

Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention: What Influenced Malaysian Youth Most?

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Abstract

The celebrity endorsement strategy has changed the way we think about marketing. This phenomenon has shaped a new advertising strategy which emphasis celebrity involvement to promote one product or/and services. In this regard, this paper aims to discover the influence of celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), brand loyalty (Blo) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI). A quantitative analysis was carried out and correlation research design was chosen for this research as the intention of this study is to see if a relationship does exist among celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), brand loyalty (Blo) toward Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI). 138 respondents answered the questionnaire via online. Finding showed only three independent variables that are celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), product match-up (PMU) and consumer perception of quality (Qua) significantly contribute to the purchase intention. The study recommended that subsequent studies on celebrity endorsement should consider other age groups (e.g., adult). This study has also restricted itself to quantitative study. To provide deeper insights into the topic matter, it is recommended that subsequent studies should be conducted through qualitative research.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Purchase Intention, Product Match-up, Perception of Quality, Brand Loyalty.

Introduction

Advertising facilitates the delivery of information on business products and services in various platforms which can lead to product awareness and knowledge. A very common and

commonly used strategy in advertising campaigns for nearly any kind of good or service out there is celebrity endorsement. Considering the effectiveness of advertising plans through celebrities' endorsement involvement, many businesses made a big stride by engaging celebrities in their advertising campaigns and stimulating positive consumer emotions towards products (Kumar, & Raju, 2013). Khan et al., 2016 claimed that celebrity endorsement in most of the famous brands has significant impact on high market share in Pakistan. Similarly, in Malaysia, celebrity endorsement is becoming popular and currently adopted by marketers as it enables them to make their products more noticeable, attractive and compelling to their potential consumers. For example, Fasha Sandha and Zizi Kirana are the endorsers for Bella Ammara, Joe Flizzow, Bunga and Hullera for Realme 5G, and many more. Even though marketing communication strategies through celebrity endorsement are widely applied by businesses, a previous study revealed 56% of Malaysians were willing to spend money on their favorite celebrities, however, only 30% of Malaysians were willing to buy the products endorsed by celebrities (Wei & Li, 2013).

This study is conducted with the overall purpose of looking at the relationship between celebrity endorsers and youth purchase intention. To achieve this overall purpose however, the study sought to accomplish the specific objective which are to discover the relationship between celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI); to discover the relationship between celebrity endorser credibility (CRE) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI); to discover the relationship between product match-up (PMU) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI); to discover the relationship between consumer perception of quality (Qua) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI) and to discover the relationship between brand loyalty (Blo) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI) towards Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI).

The use of celebrities by corporations to promote their goods, draw customers in, persuade them to buy them, and otherwise influence consumer behavior makes this topic fascinating to researchers. Researchers are also interested in learning more about the elements that young Malaysian customers will most likely consider when making a purchase. The justification for examining young customers is that they represent the generation that will determine future buying patterns in Malaysia.

This study is important because it will enable firms to examine the criteria that consumers use most frequently to decide whether or not to buy products associated with celebrities. The findings of this study may also be useful to businesses as they prepare to recruit a brand manager because they will be more able to think of celebrities to endorse their products. The youth population was the study's primary emphasis. Future research may look at how celebrity endorsement and purchasing inclinations affect other demographic variables.

Literature Review

Celebrity and Celebrity Endorser

Celebrities are well recognized persons in a society whereby their work can be in the area of music, film, fashion, sports, cooking and many others. According to Pradhan et al (2016), a celebrity is defined as an individual who possesses public recognition and uses that recognition for the promotion of products, brands or services. These are people that have been recognized by the public because of the talent and work produced by them.

Celebrity endorser on the other hand is a term used to refer to the use of an “individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer goods by appearing with it in an advertisement” (McCracken, 1989). Subbiah & Sathish (2020) claimed that a sort of advertising technique or marketing tool used by businesses or nonprofit organizations is celebrity endorsement.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the direction or feelings towards the intention to purchase and the feelings towards it can spark because of specific factors searched by the buyers. When marketers choose celebrities to endorse products, the intention to buy by customers is the result of one of the celebrity attributes where the individual has an advantage over others (Ohanian, 1991).

When marketers opt to use celebrities for their product endorsement, messages received by consumers must be easily remembered and celebrities are able to generate the intention to buy. Thus, positive attributes by celebrities are important factors that may influence consumers' intention to buy.

