American psychologists Horton and Wohl call a parasocial relationship. Indeed, parasocial relationships can be defined as one-way communication that does not have a face-to-face component. Parasocial relationship refers to the audience's non-face-to-face psychological relationship with influencers on social media (Zhong*et al.*, 2021). Parasocialrelationships create positive bonds between audience members and media personalities (Rubin & Perse, 1987). Previous researchers found that Parasocial Relationships are an important antecedent essential intention on social media (Leite & Baptista, 2021). This relationship cecreates positive bond between fans and celebrities on social media which can then influence purchases. Many companies take advantage of such bonds by hiring celebrities to build these parasocial relationships. They can then more effectively promote or communicate their products or services to consumers who are also fans (Rahman, 2017).

Parasocial relationships can be regarded as an important promotional tool for companies. When consumers use parasocial relationships, they can get more valuable product or service information and clearly feel an affinity with media characters (Hwang & Zhang, 2018). Compared to simple advertising, companies using parasocial relationships as a promotional tool can better match the tremendous growth of social media. What is especially effective in parasocial relationships is the use of celebrities. Marketers often use reliable and professional celebrities as mediators. Utilizing parasocial relationships, marketers can provide consumers with a complete and timely product or service information. In this way, they create value for both parties, reduce risk, and increase customer trust and loyalty to the company. In parasocial relationships, consumers share a common focus and strong emotional energy, resulting in a common symbol associated with the product or service.

Therefore, companies that use parasocial relationships as a promotional tool can save huge advertising costs and consumers can also have useful information about products or services.

In fact, previous research has shown that using parasocial relationships is very beneficial for companies. In the context of social media, parasocial relationships show a positive impact on customer equity and customer lifetime value (Yuan *et al.*, 2016). Park & Lennon (2006) argue that parasocial relationships positively affect purchasing celebrity-endorsed products. Several researchers have examined consumer-brand relationships and brand attitudes in termsregardingial relationships (Chung & Cho, 2017). However only a few have studied the role of parasocial relationship promotion and how it is processed in marketing on social networks, which in turn can marketing performance. Therefore, the aim of this stuthis study aimede of parasocial relationships as a strategic promotion tool on brand loyalty. This study examines specifically which attributewhich attributes of source credibility possessed by celebrity endorsers impact number of studies have identified antecedents of tSeveral of parasocial relationships, such as time spent with media personas (Schiappa *et al.*, 2007), individual characteristics (Dibble *et al.*, 2016), and media persona characteristics (Bond, 2016).

In terms of celebrity endorsement characteristics, previous researchers have considered the credibility of the message source when measuring the influence of the communicator on the effectiveness of persuasive messages (Giffin, 1967) Through the lens of source credibility, previous research has investigated the effect of celebrity endorsers on consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2016). This study aligns with recent research and focuses on the role of source credibility in celebrity endorsements (Yuan & Lou, 2020) and how sourcto e credibility will play an important role in parasocial relationships between celebrities and fans. This study adopted a threedimensional conceptualization of source credibility (Munnukka et al., 2016) to examine its effect on parasocial relationships. Source credibility is categorized into, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Expertise and trustworthiness are the two original determinants comprising the credibility of the sources proposed. Resource expertise refers to resource competencies or capabilities such as one's expertise/skills in a particular field or subject (McCroskey, 1966). Trustworthiness refers to the degree to which a source is perceived to be honest, sincere, or honest (Giffin, 1967). Meanwhile, attractiveness has been identified previous researchers have identified attractiveness as an antecedent of parasocial relationships ribes the physical or social attractiveness of an individual who functions as a media persona (Schiappa et al., 2007). Individuals tend to develop relationships with attractive celebrities (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005). Attractiveness also has a positive effect on the quality and intensity of parasocial relationships (Schmid & Klimmt, 2011) .

The role of source credibility on parasocial relationships was found to have a different effect on several previous researchers. Previous researchers found that source credibility consisting of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness had a significant effect on parasocial relationships, in addition, some researchers found that some of these factors did not have a significant effect on parasocial relationships. Lou & Kim's research (2019) which that expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness had a positive relationship to parasocial relationships. In addition, Yuan & Lou's (2020) research found that source expertise and trust did not have a significant effect on parasocial relationships. Sokolova & Kefi (2020) also found a non-significant effect of atimpactveness on parasocial relationships.

