

Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention: Examining the Mediation of Attitude towards Advertisement in Z Generation of Pakistan

Abdur Rehman Arif, Huam Hon Tat, Norizan Mat Saad,
Muhammad Khalid Anser, Arman Khan

Putra Business School, UPM, Malaysia

Email: pbs20204249@grad.putrabs.edu.my, huam@putrabs.edu.my,
needham@putrabs.edu.my, pbs20204251@grad.putrabs.edu.my,
pbs20204231@grad.putrabs.edu.my

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Abstract

Generating purchase intention is the most integral objective of advertising for businesses. There are many factors that contribute to generate purchase intention and one of those is celebrity endorsement strategy. Businesses can always attract customers through celebrity endorsement. It warrants examining the relationship of celebrity endorsement and purchase intention in the context of z generation of Pakistan and turns to be the basic objective of the study. The study further gauges the mediation of attitude towards advertisement in such a relationship. It is a quantitative study based on deductive approach. It takes to put purchase intention as a primary research question in the field of marketing and opts to use questionnaire to collect data on the basis of convenience sampling which will be analyzed through SPSS and PLS. The data will be collected from 384 respondents. The study chooses source credibility theory, match up hypothesis, and source attractiveness theory as its underpinning theories.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Attitude towards Advertisement, Purchase Intention, Celebrity's Credibility and Congruence, Z Generation

Introduction

Generating purchase intention is the most integral objective of advertising for businesses (Kang & Sung, 2022). There are many factors that contribute to generate purchase intention (Ventre & Kolbe, 2021) and one of those is celebrity endorsement strategy. Celebrity endorsement is a common promotion approach that relates to the utilization of celebrities to endorse products or services (Nabil et al., 2022). Kainyu (2022) claimed that firms can always attract customers through celebrity endorsement. Many studies have empirically proved the helpful relationship of celebrity endorsement and message recall, announcement approval, attitude towards advertisement, attitude towards brand, and buying intention (Clara, 2023).

Being one of the most influential tools of promotion of brands, celebrity endorsement is also found to be greatly expensive for businesses (Khan & Zaman, 2021). A noteworthy example is of Kylie Jenner who earned \$590 million through endorsement of business' including her own business in 2021 only (Forbes list, 2021). This amount is unbelievably like around \$2 million per day. Similarly, Fawad Khan, a Pakistani celebrity used to charge 15 to 30 million rupees for a single commercial project till 2017 (Pakistan, 2017). While the celebrities are earning huge riches out of endorsements whether they could really generate buying behavior towards the endorsed brands or not, is huge question to be probed on.

The advertisers should not perceive that the any celebrity will move a mystic wand and the sales will instantly jump up, but they will have to be critically careful to choose the celebrity with right characteristics (Dey & Gayathri, 2021). These characteristics may include celebrity's credibility (Wang & Liu, 2023), celebrity's congruence with brand (Osorio et al., 2021), and celebrity's congruence with target audience (Masato, 2021). Celebrity's credibility can be further measured by its attractiveness (Clara, 2023), trustworthiness (Meng et al., 2023), and expertise (Wang & Liao, 2023).

The study is distinctive enough as it opts to take generation z as its population which is Lifelong equipped with technology (Marks, 2021) and is target of many industries. Z generation is with very meager literature (Crider, 2022), needed to be probed further (Emelie & Nelly, 2022) which includes the people born between 1997 and 2012. Unleashing the potential of generation z became the motivation to conduct such a study. Additionally, there is acute shortage of research on z-generation in the context of celebrity endorsement in Pakistan.

Literature Review

To develop purchase intention several types of advertising have been used (Rosengren et al., 2020). While an established and widely used technique in marketing advertising is the utilization of endorsements (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020). Over the past 50 years, there has been a marked growth in the employment of celebrities in product promotion; despite the large cost the tactic frequently requires (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). A celebrity is included in every fourth or fifth advertisement, and now around 25% of advertisements in markets of west feature celebrity endorsements and according to reports from Asia, this number is significantly greater (Carrillat & Ilicic, 2019). When considering the advantages of leveraging celebrity endorsements and the influence that celebrities have on customers, these findings may not be shocking.

