

The Role of Internet Celebrity Endorsement on Consumers' Brand Perception and Online Purchase Intention

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Abstract

Advertisements have played a critical role in our daily lives. The divergent sections of society may need advertisement for various reasons, from information sharing to consumer persuasion to decision-making on purchasing. Nowadays, choosing Internet celebrity endorsement is one of the most popular strategies for companies or individuals to build successful brand development. Some theories, like Source Credibility Theory, Source Attractiveness Theory, and Meaning Transfer Theory, provide an explicit viewpoint of celebrity endorsement to explain how the Internet celebrity endorsement process influences consumers' perceptions and behavior. Therefore, this research developed and examined the relationships among Internet celebrity endorsement, brand perception, and customer purchase intention. With 250 useful survey questionnaires collected, path analysis with smartPLS was used to test the research model. The findings showed that celebrity's attractiveness, expertise, and credibility significantly positively impact brand perception and customer online purchase intention. Besides, the most influential factor in building brand perception is the attractiveness of the Internet celebrity endorsement. Furthermore, consumers' brand perception also has a positive direct impact on online purchase intention. Finally, discussions and implications are also proposed to conclude this study.

Keywords

Internet celebrity endorsements, brand perception, customer online purchase intention

1. Introduction

Celebrity endorsement or celebrity branding is a form of advertising campaign or marketing strategy used by brands, companies, or a non-profit organization that involves celebrities or a well-known person using their social status or fame to help promote a product or service or even raise awareness on environmental or social matters. Marketers use celebrity endorsers in hopes that the positive images of the celebrity endorser of the brand will also be passed on to the products or the brand image associated with the celebrities (Lee and Thorson 2008). Celebrity endorsement can also be considered a valuable tool in building brand perception and directly leading to customer purchase intention (Amos et al. 2008; Hakimi et al. 2011). In today's wholly connected world as a worldwide cyberspace, the physical traditional celebrity endorsements change to Internet celebrity endorsements just through online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc. In the past, all the marketing campaigns took a very long time to reach customers

due to the limitations of the marketing promotion technologies. With the Internet's help and social media's proliferation, companies have found another effective way to make consumers remember their brand. Marketing activities with celebrity endorsements can use private or public accounts to post videos, photos, or live streams to explain, try out new products, answer fans' questions, and advise their followers. For the brand, it is considered the fastest way to differentiate them from the competitors or improve recall. It makes the customers pay attention to brand awareness and perception (Djafarova and Trofilmenko 2018) to enter new markets for consumers to purchase. For example, when Nike wanted to branch out beyond just sponsoring tennis and track and field, they partnered with Michael Jordan- a collaboration that has since grown into its corporation.

When it comes to advertising campaigns several ten years ago, the company's first option was advertising publications, the videos broadcasted on television. However, up to now, the era of digital marketing has been dominated. According to LXA's Martech Stats and Trends, 63% of consumers between 18 and 34 years old said that they "trust what influencers say about brands much more than what brands say about themselves in their advertising." and 17% of companies will devote more than half of their annual marketing budget to influencer marketing campaigns (O'Neill 2022). Moreover, Wiedmann and von Mettenheim (2020) also emphasized the importance of celebrity endorsement factors in promoting actions not just only in brand perception and brand awareness, it also means if companies find the proper endorsement in the right field, they will get the high possibility of winning the race against competitors in the market and affect to their customers' purchase intention.

Thanks to the various applications via the Internet, people can easily buy whatever they want (e.g., clothes, electrical products, home products...etc.), which could help a brand or a company assert a strategic position and create a sustainable relationship between customers and the firms. It gradually builds a loyalty level of customers to the company's brand, enhancing buying behavior in the future. Taking advantage of the explosion of social networks, when it comes to media campaigns using celebrities, Elberse and Verleun (2012) indicated that the first-day celebrities advertise translated products for businesses, the value of their shares on the stock market can increase up to 0.25%. It affects stock value, and advertising using well-known celebrity endorsements directly impacts revenue and brand perception. However, as the market is getting so vibrant, more and more brands are associated with Internet celebrity endorsement, and the information is easily accessible to consumers. The saturation of too much misinformation and too many self-proclaimed celebrities leads to rampant, inaccurate, erroneous information provision, creating a huge barrier when users reach out to receive them. It is hard to control them. For the same difficulties and challenges, businesses have gradually found ways to spread information and messages through celebrities correctly, taking advantage of prestige and professionalism and helping businesses' products and services become more reliable than competitors. Thus, it can be seen that the use of celebrities in advertising is currently increasing. Hence, the study of the direct effect of celebrity endorsements on brand perception and customer buying intention attracts so many concerns.

