

# The Effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's Brand Ambassador Among Millennials in Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to measure the effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador among Millennials in Indonesia. The research uses a descriptive method with a quantitative approach. Data were collected through an online survey using a questionnaire as the data collection tool. The respondents were 100 Millennials who met the following criteria: they were familiar with Traveloka and Ji Chang Wook as the brand ambassador, and had used Traveloka's services. The effectiveness of the brand ambassador was measured using the VisCAP indicators, which include visibility, credibility, attraction, and power. The results showed an effectiveness score of 4.33, with the attraction indicator recording the highest score of 4.44. In this indicator, respondents believed that Ji Chang Wook is a visually appealing brand ambassador with engaging message delivery characteristics. As a result, most female respondents were drawn to Ji Chang Wook's visual appeal, while male respondents were more attracted to his engaging personality. These findings indicate that Ji Chang Wook has successfully built a strong appeal among Millennials as Traveloka's consumers, while also strengthening the positive perception of the brand. This study highlights the importance of selecting a relevant brand ambassador with strong appeal to enhance emotional connections and consumer engagement with the brand.

**Keywords:** *Brand Ambassador Effectiveness, Traveloka, Ji Chang Wook, Millennials, VisCAP*

## INTRODUCTION

Humans are naturally inclined to constantly exchange messages with their environment. When humans receive messages from external environments, whether through direct interaction or mass media, the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) process occurs. Hovland explains how persuasive messages influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors. In this theory, Stimulus refers to the message received, Organism represents the internal processes involving the understanding and evaluation of the message, and Response is the reaction or change in

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attitude that occurs after the message has been processed (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Communication is not limited to human interaction; in business, communication between brands and consumers involves the exchange of information and responses to establish effective communication.

Companies that successfully attract and dominate the market will have a competitive advantage over their rivals. To distinguish their products, each company creates a brand, which can be a name, term, symbol, design, or a combination of these elements, aimed at identifying their goods or services from those of competitors. A brand is not merely a name, but a crucial element in management. Although it is not the primary goal of management, a brand serves as a tool for evaluating the overall performance of an organization (Freddy Rangkuti, 2004).

In the face of increasingly intense business competition, communication strategies play a vital role in capturing consumer attention while simultaneously building brand loyalty. Marketing Public Relations has now become an inseparable part of modern marketing strategies, significantly impacting organizational success (Kitchen, 2020). Marketing Public Relations strengthens a company's reputation through strategic communication, which creates positive experiences for customers and enhances the brand image.

A brand plays a key role in building relationships with consumers, establishing a clear and consistent identity. Effendy (2003) emphasizes that a strong brand makes it easier for consumers to recognize and choose products amid the abundance of options in the market. In addressing the challenges of globalization and intensifying market competition, companies must reinforce their presence and build a positive brand image through effective communication with consumers. One concept within Public Relations related to marketing is Marketing Public Relations (Ardianto, 2009).

MPR functions as the designer, implementer, and evaluator of programs aimed at stimulating consumer purchase interest and ensuring their satisfaction with the brand. MPR also serves as a liaison between the company and the public, with communication being more interactive and focused on building trust and a positive image in the eyes of the public (Harris, 1991). This is achieved through effective communication and the delivery of trustworthy information regarding the brand, products, and company.

In the tourism sector, effective communication involves marketing strategies that utilize various platforms to increase the visibility of destinations and tourism services (Buhalis, 2003). In addition to utilizing various communication methods, business actors must also consider who the communicator is in conveying their message to the public. Currently, many businesses are competing to find a representative or face of their brand, known as a brand ambassador. The selection of a brand ambassador is not only intended to enhance the brand's appeal but also to establish a strong emotional connection between consumers and the brand. A brand ambassador must not only be widely recognized but also possess a positive image that can inspire the target audience to adopt the values represented by the brand (Royan, 2004).

Indonesia's tourism sector recorded a significant increase in 2022, rising from 44th to 32nd in the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI). The growth in internet access in Indonesia, with a penetration rate reaching 73.7% in 2021 according to APJII, has driven the increase in the use of Online Travel Agents (OTA). Google reported an 18% growth in the OTA market in Indonesia in 2019, with continued growth expected through 2023. OTAs play a crucial role as intermediaries between service providers and consumers, facilitating bookings and providing travel information (Xiang, 2013).

Traveloka, as one of the largest travel platforms in Southeast Asia, leads the online travel agent (OTA) market in Indonesia by offering a comprehensive service, ranging from transportation bookings, accommodation, to bill payments. Since its establishment in 2012, Traveloka has achieved unicorn status and expanded into Southeast Asian markets such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. With over 114 million downloads, Traveloka partners with over 100 airlines and offers 1 million accommodations and 15,000 entertainment activities (Traveloka, 2024). This has enabled it to outperform other platforms, including Tiket.com, which, despite being a pioneer in the local OTA market, now lags behind Traveloka in the domestic OTA category.

Traveloka has undergone a significant shift in its target market strategy, from initially targeting middle to upper-income adults to now expanding its focus to millennials, who view traveling as a hobby even without a steady income. This generation, born between 1981 and 1996 and comprising around 69.38 million people or 25.87% of Indonesia's population, is highly familiar with digital technology. ComScore research ranked Traveloka as the leading platform for searching and booking non-airline tickets, with 7.5 million monthly visits, predominantly from millennials.

