

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1.1 Background

Based on kumparan.com (2021), PUBG Corporation is a game development company based in South Korea. Established in March 2017, it is known for creating the highly popular game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG). PUBG Mobile is the official mobile version of the game developed by PUBG Corporation. As a subsidiary of Krafton, a leading game company in South Korea, PUBG Corporation focuses on developing games in the battle royale genre. PUBG Mobile has garnered significant recognition and success since its launch. It has received numerous awards, including "Best Mobile Game" at The Game Awards 2018 and "Mobile Game of the Year" at the Golden Joystick Awards 2018. The game has gained a massive global following, with millions of players worldwide. It is available in multiple languages and has a broad user base across various countries. PUBG Mobile actively participates in the esports scene, organizing and hosting competitive tournaments for professional players. Events such as the PUBG Mobile World League (PMWL) and PUBG Mobile Club Open (PMCO) showcase the game's competitive aspect and attract top-tier players from around the world.

PUBG Mobile has formed partnerships with renowned brands, artists, and events to bring exclusive content and collaborations into the game. These collaborations enhance the gaming experience and create unique opportunities for players to engage with their favorite brands or celebrities within the game. The company remains dedicated to continuously updating and improving PUBG Mobile. Regular updates introduce new maps, weapons, game modes, and performance optimizations to ensure an engaging and immersive experience for players. PUBG Corporation's commitment to innovation and delivering high-quality gameplay has contributed to PUBG Mobile's status as a leading mobile game globally.

PUBG Mobile is one of the highly popular online games worldwide. Developed by PUBG Corporation, it is the mobile version of the successful battle royale game, PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG). In PUBG Mobile, players compete in battles to be the last one standing among 100 players. The phenomenon of PUBG Mobile has attracted widespread attention from various stakeholders, including researchers, due to its significant impact on the gaming industry and popular culture. The game has generated substantial revenue and has a large user base in various countries. PUBG Mobile has also created cultural phenomena, inspiring active player communities, eSports tournaments, and various game-related content on social media. Players engage in social interactions through in-game communication features, as well as form groups

teams to play together. Furthermore, the game has sparked debates about its impact on players' health and behavior, such as gaming addiction and its influence on productivity. This phenomenon becomes an intriguing topic for researchers in understanding the dynamics of online gaming, social interactions in virtual contexts, and the implications of mobile gaming in daily life.

PUBG Mobile stands out in the mobile gaming world due to its impressive graphics, diverse game modes, large global player community, regular updates, character customization options, and its prominent role in the eSports scene. This combination of features creates an engaging and continually evolving gaming experience, making it one of the most popular and captivating mobile games to date.

As reported by HAI-Online.com (2020), PUBG Mobile has amassed millions of players worldwide and has built an active community. The game is also popular in E-sports, with tournaments and leagues where professional players compete for prizes and titles. In the research context, PUBG Mobile serves as an interesting subject to study, whether in terms of marketing, consumer behavior, social interactions, popular culture, or its psychological and social implications. Research on PUBG Mobile can provide valuable insights into understanding this phenomenon and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of gaming, technology, and digital culture.

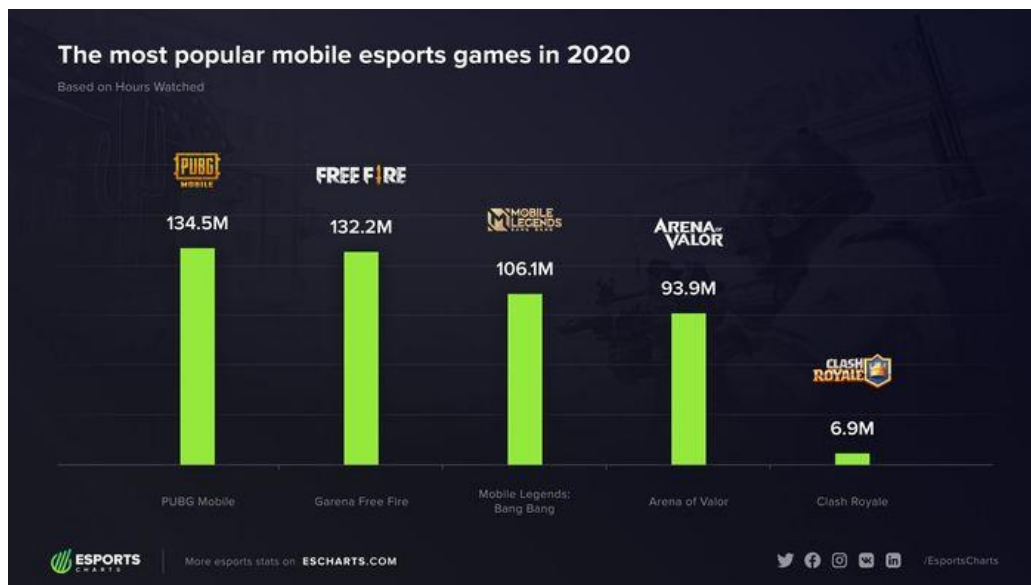


Figure 1.1 The most popular mobile E-sports games

Source: HAI-Online.com (2020)