People may or may not believe what the companies announced when telling them a product or service can assist them. People are more likely to listen and believe when celebrities declare that a product or service has helped them and could help others (Adzharuddin and Salvation 2020; Till and Shimp 1998). The rapid development of the Internet has recently made celebrity endorsements, and companies quickly adapt and change how they operate. No longer is the content only appearing in newspaper or TV ads; it is now easy to find information via images and videos on such aspects as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The spread of messages is easier and more quickly to help the brand's image easily reach users, and makes brand awareness easier than ever before, which can directly affect consumers' behavior (Winter et al. 2021; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut 2020; Zhang et al. 2019). However, the process takes time and needs the right direction and building a long-term relationship between the brand and celebrity endorser. In sum, the research purposes are threefold. First, try to understand the development of Internet celebrity endorsement and the difference between traditional and international celebrity endorsers. Second, examining the effects of Internet celebrity-related factors: attraction, expertise, and reliability. Third, it investigates the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand perception and purchase intention. Next, literature review about Internet celebrity endorsement and brand perception will be discussed. Then, the research methodology will be presented, followed by the data collection method and analysis. Afterward, the results of the findings will be presented. Finally, discussions and implications for the results will also be highlighted.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Celebrity Endorsement

If a person acts or performs something that gives spectacular results and is noticed by the masses, that person has “done something” special that we and the masses cannot do. He/She will be regarded as a unique individual with some “extra title.” We start celebrating his/her all acts which produce success. If the success rate for that person to “deliver” the same results is very high, S/he will become a “celebrity.” Thus, it can be said that a celebrity is “a famous person” who is known to the public in areas, such as sports, cinema, theatre, social life, politics, and science anything, for his/her remarkable achievement in areas other than that of the products class endorsed (Friedman et al. 1979, p. 63). In addition, according to McCracken (1989), a celebrity endorser is an “individual who is known by the public for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed”. In other words, celebrities enjoy specific public recognition by many certain groups of people. They are perceived as gods by the masses. They have some characteristic attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle, or special skills that are not commonly observed. Marketers often choose celebrity endorsers who match the desired brand image simultaneously (Hakimi et al. 2011).

The use of celebrities to increase sales and the recall value of a brand is called celebrity endorsement, and it has been used for a very long time (Choi et al. 2005; McCracken 1989). Celebrity endorsement is a form of brand or advertising campaign involving a well-known person using their fame to help promote a product or service (Erdogan 1999). Celebrities can be an influential reference group and a powerful asset for marketers. Celebrities can give testimonials about the benefits of using a product, endorse a product, or act as a spokesperson for a brand for an extended period (Blackwell et al. 2006). Celebrities and created spokespersons are used in various ways in marketing and advertising (Mehulkumar 2005) who are credible improve brand credibility, and more significant credibility increases consumer-based brand equity, including brand image, brand perception, and customer purchase buying intention.

Using a well-known celebrity could help to improve the subject's rating of the commercial (Rashid et al. 2002). Therefore, companies should consider endorsing a well-known celebrity rather than a nameless spokesperson. The decision of selecting the best endorser for endorsement is thus a pertinent issue fixed by marketers and adventures for their brand promotion. In other words, the celebrity himself/herself should be a strong brand, and the attributes of the celebrity brand should match the attributes of the product brand being highlighted. Advertisers often select endorsers as a promotional strategy to communicate the attributes of their product or brand. Therefore, this advertising approach showed to be on the increase across all media types (Levin 1988; Sherman 1985).

Celebrity as a plan in advertisements is one of the topical strategies of many brands. The purpose of such usage may be to get attention, for prolonged association, or the purpose of recall. Celebrity endorsements act as a credible means of spending money. This is because this is a world of products for which a consumer obtains value from purchasing any variety. This could be for reasons of social standing people want to wear the “right” clothes, drink the “right” beverages and use the “right” fragrances.