Traveloka, which focuses its expansion in Southeast Asia, has chosen international brand ambassadors to reach a broader market, such as Baifern Pimchanok, Ninh Duong Lan Ngoc, and most recently Ji Chang Wook. This contrasts with tiket.com, which prefers local celebrities. Starting in July 2024, Ji Chang Wook became the first South Korean brand ambassador for Traveloka in Indonesia through the campaign "Traveloka x Ji Chang Wook - Travel the World." This campaign promotes popular destinations such as Bali, Labuan Bajo, and other international locations, while also reinforcing Traveloka's image as a global travel platform resonating with the millennial and Gen Z generations, who are avid travelers (Traveloka, 2024).

Ji Chang Wook also appears in Traveloka's advertisements and social media content, including TV, billboards, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and the Traveloka app. He shares his experience using the app to book tickets, hotels, and activities, which enhances user appeal and trust. His presence strengthens Traveloka's image and builds customer loyalty, in line with the role of brand ambassadors in enhancing brand perception (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Ji Chang Wook also participates in events and activations, such as the launch of campaigns and Traveloka's major promotion, the EPIC Sale 2024, offering discounts of up to 80%.

This study refers to several previous studies. First, the research by Nofiawaty et al. (2020), which examined the influence of brand ambassadors on consumer decisions using the VisCAP model, focusing on the e-commerce sector. This research differs in that it examines Korean brand ambassadors in online travel agents.

Second, the research on Neymar Jr. as the brand ambassador of Mister Potato on Instagram, which also employed the VisCAP model. The difference lies in this study's focus on the impact on the millennial generation.

Third, a study by Nancy (2020) that tested the effectiveness of Laneige's brand ambassador using the VisCAP model, which is relevant due to the use of the same model. However, this study focuses more on Traveloka and Ji Chang Wook without limiting the social media platform.

Traveloka selected Ji Chang Wook as a brand ambassador, making him the first international actor to represent an online travel agent platform in Indonesia. This study aims to measure the effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador, considering his critical role in building and maintaining the company's image. The effectiveness is evaluated using the VisCAP model, developed by Rossiler and Percy, which includes four indicators: Visibility, Credibility, Attraction, and Power. This model is chosen because it provides a quantitative overview of the effectiveness of brand ambassadors based on respondents' feedback.

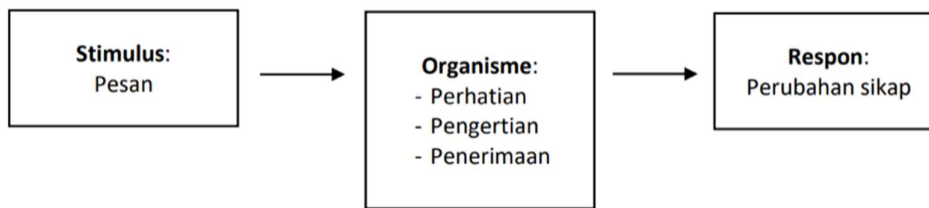
Based on the background outlined above, the researcher aims to investigate the effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador for the millennial generation in Indonesia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR)**

According to Effendy (as cited in Wibawa et al., 2022:6), the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory was proposed by Hovland in 1953. The fundamental assumption of this S-O-R theory is that the cause of behavior depends on the quality of the stimulus that communicates with the organism. This means that the quality of the communication source (e.g., credibility, leadership, and speaking style) plays a crucial role in determining the success of behavioral change in an individual, group, or society. The S-O-R theory represents a communication process that generates specific action-reaction responses, allowing individuals to expect and predict the alignment between the message and the communicator's response. The elements of this model are the message (Stimulus), the communicator (Organism), and the effect (Response).

### Bagan Stimulus-Organism-Response



In this study, the stimulus is the message delivered by Ji Chang Wook, who serves as Traveloka's brand ambassador. The organism (communicator) in this study consists of millennials aged 24 to 39 years, who are familiar with Traveloka as an Online Travel Agent and recognize Ji Chang Wook as its brand ambassador. The response (effect) observed in this study is the effectiveness. This focus is particularly important when designing strategies for public relations professionals in implementing marketing communication.

### Marketing Public Relations

According to Harris (1993), Marketing Public Relations (MPR) refers to public relations activities designed to support marketing efforts, such as increasing brand awareness, providing information, and building consumer trust and understanding of the brand. These activities also aim to expand the distribution of products and services, build consumer loyalty, and encourage market acceptance of the brand. MPR serves as a communication strategy that connects marketing and public relations to strengthen brand image (Priyowidodo, Vidyarini, & Wijayanti, 2021).

### Brand Ambassador

A brand ambassador is an individual appointed by a company to represent the brand, promote products, and build a positive image (Harris, 2000). They act as the brand's spokesperson, creating a positive image in the eyes of consumers (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). The selection of a brand ambassador must reflect the brand's values and the ability to build strong relationships with consumers. An effective brand ambassador can increase sales, strengthen the brand's image, and foster consumer loyalty (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006).

