

Investigating The Role of Celebrity Endorser Credibility Toward Product Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationships between key celebrity endorser attributes – namely physical appearance, celebrity-brand congruence, attractiveness, expertise, identification, and trustworthiness – and consumers' purchase intentions toward shoes and electronic products. Data were obtained through a survey of 355 consumers who were exposed to advertisements using celebrities as endorsers. Data analysis using Partial Least Squares-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results of the analysis show that physical appearance and celebrity congruence have a significant positive effect on purchase intention. In addition, celebrity attractiveness and expertise also have a significant effect on celebrity identification. However, trustworthiness does not play a role in moderating the relationship between physical appearance, attractiveness and purchase intention. Furthermore, trustworthiness also does not play a role in moderating the relationship between celebrity congruence, expertise and celebrity identification. Finally, celebrity identification has a significant positive effect on product purchase intention. These findings indicate that celebrity endorser-related factors have a significant impact on consumer purchase intention, except for the role of trustworthiness in moderating the relationship between these variables.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara berbagai faktor yang terkait dengan endorser selebriti, dalam hal ini penampilan fisik, kesesuaian selebriti, daya tarik, keahlian, identifikasi selebriti, dan kepercayaan, terhadap niat pembelian sepatu dan produk elektronik. Data diperoleh melalui survei terhadap 355 konsumen yang terpapar iklan yang menggunakan selebriti sebagai endorser. Analisis data menggunakan model persamaan struktural berbasis Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM). Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa penampilan fisik dan kesesuaian selebriti memiliki efek positif yang signifikan terhadap niat pembelian. Selain itu, daya tarik dan keahlian selebriti juga memiliki efek signifikan terhadap identifikasi selebriti. Namun, keandalan tidak berperan dalam memoderasi hubungan antara penampilan fisik, daya tarik, dan niat pembelian. Selain itu, keandalan juga tidak berperan dalam memoderasi hubungan antara kesesuaian selebriti, keahlian, dan identifikasi selebriti. Akhirnya, identifikasi selebriti memiliki efek positif yang signifikan terhadap niat pembelian produk. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa faktor-faktor terkait endorser selebriti memiliki dampak signifikan terhadap niat pembelian konsumen, kecuali peran kepercayaan dalam memoderasi hubungan antara variabel-variabel tersebut.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information technology and social media in recent decades has fundamentally transformed the marketing paradigm, shifting consumer attention from traditional media to highly visual and interactive digital platforms. In this hyper-connected world, companies—particularly those in highly competitive and image-driven categories, such as Indonesian local sneaker brands and global consumer electronics brands—are compelled to reach consumers through multiple channels, with celebrity endorsements remaining one of the most popular but increasingly expensive strategies.

Indonesia's rapidly expanding local sneaker industry, exemplified by brands such as Kanky, Compass, Ventela, Brodo, Geoff Max, NAH Project, Aerostreet, and Patrobas, is marked by intense competition with international brands, primarily through the strategic utilization of local identity, narrative branding, and community engagement. In this context, celebrity and influencer endorsements have become essential mechanisms for propelling market growth in the beauty industry. Simultaneously, global electronics corporations, including Samsung, Apple, Xiaomi, OPPO, Sony, and JBL, continue to dominate the Indonesian market by integrating high-profile endorsement strategies into the promotion of smartphones, true wireless stereo (TWS) devices, and laptops, often involving both international and prominent domestic celebrities. Despite significant financial investments—ranging from multi-billion-rupiah collaborations with figures such as Raffi Ahmad, Atta Halilintar, and Prilly Latuconsina within the local footwear sector to global campaigns featuring BLACKPINK, Lionel Messi, and local ambassadors such as Raisa and JKT48—many companies persist in reporting inconsistent or suboptimal returns on their investment.

A considerable proportion of these endorsement campaigns succeed in generating substantial online visibility, including high engagement metrics, viral dissemination and trending social media content. However, such outcomes frequently fail to translate into proportional increases in sales performance or in sustained brand loyalty. This discrepancy can be attributed to the predominance of superficial selection criteria, such as visual attractiveness, follower metrics, and short-term virality, while more substantive dimensions of source credibility, particularly expertise, trustworthiness, and product-celebrity congruence, remain insufficiently assessed in the literature. This issue is exacerbated when there is a misalignment between a celebrity's established persona and the brand's identity or product category [insert figure].

Furthermore, Indonesian consumers—particularly those in Generation Z and Millennial cohorts, who constitute the primary market segments for both local sneaker products and consumer electronics—demonstrate high digital literacy levels. These consumers can rapidly evaluate the authenticity of celebrity endorsements by scrutinizing historical behavior, personal branding, lifestyle consistency, and product involvement across digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. In instances where perceived credibility is low—for example, when a celebrity lacking prior association with local sneaker culture endorses a domestic brand or when a non-expert public figure promotes technologically complex products—consumer skepticism increases. This often manifests as negative user-generated content, including critical commentary, parodies, and “roast” videos, which can significantly undermine purchase intention despite their high production quality and aesthetic appeal.

Despite the rapid proliferation of celebrity endorsement practices in both the Indonesian local sneaker sector and the global electronics market targeting Indonesian consumers, empirical research examining the relative influence of source credibility dimensions—expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and product-celebrity congruence—on purchase intention within Indonesia's digital ecosystem remains limited. Existing studies are frequently fragmented and predominantly grounded in Western contexts, thereby constraining their applicability to Indonesia's distinct cultural framework, including its collectivist orientation and unique patterns of celebrity-consumer interaction.

Therefore, this study is critically important as it provides context-specific, data-driven insights for the Indonesian market, focusing on local sneaker brands and global electronics products, revealing the true weight of visual appeal versus credibility dimensions (especially expertise, trustworthiness, and congruence) in driving actual purchase decisions. The findings will enable both emerging Indonesian footwear brands and global tech companies to make smarter and more effective endorsement choices, reduce costly

mismatches, build authentic consumer trust, and achieve significantly higher marketing ROI in Indonesia's highly competitive, transparency-driven, and socially influenced digital landscape.

Endorser credibility, which consists of two main dimensions, expertise and trustworthiness, is believed to influence consumer acceptance of celebrity-conveyed messages. This credibility is intrinsically linked to consumers' perceptions of the celebrity as competent and trustworthy in product endorsement.. (Ohanian, 1990). In this context, endorser credibility plays an important role in creating celebrity identification, which is the process by which consumers feel connected to or inspired by the celebrities they admire. This identification is believed to strengthen the influence of endorsers on consumer purchase intentions, as consumers tend to buy products associated with celebrities they like and identify.

However, despite the growing popularity of celebrity endorsements, results from various studies show that the influence of endorser credibility on purchase intention is inconsistent. Several factors, including the degree of congruence between the celebrity and the endorsed product and the alignment of the celebrity's characteristics with the target audience, significantly influence the effectiveness of endorsements. Accordingly, it is essential to further examine the interplay between endorser credibility, celebrity identification, and purchase intention, particularly in dynamic contexts shaped by social media and digital participation.

Several recent studies confirm the importance of endorser credibility in shaping brand image and influencing consumer purchasing decisions. For example, Chung et al. (2023) found that the credibility of celebrity endorsers has a significant influence on brand perception and purchase intention, especially when endorsers are perceived as having authority and credibility in a particular product category. Another study by (Kim et al., 2021) showed that celebrity credibility influences consumers more in premium product categories or lifestyle-related products than in more functional or technical products.

However, although the credibility of celebrity endorsers is widely recognized to have a positive effect on purchase intention, the role of celebrity identification remains comparatively underexplored in previous research. Kim et al. (2020) showed that celebrity identification serves as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between credibility and purchase intentions. Consumers who feel closer to certain celebrities tend to be more easily influenced by their messages. This indicates that the credibility of the endorser is important, as is the extent to which consumers can identify with the celebrity endorsing a product.