Marketers must have the control towards positive and negative attributes portrayed by celebrities. Celebrities that have a negative influence will result in a decreased endorsement and have a negative influence on consumer's intention to buy (Tripp et al., 1994). Thus, marketers have to be careful in choosing celebrities to endorse and putting it as a requirement in their agreement for the celebrities to always uphold their good image in the eyes of the public.

Celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT) and Purchase Intention

Celebrity endorser's physical attractiveness is one of the main aspects to be considered by businesses to promote purchase intentions. Physical attractiveness is typically one of the most important factors considered by consumers, and it receives high social approval and acceptability (Jamil & Hassan, 2014; Ohanian, 1991). The attractiveness of celebrity brand ambassadors is seen as a key indicator to increase purchase intent and to ensure consumer brand loyalty (Subbiah & Sathish, 2020). Their attractiveness could capture audience attention in both print and electronic media. A person's physical appearance will typically garner public attention and have a favorable impact on consumer behavior toward the good or service (Jamil & Hassan, 2014; Ohanian, 1991).

H¹: celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT) significantly contributes to purchase intention (PI).

Celebrity Endorser Credibility (CRE) and Purchase Intention

Credibility can be defined as the degree to which a source is believed to have sufficient knowledge or experience to render an unbiased judgement. Similarly, while some customers are dependent on the source's competence to provide the necessary information, others are more likely to be persuaded by an endorsement from someone with high perceived expertise than someone with low perceived experience (Ahmad et. al., 2020; Mansour & Diab, 2016; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999). According to prior studies, celebrity credibility boosts brand perception, encourages purchase intentions, and has a significant influence on how

effectively a product or advertisement is endorsed. (Goldsmith et al., 2000, Gong and Li, 2017; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999). Interestingly, the impact of endorser credibility on consumer attitude change and consumer behavior has received great attention in the marketing area (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021).

H²: celebrity endorser credibility (CRE) significantly contributes to purchase intention (PI).

Product Match up (PMU) and Purchase Intention

According to Friedman and Friedman (1979), the product type and endorser type ought to be compatible. Numerous researches have demonstrated a favorable correlation between customers' perceived product compatibility and advertising effectiveness and purchase intentions (Abirami & Krishnan, 2015; Escalas & Bettman, 2009; Khan et al., 2019; Mishra et al., 2015; Wright, 2016). On the contrary, Khan et al (2019) argued that consumers compare the personality of the endorsers with their own personality and with the personality of friends and relatives and a favorable matchup positively affects consumer purchase-intentions (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995).

H³: Product match up (PMU) significantly contribute to purchase intention (PI).

Consumer Perception of Quality (Qua) and Purchase Intention

Consumer perception of quality has a great impact on their purchase intention. Many studies show the results of perceived quality stimulate consumer purchase intentions. Consumer propensity to purchase is significantly influenced by their sense of quality. An endorsement from a celebrity can influence consumer buy intent, but it can also have a beneficial impact on how customers perceive the brand's quality, leading to more frequent brand purchases (Glover, 2009; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Khan et al., 2019).

H⁴: Consumer perception of quality (Qua) significantly contribute to purchase intention (PI).

Brand loyalty (Blo) and Purchase Intention

High affiliation with a brand is known as brand loyalty (Naghibi & Sadeghi, 2011). Brand loyalty has a strong correlation with purchase intention. Daneshvary & Schwer (2000) argues that customers are more devoted to brands with strong brand image, and this fidelity influences purchase intentions. Similarly, a powerful brand creates great awareness, which influences consumer purchasing intentions favorably (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000) whereby consumers have high purchase intentions and low probability to switch to competing brands (Shabbir et al., 2017).

H⁵: Brand loyalty (Blo) significantly contribute to purchase intention (PI).

Methodology

Correlation research design was chosen for this research as the intention of this study is to see if a relationship does exist among celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), brand loyalty (Blo) toward Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI). Convenient sampling technique applied due to the difficulties to obtain the comprehensive list of Malaysian youth besides limitation of resources, time constraint, and lack of manpower. The study followed

Hair et al. (2006) whereby the ratio would be twenty-five-to-one ratio of independent variables. Since there are five independent variables, the study should obtain at least 125 responses as sample size. The questionnaire adopted from Khan et al (2019) and 138 respondents answered the questionnaire via online. The five-point likert-scale ranging from 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, and 5: Strongly Agree were developed and divided into seven parts which consists of Part A, Part B, Part C, Part D, Part E, Part F and Part G. The first section which is Part A of the questionnaire outlines the demographic profile of respondents. In this section, respondents will be asked to indicate their gender, age, income and highest education qualification. Part B until Part G of the questionnaire was focused on the following variables: celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), brand loyalty (Blo) and purchase intention (PI). The instrument used in this study was tested for validity and reliability to ensure a high-quality measure. Salkind (2009) claimed that the reliability (or the consistency) and validity (or the does-what-it-should qualities) of a measurement instrument are essential because the absence of these qualities could explain why the researcher acts incorrectly in accepting or rejecting the research hypothesis. In order to check the validity of the questionnaire, content validity was chosen in order to measure how well the items represent the entire universe of items.