According to revivaltv.id (2021), PUBG Mobile has gained significant popularity in Indonesia since its launch. It has become one of the most popular mobile games in the country with a large and active fan base. Several factors contribute to the development of PUBG Mobile in Indonesia, including accessibility, engaging gameplay, community and competitions, and collaborations with celebrities. The development of PUBG Mobile in Indonesia continues to progress over time. More players are joining the game's community, and an increasing number of E-sports events and tournaments are held in the country. This reflects the growing popularity and significant impact of PUBG Mobile in Indonesia as one of the most popular mobile games in the country. The advancement of communication technology has influenced the flow of information and the social and cultural lives of communities on a wide scale.

According to kompasiana.com (2020), BLACKPINK is a South Korean girl group consisting of four members, namely Jennie, Lisa, Jisoo, and Rosé. They have become a favorite girl group with catchy songs and captivating music videos. Since their debut in 2016, BLACKPINK has released many hit songs such as "Ddu-Du Ddu-Du," "Kill This Love," and "How You Like That." These songs bring fun energy and a positive atmosphere. Their lyrics also tell stories of struggle and courage, which is one of the reasons for their popularity. BLACKPINK's music videos have also garnered much attention, featuring standout visuals with unique costumes and makeup. Guest appearances from renowned actors and actresses make their music videos even more captivating. Since their debut, BLACKPINK has received numerous awards as a favorite girl group. Some of the awards they have received include the "Digital Bonsang" at the 2018 Golden Disc Awards, "Worldwide Fans' Choice Top 10" at the 2019 Mnet Asian Music Awards, and "Worldwide Icon of the Year" at the 2019 Brand Customer Engagement Awards.

BLACKPINK's global influence extends beyond their music. They have collaborated with international artists and brands, solidifying their presence in the global music industry. Their collaborations with artists such as Lady Gaga and Dua Lipa have further expanded their fan base and showcased their versatility as performers. In addition to their music career, BLACKPINK members are also involved in various other activities. They have appeared in fashion campaigns, model for renowned brands, and participated in variety shows, showcasing their diverse talents and captivating personalities. BLACKPINK success can be attributed to their exceptional talent, hard work, and the support of YG Entertainment. With their captivating music, powerful performances, and global appeal, BLACKPINK continues to leave a lasting impact on the music industry and inspire fans around the world. According to kapanlagi.com (2020), BLACKPINK is one of the world's famous girl groups, and their success can be

attributed to several key factors such as talent and artistic quality, appealing and diverse music, captivating visuals, effective marketing strategies, and strong fan support. The success and popularity of BLACKPINK have made them a sought-after collaboration target for companies. With a large fan base and extensive influence, BLACKPINK becomes a valuable asset for businesses looking to reach a wider audience and promote their products or services.

According to cnbcindonesia.com, in 2020, the Korean Business Research Institute released their research results on K-Pop girl groups in South Korea. BLACKPINK secured the top position in the ranking. This month, they maintained their first place with a score of 9,922,928 points. Their success is attributed to the promotion of their pre-release single titled 'How You Like That'. PUBG Mobile used this reason to collaborate with BLACKPINK, considering the group's immense global fanbase. The collaboration is expected to help PUBG Mobile attract more players and new fans, ultimately enhancing the game's appeal. Co-branding with a renowned group like BLACKPINK is also anticipated to support PUBG Mobile's branding and promotion efforts, creating buzz in the gaming and music industries.

The Korean Wave first gained momentum through Korean music, which was well-received by people outside of Korea, especially in Southeast Asian countries, and then spread to Europe and America. K-Pop became increasingly popular with mesmerizing idol groups. The exceptional vocal quality and dance choreography of K-Pop idols have been contributing factors to their success. Several idol groups such as Super Junior, Girls' Generation, 2PM, Wonder Girls, BIGBANG, 2NE1, EXO, BTS, and BLACKPINK have achieved remarkable accomplishments in driving the Korean Wave. This booming K-Pop trend has also influenced Indonesia as one of the world's trendsetters.

Blackpink is a K-pop music group known for their unique musical style and concept, blending elements of pop, hip-hop, and electronic music. They have created a global influence through international collaborations and have become fashion icons recognized worldwide. Their spectacular music videos often reach millions of viewers on YouTube, and they have an impressive track record of achievements, such as performing at Coachella and reaching one billion views on YouTube. Blackpink is one of the prominent and influential music groups in the current global entertainment industry.