In addition, the influence of source credibility also has different findings on brand loyalty. Sinaga's research (2010) found that attractiveness, liking, trust and expertise had a significant effect on the loyalty of Medan City Democratic Party voters. May (2020) shows that there is a significant positive and moderate correlation between factors and source credibility (attractiveness, competence, homogeneity) on the endorsement of NBA athletes (Kobe Bryant) in Ele.me advertisements on Weibo on Chinese customer brand perceptions and loyalty. brand, but the trust factor was found to be insignificant. In the research of Masri *et al* . (2015) found that source credibility does not have a significant effect on loyalty. Mittal's research (2021) found that source expertise had a significantimpact on brand loyalty, but trust and attractiveness were found to have no significant effect on brand loyalty. Thus this study closes the existing gap by including the mediating role of parasocial relationships to obtain broader results regarding source credibility. Furthermore, this research will discuss this gap based on the phenomenon of parasocial relations that is currently developing, namely the *Korean Hallyu* or *Korean Wave*.

Korean Hallyu or Korean wave refers to the increasing public interest in Korean pop and traditional arts in various countries of the world. Korean fever or Hallyu wave, offers entertainment in the form of movies, dramas, Korean variety shows and Korean Pop (K-pop) music. The emergence of the Korean Wave, including Korean popular music (K-pop) and episodic TV/web dramas, has played an important role in the global cultural market. The increasing use of social media also plays an important role in spreading Korean culture in society. Thus, the surge of K-pop boy bands, cannot be achieved without social media platforms. This is because of the easy access to interact with your favorite celebrities online. With the development of social media in the community, it becomes a liaison between fans and idols. The presence of social media in the end really helps the K-pop music industry in reaching a wider audience and fans. With this media, it is easier for the audience to watch their favorite celebrity in audio-visual form. Through information in the media, fans seem to know

whatever is in their favfamoustist starting from the place and date of birth, blood type and hobbies which are all available in full in the media (Darfiyanti & Putra, 2012). Frequent exposure to idols that can be seen through social media makes it easier for fans to get close to their idols and feel very familiar with the idol's features from appearance, language style, habits and behavior even though they do not communicate directly (Raviv *et al.*, 1996). Social media is also used by celebrities to get closer to their fans to just say hello through social media posts so that teenage fans can monitor the daily activities of their idol artists and fans seem to continue to interact with their idols. Events where fans feel they know their idols personally in the media are called parasocial relationships. Thus the study aims to examine the effect of source credibility consisting of source expertise, trustworthiness, source attractiveness on consumers' parasocial relationships with Korean artists NCT Dream and their effect on brand loyalty.

II. Methods

The survey questionnaire has three main parts (description of the study, questions related to the research variables, and questions to collect demographic information). The population in this study are all Indonesian consumers on Lemonilo products who have collaborated with NCT Dream. In this study, non-probability sampling was used, which is a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunities or opportunities for each member of the population to be sampled. This study uses a *non-probability sampling approach* which according to Sugiyono (2012 : 85)*non-probability sampling* is a technique that does not provide equal opportunities or opportunities for each element or member of the population to be selected as a sample. The sampling technique used is *purposive sampling technique*. *Purposive sampling* is a sampling technique by selecting a sample among the population in accordance with what the researcher wants (objectives/problems in research). The sampling technique in this study is by considering the criteria, namely, first, consumers have bought lemonilo more than 3 times in the last 3 months starting from February. This is because PT. Lemonilo Indonesia, which started its collaboration with NCT Dream in February. Second, consumers who have idolized NCT Dream, who have followed NCT Dream on social media and joined the NCT Dream *fanbase group* on any social media.

The indicators of this study were adapted from several previous studies. Source credibility consisting of source expertise, trustworthinessworthiness, and source attractiveness was measured using three indicators from Yuan $et\ al\$. (2016) . Parasocial relationships were measured using four measurement items from Sokolova & Perez (2021) . Brand loyalty was measured using four items from Zhong $et\ al\$. (2021) . A total of 245 responses were collected with 235 usable for data analysis. Data analysis using SEM analysis with the help of the AMOS 24 application.