Celebrity's credibility is an endorser's affirmative characteristic that may have an effect on the audience's perception and it has three dimensions such as attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness (Halder et al., 2021; Ohanian, 1990). The terms like classy, elegant, attractive, beautiful and sexy have been commonly used to grasp the physical attractiveness of a celebrity (Olmedo et al., 2020; Ohanian, 1990). Al-Awadhi (2020) claimed that attractive endorsement can ensure higher success rates in interpersonal marketing as compared to endorsing an unattractive person. Celebrity's expertise is the degree of perception about an endorser to be source of convincing claims (Lee et al., 2022; Erdogan, 1999). Researches argue that the experts in field are much effective as the message shared by an expert is subject to more acceptance and agreement regarding the idea and subject of the message as compared to the word on someone who is not an expert (Lee et al, 2022). Authenticity and honesty of the celebrity is taken to be the trustworthiness of the celebrity (Lee et al., 2022). Attracting

the customers with more trustworthy personality is more influential way to earn (Sugita & Hendryani, 2022). The theory employed for the celebrity's credibility is source credibility theory (Zhu et al., 2020)

Cheung and Leung (2021) defined it as Congruence of celebrity and brand refers to the degree of fit amid the image and values of a celebrity and those of a brand they endorse. A main determinant of effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is congruence between product and the endorser (Moharana et al., 2023). Hussain et al (2021) claimed that the academic view of 'match-up' is reliable with assumptions of earlier researches that have focused on the congruence based effectiveness. They submitted that the appropriate congruence between endorsed brand and celebrity will lead to effective celebrity endorsement. The theory employed for the celebrity's congruence with brand is match-up hypothesis (Rahman et al., 2021)

Evaluations increase in case of increase in supposed similarity between consumer and celebrity (Roy et al., 2018). Abbasi et al (2023) recommended that purchasers can develop a connection to the product and may construct self-brand association. Brand evaluation also enhanced in case of increase in fit between celebrity and the consumer characteristics (Roy & Bagdare, 2015). Self-brand association shows that when an endorser burns-through a product, the customer fuses the product into oneself idea, consequently coordinating the brand as a piece of their all-inclusive self (Abbasi et al., 2023). Shoppers' self-idea turns into a fundamental component to impact their utilization practices. Mental self-view consistency assists the advertisers with foreseeing various countenances of purchaser conduct (Ozer et al., 2020). Customers are bound to buy when their mental self-view coordinates with the superstar endorser's picture (Lee et al., 2022). The theory employed for the celebrity's congruence with target audience/consumer is source attractiveness (Shin & Lee, 2021).

Attitude towards advertisement is an individual's overall evaluation of an advertisement as optimistic or damaging, which includes both perceptive and affecting evaluations (Wang & Liu, 2023). Studies are conducted having taken attitude towards advertisement as a mediator to endorsement and purchase intention and have shown different results. Das and Dhar (2021) concludes that attitude towards advertisement mediates the association of celebrity endorsement and purchase intent. While Zhu et al (2022) proved that attitude towards advertisement and brand attitude mediated the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. Li et al (2020) concluded that attitude towards advertisement and trust mediates the association of endorsement and purchase intention. However, Bezabih (2021) found that attitude towards advertisement did not significantly mediate the association of product involvement and purchase intention.

With the Consistency of meager literature, generation z is youngest one coming into the employment force with approximation of potential earning around 2 trillion United State Dollars by 2030 (Forbes, 2021). Generation z, moreover, is found to be very much diverse in nature and have been recognized as lifelong equipped with technology (Marks, 2021). Therefore, this generation is the target of many industries (Dash et al., 2021) and the fashion consciousness is increasing (Arif et al., 2021). Keeping these characteristics in mind the current study opts to explore its view about celebrity endorsement in this generation, in addition to their gender difference about the endorsement strategy.

Scope and Significance

Many businesses put great weight age to celebrity endorsement and invest a significant amount to advertise their brand opting celebrity endorsement advertising strategy (Awan & Arif, 2016). However, merely investing endorsement mode of advertising is not the right way to expect a great amount of returns (Raithel, 2020); rather the firms will have to consider many factors to save their huge investments in celebrity endorsement (Lili et al., 2022). These factors may be Celebrity's attractiveness (Arora et al., 2022), expertise (Wang & Liao, 2023) and trustworthiness (Rungruangjit, 2022). The current study observes the impact of credibility of celebrity (Su et al., 2023), congruence of customer with celebrity (Abbasi et al., 2023), congruence of brand and celebrity (Tseng & Wang, 2023) on purchase intention. The study will opt to confirm these features as influential or not in the geography of Pakistan which is with acute shortage of literature regarding celebrity endorsement. Moreover, this study investigates the influence of celebrity endorsement on the consumer purchase intention through the mediation of attitude towards advertisement.