Due to the immense availability of media, a new stage of commercial communication has emerged. In this jet age, people ignore all commercials and advertisements while flipping through magazines and newspapers or viewing TV. Companies are constantly finding new ways to communicate with their consumers consciously and subconsciously by surrounding customers with constant brand messages. At a conscious level, the consumers choose the communications they are interested in (Jinadasa 2011). They will selectively perceive relevant brand messages if they seek a specific product or service. The battle for a piece of the consumers' “mind space” has made companies want to associate their brands with desirable and trustworthy celebrities to attract consumers' attention and interest. Celebrity endorsement as a means of communication has been commonly utilized in advertising and branding. This is done because it is assumed that celebrities have a powerful effect on the affluence of the brands they endorse.

Celebrity endorsement has also been defined as: “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement.” (McCracken 1989, p. 310). Research statistics have shown that celebrity advertisements have doubled in the past ten years, which is statistically related to the consumer goods industry. Celebrity endorsements can help advertisers stand out and attract attention (Kaikati 1987). It is also perceived as more entertaining and trustworthy (Atkin and Block 1983). Furthermore, celebrity image impacts brand image, which helps the marketing manager introduce a new product or reposition the existing one (Kaikati 1987; Walker et al. 1992). A celebrity endorsement program that has been planned successfully can change negative perceptions of advertised products and services. The correct choice of celebrity can effectively establish a position for a newly launched product and can also change perceptions of a product that has been positioned incorrectly (Van Der Waladt et al. 2009). It is known that the use of celebrity endorsement has been generating a positive impact on strengthening the firm financially (Agrawal and Kamakura 1995). For example, an event study

reported that Michael Jordan's return to the National Basketball Association (NBA) in 1995 increased his client firms' market-adjusted values by almost two percent on average, or over \$1 billion in stock market value (Pornpitakpan, 2004, p. 56). Globally known celebrities can also provide the same prestige to a product established in an international market (Van Der Wald et al. 2009).

Besides positive impacts, celebrity endorsement may also have disadvantages. Depending on a celebrity's popularity, the costs of a spokesperson for a product can reach up to millions of dollars (Pornpitakpan 2004). Sometimes, celebrity problems and negative publicity may adversely affect the brand image or damage a firm's reputation (Till and Shimp 1998). In other words, if a celebrity loses his/her popularity, becomes overexposed, or changes his/her image, this may cause negative effects on the brand/product (Kaikati 1987). Celebrities can also harm the company product by stating that "they never use this product (vegetarian endorsing a meat product) or overuse the controversial products (alcohol & tobacco)" (van der Waldt et al., 2009, p. 103). The relationship between brand and celebrity ceases to be distinctive if the celebrity starts endorsing too many unrelated brands, which may harm the celebrity's image (Mehulkumar, 2005). The long-term influence of the created characters is another advantage over real celebrities, as the same created spokesperson can be used for a long time and adapted to the changing circumstances (Van Der Waldt et al., 2009, p. 103). The most significant disadvantage of a created spokesperson is that it takes a long time and requires a good amount of advertising spending to create awareness.

2.2 Internet Celebrity Endorsements

Speaking of celebrity endorsements would be incomplete without discussing the evolution of contemporary media, which began with Johann Gutenberg and the early real celebrities, the great writers and newspapers, radio, film, and television, and now the Internet and all of the social media platforms (Celebrity Cred 2024). Though traditional media have contributed to many successful campaigns, it must be considered against the backdrop of the growth of Internet use. In the first decade of the new millennium, because of the speed of the news cycle and the growth of the Internet, celebrity spokespersons have paradoxically been more accessible than ever to reach and sign deals with. Advertisers have been able to quantify better than at any other time the effect a celebrity can have on the bottom line for a given brand. Internet celebrity endorsement refers to some people who are well-known on the Internet and have many fans because of their outstanding appearance or talent. Everybody can be an Internet Celebrity just with a smartphone connected to the Internet. Creating and spreading content on many platforms is easy, from a simple forum fan page many years ago to a million followers on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok accounts. It also states that for an Internet celebrity who has acquired or developed their fame and notability through the Internet, the popularity of social media has made it easier for people to reach a larger audience worldwide.