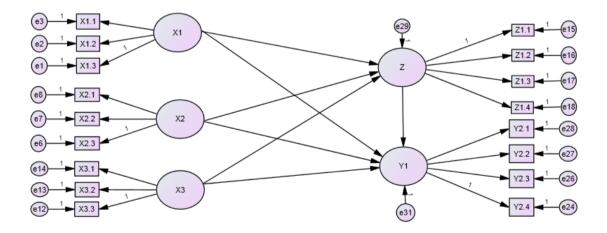


Figure 1. SEM Model

III. Result

Based on the results of the characteristics of the respondents, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are women with a total of 171 (72.8%). The majority of respondents aged 17 to 25 years with a total of 220 people (93.6%). The majority of research respondents have education as high school students as many as 167 respondents (71.1%), and the lowest respondents have diploma 3 education as many as 22 people (9.4%). The majority of research respondents work as students as many as 205 respondents (87.2%), there are 15

respondents (6.4%) work as private sector employees, as many as 3 respondents (1.3%) work as housewives, as many as 2 respondents (0.9%) work as government employees, then as many as 4 respondents (1.7%) work as entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it is known that the majority of respondents have an income of between Rp. 1.000.001 - Rp. 2,000,000 is 153 people (65.1%).

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Gender			
Man	64	27.2	
Woman	171	72.8	
Age			
17 – 25 Years	220	93.6	
26 – 35 Years	14	6	
36 – 45 Years	1	0.4	
Education		,	
Senior High School	167	71.1	
Diploma 3 (D3)	22	9.4	
Bachelor degree	46	19.6	
Profession			
Student	205	87.2	
Private sector employee	15	6.4	
Housewife	3	1.3	
government employees	2	0.9	
Businessman	4	1.7	
Other	6	2.6	
Income			
< IDR 1,000,000	56	23.8	
IDR 1,000,001 - IDR 2,000,000	153	65.1	
IDR 2,000,001 - IDR 4,000,000	17	7.2	
IDR 4,000,001 - IDR 6,000,000	7	3	
> IDR 6,000,000	2	0.9	
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Source: Processed data (2022)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Prior to data analysis, validity and reliability tests were carried out by confirmatory factor analysis using the Amos 24 application. The measurement model was initially carried out before estimating the structural model. The results of the test of the validity of the indicators of the research variables showed that all indicators of the latent variables were valid (Table 2) indicated by the *loading factor value* > 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Thus the results of the construct validity test are declared valid. Based on the results of the analysis of Amos 24, the overall fit index research model can be accepted (Bollen, 1989): *root mean square error approximation* (RMSEA) = 0.076 (<0.08); *goodness of fit index* (GFI) = 0.967 (> 0.9); *root mean square residual* (RMR) = 0.096 (<0.05); *adjusted goodness of fit index* (AGFI) = 0.922 (> 0.9); *normed fit index* (NFI) = 0.905 (> 0.9); *incremental fit index* (IFI) = 0.920 (> 0.9); *comparative fit index* (CFI) = 0.959 (> 0.9); *parsimony goodness-of-fit index* (PGFI) = 0.627 (> 0.5); and *parsimony-adjusted normed fit index* (PNFI) = 0.684 (> 0.5).

Table 2. CFA Uji test

Indicator	p	Loading Factor	Information	Construct Reliability	Information
X1.1	***	,832	Valid		
X1.2	***	,831	Valid	0.946	Reliable
X1.3	***	,647	Valid	-	
X2.1	***	,831	Valid		
X2.2	***	,756	Valid	0.913	Reliable
X2.3	***	,721	Valid	-	
X3.1	***	,605	Valid		
X3.2	***	,760	Valid	0.893	Reliable
X3.3	***	,764	Valid		
Z1.1	***	,749	Valid		
Z1.2	***	,773	Valid	-	
Z1.3	***	,766	Valid	0.917	Reliable
Z1.4	***	,646	Valid	-	
Y1.1	***	,868	Valid		
Y1.2	***	,774	Valid	-	
Y1.3	***	,581	Valid	0.888	Reliable
Y1.4	***	,868	Valid	-	

Source: Processed data (2022)