The study will yield valuable information that will help Pakistani marketers create celebrity endorsement-based advertising campaigns to target generation z. This can help businesses choose the right celebrities for the endorsement of their brand. Moreover, governments can utilize celebrity endorsement effectively in health, environment, economy and other related campaigns to help achieve public goals. For instance, Reddinger et al (2022) found that celebrity endorsements significantly increased the likelihood of people getting vaccinated and suggest the policy makers to use celebrity endorsements to promote vaccination campaigns and increase vaccine uptake. Similarly, Park et al (2020) suggest that policy makers could use celebrity endorsements to promote environmental policies and encourage consumers to adopt more sustainable behaviors. Above all, 'this study is all about satisfying customers through celebrity endorsement'.

Proposed Conceptual Model

The study proposes to broaden the current theorization about effective celebrity endorsement and it proposes how celebrity endorsement leads to the purchase intention through a proposed model. The model shown in figure 1 illustrates the relationship of celebrity's credibility, celebrity's congruence towards brand, and celebrity's congruence towards target audience/consumer with purchase intention. It also opts to check the mediation of attitude towards advertisement between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. These relationships are gauged in the context of z generation of Pakistan. The objectives of the study are:

- 1: To examine the impact of celebrity's credibility on Purchase Intention.
- 2: To examine the impact of celebrity's congruence with brand on Purchase Intention.
- 3: To examine the impact of celebrity's congruence with Target Audience on purchase intention.
- 4: To examine the mediation of attitude towards advertisement between celebrity's credibility and purchase intention.
- 5: To examine the mediation of attitude towards advertisement between celebrity's congruence with brand and purchase intention.
- 6: To examine the mediation of attitude towards advertisement between celebrity's congruence with target audience and purchase intention.