### Effectiveness of Brand Ambassadors using the VisCAP Model

A brand ambassador is an individual employed by a company to influence the public through their celebrity image, attract interest, and promote products. The effectiveness of a brand ambassador can be evaluated using the VisCAP model (Percy & Rossiter, 1987, in Setiawan, 2018), which includes visibility, credibility, attraction, and power. This model helps marketers assess the suitability of an endorser for promoting a product. If the VisCAP score is

high, the endorser is considered capable of attracting consumer interest and driving purchasing decisions.

Rossiter and Percy (1985) defined the characteristics of a brand ambassador using the VisCAP theory to measure and evaluate their effectiveness. This theory consists of four elements:

**1. Visibility**

This refers to how popular a celebrity is. When selecting a celebrity, it is important to choose someone who is widely known. Their fame draws public attention to the brand they represent. A celebrity's recognition can enhance brand awareness.

**2. Credibility**

This refers to the assessment of the source's (celebrity's) strengths and how well the public accepts and follows them. A brand ambassador with high credibility will influence consumer trust. Credibility is related to expertise, which is the celebrity's knowledge of the product, and objectivity, which is the celebrity's ability to convince consumers.

**3. Attraction**

The attractiveness of a brand ambassador includes the level of appeal and similarity to the personality desired by the product users. Similarity between the target audience and the image in the advertisement is crucial, showcasing an individual in the advertisement who has a style similar to that of the target group. Attraction has two aspects: appeal, observed through physical appearance and personality, and similarity, which refers to the audience's perception of commonalities with the brand ambassador, such as age, hobbies, and activities during marketing.

**4. Power**

Power refers to the characteristic strength possessed by a brand ambassador, where this strength can increase the intensity of product purchases, even without changing consumer attitudes, by motivating the target to take action.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Conceptualization of The Research**

This research employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to provide a systematic, factual, and accurate portrayal of the facts and characteristics of a particular population or object (Rukajat, 2018). In this study, the researcher aims to assess the effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador among millennials in Indonesia.

This study uses a quantitative approach, and the method employed is the survey method. The survey will be conducted using an online questionnaire through Google Forms, which will be distributed to the target research group online via various social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Line, WhatsApp, and TikTok. The questionnaire will consist of

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questions that examine the variables of the indicators: visibility, credibility, attraction, and power.

### **Research Subject**

The research subject can refer to an entity, phenomenon, or object that serves as a data source within the context of the research (Suliyanto, 2018). In this study, the subject is Traveloka users aged 38-42 years, categorized as millennials who are familiar with Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador. The total number of millennials in Indonesia is 69.38 million people (Indonesia.go.id, 2023). Due to the large population size, it is not feasible for the researcher to analyze the entire population. For this reason, the researcher has decided to use a sample drawn from this population. This study requires 100 respondents to serve as the sample, using a non-probability sampling technique and purposive sampling.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Data Analysis**

This study uses SPSS to analyze the effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador among Indonesian millennials. Data will be collected from 100 respondents via a questionnaire with responses based on a Likert scale with five answer choices. The answers will reflect support or attitudes expressed in words. These responses will be categorized as strongly agree (SS), agree (S), neutral (N), disagree (TS), and strongly disagree (STS). The researcher will process the data using SPSS as a tool for data analysis to facilitate and expedite the process. Mean analysis will be conducted to evaluate the indicator values based on the variable's interval category. Based on the calculations, if the interval value falls at 2, the results will be divided into two categories: 1.00 - 3.00 indicating ineffective, while 3.01 - 5.00 indicating effective.

## Data Findings

*Table 1. Mean Values of VisCAP Indicators*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<i>Visibility</i>	4,265
<i>Credibility</i>	4,29
<i>Attraction</i>	4,44
<i>Power</i>	4,325
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,33</b>

*Tabel 2. Visibility*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>STS (1)</b>	<b>TS (2)</b>	<b>N (3)</b>	<b>S (4)</b>	<b>SS (5)</b>	<b>Average Question Score</b>
Visibility	Ji Chang Wook has credibility to be the brand ambassador of Traveloka.	0	1	8	40	51	4.41
	Ji Chang Wook has many fans in Indonesia.	0	1	2	46	44	4.12
<b>Total Mean of Visibility Indicator</b>							<b>4.265</b>

*Tabel 3. Credibility*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>STS (1)</b>	<b>TS (2)</b>	<b>N (3)</b>	<b>S (4)</b>	<b>SS (5)</b>	<b>Average Question Score</b>
<i>Credibility</i>	Ji Chang Wook memiliki kredibilitas untuk menjadi brand ambassador Traveloka	0	1	9	46	44	4,33
	Ji Chang Wook is convincing when delivering Traveloka's message in the 'Travel The World' campaign, showcasing Bali and Labuan Bajo tourist destinations.	0	2	8	53	37	4,25
<b>Total Mean of Credibility Indicator</b>							<b>4,29</b>

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>STS (1)</b>	<b>TS (2)</b>	<b>N (3)</b>	<b>S (4)</b>	<b>SS (5)</b>	<b>Average Question Score</b>
<i>Attraction</i>	Ji Chang Wook seems to have a pleasant personality as Traveloka's brand ambassador	0	1	3	45	51	4,46
	Ji Chang Wook has a handsome face, making him easily recognizable as Traveloka's brand ambassador.	0	1	9	37	53	4,42
<b>Total Mean of Attraction Indicator</b>							<b>4,44</b>