Internet Celebrities, or influencers, can be categorized into five types: Nano, Micro, Macro, Mega, and Celebrity (Isamail 2018). Nano influencers generally have under 5,000 followers on Instagram. "Micro influencers have between 5,000 and 100,000 followers on Instagram. Macro influencers have between 100,000 and 500,000 followers on Instagram. Mega influencers have between 500,000 to 5,000,000 followers on Instagram. Moreover, finally, Celebrities are defined as having over 5,000,000 followers on Instagram." (Linqia, Inc. 2019, p.8). The different types of Internet Celebrities interact directly with their fans through various online media daily. The resulting advertising and persuasion effect goes beyond the past one-way propagation of TV commercials. Internet celebrities can use the low cost to keep in touch with their fans and create stable network traffic. Companies may engage internet celebrities for influencer marketing to promote items to their fans and followers on their platforms. Internet celebrities frequently serve as lifestyle gurus, promoting a specific lifestyle or attitude in fashion, technology, video games, politics, and entertainment (Reinikainen et al. 2020). Internet celebrities may reach their audiences differently depending on their rise to fame. Millions of people write online journals or blogs, but most are not working because their content does not reach a large audience and may be intended for a smaller, niche audience. In some cases, people might get fame through a single viral event, such as a TikTok 15s – 60s video. Depending on its reach, the content may go viral unexpectedly on the internet. Nevertheless, the industry thrives as promoted Tweets, promoted Instagram, Facebook posts and other types of endorsements are added to the mix as fast as new media channels and apps can be created.

3. Brand Perception

Branding has been around for centuries to distinguish one producer's goods from another's. The word brand is derived from the Old Norse word "brand," which means "to burn," as brands were and still are how livestock owners mark their animals to identify them. According to the AMA (American Marketing Association), the key to creating a brand

is to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design, or other characteristic that distinguishes a product from others. In general, there are 4 fundamental questions that customers invariably ask about the brands, namely:

1. Who are you? Represent brand identity;
2. What are you? Represent brand meaning;
3. What about you? What do I think or feel about you? Represent brand responses;
4. What about you and me? What kind of association and how much of a connection would I like to have with you? Represent brand relationships.

It is different from brand awareness, and it comes in many different ways, such as listening to reviews directly from acquaintances, seeing brand ads, or experiencing the product yourself. Obviously, business is built on customer relationships, and brand perception sets the tone. Today's consumers share their opinions and experiences widely, and their peers trust them when buying or passing. In fact, after having a positive experience with a company, many consumers would recommend the brand to a friend by word-of-mouth physically or online. Therefore, companies try their best to cultivate a positive brand perception among their target consumers. However, it is a tricky goal because today's buyers are more knowledgeable and less loyal than ever (Belch, 1994). Consumers are looking for better experiences and are willing to switch brands until they find one that meets their needs. This is why creating and maintaining a unique brand matters. So, how can companies monitor and understand consumer brand perception when looking at it from inside the box? The customers matter, and so do their opinions. Positive brand perception means consumers are more likely to choose your business over a competitor. It also means they will likely bring new customers to your business since many customers will refer friends and family to their favorite brands. Negative brand perception means they are more likely to choose a competitor and tell other potential customers why they did not choose you. In other words, brand perception impacts your bottom line a lot. Companies often assume they know how their customers feel about them. After all, they talk to them and help them solve problems daily. Based on these interactions alone, companies tend to inflate brand perception, believing it to be more positive than it is. Even for small companies, brand perception is one part of a larger marketing equation. Consumers might see a branded TV spot, read a review, or catch a pre-roll YouTube ad. These brief interactions can quickly change a consumer's perception of a company from negative to neutral or neutral to positive (Barajas-Portas 2015). That is the power of brand perception, which is why it matters. Once consumers formulate a perception in their minds, whether positive, negative, or neutral, it is hard to change their beliefs.

3. Hypothesis Development and Methodology

3.1 Hypothesis development

Celebrity endorsement provides a brand a touch of glamour and the hope that a famous face will provide added appeal and name recognition in a crowded market (Belch and Belch 1995). Physical attractiveness suggests that a celebrity determines the effectiveness of persuasion because consumers want to be like the endorser and identify themselves with the endorser (Cohen and Golden 1972). The concept of attractiveness does not come from physical attractiveness. According to Source Attractiveness Theory, which is based on social psychological research, attractiveness also entails intellectual skills, personality properties, way of living, athletic performances, and skills of endorsers (Erdogan 1999). There are many cases of celebrities considered less popular but still chosen to be represented by a brand because their images match what the brand wants to create. At the time, attractiveness became necessary, and a brand's image increased. That is another point: there are pros and cons. A widespread drawback of celebrity endorsement is called the "Vampire Effect," or the celebrity overshadowing the brand, which causes some audiences to forget the brand that a celebrity is approving. Nowadays, new or startup brands and companies need to pay attention; if they choose a very popular celebrity endorser, it may harm their brand. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:
Hypothesis 1a: Attractiveness has a positive direct effect on brand perception.