However, in practice, not all consumers establish a sense of connection or identification with the endorsing celebrity. For instance, Zhou and Tong (2022) demonstrated that in the cosmetics industry, celebrity credibility plays a more decisive role than celebrity identification, as consumers tend to prioritize the endorser's expertise in beauty and skincare over their emotional affinity. Conversely, in the context of lifestyle products such as apparel or food, celebrity identification exerts a more substantial influence on consumer responses.

Although celebrities with extensive social media followings and high engagement rates are often associated with stronger effects on purchase intention, primarily due to the perceived virtual intimacy and enhanced identification they generate (Ling et al., 2023), the extent to which these factors, particularly perceived relevance and digital interaction, moderate or even surpass the influence of traditional source credibility dimensions (i.e., expertise and trustworthiness) is unclear. This ambiguity has contributed to the suboptimal allocation of endorsement expenditures, with firms investing hundreds of millions to billions of rupiahs without achieving commensurate returns on their investments. Accordingly, this study addresses this critical gap by systematically examining the relative and moderating effects of these variables on Indonesian consumers' purchase intentions.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the extent to which a person intends to buy a product. Purchase intention is one of the most powerful predictors of consumer behavior because it is often the first step before an actual purchase decision is made. Various theories have been developed to understand how purchase intentions are formed and the factors that influence consumer decision making.

The main theory used to explain the phenomenon of purchase intention is the theory of planned behavior (TPB) - (Ajzen., 1991), which is one of the most influential theories in consumer behavior and states that the intention to act (for example, buying a product) is influenced by three main factors: (1) attitude toward behavior; (2) subjective norms; and (3) perceived behavioral control.

In addition to Ajzen's TPB, there is another theory, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Mod-

el (Mehrabian., 1974). The S-O-R model explains the relationship between an external stimulus (e.g., an advertisement or marketing communication) and an individual's response (e.g., a purchase decision). The model consists of three main elements: (1) stimulus (S), that is, external factors that influence individuals, such as advertising messages, endorser credibility, and product features; (2) organism (O), that is, internal processes within individuals that influence their response, such as perceptions, attitudes, and emotions evoked by the stimulus; and (3) response (R), that is, the action or decision that the individual takes, which in this case is the intention to purchase the product or brand.

Petty and Cacioppo, (1986) also describes the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) theory that two main pathways influence changes in a person's attitude towards a product or brand, which in turn affects purchase intentions, namely: First, the central route, where consumers who tend to think deeply and rationally about marketing messages (e.g, product advantages, facts, and evidence). Second, the peripheral route, where consumers are more influenced by peripheral factors, such as celebrity appeal, visual design, or advertising snippets.

Recent literature indicates that consumer purchase intention is a multidimensional construct shaped by a combination of cognitive, affective, and social factors, including endorser credibility, emotional engagement, digital interaction, and prior consumer experience. Among these, endorser credibility has been consistently identified as a fundamental determinant. Empirical evidence from Hwang & Lee (2019) demonstrates that perceived credibility—particularly in terms of expertise and trustworthiness—exerts a significant positive effect on purchase intention, with stronger effects observed when the endorser exhibits high congruence with the promoted product.

Affective mechanisms also play a critical role beyond cognitive evaluations of credibility. Zhou and Tong (2022) highlight that emotions evoked by celebrities significantly influence consumer decision-making. Consumers who develop emotional attachment or admiration toward a celebrity are more likely to exhibit purchase intention, particularly when the celebrity is perceived as a positive role model. This finding underscores the importance of celebrity identification and affective resonance in shaping consumer behavior. In addition to emotional and credibility-based factors, consumer experience in digital environments further contributes to purchase intention. (Zhou & Tong, 2022) also report that positive online shopping experiences and ease of access to relevant product information directly enhance consumers' likelihood of purchase. When consumers perceive the search and transaction processes as efficient, informative, and satisfactory, their confidence in purchase decisions increases accordingly.

Social media engagement is another critical dimension that influences purchase intention. (Lou & Yuan, 2019) revealed that platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube function as powerful mediating environments in which influencers with substantial followings can shape consumer attitudes and behaviors. Consumers who perceive a sense of connection with influencers tend to develop more favorable evaluations of the endorsed products, thereby increasing their purchase intentions.

Finally, cognitive brand-related factors reinforce these effects. (Ling et al., 2023) proposed a structural model in which brand knowledge influences purchase intention indirectly through the mediating roles of perceived value and brand trust. Their findings indicate that brand trust, in particular, has a significant and direct impact on purchase intention, emphasizing the importance of credibility at both the endorser and brand levels.

Collectively, these studies suggest that purchase intention is not driven by a single determinant but rather emerges from the interaction of credibility, emotional attachment, digital experience, social influence, and brand-related perceptions. However, the relative strength and interplay of these factors remain context-dependent, necessitating further empirical investigations in specific cultural and market settings in the future.

Physical Appearance and its relationship with Purchase Intention

Physical appearance refers to a person's physical attributes that can influence others' perceptions, social interactions, and behaviors towards that individual. Physical appearance, including aspects such as the face, body, and style of dress, influences interpersonal attractiveness and perceptions of other individuals. Although not specifically focused on celebrities, these findings provide a strong theoretical basis for understanding how visual elements contribute to brand perception and purchase intentions in a marketing context. (Kleck & Rubenstein, 1975)

The theories related to physical attractiveness relate to several aspects, namely: (1) halo effect theory, which explains that individuals who are considered physically attractive are often associated with other positive characteristics, such as intelligence and kindness. This means that physical attractiveness can affect

the overall assessment of others (Dion et al., 1972); (2) social perception theory, which emphasizes how people form perceptions of others based on their physical appearance. Physical attractiveness can affect how people interact and judge each other (3) social attractiveness theory, which states that physical attractiveness plays an important role in forming social relationships. Individuals tend to be more interested in interacting with people they find attractive (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). (4) fit theory, which argues that the effectiveness of an endorser (such as a celebrity) in promoting a product depends on the fit between the endorser's physical attractiveness and the endorsed product. This fit can increase consumer acceptance of the product (Kamins, 1990).

Thus, referring to the definitions and theories presented can provide a comprehensive understanding of how physical attractiveness affects social interactions and consumer behavior.

An attractive physical appearance can increase consumer interest in a product. Research shows that consumers tend to respond positively to advertisements featuring attractive models, which can increase purchase intention (Zhou & Tong, 2022). Products promoted by attractive individuals are often perceived to be of higher quality. Studies have shown that physical attractiveness can build trust in the brand, which contributes to an increase in purchase intention (Khan et al., 2016). Influencers with attractive appearances can influence their followers' buying behavior. Recent research has found that endorsements by attractive influencers can significantly increase consumers' purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Finally, an attractive physical appearance can trigger a positive emotional response, which affects buying decisions. When consumers feel emotionally connected to an attractive individual, they are more likely to make an effort to purchase the product (Blake et al., 2021).

The relationship between endorser physical appearance and purchase intention has become an important focus of research in marketing, especially with the development of influencer marketing that deals with endorser attractiveness (Spry et al., 2011); endorser and product compatibility (Hwang & Lee, 2019); Social Media Effects (Freberg et al., 2011); Emotional Connection (Lim & Childs, 2020); (Albaum et al., 2021); and positive perceptions (Zhou & Tong, 2022).