Table 3. SEM Uii Test

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			Estimate	SE	CR	P	Information		
\mathbf{Z}	<	X1	0.365	0.09	4.065	***	Hypothesis accepted		
Y	<	X1	0.178	0.087	2.043	0.041	Hypothesis accepted		
\mathbf{Z}	<	X2	0.187	0.081	3,321	0.002	Hypothesis accepted		
Y	<	X2	0.192	0.060	3,188	0.001	Hypothesis accepted		
\mathbf{Z}	<	X3	0.438	0.078	5.582	***	Hypothesis accepted		
Y	<	X3	0.133	0.079	1,676	0.094	Hypothesis rejected		
Y	<	Z	0.375	0.098	3.815	***	Hypothesis accepted		

Source: Processed data (2022)

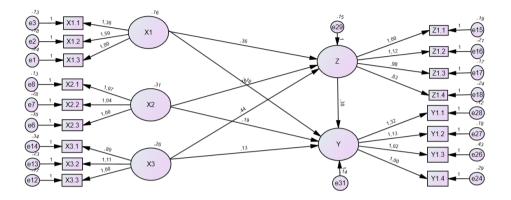


Figure 1. SEM. Test Results

Source expertise was found to have a significant effect on parasocial relationships. This is evidenced by the CR value of 4,065 and a significant probability (p) of 0.000 is smaller than the required significant level of 0.05. Source expertise was found to have a significant effect on brand loyalty. This is evidenced by the CR value of 2.043 and a significant probability (p) of 0.041 is obtained, which is smaller than the required significance level of 0.05. Trustworthiness was found to have a significant effect on parasocial relationships. This is evidenced by the CR value of 3.321 and a significant probability (p) of 0.002 is greater than the required significance level of 0.05. Trustworthiness was found to have a significant effect on loyalty. This is evidenced by the CR value of 3.188 and a significant probability (p) of 0.001 is smaller than the required significance level of 0.05. Source attractiveness was found to have a significant effect on parasocial relationships. This is evidenced by the CR value of 5.582 and a significant probability (p) of 0.000 is smaller than the required significant level of 0.05. Source attractiveness was found to have no significant effect on Lemonilo brand loyalty. This is evidenced by the CR value of 1.676 and a significant probability (p) of 0.094 is greater than the required significance level of 0.05. Parasocial relationships have a significant effect on brand loyalty. This is evidenced by the CR value of 3.815 and a significant probability (p) of 0.000 is smaller than the required significance level of 0.05.

IV. Discussion

The results of the research prove that there is a positive and significant effect of NCT Dream's expertise on parasocial relationships. This finding explains that consumers have perceived NCT Dream's expertise in advertising the Lemonilo brand to be good so that consumer preference for NCT Dream increases which in turn will also increase parasocial relationships with NCT Dream. In addition, consumers who feel that NCT Dream is an expert in advertising the Lemonilo brand will assume that they are *fans* of NCT Dream so they will continue to follow NCT Dream on online media which will then form a parasocial relationship. In addition, the results of this study are in line with previous research which also found a significant influence on resource expertise on parasocial relationships (Aw & Chuah, 2021; Lou & Kim, 2019; S. Yuan & Lou, 2020; Zakiyah & Hartini, 2020) . The results of the study also prove that there is a positive and significant effect of NCT Dream's expertise on brand loyalty. This finding explains that consumers have perceived NCT Dream's expertise in advertising the Lemonilo brand to be good, which in turn will increase loyalty to the Lemonilo brand. The results of this study are in line with previous research which also found a significant influence on source expertise on brand loyalty (Sinaga, 2010; Mittal, 2021).

The results of the research prove that there is a positive and significant influence of NCT Dream's trustworthiness on parasocial relationships. This finding explains that consumers have perceived that NCT Dream can be trusted in advertising the Lemonilo brand so that it will increase consumer preference for NCT Dream which will then also form a parasocial relationship with NCT Dream. In addition, consumers who feel that NCT Dream can be trusted in advertising the Lemonilo brand will assume that they are fans of NCT Dream so they will continue to follow NCT Dream on online media which will then increase their parasocial relationship with NCT Dream. Thus, based on the results of this study, it is stated that NCT Dream's trust in advertising the Lemonilo brand can increase the parasocial relationship of consumers with NCT Dream. In addition, the results of this study support previous research which also found a significant effect of trustworthiness on parasocial relationships (Lou & Kim, 2019; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Zakiyah & Hartini, 2020). The results of the research prove that there is a positive and significant effect of NCT Dream's trustworthiness on brand loyalty. This finding explains that consumers have perceived that NCT Dream can be trusted in advertising the Lemonilo brand so that it will increase their loyalty to the Lemonilo brand. Thus, based on the results of this study, it is stated that NCT Dream's trust in advertising the Lemonilo brand can increase consumer loyalty to the Lemonilo brand. In addition, the results of this study support previous research which also found a significant effect of trustworthiness on brand loyalty (Fepriyanto, 2022; Zakiyah & Hartini, 2020).