Credibility is the most crucial reason for celebrity endorsement (Ohaniann 1990; 1991). Credibility is "the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skills, or experience and trusts the source to give unbiased, objective information." (Belch and Belch 1995, p.189). Celebrities are seen as credible sources of information (Goldsmith et al. 2000), and the credibility of a celebrity is described as the total amount of positive features that create and increase the acceptance of the message (Erdogan 1999). Credibility is significant when people have a negative attitude towards the brand, and powerful arguments are needed to inhibit the counter-arguing and positively influence the attitude towards the brand. Consequently, when celebrities are credible to others, it will affect the acceptance of the message and the persuasion (Erdogan et al. 2001).

Hypothesis 1b: Credibility has a positive direct effect on brand perception and brand perception.

Source expertise is the “extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions and refers to the knowledge, experience or skills possessed by an endorser” (Hovland et al. 1953, p. 59). Research by Miciak and Shanklin (1994), carried out among 43 advertising agencies and companies, indicated that most experts believed the most critical dimensions of credibility are trustworthiness and prowess or expertise about the recommended product or service. It means that a celebrity's expertise positively impacts customer attitude to a brand perception. Regarding expertise, the celebrity does not have to be an expert in the field. Consumers must think and believe a celebrity has expertise (Ohanian 1990). To illustrate, in a selling context, an expert salesperson caused a significantly higher number of customers to purchase a product than a non-expert salesperson (Woodside and Davenport 1974). Expert sources also influence perceptions of the product's quality. The source or celebrity that is a specialist is more persuasive (Aaker 1997) and generates more purchase intentions (Ohanian 1991). Furthermore, Speck et al. (1988) stated that celebrities seen as experts in a specific area engender a higher brand recognition than those seen as non-experts. The level of celebrity expertise will determine its effectiveness (Amos et al. 2008). The more expertise a celebrity has, the more effective it will be. The expertise of a celebrity will not be changed by negative publicity, but the believability and credibility will be negatively influenced.

Hypothesis 1c: Expertise has a positive direct effect on brand perception

At the beginning of brand building and development, it can be said that brand perception plays a central role in controlling consumer behavior. By creating brand awareness, customers can see the brand, but the establishment of thinking and judgment about brand properties has not yet been formed. Therefore, it is necessary to have more robust ways to help customers have deep insights about the product/service brand to create the right attitude for the brand, leading to the purchase plan. Gradually resonating with many different factors can even change customers' shopping habits. For instance, Coca-Cola can be considered a giant bomb in successfully building brand perception through diverse marketing campaigns. With more than 3300 products, this beverage brand has dominated the market by combining consumers' habits and daily behaviors with their products. Worldwide, they organized many campaigns with the participation of various celebrity endorsements that help create customers' mindset; when mentioning Coca-Cola, they will remember the desire to experience new things to make life full of excitement.

Hypothesis 2: Brand perception has a positive direct effect on consumer online buying intention

Khan and Lodhi (2016) state that Internet celebrity endorsement is used to create brand awareness and recognition and grab consumers' attention. Moreover, the proper Internet celebrity endorsement will help a brand to improve brand perception, and customers start taking an interest in the product. There are mainly three reasons. First, customers like to see a familiar on a product: A lot of mainstream or A-list celebrities are known to the majority of the world's population, such as Beyonce, Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian, Kanye, David Beckham; it catches viewers' attention when they see Queen Bee in the Pepsi commercial or their print ad. Even though some of their customers are not die-hard fans, her fame is taking the world by storm. Secondly, customers want to be similar to celebrities. Celebrities' fame and success stories are also inspirations to their fans. Therefore, some attempt to live their lifestyles or alter their physical looks to appear even remotely close to the star. Generally, celebrities post a product they are promoting on their social media pages, and therefore, if fans genuinely want to look like them, they will buy whatever products they use. Thirdly, the belief of getting a high-quality product, since by now we know that consumers are prone to buying a product when they see a familiar face or celebrities they like or admire in the ads, is assumed that it must be a high-quality product because they feel credentials. Most fans would believe that if their favorite stars think the product is favorable, they would most likely buy it. Sometimes, the brands can speak for themselves if they are big-name brands. Thus, the following hypothesis is then proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Internet celebrity endorsement has a positive direct effect on consumer online purchase intention

Accordingly, following the development of the abovementioned hypotheses, the research model is proposed to examine the relationships among Internet celebrity endorsement, brand perception, and consumer purchase intention, as shown in Figure 1.