Tabel 5. Power

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>STS (1)</b>	<b>TS (2)</b>	<b>N (3)</b>	<b>S (4)</b>	<b>SS (5)</b>	<b>Average Question Score</b>
<i>Power</i>	Ji Chang Wook as a brand ambassador makes Traveloka more attractive.	0	0	6	39	55	4,49
	Ji Chang Wook is able to encourage people to travel practically using Traveloka.	0	1	14	53	32	4,16
<b>Total Mean of Power Indicator</b>							<b>4,325</b>

## Analysis and Interpretation

### Average Value of VisCAP Indicator

The average results from the brand ambassador indicator show favorable outcomes from 100 respondents. The total average value of the VisCAP indicator is 4.33, indicating that Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador is considered effective since the average score exceeds 3.00. According to the table above, the research results show that the visibility indicator has the lowest mean score of 4.265, which suggests that Ji Chang Wook, as a brand ambassador, still has room for improvement in providing exposure to the brand through media presence, such as advertisements, social media, and public events. Ji Chang Wook's visibility is above average, as indicated by the score above 3.00, but compared to other indicators, the Visibility indicator has the lowest value. Meanwhile, attraction has the highest score of 4.44, indicating that Ji Chang Wook's ability to generate interest and connect the audience with the brand he represents is highly effective. Furthermore, the credibility indicator received an average score of 4.29, while the power indicator scored 4.325. These values suggest that Ji Chang Wook is effective in his role as a brand ambassador for Traveloka.

Attractiveness in this study emerges as the most prominent factor in the effectiveness of a brand ambassador. A physically or personally appealing brand ambassador plays a crucial role in enhancing a brand's image and attraction. An appealing appearance makes the brand ambassador more acceptable to the public and is often perceived as more credible. This significantly influences how the public views the brand they represent. Studies have shown that

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the attractiveness of a brand ambassador can significantly enhance the brand's image and strengthen consumers' intentions to purchase the products or services offered (Putri et al., 2021). Therefore, in designing marketing strategies, it is essential for Public Relations to choose a brand ambassador with strong appeal, both physically and in terms of personality. The more attractive the brand ambassador, the greater the likelihood that the public will feel more connected to the brand.

One reason why an attractive brand ambassador can influence consumer behavior is that their appeal can evoke positive emotions. When consumers associate a brand ambassador with feelings of happiness, admiration, or trust, they are more likely to develop an emotional connection with the brand being promoted. This emotional connection further strengthens the effectiveness of the message conveyed, thus increasing consumers' purchase intentions. An attractive brand ambassador not only gains attention on social media but also enhances the visibility of the brand they represent, resulting in higher engagement from the public (Pardede & Aprianingsih, 2023).

Visibility helps a brand ambassador attract the audience's attention and makes them more likely to remember the promoted product. The popularity of a brand ambassador with a large following on social media increases the likelihood that promotional content will go viral. This viral effect amplifies the reach of marketing campaigns, bringing more audiences to interact with the content and ultimately helping to strengthen the brand's image in the public's mind (Nugroho et al., 2023). With increased frequency of exposure to the brand ambassador's face or name, the public not only becomes more familiar with the brand but also finds it easier to remember the products they offer.

Furthermore, the physical or personal appeal of the brand ambassador also contributes to increasing their credibility. Psychologically, people tend to associate attractiveness with positive traits such as honesty and competence. Therefore, when an attractive brand ambassador supports a product, the public is more likely to trust the brand, even if they may not be fully knowledgeable about the product. This becomes even more effective when the brand ambassador's appeal aligns with the values or identity the brand wants to communicate. For instance, an attractive brand ambassador with an image that aligns with sustainability or a healthy lifestyle will strengthen the positive image of a brand aiming to highlight these values (Handayani & Pradana, 2023). Thus, it can be concluded that the physical attractiveness of a brand ambassador plays a significant role in supporting the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. This appeal not only helps increase brand awareness but also strengthens emotional bonds with consumers, which in turn drives purchase interest and brand loyalty.

In its publicity efforts, Traveloka actively features Ji Chang Wook on social media or organizes events to increase visibility, thus creating a two-way symmetrical communication between the public and the brand. Two-way communication between the brand ambassador and the public plays a vital role in making the brand ambassador more approachable and accessible to consumers. With this approach, the brand ambassador appears more human,

which makes consumers feel more connected and valued. When a brand ambassador actively responds to questions or comments from the audience, it demonstrates their attention to the opinions and needs of consumers, ultimately building trust and closeness (Yang, 2021). This approach also fosters a sense of inclusion, where consumers feel that their voices are heard and valued.

Personal and consistent interactions between the brand ambassador and consumers not only strengthen the positive image of the brand but also increase long-term consumer loyalty to the brand. With two-way communication, consumers become more involved in the promotion process, making them more likely to recommend the products or services they received to others. This creates a viral effect that is highly beneficial to the brand's marketing campaign (Mukherjee et al., 2023). In today's digital era, social media facilitates direct and rapid interaction, making two-way communication strategies even more effective and relevant in building closer, more personal relationships with consumers.

### **Visibility**

For the visibility indicator, there are two statements with a total mean of 4.265. This indicator has the lowest total mean score compared to all other indicators. The statement "Ji Chang Wook attracts the audience's attention when acting as a brand ambassador" received the highest average score of 4.41, while the statement "Ji Chang Wook has many fans in Indonesia" received the lowest average score of 4.12. Both statements under the visibility indicator reached the "effective" category, as the mean score for each statement was above 3.00.