Based on this explanation, the authors propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The physical appearance of celebrity endorsers has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

Celebrity Congruence and its Relationship with Purchase Intention

Celebrity congruence refers to the fit or compatibility between the attributes, values, and image of a celebrity and the brand or product they represent. This congruence is important in marketing because it can affect consumer perception of the brand and the effectiveness of the endorsement campaign. When the endorsed celebrity is perceived to be a good match for the product, it can increase credibility, trust, and consumer purchase intention. (Kamins, 1990).

The aspects associated with celebrity congruence theory are as follows:

- a. Conformance Theory states that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements depends on the fit between the characteristics of the celebrity and the endorsed product. The higher the level of fit, the more likely consumers are to respond positively to the product (Kamins, 1990).
- b. Social Perception Theory emphasizes that consumers form perceptions of brands and products based on celebrity characteristics. The congruence between celebrity and brand images can influence the way consumers value products, resulting in more positive purchase decisions (Hwang & Lee, 2019).
- c. Cognitive consistency theory explains that individuals seek consistency in their knowledge and their beliefs. When there is a mismatch between a celebrity and a brand, consumers may experience cognitive discomfort, which may affect their purchase intention. High congruence reduces discomfort.

The relationship between celebrity endorser congruence and purchase intention has become an interesting research topic in marketing, especially with the increasing use of influencers and celebrities in product promotion. Key aspects of the relationship between celebrity endorser congruence and purchase intention include the fact that celebrities who match brand values and image can increase trust and relevance, which in turn can increase purchase intention (Kamins, 1990). The positive effect on consumer attitudes is that when the celebrity is perceived as appropriate for the product being represented, consumers are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the brand. High fit between the celebrity and product can significantly increase purchase intention. In addition, the emotional influence between celebrities and brands can also create a strong emotional connection with consumers. When consumers develop an emotional connection

tion with the celebrities they admire and the products they endorse, their intention to purchase is likely to increase (Lee et al., 2021). Social media factors and celebrity fit show that influencers who have brand fit tend to generate higher levels of engagement and purchase intent compared to those who do not. (Schouten et al., 2020)

Related celebrity congruence and purchase intention in the context of marketing and advertising include; congruence and brand perception (Hwang & Lee, 2019) ; building trust and emotional affect; social media platforms (Schouten et al., 2020) ; celebrity congruence and purchase intention; the Halo Effect; increased trust (Hwang & Lee, 2019) .

H2: Celebrity congruence of endorser celebrities has a significant positive effect on purchase intention of product

Attractiveness and its relationship with Celebrity Identification

Attractiveness is a physical and/or personality quality or trait that makes a person aesthetically or emotionally appealing. In social and marketing contexts, attractiveness often includes components such as physical appearance, personality traits, and interpersonal allure. Attractiveness can influence social interactions, brand perceptions, and consumer behavior. (Ohanian, 1990)

Some aspects related to attractiveness theory include the following: (1) halo effect theory, which states that individuals who are perceived as physically attractive tend to be associated with other positive qualities such as intelligence and kindness. In marketing, this means that products endorsed by attractive individuals are perceived positively (Dion et al., 1972). Social perception theory explains how people form judgments about others based on their physical appearances. Attractiveness can influence social interactions, where attractive people are more often accepted and receive more favorable treatment in social situations; fit theory, which argues that the effectiveness of an endorser (such as a celebrity) in promoting a product depends on the fit between the endorser's physical attractiveness and the endorsed product. High attractiveness can increase consumer confidence in the product (Kamins., 1990) ; and social attractiveness theory emphasizes the importance of attractiveness in forming social relationships. Physical attractiveness and personality can increase social attractiveness, which has an impact on interaction and relationship formation (Berscheid & Reis., 1998) .

Celebrity attractiveness and charisma can influence consumers' identification with endorsers, which in turn can influence their purchase behavior. Some aspects related to that relationship are: attractiveness and self-identification; emotional effects (Biswas et al., 2021) ., (Hwang & Lee., 2019) ; influence on purchase decisions and the role of social media (Lou & Yuan., 2019); (Boatwright & Freberg., 2022) . Additionally, attractiveness fosters wishful identification by enhancing emotional closeness and perceived similarity, leading to stronger brand attitudes and higher purchase intentions (Schouten et al., 2020). Recent meta-analyses further confirm that physically attractive endorsers significantly boost consumer identification through halo effects, particularly in lifestyle products, mediating the path to behavioral outcomes, such as buying (Knoll & Matthes., 2017); (Park & Lin., 2020). Empirical evidence also shows that attractiveness directly predicts purchase intention via self-concept alignment, where consumers aspire to emulate the endorser's image (Wang et al., 2021).

H3: Celebrity endorser attractiveness has a significant positive effect on Celebrity identification

Expertise and its relationship with Celebrity Identification

Expertise refers to the level of knowledge, skills, and experience an individual has in a particular field. In a marketing context, expertise is often associated with the credibility of an endorser or influencer who can influence consumer perceptions of a product or brand. In addition, consumers tend to believe more in recommendations from individuals they consider experts in their field (Ohanian., 1990) .

Several theoretical perspectives provide a robust foundation for the role of expertise in shaping consumer responses to celebrity endorsements. The foremost among these is source credibility theory, which conceptualizes endorser credibility as comprising two principal dimensions: expertise and trustworthiness. Within this framework, perceived expertise reflects the extent to which an endorser is considered knowledgeable, experienced or competent in a given domain. Higher levels of perceived expertise increase the likelihood that consumers will accept, internalize, and act on the information or recommendations provided by an endorser (Ohanian, 1990).

Complementing this perspective, social perception theory explains how individuals form evaluative judgments about others based on observable cues, prior knowledge and contextual information. From this standpoint, perceived expertise emerges as a socially constructed attribute that significantly influences how consumers interpret both endorsers and the products they endorse. When an endorser is perceived as highly competent, this perception is often transferred to the product or brand, thereby enhancing its perceived quality and credibility (Fiske & Taylor, 2013).

In addition, principles derived from the social attractiveness theory suggest that expertise can function as a form of attractiveness. Individuals recognized as experts tend to command attention, admiration, and respect, which, in turn, strengthens their persuasiveness. In marketing contexts, such perceived authority enhances consumer confidence in the endorsed product and increases the persuasive effectiveness of the endorsement message (Cialdini, 2007).

Finally, motivation and engagement theory further elucidates the behavioral implications of perceived expertise. According to this perspective, expertise not only influences attitudes but also stimulates deeper cognitive and affective engagement with brands. When consumers perceive an endorser as an expert, they are more likely to process the message attentively, interact with the brand, and develop stronger relational ties, ultimately leading to increased purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Chaiken, 1980).

Taken together, these theoretical lenses converge to highlight expertise as a central mechanism through which endorsements exert influence, operating across cognitive evaluation, social perception, affective responses and behavioral engagement.

Celebrity expertise constitutes a critical determinant of consumer identification with the endorser and subsequently influences purchase decisions. The central dimensions of this construct include perceived expertise, capacity to build trust, direct effect on purchase intention, and amplification through social media environments (Vander Schee et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Perceived expertise enhances the credibility of the endorsement message, thereby increasing the likelihood that consumers will internalize the information and develop favorable attitudes toward the promoted product.

Moreover, the combined effects of celebrity expertise and attractiveness have been shown to strengthen consumer identification, trust, and overall perceived credibility. These interrelated factors collectively contribute to the formation of purchase intention (Erdogan et al., 2001; Hwang & Lee, 2019). In particular, when consumers perceive both competence and appeal in an endorser, the persuasive impact of the endorsement significantly increases.

From a strategic perspective, congruence between a celebrity's expertise and the endorsed product or brand is essential for maximizing campaign effectiveness. Empirical findings suggest that selecting endorsers whose domain-specific knowledge aligns with the product category leads to stronger consumer identification and more favorable brand behavioral outcomes. Accordingly, marketers should prioritize expertise as a key criterion in endorser selection to ensure alignment, credibility, and optimal persuasive impact (Munnukka et al., 2016).