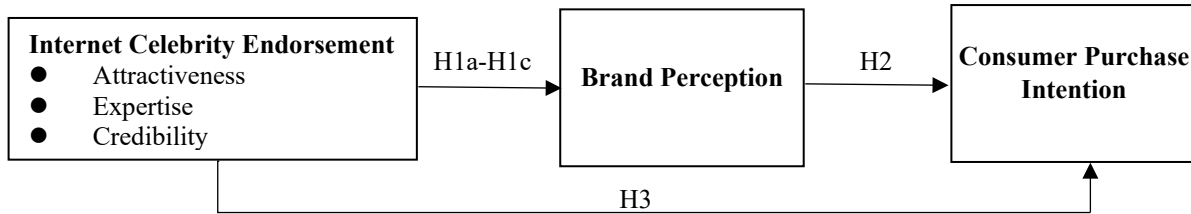


Figure 1. The research model

3.2 Operational Definition and Measurement Items of Constructs

In this research, all constructs' measurement items and operational definitions (Table 1) were adapted from the previous study. The items were Likert-type scales from strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree, with a score of 1 to 5, respectively. The questionnaire for this research consists of three parts. The first part is Internet celebrity endorsement, which includes three factors: attractiveness, expertise, and credibility. The second part focuses on brand perception. The third part is used to measure consumer online purchase intention. Online questionnaires for the survey and convenient sampling were adopted to collect the data.

Table 1. Operational definition of constructs

Construct	Operational definition
Celebrity attractiveness	Celebrity has a unique characteristic that will let consumers focus on the celebrity.
Celebrity expertise	Celebrity knows the products like the back of his/her hand and quickly solve the consumers' problems.
Celebrity credibility	The degree to which consumers believe everything that celebrity said.
Brand perception	The degree of what customers believe a product or service represents, not what the company owning the brand says it does.
Consumer online purchase intention	The degree of consumers willing to buy the product online.

Regarding the instrument of each construct. In general, celebrity credibility can be classified into 3 attributes: attractiveness, expertise, and credibility (Ohanian 1990). Each dimension was composed of five semantic differential items scored on five-point scales (from five scores of strongly disagree to five scores of strongly agree) as follows:

- Attractiveness: physical attractiveness, classy, fashion, elegant, sexy
- Expertise: expert, knowledge, experience, authority, training
- Credibility: trustworthy, belief, reliable, honest, sincere

As the measurement of this construct is multidimensional, the score on each dimension was derived by averaging each response within each dimension. Thus, this study adopted the scale that Gupta (2015) developed to evaluate this construct.

Brand perception was measured with a scale of 5 items adapted from Barajas-Portas (2015). Participants were asked to rate the degree to which he or she agreed with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale from "1= Strongly disagree" to "5 = Strongly agree". These five items are customer use, experience, functionality, reputation, and word of mouth.

Customer online purchase intention can be defined as the willingness of a customer to buy a specific product or a particular service online, known as online purchase intention. Online purchase intention is a dependent variable that depends on several external and internal factors. Ostrom (1969) proposed that purchase intentions are individual action tendencies relating to the brand. Intention and attitude are different. Although the attitude is to conclude the evaluations, intentions represent the person's motivation in the sense of his/her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). The measurement items were adapted from those of Woodside and Davenport (1974). The

items were also rated on a five-point Likert scale from “1= Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree,” as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement scales of customer purchase intention

Construct	Item(s)
Customer online purchase intention	1. I think celebrity endorsement is an essential factor when deciding.
	2. I will buy a product online just because of the attractiveness of a celebrity.
	3. I care about the quality of the product, not celebrity endorsements.
	4. I do not believe in celebrity endorsements because they accept many advertisements. (R)
	5. I always buy a product online which is endorsed by a celebrity.
	6. I always get attracted to a product/brand by a celebrity endorsement.
	7. My emotion with the celebrity will affect my online purchase intention.
	8. I think a brand with a celebrity endorsement is easier to recognize in the online market.
	9. I will change from my regular products to a new product endorsed by my favorite celebrity.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

This present study is based on primary data collection through convenience and snowball sampling to expand the sample size. The data was collected from the consumers with a Google form link on social media sites. The online survey contains 30 questions to measure celebrity endorsement, brand perception, and customer buying intention. Potential respondents were approached by email with the online questionnaire link and urged to spread the content to others. Finally, a total of 284 respondents were collected. After excluding 34 incomplete responses, 250 valid samples were collected for the final analysis.