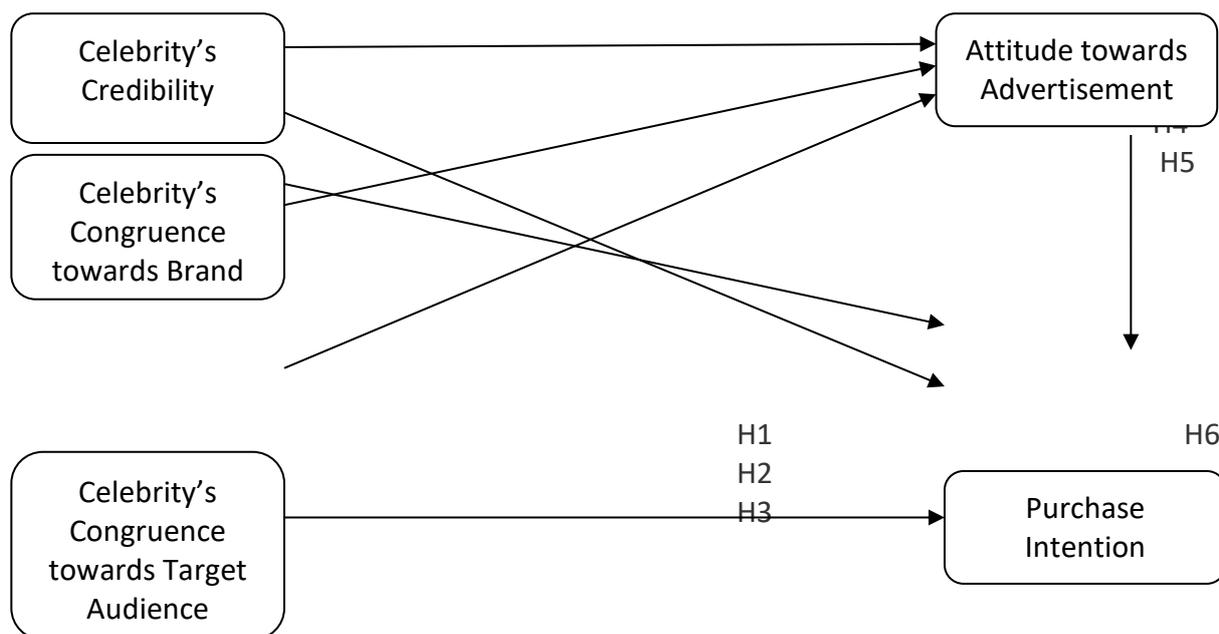


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model

Hypothesis Development

First hypothesis of the study is based on the assumption that consumers perceive credible celebrity endorsers as trustworthy and authoritative sources of information, which can lead to a positive attitude toward the endorsed product or brand and an increased likelihood of purchase intention (Shah, 2020). Liu et al (2020) examines the effect of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention, with a focus on the moderating role of source credibility. This effect was stronger for consumers who perceived the celebrity endorser as credible. They also found that the effect of source credibility on purchase intention was partially mediated by consumer attitude toward the endorsed product. Rungruangjit (2022) also confirmed the positive impact of celebrity's credibility on purchase intention. So these studies provide support for the hypothesis that the credibility of a celebrity endorser is positively related to purchase intention among consumers and need to be tested among z generation of Pakistan.

H1: Celebrity's credibility has a positive influence on purchase intention.

Phua et al (2020) found that perceived congruence between a celebrity and a brand positively influenced consumers' attitude towards the brand, which in turn led to higher purchase intention. Similarly, Tseng and Wang (2023) found that celebrity-brand congruence positively influenced consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention. Similarly, Saima and Khan (2020) found that social media celebrity's credibility positively influenced purchase intention, and the congruence between the celebrity and the product also positively influenced purchase intention. Lee et al (2022) concluded that there is a significant positive relationship of celebrity-brand congruence on purchase intention but with mediation of perceived quality and trust. Having discrepancy among different findings, there are studies that also proved the direct of relationship of celebrity and brand match up towards purchase intention. Hence, the above literature warrants the development of the following hypothesis.

H2: Celebrity's congruence towards brand has a direct positive influence on purchase intention.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between celebrity congruence with the target audience and purchase intention. For Instance, Zhu et al (2022) found that the perceived similarity between the celebrity and the target audience had a positive effect on purchase intention in the context of Instagram influencer marketing. In another study, Yu and Zhang (2022) investigated the impact of celebrity congruence with target audience on purchase intention in the context of online shopping. Similarly, Wang et al (2022) showed that the perceived congruence between the celebrity and the target audience had a positive effect on purchase intention in the context of green products. A study by Caan and Lee (2023) indicated that the congruence between the celebrity and the target audience had a positive effect on purchase intention in the context of luxury brand products. Chen et al (2022) concluded that there is strong relationship of celebrity-target audience congruence with purchase intention but with mediation of brand familiarity. Khan and Zaman (2021) also witnessed the relationship of congruence of celebrity and the target audience with mediation of brand attitude as significant. So, it is important to probe the direct relationship of celebrity and the target audience/consumer.

H3: Celebrity's congruence towards target audience has a direct positive relationship with purchase intention.

Vidyanata et al (2022) proved that celebrity's credibility have a positive impact on purchase intention with mediation of attitude towards advertisement. Similarly, Khan et al (2023) claimed that attitude towards advertisement plays a vital role as mediator between significant positive relationship between celebrity's credibility and purchase intention. While, Chen et al (2021) found that attitude towards advertisement partially mediates between celebrity's credibility and purchase intention. Shah (2020) conducted a study on relationship of celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. Author proved that all dimension of celebrity endorsement as celebrity's attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness are mediation by attitude towards advertisement. None of them conducted study in the context of z generation. So, it is needed to test the perception of z generation in the context of Pakistan.

H4: The influence of celebrity's credibility on purchase intention is mediated by attitude towards advertisement.

The congruence between the celebrity and the brand is a crucial factor that determines the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. Tseng and Wang (2023) found that the congruence between celebrity and brand positively influences consumers' attitudes towards the advertisement, which in turn, increases their purchase intention. Same alike, a study conducted by Arora et al (2019) found that the congruence between celebrity and brand has a significant positive effect on attitude towards advertisement, which in turn, positively influences consumers' purchase intention. Shah (2020) witnessed that attitude towards advertisement and attitude towards brand simultaneously mediate the relationship of celebrity brand fit and purchase intention. The literature available of relationship of celebrity's congruence with brand and purchase intention with mediation of attitude towards advertisement is critically shallow in the context of z generation of Pakistan which warrants further probe.