H4: The expertise of a celebrity endorser has a significantly positive effect on celebrity identification.

Trustworthiness and its relationship with Physical Appearance, Celebrity Congruence and Purchase Intention

Trustworthiness does not operate in isolation; rather, it interacts dynamically with other endorser and campaign characteristics, shaping the overall effectiveness of endorsement strategies. One of the most salient interactions is between trustworthiness and attractiveness. Although these constructs are conceptually distinct, prior research has identified a positive spillover mechanism whereby physically attractive endorsers are initially perceived as more trustworthy due to the "halo effect" (Eagly et al., 1991; Joseph, 1982). However, this effect is conditional. When attractiveness is perceived as overly superficial, exaggerated, or strategically manipulative, it can undermine perceived sincerity and trigger consumer skepticism (Till & Busler, 2000; Amos et al., 2008). Accordingly, attractiveness enhances trustworthiness only when accompanied by consistent and authentic behavior that reinforces credibility over time.

The second critical interaction involves congruence or "fit" between the celebrity's image and the endorsed product. Trustworthiness is substantially strengthened when there is a high degree of alignment

between the endorser's public persona and the product category (Kamins, 1990; Fleck et al., 2012; Knoll & Matthes, 2017). Consumers are more likely to perceive endorsements as genuine when the celebrity's lifestyle, expertise, or habitual consumption patterns are consistent with the promoted product; for example, athletes endorsing sports footwear or technology-savvy figures promoting smartphones. In contrast, incongruent pairings tend to signal opportunistic or purely financial motives, thereby reducing perceived sincerity, weakening message credibility, and increasing consumer resistance (Rice et al., 2012; Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016).

Beyond these interaction effects, trustworthiness has been consistently identified as the most influential dimension of source credibility in predicting purchase intention, often surpassing expertise and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1991; Amos et al., 2008; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). When consumers perceive an endorser as honest, reliable, and sincere, this trust is transferred to the endorsed brand and product, thereby reducing perceived risk and enhancing purchase willingness (Silvera & Austad, 2004). This mechanism is particularly salient in high-involvement product categories, such as sneakers and consumer electronics, where both functional performance and symbolic value are critical determinants of consumer choice (Muda et al., 2014; Priporas et al., 2019).

Collectively, these findings underscore that trustworthiness functions as both an independent predictor and an interaction-based amplifier within the broader endorsement framework, exerting a central role in shaping consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions

Several theories support these relationships.

- a. Source credibility theory (Ohanian, 1990) posits that trustworthiness and expertise form the core of credibility and directly affect persuasion and purchase intentions.
- b. The Match-Up Hypothesis (Kamins, 1990) and the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989) emphasize that congruence enhances trustworthiness and meaning transfer from celebrities to products.
- c. The elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) suggests that under high-involvement conditions, trustworthiness serves as a central route cue that strongly influences attitude and purchase intention.
- d. The Halo Effect Theory explains the initial boost in trustworthiness from physical attractiveness, while authenticity and congruence sustain it over time.

In summary, in today's transparency-driven digital environment, especially in the Indonesian sneaker and global electronics markets, celebrity endorsement's trustworthiness is the cornerstone of its effectiveness. Its positive relationship with appropriate physical appearance and strong celebrity-product congruence ultimately determines whether endorsement investments translate into genuine consumer trust and actual purchase behaviour.

H5: Celebrity endorser trustworthiness moderates the relationship between physical appearance and product purchase intention.

product purchase intention

H6: Endorser celebrity trustworthiness moderates the relationship between Celebrity

Congruence and product purchase intention

H7: Endorser celebrity trustworthiness moderates the relationship between attractiveness and

Celebrity Identification

H8: Endorser celebrity trustworthiness moderates the relationship between Expertise with Celebrity Identification

Celebrity identification

Celebrity identification is the process by which a person feels emotionally connected to or considers themselves to belong to a particular celebrity. This process can lead a person to adopt the values, ways of thinking, and behaviors of the celebrity they look up to. This can affect a person's decision to shop because they tend to follow what the celebrity they idolize does or chooses (Cohen., 2001) .

Some theories related to celebrity identification include the following: (1) Social Identification Theory, which explains how people identify with certain groups or individuals, thus influencing their attitudes and actions;

In the context of celebrities, fans may adopt the values or lifestyle of the celebrities they like, which in turn influences their product preferences. (Tajfel H & Turner, n.d.) ; (2) Social attractiveness theory, which states

that individuals are more attracted to people they perceive as having physical beauty and good personality. Celebrity attractiveness can increase fans' sense of identification, which in turn affects their purchasing decisions. (Berscheid & Reis., 1998) (3) Social influence theory, which explains how individuals are influenced by others when making decisions. Well-known celebrities can act as a strong social influence, thus influencing the behavior and choices of their fans, including in choosing brands and products. (Cialdini Robert B., 2007) (5) Symbolic consumption theory, which states that consumers buy products to express their social identity. When a person feels connected to a celebrity, they tend to buy the same or similar products used by the celebrity to reinforce their identity. (Solomon., 1983) .

Recent research shows that celebrity identification plays an important role in marketing, especially in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. (Y. J. Kim et al., 2021) found that celebrity identification has a direct and significant impact on consumers' intention to purchase products. Consumers who feel connected to a particular celebrity tend to have a more positive attitude towards the product advertised by the celebrity. This effect is even stronger when the celebrity has high credibility and strong relevance to the product being promoted. Celebrity identification serves as an intermediary that connects the influence of celebrity credibility with consumer purchase intentions. Celebrity identification is highly influential on consumer behavior on social media platforms, especially on interactive social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Consumers who identify with celebrities who are active on social media are more easily encouraged to buy products promoted by these celebrities. (Schouten et al., 2020) (Sokolova & Kefi., 2020); (Jamil et al., 2024); (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

Interactive engagement between celebrities and their followers on social media platforms is a critical mechanism for strengthening consumer–celebrity identification and influencing purchase decisions. Bidirectional communication, such as comments, replies, live interactions, and user-generated content, enhances perceived intimacy and accessibility, thereby fostering a stronger psychological connection between consumers and brand endorsers. In this context, celebrity identification functions as a key mediating variable in the relationship between source credibility and purchase intention. Consumers who perceive a sense of similarity, aspiration, or personal relevance to a celebrity are more likely to internalize and accept marketing messages delivered by the endorser.

This perspective underscores the strategic importance of selecting celebrities whose personal image, values, and lifestyle align closely with the characteristics and aspirations of the target audience. Empirical evidence from (Hossain et al., 2025) indicates that celebrity identification exerts a particularly strong influence on purchase intention in lifestyle and fashion-related product categories. In such contexts, identification facilitates the development of emotional attachment, encouraging consumers to not only evaluate the product favorably but also emulate the lifestyle associated with the celebrity.

Furthermore, the impact of celebrity identification is especially pronounced among younger consumer segments, including Generation Z and Millennials, who are highly engaged with influencers and social media personalities. These consumers tend to construct aspects of their self-identity through associations with admired public figures, thereby amplifying the persuasive effect of their endorsements (Shezi, 2022). Beyond its immediate influence on purchase intention, celebrity identification also contributes to long-term brand outcomes. Consumers with high levels of identification are more likely to exhibit repeat purchase behavior and sustained brand loyalty, as purchasing endorsed products becomes a symbolic means of expressing their personal values, aspirations, and social identity.

Collectively, these findings position celebrity identification as a central psychological mechanism that not only mediates the effect of credibility on purchase intention but also extends its influence on long-term consumer–brand relationships.