The results of the research prove that there is a positive and significant influence of the attractiveness of NCT Dream on parasocial relationships. This finding explains that consumers have perceived the attractiveness of NCT Dream in advertising the Lemonilo brand as good so that consumer preference for NCT Dream increases which in turn will also increase parasocial relationships with NCT Dream. In addition, consumers who feel that NCT Dream is interesting in advertising the Lemonilo brand will assume that they are fans of NCT Dream so they will continue to follow NCT Dream on online media which will then form a parasocial relationship. This is in line with the findings of several previous studies which state that source attractiveness has a significant influence on parasocial relationships (Aw & Chuah, 2021; Lou & Kim, 2019; Sokolova & Perez, 2021; S. Yuan & Lou, 2020; Zakiyah & Hartini, 2020).

The results of data analysis show that the source attractiveness variable has no significant effect on brand loyalty. Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the sixth hypothesis which states that source attractiveness has a significant effect on brand loyalty is not proven and is declared rejected. This means that consumer perceptions of the attractiveness of NCT Dream do not directly affect the loyalty of the Lemonilo brand. This then explains that when NCT Dream is considered physically or socially attractive, it cannot influence consumers in building loyalty to the Lemonilo brand. Therefore, physically attractive celebrities (*attractiveness*) cannot affect loyalty to the Lemonilo brand. The results of this study are not in line with the findings of several previous studies which stated that source attractiveness has a significant influence on brand loyalty (Aw & Chuah, 2021; Lou & Kim, 2019; Sokolova & Perez, 2021; Yuan & Lou, 2020; Zakiyah & Hartini, 2020). However, this study is in line with Mittal's (2021) research which states that source attractiveness has no significant effect on loyalty.

The results of data analysis show that the parasocial relationship variable has a significant influence on brand loyalty. Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that the fifth hypothesis which states that source attractiveness has a significant effect on brand loyalty is acceptable. The coefficient value shows a positive value, so it can be explained that the higher the parasocial relationship that consumers have with NCT Dream, the higher loyalty to the Lemonilo brand. Parasocial relationships are one-sided relationships that fans develop with celebrities, including social media influencers (Horton & Richard Wohl, 1956). Meanwhile, brand loyalty is defined as consumer preference consistently to make purchases of the same brand on specific products or certain service categories (Rizan *et al.*, 2012). So that the high parasocial relationship between NCT Dream and consumers will make consumers loyal to Lemonilo products. This is in line with research research by Zhong *et al.* (2020) and Labrecque (2014) who found that parasocial relationships have a significant influence on brand loyalty. In the indirect effect test, it was found that the parasocial relationship did not act as an intervening variable on the influence of source expertise and trustworthiness on lemonilo brand loyalty, but parasocial relationships acted as an intervening variable on the influence of source attractiveness on lemonilo brand loyalty.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of source credibility consisting of source expertise, trustworthiness, and source attractiveness on consumers' parasocial relationships with NCT Dream, as well as the influence of source expertise, trustworthiness, and source attractiveness on Lemonilo brand loyalty. The results showed that source expertise, trustworthiness, source attractiveness had a significant influence on

parasocial relationships. In addition, source expertise and trustworthiness have a significant influence on lemonilo brand loyalty, while source attractiveness has no significant effect on brand loyalty. The effect of parasocial relationships on brand loyalty has also been found to be significant. In the indirect effect test it was found that parasocial relationships did not act as an intervening variable on the influence of source expertise and trustworthiness on lemonilo brand loyalty, but parasocial relationships acted as intervening variables on the influence of source attractiveness on lemonilo brand loyalty.

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