According to the causal relationship proposed, this present study will use SPSS 22 to organize and analyze respondents' profiles and descriptive statistics of the variables. Then, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with smartPLS 3.0 will be employed to verify the proposed research model as well as the reliability and validity of the instrument.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic of the respondents

The participants' profile includes gender, age, industry, job title, and salary. The dataset encompasses 34 males, accounting for 13.6%, and 216 females, accounting for 86.4%. Regarding age, the age group from 26-30 is the highest, with 184 respondents (73.6%). Regarding industry, the respondents come from the following sectors: communication, banking, service, agency, and other, sequentially being 42.8%, 4.6%, 29.2%, 9%, and 14.4%. Regarding the job title of respondents, 60.4% of the subjects were seniors. Based on the survey conducted on basic salary in Vietnam, the number of respondents whose salary is smaller than 300 USD is about 52%, from 300 USD to 1000 USD is about 42.4%, and the highest of more than 1000 USD is about 4.8%.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation integrating with correlation coefficients and Cronbach's alpha of all dimensions are summarized in Table 3. According to Nunnally (1978), the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient above the threshold of 0.70 demonstrates high internal consistency. The findings showed that the Cronbach's alpha for each construct is from 0.80 to 0.94, demonstrating that all constructs have high international consistency. Table 3 also presents the correlation coefficients of all the dimensions, showing that all the relationships between factors reach the significant level of $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and

Construct	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
Attractiveness	4.01	.04	(0.80)				
Expertise	4.26	.06	.676**	(0.87)			
Credibility	4.57	.61	.579**	.732**	(0.94)		
Brand perception	4.45	.51	.651**	.626**	.571**	(0.85)	
Customer online purchase intention	3.95	.57	.468**	.464**	.349**	.497**	(0.85)

Note: 1. ** $p < 0.01$; 2. The diagonal value presents the Cronbach's alpha value for each variable

4.3 Measurement Model with Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In the first step of SEM analysis, the measurement model should be conducted to evaluate the indicator reliability, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The analysis of measurement models is mainly based on confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the properties of the variables (Bagozzi 1993). We used the value of 0.5 as the threshold for factor loading assessment (Hair et al. 2014). Consequently, the factor loadings for all items demonstrated that they were all above the threshold of 0.5. Composite reliability (CR) was computed to examine the consistency of the constructs—a value of 0.7 or higher indicated satisfactory construct reliability (Hair et al., 2014). The findings showed that the CR of each construct, ranging from 0.81 to 0.95, is greater than the recommended value, demonstrating the satisfaction of construct reliability. In addition, the AVE (average variance extracted) value can be used to test convergent and discriminant validity. The findings showed that all of the AVE values of the constructs are greater than the threshold value of 0.5 suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). In addition, the AVE values for all the constructs are more significant than the correlation coefficients between itself and others. Thus, the findings demonstrate an acceptable level of convergent and discriminant validity.

4.4 Structural Model

PLS-SEM with bootstrapping at 5000 was used for the structural model to test the path effect. The results showed that all the paths are significant. Specifically, the findings showed that the three characteristics of Internet celebrity endorsement positively affect brand perception (with a value of 0.39**, 0.24**, 0.17**) and consumer purchase intention (with a value of 0.29***, 0.29**, 0.33***). In addition, brand perception also demonstrated a direct effect on consumer purchase intention. The explain power for the 3 antecedents to brand perception is 49%, and 24% for brand perception to consumer purchase intention (see Figure 2).