H9: Celebrity endorser identification has a significant positive effect on product purchase intention.

Based on the theoretical basis and hypotheses, the research framework is shown in Figure 1.

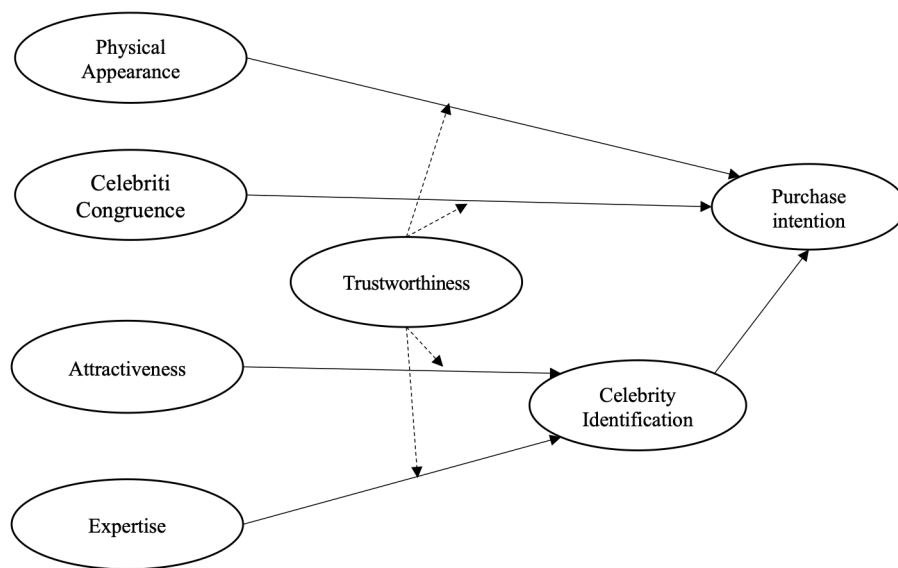


Figure 1. Research framework

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Research measurement development

This study measured the influence of physical appearance, celebrity congruence, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness on celebrity identification and purchase intention for shoes and electronics. Physical appearance is defined as the physical attractiveness of celebrities who can attract public attention, both through print and electronic media, related to the advertised product. The indicators included attractiveness, classiness, handsome features, and elegance. Celebrity congruence is the compatibility between a celebrity's image as an endorser and the brand of the product being advertised. The indicators included familiarity, harmony, suitability, and trustworthiness. Attractiveness refers to the attractiveness of a celebrity's external appearance in a particular field, with indicators such as attractive, classy, elegant, and supportive of the product image.

Expertise is defined as a celebrity's knowledge or skills in sports or electronics, as measured through indicators such as expert, experienced, and qualified. Trustworthiness refers to the perception of a celebrity's honesty, integrity, and credibility in sports or electronics. The indicators include reliability, honesty, trustworthiness, and brand support. Celebrity identification is the extent to which consumers feel attracted to and personally connected with a celebrity who endorses their brand. Indicators include recognition, reviews, fandom, praise, and feelings of closeness. Purchase intention is defined as the attitudes and behavioral tendencies of consumers influenced by various marketing activities that aim to encourage product purchases. The indicators used were tracking, buying, wearing, and participating. (Shezi., 2022); (Jamil & Hassan., 2014)(Shin & Choi., 2021)

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire with a Likert scale, in which respondents were asked to rate various aspects under study. Instrument validity and reliability tests were conducted, and all items were declared valid and reliable. The correlation significance value was above 95% ($\alpha = 0.05$), and the Cronbach's alpha value for all constructs was > 0.60 .

Table 1. Variable, Indicator/statement and Source

Variables.	Code	Indicator/statement	Source
Physical Appearance	Physi.Ap_1	1. Attractive	(Jamil & Hassan, 2014)
	Physi.Ap_2	2. Classy	
	Physi.Ap_3	3. Beautiful	
	Physi.Ap_4	4. Elegant	
Celebrity Congruence	Cc1	1. How familiar are you with the celebrity who appeared in the ad	(Jamil & Hassan, 2014)
	Cc2		

Variables.	Code	Indicator/statement	Source
Attractiveness	Cc3	2. How congruent is the image of the celebrity with the brand they endorse?	(Shezi, 2022)
	Cc4	3. How believable is this celebrity's endorsement of this brand?	
	Att1.	4. How believable is this celebrity's use of that product?	
	Att2	1. My favorite sports celebrity is an attractive celebrity who endorses sports brands.	
Expertise	Att3	2. My favorite sports celebrity is a classy celebrity endorser of sports brands.	Shezi, (2022).
	Att4	3. My favorite sports celebrity is a handsome celebrity endorsing sports brands.	
	Exp1	4. My favorite sports celebrity is an elegant celebrity who endorses sports brands.	
	Exp2	1. My favorite sports celebrity is a skilled celebrity endorser of sports brands.	
Trustworthiness	Exp3	2. My favorite sports celebrity is an experienced celebrity endorser of sports brands.	(Shezi, 2022)
	Exp4	3. My favorite sports celebrity is a qualified celebrity endorser of sports brands.	
	Tru1	4. My favorite sports celebrity is a knowledgeable celebrity endorser of sports brands.	
	Tru2	1. My favorite sports celebrity is a dependable celebrity endorser of sports brands.	
Celebrity Identification)	Tru3	2. My favorite sports celebrity is an honest celebrity endorser of sports brands.	(Shezi, 2022)
	Tru4	3. My favorite sports celebrity is a reliable endorser of sports brands.	
	Ci1	4. My favorite sports celebrity is a trustworthy celebrity endorser of sports brands.	
	Ci2	1. I am a big fan of my favorite sports celebrity compared to other players.	
Purchase Intention	Ci3	2. I can recognize my favorite sports celebrities in public places.	(Shezi, 2022)
	Ci4	3. I am a committed fan of my favorite sports celebrity.	
	Ci5	4. When someone criticizes my favorite sports celebrity, it feels like a personal insult.	
	Ci6	5. I am very interested in what others think about my favorite sports celebrity.	
Purchase Intention	Ci7	6. My favorite sports celebrities' successes are my successes.	(Shezi, 2022)
	Pi1	7. When someone praises my favorite sports celebrity, it feels like a personal compliment.	
	Pi2	1. The likelihood that I will attend my favorite sports celebrity events/functions in the future is high.	
	Pi3	2. The likelihood that I will track my favorite sports celebrity through the media (e.g., TV, radio, Internet) in the future is high.	
Purchase Intention	Pi4	3. The likelihood that I will purchase my favorite sports celebrity's merchandise in the future is high.	(Shezi, 2022)
	Pi5	4. The likelihood that I will wear my favorite sports celebrity's personalized brand in the future is high.	
		5. The likelihood that I will participate in discussions about my favorite sports celebrity in the future is high.	

Questionnaire design

The survey questionnaire in this study consisted of seven constructs with 32 items (Table 1). The Attractiveness, Celebrity Identification, Expertise, Trustworthiness, and Purchase Intention constructs were adapted from Shezi (Shezi., 2022). Meanwhile, the Physical Appearance and Celebrity Congruence constructs were adapted to research (Jamil & Hassan., 2014). The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms. The respondents were asked to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1

(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The demographic characteristics of the respondents included gender, age, marital status, occupation, and monthly income.

Population & sampling design

The target population in this study was consumers who recognize celebrity endorsers and have an interest in buying shoes and electronic products promoted by these celebrities. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with the following criteria: respondents were at least 17 years old and had seen celebrity endorsers through social-media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. The total number of respondents in this study was 335.