The first statement, "Ji Chang Wook attracts the audience's attention when acting as a brand ambassador," received 49 responses of "strongly agree," 40 responses of "agree," 8 responses of "neutral," 1 response of "disagree," and 0 responses of "strongly disagree." This indicates that Ji Chang Wook has an appeal that can capture the attention of the audience when serving as Traveloka's brand ambassador. On the other hand, the second statement, "Ji Chang Wook has many fans in Indonesia," received 44 responses of "strongly agree," 46 responses of "agree," 2 responses of "neutral," 1 response of "disagree," and 0 responses of "strongly disagree." This statement demonstrates respondents' agreement that Ji Chang Wook is a well-known actor with a large fanbase in Indonesia.

The results of both statements suggest that Ji Chang Wook is effective as Traveloka's brand ambassador due to his popularity as an actor, with many fans, particularly in Indonesia.

*Tabel 6. Number of Viewers for Korean Dramas Starring Ji Chang Wook*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Drama/Film Title</b>	<b>Number of Viewers/Popularity</b>
2011	Warrior Baek Dong Soo	18 million viewers (Korea)
2013	Empress Ki	18.8 million viewer (Korea)
2013	Fabricated City	2.5 million viewer (Korea)
2015	The K2	3 million viewer (Korea)
2017	Suspicious Partner	20 million viewer (Korea)
2018	Lovestruck in the City	4 million viewer (Korea)
2019	Melting Me Softly	4 million viewer (Korea)
2020	Backstreet Rookie	4 million viewer (Korea)
2022	The Sound of Magic	3 million viewer (global)
2022	If You Wish Upon Me	4 million viewer (global)
2023	The Worst of Evil	1 million viewer (global)

It can be observed that the Korean dramas starring Ji Chang Wook have a significant number of viewers, further reinforcing his status as a popular actor. Celebrities who act as brand ambassadors become tools for representing the targeted market segment. According to Ruslan (2002) in Firmasyah (2020), Marketing Public Relations (MPR) focuses on the planning and evaluation of programs aimed at driving purchases and consumer satisfaction through trustworthy information that connects companies and products with consumers' needs and desires.

From this perspective, it can be concluded that the Marketing Public Relations strategy applied by Traveloka in selecting a popular brand ambassador from the film industry can enhance the exposure of the represented product, attract public attention, and strengthen the product's image. As explained by Royan (2005), when a celebrity or public figure who is famous in their field promotes a product, it can improve the brand image and reinforce the product's value. Luhputu & Baktiar (2019) also stated that the greater the public's attention to a widely known public figure through various media, the higher their visibility.

The selection of a brand ambassador in marketing public relations is heavily dependent on their level of visibility. A brand ambassador with high visibility can help increase brand

recognition and recall among consumers. A figure with a large number of social media followers tends to positively influence purchase intentions because they are able to reach a broader audience and create a significant impact on brand perception (Dzulfikar, 2023).

The visibility of a brand ambassador is a crucial factor for Marketing Public Relations when organizing the publicity of a brand. Although a brand ambassador can enhance visibility and brand perception, challenges such as managing relationships with influencers and ensuring content quality remain a primary concern for Public Relations staff. Relationships with brand ambassadors require a careful strategy to maintain alignment between the brand's values and their personal image, so that potential risks, such as controversies or mismatches with the target audience, can be minimized (Yörük, Erhan, and Summak, 2023). Furthermore, Public Relations must ensure that the content produced by the brand ambassador is not only engaging but also relevant, authentic, and consistent with the core message of the brand. Given the enormous influence of brand ambassadors, content quality plays a critical role in the success of campaigns to capture public attention and maintain their trust in the brand. Therefore, Public Relations needs to adopt a collaborative and proactive approach when working with brand ambassadors to maximize positive impact while addressing various emerging challenges.

### **Credibility**

After the visibility indicator, the credibility indicator achieved a total mean value of 4.29. This indicator consisted of two statements, with the first statement, *"Ji Chang Wook has the credibility to be a Traveloka brand ambassador,"* achieving the highest average score of 4.33. In contrast, the second statement, *"Ji Chang Wook is convincing when delivering Traveloka's message in the 'Travel The World' campaign showcasing Bali and Labuan Bajo destinations,"* received a slightly lower average score of 4.25.

The first statement, *"Ji Chang Wook has the credibility to be a Traveloka brand ambassador,"* received 44 strongly agree responses, 46 agree responses, 9 neutral responses, 1 disagree response, and 0 strongly disagree responses. This result indicates that Ji Chang Wook possesses sufficient credibility to serve as a brand ambassador for Traveloka. Meanwhile, the second statement, *"Ji Chang Wook is convincing when delivering Traveloka's message in the 'Travel The World' campaign,"* garnered 37 strongly agree responses, 53 agree responses, 8 neutral responses, 2 disagree responses, and 0 strongly disagree responses. This finding suggests that Ji Chang Wook is effective in convincing the audience when conveying messages in Traveloka's campaign highlighting Bali and Labuan Bajo.