Results and Discussions

Demography

A total of 138 respondents were analyzed who answered the online survey. The respondents were required to answer their gender, age, income, and highest academic qualification in Part A of the questionnaire that is related to demographic background. Table 1 shows the demographic background of the respondents. In this study, most respondents were female with 123 (89.1%) and only 15 (10.9%) were male. Most of the respondents were between 18-20 years old that is 90 (65.2%) and the remaining 48 (34.8%) were between 21-25 years old. Based on this study, most respondents received under RM1000 with 129 (93.5%), followed by RM1001-RM2000 with 8 (5.8%) and only 1 (0.7%) respondent received between RM2001-RM3000 as their monthly income. Most respondents were Diploma holders with 105 (79.1%) as their highest academic qualification and followed by secondary school with 19 (13.8%), Bachelor's Degree with 13 (9.4%) and another 1 (0.7%) respondent only attending primary school.

Table 1

Demographic Background

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	15	10.9
	Female	123	89.1
Age (years)	18 - 20 years old	90	65.2
	21 - 25 years old	48	34.8
Income	< RM1000.00	129	93.5
	RM1001 - RM2000	8	5.8
	RM2001 - RM3000	1	0.7
Highest academic qualification	Bachelor's Degree	13	9.4
	Diploma	105	76.1
	Primary school	1	0.7
	Secondary School	19	13.8

Regression Analysis

In this study, all independent variables that includes celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), and brand loyalty (Blo) were analyzed towards the only dependent variable; purchase intention (PI) using the standard approach of multiple regression.

Table 2

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.845 ^a	.714	.703	.49730

Notes:

a. Predictors: (Constant), BLo, PMU, Qua, CRE, ATT

b. Dependent Variable: PI

Based on Table 2, it was found that, all independent variables that includes celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), and brand loyalty (Blo) explain 71 percent of the variance (R Square) of purchase intention which is highly significant. Out of 138 respondents, we would be very unlikely to get an R value as high as 0.845. Therefore, we concluded that R is significant.

Table 3

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.461	5	16.292	65.877	<.001 ^b
	Residual	32.645	132	.247		
	Total	114.106	137			

Notes:

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), BLo, PMU, Qua, CRE, ATT

Table 3 shows the F-value of 65.877 to indicate that the relationship between independent variable and dependent variable is highly significant $F(5, 132) = 65.877, p < 0.001$.

Table 3
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.107	.230		-.466	.642
	ATT	.292	.071	.308	4.105	<.001
	CRE	.046	.077	.044	.594	.554
	PMU	.295	.083	.296	3.534	<.001
	Qua	.309	.068	.307	4.550	<.001
	BLo	.014	.056	.012	.247	.805

Notes:

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Next, we made a closer look at the t-values based on Table 4. It indicates that only three independent variables that are celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), product match-up (PMU) and consumer perception of quality (Qua) significantly contribute to the purchase intention $p < 0.001$.

Conclusion

This paper focused on celebrity endorsers and youth purchase intention. The study has attempted to identify the components of celebrity endorsement which are celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), celebrity endorser credibility (CRE), product match-up (PMU), consumer perception of quality (Qua), brand loyalty (Blo) and its influence on Malaysian youth purchase intention (PI). Finding showed only three independent variables that are celebrity endorser attractiveness (ATT), product match-up (PMU) and consumer perception of quality (Qua) significantly contribute to the purchase intention. The results extracted from the current study strongly accept the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchase intention. Previous studies on celebrity endorsements indicate that attractiveness and credibility have positive impacts on consumer attitude toward purchase intention (Park and Lin, 2020; Gong and Li, 2017; Till and Busler, 2000).

Despite the fact that this study has made a few contributions to the field, it additionally has a few limitations. This study covered and concentrated only on youth; therefore, we recommend that future studies of this kind should involve other groups of consumers (e.g. adults). This study has also restricted itself to quantitative study. In order to provide deeper insights into the topic matter, it is recommended that subsequent studies should be conducted through qualitative research.

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