Data collection process

The type of data in this study is quantitative data collected through distributing questionnaires and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Reliability tests were conducted using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) to assess the internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was used to test discriminant validity between constructs. The analysis also included testing the causal relationships, mediation effects, and moderation effects between variables to identify patterns of relationships and draw conclusions. The results of the analysis were interpreted to gain theoretical and practical insights into the influence of celebrity endorsers on consumer purchase intentions.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

The initial phase of this study focused on ensuring that the research instrument met the established standards of validity and reliability. A structured multistage procedure was implemented to systematically evaluate and refine the measurement tool.

The first stage involved a preliminary face-validity assessment. Following the development of the questionnaire, the instrument was reviewed by peers to evaluate its clarity and comprehensiveness. This stage consisted of two primary activities: (a) obtaining feedback regarding the clarity and ease of understanding of each statement and (b) identifying any ambiguous or potentially confusing questions. The peer review process revealed that several items lacked clarity, prompting revisions to improve wording precision and respondent interpretability.

The second stage extended the face validity assessment through expert evaluation. Subject-matter experts in the relevant research domain were consulted to provide critical feedback on the instrument's conceptual alignment and practical applicability of the instrument. Their input contributed to refining the phrasing, structure, and relevance of the questionnaire items, ensuring that each construct was accurately represented and was theoretically grounded.

The third stage involved empirical testing for validity and reliability through a pilot study. A pretest was conducted with 30 respondents who met the study's sampling criteria. Construct validity was assessed using correlation analysis, where all indicators demonstrated validity by achieving r -count values exceeding the r -table thresholds at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Reliability analysis further confirmed the internal consistency of the instrument, with all variables recording Cronbach's alpha coefficients greater than 0.60, indicating acceptable reliability for subsequent data collection and analysis.

Following the completion of data collection, all questionnaire responses were systematically tabulated. The tabulated data were then used to generate descriptive statistics outlining the respondent characteristics, including gender, age, highest level of education, and occupation. These descriptive insights provide a contextual grounding for interpreting the study's empirical findings.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	207	58
	Female	148	42
Age	17 - 25 Years	201	57
	26 - 35 Years	96	27
	36 - 45 Years	41	12
	46 - 55 Years	17	4
	56 - 65 Years	10	3
Level of Education	High School Equivalent	66	18
	College Graduate	28	8

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Profession	Diploma	60	17
	Bachelor 1	218	62
	Strata 2	8	2.2
	Strata 3	3	0,8
	Student	26	8
	Student	23	7
	Private Employee	165	47
	Entrepreneur	18	5
	SOE Employee	25	7
	Others	78	22
	Professional	5	2
	Military/Police	3	1
	CIVIL SERVANT	12	4

Based on Table 2, of the total 355 respondents, 207 were men (58%) and 148 were women (42%). In terms of age, the majority of respondents were in the 17–25 years age range, as many as 201 people (57%). Second place was the respondents aged 26–35 years, as many as 96 people (27%), followed by 36–45 years old, as many as 41 people (12%), and finally 46–55 years old, as many as 17 people (4%). Based on the last level of education, the most respondents were Bachelor's degree graduates, as many as 218 people (62%). Furthermore, 66 high school graduates (18%), 60 Diploma (D1–D3) graduates (17%), 8 Strata 2 (S2) graduates (2.2%), and 3 Strata 3 (S3) graduates (0.8%). In terms of occupation, the majority of respondents were private employees, as many as 165 people (47%). Followed by other job categories as many as 78 people (22%), BUMN employees as many as 25 people (7%), entrepreneurs/entrepreneurs as many as 18 people (5%), civil servants as many as 12 people (4%), professionals as many as 5 people (2%), and TNI / Polri as many as 3 people (1%).

Table 2. Model fit and quality indices

Average path coefficient (APC)=0.182, $P < 0.001$
Average R-squared (ARS)=0.549, $P < 0.001$
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)=0.544, $P < 0.001$
Average block VIF (AVIF)=3.938, acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)=4.595, acceptable if ≤ 5 , ideally ≤ 3.3
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)=0.659, small ≥ 0.1 , medium ≥ 0.25 , large ≥ 0.36
Simpson's paradox ratio (SPR)=0.889, acceptable if ≥ 0.7 , ideally = 1
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)=0.999, acceptable if ≥ 0.9 , ideally = 1
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)=1.000, acceptable if ≥ 0.7
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)=0.722, acceptable if ≥ 0.7

The subsequent stage of the analysis involved evaluating the overall model fit using a set of goodness-of-fit indices within the PLS-SEM framework. The key indicators assessed included the average path coefficient (APC), average R-squared (ARS), and average adjusted R-squared (AARS).

The results indicate that the model demonstrates a strong fit. Specifically, the p-values associated with APC, ARS, and AARS were all statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, with APC = 0.182, ARS = 0.549, and AARS = 0.544. These findings suggest that, on average, the structural relationships in the model are meaningful and that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance in the endogenous constructs. Collinearity diagnostics further confirmed the robustness of the model. The Average Block Variance Inflation Factor (AVIF) was 2.938, while the Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF) was 4.938. Both values fall below the critical threshold of 5, indicating the absence of multicollinearity issues among the indicators and latent variables.

In terms of overall model adequacy, the goodness-of-fit (GoF) index was 0.659, which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.36. This categorizes the model as having a large effect size and indicates an excellent overall fit. Additional model diagnostics reinforce this conclusion. The Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR) was 0.889, the R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR) was 0.999, and the Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR) was 1. These values suggest that the model is free from paradoxical or suppressor effects. Furthermore, the Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR) was 0.722, exceeding the minimum acceptable value of 0.70, thereby confirming that the causal directions specified in the model are

appropriate and not subject to reversal.

Following the confirmation of structural model adequacy, the analysis proceeds to the evaluation of the measurement model. This stage assesses construct validity and reliability using convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity tests. Based on the results presented in Table 3, all constructs exhibit composite reliability (CR) values above the recommended threshold of 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeding 0.50, consistent with the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2017).

The indicator-level assessment further supports convergent validity, as all outer loadings exceed the minimum threshold of 0.708. Additionally, the factor and cross-loadings demonstrate that all indicators load significantly on their respective constructs, with loading values greater than 0.50 and p-values less than 0.05. Collectively, these results confirm that the measurement model satisfies the requirements for validity and reliability, thereby supporting the robustness of the interpretation of the subsequent structural model.

Table 3. Measurement Model

Item	Validity loadings and cross- loadings	P Value	Composite Relia- bility	Reliability Cronbach's alpha coefficients (>0.70)	Average variances extracted
Exp_1	0.821	< 0.001	0.900	0.852	0.694
Exp_2	0.881	< 0.001			
Exp_3	0.809	< 0.001			
Exp_4	0.818	< 0.001			
Trustw_1	0.815	< 0.001	0.900	0.852	0.693
Trustw_2	0.854	< 0.001			
Trustw_3	0.826	< 0.001			
Trustw_4	0.834	< 0.001			
Cel_Id1	0.791	< 0.001	0.936	0.920	0.676
Cel_Id2	0.812	< 0.001			
Cel_Id3	0.866	< 0.001			
Cel_Id4	0.792	< 0.001			
Cel_Id5	0.808	< 0.001	0.888	0.831	0.664
Cel_Id6	0.840	< 0.001			
Cel_Id7	0.842	< 0.001			
Attract_1	0.833	< 0.001			
Attract_2	0.843	< 0.001	0.876	0.810	0.639
Attract_3	0.774	< 0.001			
Attract_4	0.807	< 0.001			
Cel_Cong_1	0.701	< 0.001			
Cel_Cong_2	0.858	< 0.001	0.862	0.784	0.613
Cel_Cong_3	0.841	< 0.001			
Cel_Cong_4	0.789	< 0.001			
Physi.Ap_1	0.840	< 0.001			
Physi.Ap_2	0.911	< 0.001	0.923	0.896	0.706
Physi.Ap_3	0.837	< 0.001			
Physi.Ap_4	0.622	< 0.001			
Pi_1	0.835	< 0.001			
Pi_2	0.846	< 0.001	0.923	0.896	0.706
Pi_3	0.837	< 0.001			
Pi_4	0.863	< 0.001			
Pi_5	0.819	< 0.001			