From both statements, respondents agreed that Ji Chang Wook is credible as a brand ambassador and is capable of persuading the audience through the messages he communicates to the public. The average scores for both statements are categorized as effective since they exceed the threshold of 3.00.

An effective brand ambassador can enhance the appeal of tourist destinations by leveraging their credibility to build trust and engagement with potential visitors. The credibility

of social media influencers has been shown to increase trust in a brand and strengthen consumers' purchase intentions. This underscores the importance of factors such as trustworthiness, relatability, and appeal in influencing consumer decisions (Najar et al., 2024). Furthermore, employing communication strategies that involve credible brand ambassadors can enhance engagement levels and interest in tourism offerings, encouraging more individuals to explore the destinations being promoted (Diesbach, 2012).

*Tabel 7. Ji Chang Wook's Achievements*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Types of Award</b>	<b>Film/Drama</b>
2010	Best New Actor, Korea Drama Awards	Smile Again
2011	Excellence Award, Actor in a Daily Drama, KBS Drama Awards	Smile, Dong Hae
2013	Best New Actor, The Musical Awards	The Days
2014	Excellence Award, Actor in a Mid-length Drama, KBS Drama Awards	Empress Ki
2014	Popularity Award, Actor, KBS Drama Awards	Healer
2014	Best Couple Award, KBS Drama Awards	Healer bersama Park Min-young
2015	Most Popular Actor (Overseas), China TV Drama Awards	Healer
2016	Top Excellence Award, Actor in a Miniseries, SBS Drama Awards	The K2
2017	Best New Actor – Film, Baeksang Arts Awards	Fabricated City
2018	Top Excellence Award, Actor in a Mid-length Drama, SBS Drama Awards	Suspicious Partner
2019	Asia Celebrity Award (Actor), Asia Artist Awards	Healer
2020	Excellence Award, Actor in a Miniseries, SBS Drama Awards	Backstreet Rookie
2020	Best Actor (Online), Korea First Brand Awards	Backstreet Rookie

Year	Types of Award	Film/Drama
2021	Best Actor in a Leading Role, Seoul Drama Awards	If You Wish Upon Me
2023	AFA Next Generation Award, Asian Film Awards	If You Wish Upon Me
2024	Best Actor in a Drama Series, Seoul Drama Awards	If You Wish Upon Me

Ji Chang Wook is recognized as an accomplished actor, with his primary focus being in the realm of acting. However, Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) argue that a public figure serving as a brand ambassador does not necessarily need expertise in the field of the product they represent. According to Stephen, Robbins, & Timothy (2009), "ability" refers to an individual's capacity to perform various tasks in a specific role.

The credibility of a brand ambassador is crucial for the brand employing them. In the entertainment industry, Ji Chang Wook is a distinguished actor who has received numerous awards for his talent. The public is more likely to purchase products when they perceive the brand ambassador as credible, thereby enhancing the brand's overall image. The credibility of a brand ambassador is not solely derived from their popularity but also from the extent to which they are seen as authentic, knowledgeable, and relevant to the product or service they endorse. When the public feels that the brand ambassador genuinely believes in the product they recommend, that trust transfers to the brand itself (Ardiyani & Pasharibu, 2023). As a result, this not only increases the likelihood of purchase but also fosters long-term relationships between the public and the brand. With an increasingly positive brand image, companies can strengthen public loyalty and enhance their competitiveness in a challenging market.

Marketing Public Relations (MPR) enhances the credibility of messages because consumers tend to view MPR as a more trustworthy source of information or opinions (Giannini, 2010, as cited in Melanthiou & Papasolomu, 2012). In this context, Ji Chang Wook's role as a brand ambassador falls within MPR strategies, where he acts as an opinion leader delivering critical facts or information about Traveloka. The primary goal is for the audience to understand and trust the information conveyed through him.

### **Attraction**

Among all the indicators, attraction achieved the highest total mean score, amounting to 4.44. This indicator comprises two statements: the first, "Ji Chang Wook appears to have a pleasant personality as Traveloka's brand ambassador," recorded the highest mean of 4.46; the second, "Ji Chang Wook has a handsome appearance, making him easily recognizable as Traveloka's brand ambassador," scored slightly lower with a mean of 4.42.

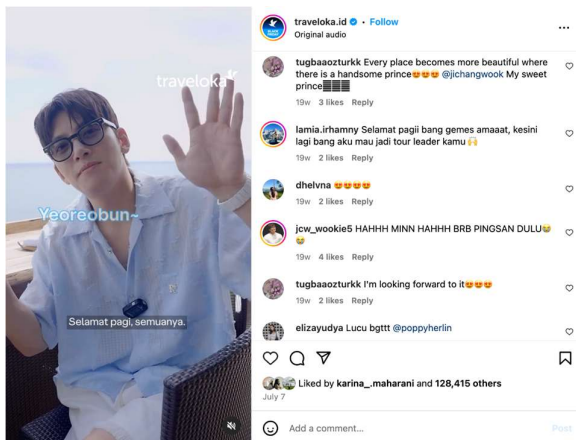
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For the first statement, 51 respondents strongly agreed, 45 agreed, 3 were neutral, 1 disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. These results indicate that Ji Chang Wook is perceived by the audience as having a pleasant personality suitable for representing Traveloka. Meanwhile, for the second statement, 53 respondents strongly agreed, 37 agreed, 9 were neutral, 1 disagreed, and none strongly disagreed. This suggests that Ji Chang Wook's attractive appearance makes him easily recognizable as Traveloka's brand ambassador. The results from both statements demonstrate that respondents believe Ji Chang Wook's visual appeal and personality make him highly recognizable and effective as a brand ambassador. Both statements fall into the effective category, with mean scores exceeding 3.00.