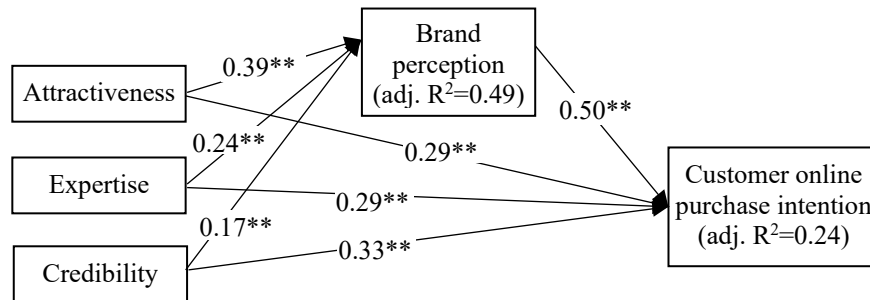


Figure 2. The results of the research model

5. Conclusion and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrated the causal effects among Internet celebrity endorsement, brand perception, and customer purchase intention. It is observed that the most influential determinant of the brand is attractiveness, followed by expertise and credibility. In addition, credibility is found to have the most substantial effect on customer purchase intention among the 3 antecedents. Thus, it is indicated that the 3 characteristics of Internet celebrity are crucial for Internet celebrity endorsement and in explaining brand perception and purchase intention. Regardless of the target audience, the celebrity's opinion building on their relationships with their fans has the potential to transform into purchasing behavior. To create customer purchase intention, using the Internet celebrity endorsement is considered to make the brand more accessible to be recognized in the market and is also an essential factor in making purchase intention. Thus, it is appropriate to examine the model's predictability above following the importance of the character traits of Internet celebrities. This leads us to make the following implications.

5.2 Implications

The journey from unknown–knowing–intention–taking action for purchasing takes quite a long time. Nowadays, using the Internet celebrity endorsement in a brand's media plan is very common. When searching for any keywords of marketing campaigns, you will see that they spend much money using Internet celebrity endorsements. However, are they working and effective? How to choose endorsers to successfully campaign to increase brand perception and extend customer purchase intentions has become a problematic way for marketers to compete in the market. Therefore,

choosing an Internet celebrity endorsement with credibility and expertise is the most important. Since their ability to persuade fans to buy the product will be higher than that of others. For example, choosing a fashion endorser to promote health products will be a bad idea since a fashion endorser will not have any professional knowledge related to health, and it is undoubtedly challenging to convey brand messages to help customers trust the products. This study is significant because it enhances our understanding of drivers of consumer purchase intention from the perspectives of Internet celebrity endorsement and brand perception. This will provide insights into the factors that impact consumers' decisions, which would be valuable for future studies.

In addition to factors such as reliability, expertise, and attractiveness, a brand needs to define the business's target audiences that should be relevant to the followers of Internet celebrity endorsement. The purpose is to hit the right audiences in the fastest way. Although it may be the same field, each endorser will have a different audience. The fashion market will be divided into many categories according to age, style, etc. So, the company must choose the one with suitable audiences for their target customers. Finally, choosing the right endorser who is famous and loved by the public with sympathy is also critical. This shows that the influence of Internet celebrity endorsement is positive or harmful to the audience. Because there will be several endorsers with suitable expertise and credibility, but an unclear personal life will affect the products they endorse, this may result in consumers turning to hate the products they are promoting.

McKinsey Quarterly magazine's Consumer Decision Journey model describes how to connect a brand with customers for a long time to change loyal customers. They said that when coming up with an intent to purchase, the customer will do a review and then gradually assess whether they should buy the item or not. The mission is to draw attention to their products. At the same time, there are too many products out of the market, such as Internet advertising, viral video content, and displaying products in crowded places such as shopping malls, which requires their message content to be consistent with the right direction towards the brand. In the second step, consumers start having an initial review consulting with other reviewers and retailers. This is when brands will actively use Internet celebrity endorsement to approach customers. Thus, this method will be more effective than the brand's pushy information persuasion. However, these are only necessary conditions; nowadays, customers are becoming increasingly intelligent while they get various information online. According to analysis researchers, the marketing budget shows that 70-90% of the cost is spent on advertising and promotions; the Internet celebrity endorsement directs consumers at the reviewing and purchasing steps, and brands need to develop more cohesion between brand perception and customers. Moreover, brand perception needs to be associated with one country's culture to self-adjust to fit with the cultural image of each place and choose the right direction to win the hearts of consumers and other brands.

5.3 Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This present has several limitations. First, the underlying meaning between brand perception and brand awareness is still fragile; the academic knowledge of brand perception is just a minority. Future research suggests that the differences between brand perception and brand awareness and their effects on outcomes be demonstrated. Second, the impact of demographic characteristics was not incorporated in the analysis. It would be helpful to recognize the profile of the consumers to uncover the differences in Internet celebrity endorsement, brand perception, and online purchase intention to understand consumers' behavior in online buying.

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