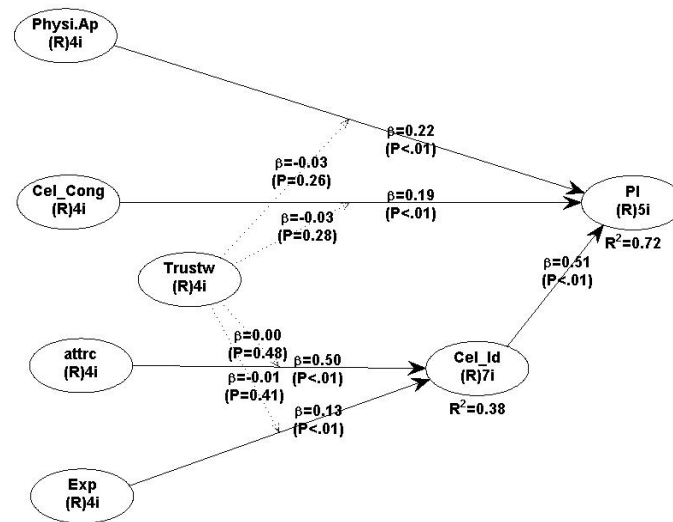


Figure 2. Full model estimation results

The results of Figure 2 are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Variable Relationship	β	p Value	Decision
H ₁	Physical Appearance → purchase intention	0.22	<.01	Significant
H ₂	Celebrity congruence → Purchase Intention	0.19	<.01	Significant
H ₃	Attractiveness → Celebrity identification	0.50	<.01	Significant
H ₄	Expertise → Celebrity identification	0.30	<.01	Significant
H ₅	Trustworthiness → Physical Appearance & purchase intention	-0.03	0.26	Not Significant
H ₆	Trustworthiness → Celebrity congruence → purchase intention	-0.03	0.28	Not Significant
H ₇	Trustworthiness → Attractiveness → Celebrity identification	0.00	0.48	Not Significant
H ₈	Trustworthiness → Expertise → Celebrity identification	-0.01	0.41	Not Significant
H ₉	Celebrity identification → Purchase Intention	0.51	<.01	Significant

1. The physical appearance of celebrity endorsers had a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.22$; $p < .01$).

This study shows that the physical appearance of celebrity endorsers has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention. The more attractive the celebrity's appearance, the higher the consumer's desire to buy the promoted product. The coefficient value $\beta = 0.22$ and $p < 0.01$ confirm that this relationship is strong and statistically significant. The visual appeal of celebrities shapes positive perceptions of products and purchase intentions, especially if they look attractive and elegant. This finding is consistent with (M. Kim et al., 2024), who stated that celebrities' physical appearance strongly influences purchase intention, especially for appearance-related products such as cosmetics and fashion.

Boerman & Müller., (2022) also support that celebrity attractiveness affects brand perception and purchase intention, especially for lifestyle-based products. (Djafarova & Bowes., 2021) add that this influence is stronger in young audiences who are frequently exposed to celebrity advertising on social media, especially if there is an emotional attachment. However, some studies note that in addition to physical appearance, celebrity expertise and trustworthiness are also important. For example, Schouten et al., (2020) showed that for products with high credibility demands, such as health and technology,

the effect of physical attractiveness depends on consumers' perceptions of the celebrity's competence and integrity.

2. Celebrity endorser congruence has a significant positive effect on product purchase intention with $\beta = 0.19$; $p < 0.01$

This study's findings indicate that celebrity-product congruence exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on consumer purchase intention. The estimated path coefficient ($\beta = 0.19$) with a significance level of $p < 0.01$ confirms that a higher perceived alignment between the celebrity endorser and product leads to a stronger intention among consumers to purchase. This relationship suggests that when consumers perceive a natural fit between the celebrity's image and the endorsed product, the endorsement becomes more persuasive and credible.

This congruence effect operates through the formation of favorable perceptions, whereby consumers assume that the celebrity genuinely represents, uses, or is associated with a product. As a result, both trust and affective attraction toward the product are enhanced, reinforcing behavioral intentions. These findings are consistent with prior research (Shezi, 2022; M. Kim et al., 2024), which demonstrates that celebrity-product congruence strengthens brand perception and increases the effectiveness of endorsements, particularly in lifestyle-oriented product categories such as fashion and cosmetics, where symbolic and identity-related attributes are salient.

However, the strength of this effect is not uniform across all product types. Evidence from Bi & Zhang (2023) and Schouten et al. (2020) suggests that for utilitarian or highly technical products—such as electronics or healthcare items—consumers tend to rely more heavily on functional attributes, product quality, and objective credibility rather than the perceived fit of a celebrity endorser. In such contexts, the marginal impact of congruence may be attenuated.

Furthermore, the role of celebrity congruence is amplified within social media environments. As highlighted by Djafarova & Bowes (2021), younger audiences, in particular, are more responsive to endorsements that reflect a coherent and aspirational lifestyle. Celebrities and influencers on social platforms are often perceived not merely as endorsers but as lifestyle exemplars, making congruence a critical determinant of engagement and persuasion. Consequently, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is contingent not only on alignment with the product but also on relevance to the target audience's identity and social context.

3. Celebrity endorser attractiveness has a significant positive effect on Celebrity identification with $\beta = 0.50$; $p < 0.01$

The results of this study demonstrate that celebrity physical attractiveness positively and statistically significantly affects the level of celebrity identification. The estimated path coefficient ($\beta = 0.50$) with a significance level of $p < 0.01$ indicates a strong relationship, suggesting that higher levels of perceived attractiveness are associated with greater consumer identification with the celebrity endorser. This finding highlights the central role of visual appeal in shaping the psychological connections between consumers and brand endorsers.

Physical attractiveness contributes to the formation of favorable perceptions, emotional attachment, and a perceived sense of closeness between the parties. Consumers are more likely to relate to and identify with celebrities they perceive as aesthetically appealing, which enhances the persuasive effectiveness of marketing communication. This mechanism operates through affective responses, wherein attractiveness facilitates admiration and aspirational alignment, thereby strengthening identification with the brand.

These findings are consistent with those of previous studies. Kim et al. (2024) reported that an attractive appearance enhances consumer identification and increases positive affect toward the endorsed products. Similarly, Shezi (2022) found that physical attractiveness is a strong determinant of celebrity identification, particularly among younger consumers and within lifestyle-oriented product categories, such as fashion and beauty, where symbolic and self-expressive attributes are prominent. Boerman and Müller (2022) further support this perspective, noting that attractive celebrities can intensify consumers' emotional and social connections to brands.

However, the influence of physical attractiveness is context-dependent. As noted by Schouten et al. (2020), its effect tends to diminish in the case of technical or functionally complex products, such as cars. In such contexts, consumers prioritize expertise, credibility, and information value over aesthetics. Consequently, while attractiveness is a powerful driver of identification in the hedonic and lifestyle

domains, its relative importance is reduced when utilitarian product attributes dominate consumers' decision-making processes.

4. The expertise of the celebrity endorser has a significant positive effect on Celebrity identification with $\beta = 0.30$; $p < .01$

The value of $\beta = 0.30$ indicates a positive influence between celebrity expertise and celebrity identification. In other words, the higher the celebrity expertise, the greater the tendency for consumers to feel connected to it. This expertise includes knowledge, experience, or skills relevant to the advertised product.