Attraction refers to a brand ambassador's ability to captivate the audience and generate interest in the brand they represent through their personal charm and public image. A brand ambassador's appearance and personality serve as significant added values, not only making the audience like the figure but also fostering a sense of connection and aspiration to emulate their characteristics. Consequently, admiration for a brand ambassador often translates into interest and affection for the brand they endorse (Rossiter & Percy, 1985).

This is evident as respondents agreed that Ji Chang Wook possesses a compelling personality and appearance that draw public attention. Supporting this, KingChoice.me, a popular polling platform covering various topics in the Korean entertainment industry, garnered thousands of votes from fans. One of its most popular polls, focusing on selecting the most charming Korean actor, crowned Ji Chang Wook as the top-ranked actor in 2023. With millions of votes, his victory highlights his handsome features, undeniable charisma, and versatile acting skills across genres, from action to romance.

A communicator with physical attractiveness tends to leave a positive impression on the audience, making them more effective in promoting products. An appealing appearance creates a strong first impression, drawing consumer attention to the message conveyed. However, physical appeal alone is insufficient; it becomes more impactful when combined with credibility and expertise relevant to the promoted product. For instance, a professional athlete endorsing sports products not only attracts attention through appearance but also through their knowledge and experience in the field. This combination of physical appeal, credibility, and expertise builds consumer trust, strengthening brand image and boosting product sales (Sudhir et al., 2008). Selecting an attractive brand ambassador is a strategic Public Relations tactic to draw attention to Traveloka's messaging.



Gambar 1. Traveloka's Instagram Feed

Through Instagram posts by Traveloka, numerous fan comments highlight Ji Chang Wook's unmistakable visual appeal. His immense fan base is further evidenced by his Instagram account, boasting over 27.7 million followers. The role of public relations in attraction is crucial, as it helps build public perception and enhance the celebrity's appeal. With effective PR strategies, a brand's visibility can be increased, perceptions of the brand can be positively shaped, and consumer engagement in advertising can be effectively facilitated.

Selecting a brand ambassador involves careful consideration of their alignment with the company's identity to ensure they effectively represent the message the brand seeks to convey to its audience (Opris et al., 2020). Celebrity endorsements can significantly enhance brand awareness and strengthen consumer recall of promoted destinations. However, the success of such promotions heavily relies on the compatibility between the chosen celebrity and the characteristics of the destination being advertised (Jolly, 2013).

In this case, Ji Chang Wook embodies an image that aligns seamlessly with Traveloka's brand identity. His sophisticated and charming persona mirrors the aspirational qualities that Traveloka seeks to convey, making him an ideal ambassador for its campaigns.

## Power

On the final indicator, namely *power*, there are two statements with a total mean score of 4.325. The first statement, "Ji Chang Wook as a brand ambassador makes Traveloka more appealing," achieved an average score of 4.49. Meanwhile, the second statement, "Ji Chang Wook is able to encourage people to travel conveniently using Traveloka," obtained an average score of 4.16. This indicator's total mean score exceeded 3.00, indicating that both statements within the *power* indicator are considered effective.

For the first statement, "Ji Chang Wook as a brand ambassador makes Traveloka more appealing," there were 55 responses indicating "strongly agree," 39 responses indicating "agree," 6 neutral responses, and no responses for "disagree" or "strongly disagree." This indicates that the selection of Ji Chang Wook as a brand ambassador enhances Traveloka's

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appeal in the eyes of its audience. In contrast, for the second statement, “Ji Chang Wook is able to encourage people to travel conveniently using Traveloka,” there were 32 responses indicating "strongly agree," 53 responses indicating "agree," 14 neutral responses, 1 response for "disagree," and none for "strongly disagree." This signifies that Ji Chang Wook effectively convinces the audience to use Traveloka for convenient travel.

From these two statements, respondents agree that Ji Chang Wook possesses the persuasive ability to represent and promote Traveloka. Amid intense competition in digital tourism communication, Traveloka must stand out among other travel agencies. To achieve this, the company employs a two-step strategy: first, capturing public attention through the brand ambassador, and second, directing the public’s focus to Traveloka’s core message. This approach reflects the implementation of a persuasive message strategy, evident in the manner the brand ambassador influences the audience, aligning with the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM).

In situations where the audience exhibits low involvement or limited attention to the message (low elaboration), the physical appeal or expertise of the brand ambassador can serve as a heuristic, enabling the audience to accept the message automatically. Conversely, in high-involvement situations (high elaboration), the audience critically evaluates the quality of the arguments presented, rather than focusing solely on the appearance or status of the brand ambassador.

This demonstrates that the effectiveness of a brand ambassador is contingent upon how the audience perceives the message and the degree of their engagement with the information provided. By understanding this dynamic, public relations practitioners can adopt communication strategies that either leverage visual appeal or deliver more robust and convincing arguments to support a brand campaign (Richard et al., 1984). Ultimately, the effectiveness of a brand ambassador lies in their ability to persuade the public to develop stronger connections with the represented brand, rather than with the ambassador themselves. In some cases, the charm of the brand ambassador may hinder the brand’s message delivery, as the audience becomes more focused on the ambassador’s persona rather than the brand’s message (Geurin, 2020).