As reported by liputan6.com (2020), the significant influence of K-Pop trendsetters or idols on consumer purchasing decisions has led companies to see business opportunities in using K-Pop celebrities as marketing communication tools. K-Pop celebrities become brand ambassadors for companies, capable of attracting consumers to purchase the products they promote. Thus, the Korean Wave trend has created significant business and marketing

opportunities, where companies leverage the popularity of K-Pop celebrities to enhance the attractiveness of their products and attract consumer interest. Typically, companies seek brand ambassadors who align with their criteria and are popular celebrities with a large fan base. Companies choose celebrities as brand ambassadors due to strong reasons such as their outstanding achievements and expertise in their respective fields.

The advancement of communication technology, particularly the internet, has also had an impact on the social and cultural patterns of society. In this modern era, accessing information through various media such as newspapers, radio, television, and online news portals via the internet has become effortless. The internet has become a crucial aspect of social, political, and economic life, facilitating access to various daily needs of the community. This has led to an increase in the number of internet users who frequently access it. A significant development in communication technology, especially the internet, is the shift in online shopping behavior. This phenomenon can be observed in Indonesia, where many companies, including those related to this research, such as PUBG Mobile.

In the marketing context, the company PUBG Mobile uses celebrities as brand ambassadors to reach a broader audience and influence consumer behavior. They select popular celebrities with a large fan base to build emotional connections with the target market. Through this strategy, the company hopes to increase brand awareness, expand the reach of their products, and attract consumer interest in using or purchasing their products. Thus, in an era of advanced communication technology, companies leverage the popularity of celebrities and the ease of internet access to connect with potential consumers and promote their products more effectively.

PUBG Mobile, one of the highly popular mobile games, chose to collaborate with the famous K-Pop group named BLACKPINK in 2020. BLACKPINK, consisting of four members: Jisoo, Jennie, Rosé, and Lisa has gained enormous global popularity with their catchy songs and energetic stage performances. The collaboration between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK provides fans of PUBG Mobile with the opportunity to experience exclusive content inspired by BLACKPINK within the game. Some possible elements of the collaboration between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK include character appearances in the game designed based on BLACKPINK members, special clothing inspired by the group's style, and BLACKPINK songs incorporated into the game's soundtrack. This collaboration between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK is an example of companies' efforts to leverage the global popularity of K-Pop and reach a broader audience by integrating popular cultural elements into their games. It also gives BLACKPINK fans the chance to have a deeper experience with their

favorite music group through the virtual world of PUBG Mobile.



Figure 1.2 BLACKPINK co-branding official poster with PUBG Mobile Game

Source: YG's official Twitter account (2020)



Figure 1.3 BLACKPINK co-branding official poster with PUBG Mobile Game

Source: PUBG Mobile's Official Instagram account (2020)

The collaboration between PUBG (PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds) and Blackpink is a synergy that combines two influential entities in the entertainment world. PUBG, a popular game with a battle royale concept, meets Blackpink, one of the most famous K-pop music groups in the world. This collaboration focuses on merging elements from both brands, creating a unique and exciting experience for their respective fans. An important aspect of this collaboration is the use of Blackpink's famous songs in the PUBG Mobile game. Songs such as "Playing with Fire" and "Kill This Love" are featured in the game, allowing players to feel the energy and spirit of Blackpink while playing PUBG. Additionally, the collaboration involves introducing character appearances inspired by Blackpink. PUBG Mobile players can customize their character's appearance with specially designed clothing and accessories featuring Blackpink motifs. This provides an opportunity for Blackpink fans who are also PUBG Mobile players to express their support for their favorite music group within the gaming context. In addition to in-game content, the collaboration also includes special events hosted by PUBG Mobile featuring the presence of Blackpink members. These events can take the form of live performances in virtual concerts or other special shows, where Blackpink members interact directly with PUBG Mobile fans. This allows fans to experience a sense of closeness with their idols within the gaming context they enjoy.

The collaboration between PUBG and Blackpink is not just a merger of strong brands but also an effort to expand their fan bases and exposure. PUBG Mobile leverages Blackpink's global popularity to reach music fans who may not have been exposed to their game before. Meanwhile, Blackpink gets the opportunity to expand their fan base into the large gaming community. Through this collaboration, PUBG and Blackpink create a mutually beneficial relationship, where they reinforce and expand their reach among their fans. This creates an exciting and unique experience for PUBG Mobile players who are also Blackpink fans, while positively influencing the image and popularity of both brands.

Companies often seek collaborations with BLACKPINK to leverage their appeal and influence on their dedicated fan base. These collaborations can take the form of brand endorsements, product partnerships, or joint marketing campaigns. By associating their brand with BLACKPINK, companies aim to increase brand awareness, boost sales, and tap into the enthusiastic and loyal fan community that BLACKPINK has built. The influence of BLACKPINK extends beyond the music industry. They have also entered into various partnerships and collaborations with renowned fashion brands, beauty companies, and even consumer goods companies. These collaborations benefit not only the involved companies but

also provide BLACKPINK with an additional platform to showcase their talents and expand their reach.