H5: The influence of celebrity's congruence with brand on purchase intention is mediated by attitude towards advertisement.

The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements depends on various factors, including the congruence between the celebrity and target audience (Um, 2020). Congruence refers to the similarity between the celebrity and the target audience in terms of demographic, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics (Min et al., 2019). One study conducted by Pradhan et al (2023) found that the congruence between a celebrity and target audience positively affects attitude towards advertisement and purchase intention. Another study by Yang and Jiang (2021) showed that perceived congruence positively affects attitude towards advertisement, which in turn affects purchase intention. Moreover, Rahman (2022) proved that the positive relationship between attitude towards advertisement and purchase intention is stronger when there is high congruence between the celebrity and target audience. Yang et al (2022) also found that celebrity-target audience congruence mediates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention through attitude towards advertisement. This literature demands to probe such relationship in the context of z generation of Pakistan.

H6: The influence of celebrity's congruence with target audience on purchase intention is serially mediated by attitude towards advertisement and attitude towards brand.

Research Methodology

Research philosophy is related to the fundamental beliefs and assumptions that guide the research process (Younus & Zaidan, 2022). The study opted purchase intention as a primary research question in the field of marketing. This study opts for positivist research philosophy under ontology since the research philosophy depends upon the objective of the study (Busse et al., 2019). The use of a positivist approach allowed the researchers to quantify the impact of celebrity endorsement on buying behavior and draw statistical conclusions about the effectiveness of this marketing strategy (Zhao et al., 2022).

According to Babbie (2020), the unit of analysis is the individual, group, or social artifact that a researcher studies to understand a phenomenon. The unit of analysis in this questionnaire-based research study is who is included in generation z. According to Babbie (2020), there are three commonly used time horizons in research: cross-sectional, longitudinal, and retrospective. This study is the analysis of the very time responses of the sample about celebrity endorsement and the proposed relationships, which is taken one time; therefore, this study's time horizon category falls under cross sectional. This study is a quantitative type of study and follows mono method that focuses on examining the relationships, underlying theories and the proposed hypothesis. Mono, mixed, and multi are the three methods used in sampling (Bindu & Herbert, 2022). It is very important to choose the population of the study (Khaw et al., 2022). The population of this study is z generation of Pakistan. Generation z, moreover, is found to be very much diverse in nature and have been recognized as lifelong equipped with technology (Marks, 2021). The current study uses convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which is related to choosing individuals or items that are easily accessible or convenient to the researcher. This method is regularly used when time or funds are restricted, but it can introduce bias into the sample (Winton & Sabol, 2022). Following the directions of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size of the study is 384. This research will use a questionnaire to obtain primary data. The

study uses five degree likert scale to measure the variables. The data will be analyzed through SPSS and Smart-PLS.

Discussion and Conclusion

The conclusions are based upon the rich literature of celebrity endorsement. Starting with relationships, there found to be a positive relationship between celebrity's credibility and purchase intention (Firman et al., 2021). Moreover, all the dimensions of celebrity's credibility are found to contribute towards purchase intention such as attractiveness (Arora et al., 2019), expertise (Trivedi & Sama, 2021), and trustworthiness (Rungruangjit, 2022). The congruence of celebrity and the brand influences the purchase intention positively (Arora et al., 2022). Likewise, the celebrity's congruence with target audience also contributes to generate purchase intention (Ao et al., 2023).

The attitude towards advertisement also mediate between the celebrity's credibility, congruence with brand, and congruence with celebrity and purchase intention (Shah, 2020), proved by many studies. It is observed that a celebrity with certain features first attract generation z towards advertisement and then it may lead to purchase intention (Ngoh, 2022). Different studies found different results in this regard but more or less the relationships are significant in one way or another. Such a result where all hypotheses are accepted is because of generation z's keenness towards becoming modern and more technology oriented than any other generation (Marks, 2021). Hence, all the hypotheses found accepted regarding z generation in the context of Pakistan.

The future studies should be conducted as a comparison of z and y generation in the context of celebrity endorsement to guide advertisers, policy makers, and companies. Many studies are conducted to check the mediation of attitude towards brand and many are conducted to gauge the relationship of attitude towards advertisement and attitude towards brand. So, a sequential/serial mediation of attitude towards advertisement and attitude towards brand should be conducted to examine the relationship of celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

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