Gambar 2. Netizens' posts on X about Traveloka

It can be observed in the search results on the X application, where many netizens expressed their joy over the selection of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador, with some even stating that they wanted to use Traveloka because of Ji Chang Wook. In this context, power functions to influence consumer behavior, in line with the goals of MPR to encourage the audience to behave in accordance with marketing objectives, such as purchasing products or using services. A brand ambassador with power not only attracts attention but also motivates the audience to act, bridging the gap between brand communication and consumer purchasing decisions (Hayati & Damanik, 2022). In the context of tourism, an influential brand ambassador can motivate the audience to choose the destinations or services offered by the brand, increase awareness, and shift their behavior toward the decision to travel using platforms like Traveloka.

## CONCLUSION

This study evaluates the effectiveness of Ji Chang Wook as Traveloka's brand ambassador by involving 100 millennial respondents aged 28–42 years. The selected respondents are Traveloka users who are familiar with Ji Chang Wook as the brand's representative. Using the VisCAP theory (Visibility, Credibility, Attraction, Power) as the analytical framework, the study shows that Ji Chang Wook successfully meets all indicators with an average score of 4.33, which is categorized as effective. These results demonstrate that Ji Chang Wook not only enhances the brand's visual appeal but also strengthens emotional connections with consumers, making him a strategic and relevant choice to strengthen Traveloka's position in the market.

The average score for the attraction indicator is 4.44, indicating that Ji Chang Wook has exceptional appeal, both physically and in terms of character. This makes him highly effective in captivating the audience, especially his fans, who easily recognize his role as Traveloka's brand ambassador. Ji Chang Wook's presence leaves a strong impression and creates an emotional bond between the brand and the audience, thereby strengthening Traveloka's image in the market. The power indicator has an average of 4.32, reflecting Ji

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Chang Wook's ability to influence audience decisions, such as using the Traveloka app or purchasing the products offered. The messages he conveys as the brand's representative have been shown to significantly impact consumer behavior.

Additionally, the credibility indicator recorded an average score of 4.29, which reflects the trust the audience places in the messages conveyed by Ji Chang Wook. As a brand ambassador, he is able to deliver information in a clear, trustworthy manner that aligns with the brand's image. However, the visibility indicator shows an average score of 4.26, which, although lower than the other indicators, still falls within the effective category. This score suggests that, although Ji Chang Wook is fairly well-known and capable of attracting attention on social media, there is still room to enhance his presence across various digital platforms.

Ji Chang Wook's presence as a brand ambassador not only increases Traveloka's appeal in the local market but also expands the brand's reach to a global level. With his popularity, he helps Traveloka attract the attention of international fans while promoting local Indonesian tourism to foreign tourists. Nevertheless, public relations strategies should be directed towards strengthening Ji Chang Wook's visibility on social media, so that his effectiveness in increasing audience engagement and solidifying the brand's position in the global market can be maximized.

This approach provides a significant opportunity for the public relations team to create more interactive and relevant strategies. By fully utilizing digital platforms, the relationship between the brand, Ji Chang Wook as the brand ambassador, and the audience can be strengthened. By leveraging Ji Chang Wook's established appeal, combined with increased exposure across various media, Traveloka has a great opportunity to solidify its position as a leader in the online travel industry.

This research focuses on the selection of brand ambassadors who have the power to enhance consumer engagement in the tourism sector, particularly among the Millennial generation in Indonesia, a key demographic for tourism growth. The study reveals how brand ambassadors not only play a role in strengthening the brand image but also in driving tourist behavior, thereby influencing consumer decision-making processes and destination choices. By highlighting the impact of brand ambassadors on consumer perceptions in the context of tourism, this research provides new insights into the strategy of using celebrity endorsements in destination marketing

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Red Velvet as a brand ambassador in the Azarine Cosmetic makeup series product. Based on data analysis and discussion in chapter 4, it can be concluded that the use of Red Velvet as a brand ambassador for makeup series products has proven effective. This effectiveness is measured using a source credibility model consisting of three indicators: trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise. The results of data processing show that the expertise indicator obtained the highest value with a value of 4,281, making it the most effective indicator in this study.

Based on the data that has been discussed in the analysis, the appearance of Red Velvet members who have beautiful facial visuals, soft, charming, elegant faces, good personalities, glowing skin, unique faces, good vocal and dance skills, and a positive image, prove that Red Velvet has a strong charm as a brand ambassador. Another supporting factor, seeing the charm that Red Velvet has, many brands collaborate with Red Velvet as a group or individually as brand ambassadors. Red Velvet, a K-pop group known for its strong charm and extraordinary talent, serves as an effective brand ambassador in terms of expertise, experience, knowledge, qualifications, and skills. Red Velvet's strong charm lies not only in their physical appearance, but also in their ability to communicate and connect with fans around the world. In MPR, their ability to build positive relationships with the public is very important. They not only promote products, but also represent values that are relevant to the audience, such as self-confidence, creativity, and passion (Fatimah, 2024). This study shows that expertise has the highest value in source credibility.

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