Collaborations between BLACKPINK and companies are usually strategically planned. As Kevin Lane Keller (2013) stated, "Brand partnerships provide an opportunity for two or more brands to work together in ways that leverage the equity of each brand, enhance brand awareness, and create new brand associations and experiences." Companies select BLACKPINK based on brand image, values, and compatibility with the target market. The goal is to create mutually beneficial partnerships where both parties can leverage their strengths and tap into their respective audiences. Overall, the popularity of BLACKPINK has made them a sought-after collaboration target for companies across various industries. Their influence, combined with a strong fan base, provides valuable opportunities for businesses to enhance their brand presence and engage with passionate consumer communities.

This research will employ a quantitative method with a positivist paradigm to examine the relationship between co-branding as the X variable and brand image as the Y variable. The population under study will be students from the Faculty of Communication and Business at Telkom University. The quantitative method will be used to collect data that can be measured numerically and analyzed using statistical techniques. In this research, data will be collected through the use of questionnaires containing questions related to students' perceptions of co-branding and brand image. The positivist paradigm in this research assumes that the phenomena being studied can be objectively measured and explained through existing laws. This paradigm focuses on hypothesis testing and the pursuit of objective truth. The X variable in this research is co-branding. Co-branding refers to a marketing strategy where two different brands collaborate to create a new product or service that combines their identities and images. This research will measure students' perceptions of the effectiveness of co-branding and the extent to which co-branding influences brand image. The Y variable is brand image. Brand image refers to the perceptions and associations formed in consumers' minds about a brand. This research will measure the brand image held by students towards the brands involved in co-branding. The population of this study is students from the Faculty of Communication and Business Telkom University. A random sample will be selected from this population to represent variations in perceptions of co-branding and brand image. The data collected from the sample will be statistically analyzed to test the relationship between the X variable (co-branding) and the Y variable (brand image).

The Faculty of Communication and Business (FKB) at Telkom University as the population for this research for several compelling reasons. The relevance of the research subject to the

field of FKB, which possesses knowledge and interest in communication and business. The ease of access and support that the university environment can provide for this research. The alignment with the research objectives, especially if the research focuses on changes or impacts occurring within the academic and business environment. The potential internal benefits for FKB, such as recommendations for curriculum development. The potential for collaborations resulting from this research.

This research has strong academic reasons to be conducted. It has the potential to make a valuable contribution to academic knowledge by exploring the impact of celebrity collaborations like Blackpink on brand image within a campus environment. This study enables the application of marketing and branding theories in a real-world context, bridging the gap between theoretical understanding and practical experience. Through the analysis of celebrity collaboration's effects, this research can play a crucial role in advancing academic literature on co-branding. Additionally, it will assist students or researchers in developing essential research skills, including data collection, data analysis, and report writing. This research is relevant to current business trends that often involve celebrities in marketing efforts, thus offering valuable insights into contemporary business practices. Ultimately, the research findings may provide practical recommendations to PUBG Mobile or the university on how to enhance their marketing strategies, benefiting both the academic and practical realms.

1.3 Identification of Problems

Based on the background description above, the research problem in this study can be formulated as follows:

1. Does the co-branding between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK have an influence on the brand image of PUBG Mobile?
2. How significant is the influence of the co-branding between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK on the brand image of PUBG Mobile?

1.4 Research Purposes

Based on the previously formulated research problem, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To find out if there is a Co-Branding Effect between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK on the PUBG Mobile Brand Image.
2. To find out how much influence the influence of Co-Branding between PUBG Mobile and BLACKPINK has on the Brand Image of PUBG Mobile.

1.5 Research Usability

This research is expected to provide benefits to those who need it, both theoretically and practically, including:

a. Theoretical Uses

This research is expected to add insight and knowledge about how a brand's strategy is to build a brand image by implementing Co-branding with other parties and how it affects both parties to consumers. It is also expected to be a means of developing knowledge theoretically studied in lectures.

b. Practical Use

1. For writers

For the researchers themselves, it is expected that they can add knowledge and broader insights, so that it can be used as input in seeing the difference between theory and practice in the field.

2. For Academics

It is hoped that this research can be used as input for research related to finance as well as a source of information for further research, and can contribute to adding scientific insight to the academic community in the fields of communication and business, especially marketing.

3. For Readers

The author hopes that this research can be used as input for readers who will conduct research both related to this research topic and unrelated.

1.6 Time and Place of Research

The research that will be carried out by the author is from March to July 2023. The place of research conducted by the author is at Telkom University, Jalan Telekomunikasi, Buahbatu - Bojongsoang Canal, Sukapura, Dayeuhkolot District, Bandung Regency, West Java.