For example, a celebrity with a strong background in sports, beauty, or health has an easier time connecting with consumers, especially when promoting products that fit their field. Although its influence is smaller than physical attractiveness and product fit, expertise is still important, especially for products that require credibility. A p-value of <0.01 indicates that this effect is statistically significant; therefore, it can be concluded that celebrity expertise contributes significantly to forming a psychological bond with consumers.

This finding is in line with that (Schouten et al., 2020), who showed that expert celebrities are more trusted, especially for products that require professional validation, such as technology or health. In contrast, according to (Djafarova & Bowes., 2021), for lifestyle products such as fashion and beauty, attractiveness and celebrity congruence are more dominant. However, expertise remains relevant for products that demand specialized authority. (Shezi, 2022) also stated that celebrity expertise matters for consumers seeking specific information, such as in financial, educational, or technical products.

5. Endorser celebrity trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between Physical Appearance and product purchase intention, with $\beta = -0.03$; $p = 0.26$

The results showed that celebrity trustworthiness did not moderate the relationship between physical appearance and purchase intention, indicated by $\beta = -0.03$ and $p = 0.26$ ($p > 0.05$). This implies that trust in celebrities does not enhance or diminish the impact of physical attractiveness on purchasing decisions. In other words, the effect of a celebrity's physical appearance on purchase intention is direct and independent of the level of consumer trust. This finding suggests that, in the context of products that emphasize visual aspects, trustworthiness is not a key factor.

Previous research (Yu-Ping et al., 2020) suggests that trustworthiness may play a role in products with high credibility demands (e.g., health or financial products). However, studies by (Boerman & Müller, 2022) and (L. Choi et al., 2022) support that in aesthetic-based product categories such as fashion and cosmetics, physical attractiveness is more dominant than trustworthiness. Thus, while trustworthiness is important in certain contexts, its role as a moderator is not always significant, especially in products that rely more on image and visual appeal.

6. Celebrity endorser trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between Celebrity Congruence and product purchase intention with $\beta = -0.03$; $p = 0.28$

This study concludes that celebrity trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between celebrity congruence and consumer purchase intention, indicated by a value of $\beta = -0.03$ and $p = 0.28$ ($p > 0.05$). This means that although celebrities are compatible with the product, the level of trustworthiness does not affect the strength of the relationship. Celebrity congruence has a direct influence on purchase intention, without being influenced by trustworthiness. This finding is in line with (M. Kim et al., 2024), who state that celebrity congruence drives purchase intention more, especially for lifestyle products such as fashion and beauty.

In contrast, Shezi (2022) showed that trustworthiness is more relevant for products that demand high credibility, such as healthcare or technology. (Boerman & Müller, 2022) also confirmed that celebrity congruence is more influential than trustworthiness in the context of visual and symbolic products. Thus, although trustworthiness is an important aspect of celebrity credibility, its role as a moderator in the relationship between celebrity congruence and purchase intention is not significant, especially for products that emphasize lifestyle and self-image.

7. Endorser celebrity trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between attractiveness and Celebrity Identification, with $\beta = 0.00$; $p = 0.48$

This study shows that celebrity trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between physical attractiveness and celebrity identification, indicated by the value of $\beta = 0.00$ and $p = 0.48$ ($p > 0.05$). This means that the level of trust in celebrities does not affect the extent to which physical attractiveness shapes consumer identification with celebrities. Thus, attractiveness has a direct influence on celebrity identification, without being strengthened or mediated by trustworthiness. This finding is in line with that (Boerman & Müller, 2022) and (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021), who state that trustworthiness is more relevant for direct purchase decisions, not in forming emotional identification. Y. Choi et al., (2021) added that trustworthiness only moderates this relationship in the context of products that demand high credibility, such as health or finance. However, for lifestyle and emotional products, such as fashion or cosmetics, physical attractiveness is sufficient to form a psychological connection with consumers.

Overall, these results confirm that in the context of lifestyle-based products, trustworthiness is not a significant moderator, and visual appeal remains a major factor in forming celebrity identification relationships.

8. Celebrity endorser trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between Expertise and Celebrity Identification with $\beta = 0.01$; $p = 0.41$

The results show that celebrity trustworthiness does not moderate the relationship between expertise and celebrity identification, as evidenced by $\beta = 0.01$ and $p = 0.41$ ($p > 0.05$), indicating the absence of a statistically significant moderating effect. This means that even if a celebrity has high expertise, consumers' level of trust does not affect the extent to which they identify with the celebrity. Expertise stands alone as a factor that influences consumer identification without being influenced by it.

This finding is supported by (Schouten et al., 2020) who assert that celebrity expertise forms a direct connection with consumers, and (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021) who state that trustworthiness is more relevant for products with high credibility demands rather than for lifestyle or image-based products. Shezi, (2022) also emphasized that in technical or expertise-based products, consumers focus more on the celebrity's abilities than their personal integrity. Thus, celebrity expertise is strong enough to form celebrity identification without the need for support from trustworthiness, especially in products that emphasize celebrity performance and authority.

9. Endorser celebrity identification has a significant positive effect on product purchase intention with $\beta = 0.51$; $p < .01$

Discussion

The results show that celebrity identification has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. This means that the stronger the connection consumers feel with the celebrity endorser, the higher their tendency to buy the promoted product. This identification reflects an emotional, social, or aspirational attachment between the consumer and the celebrity, not just visual appeal. The connection significantly drives purchase intention, and this result is statistically valid.

Previous research supports this finding. (Y. Choi et al., 2021) emphasized that celebrity identification is particularly effective for lifestyle and entertainment products. (Shezi, 2022) added that consumers are more likely to buy products from celebrities who reflect their values and self-image. (Schouten et al., 2020) and (Boerman & Müller, 2022) also showed that strong identification increases brand affection and purchase intention, especially for emotional products such as fashion or cosmetics. In conclusion, celebrity identification is an effective marketing strategy, especially for products that emphasize image, lifestyle, and emotional connection with consumers.

5. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, SUGGESTION, AND LIMITATIONS

Conclusion

The findings of this study lead to several key conclusions regarding the structural relationships among the

variables examined. First, physical appearance and celebrity-product congruence are found to have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. This indicates that consumers are more likely to develop buying intentions when the celebrity endorser is perceived as visually appealing and well matched with the endorsed product. These factors enhance the persuasive power of endorsements by strengthening their perceived relevance and appeal. Second, the results demonstrate that attractiveness and expertise significantly influence celebrity identification. This suggests that consumers are more likely to feel psychologically connected to celebrities who are not only physically appealing but also perceived as knowledgeable or competent in the relevant domain. Such identification reflects affective and cognitive alignment, which increases the overall effectiveness of the endorsement.

In contrast, celebrity trustworthiness did not moderate the tested relationships. Specifically, it did not significantly moderate the relationship between physical appearance and celebrity congruence on purchase intention, nor did it moderate the relationship between attractiveness and expertise on celebrity identification. This result indicates that, within the context of this study, trustworthiness does not strengthen or weaken the influence of the independent variables on their respective dependent variables. This outcome warrants scrutiny as it diverges from a substantial body of endorsement literature that typically positions trustworthiness as a critical driver. Its insignificance may reflect measurement limitations, sample characteristics, or product-category effects rather than a universal absence of influence.

Despite the lack of a moderating role, celebrity identification emerged as a significant predictor of purchase intention. The analysis confirmed that higher levels of consumer identification with a celebrity led to stronger intentions to purchase the endorsed product. This reinforces the role of identification as a central psychological mechanism linking endorsement attributes to consumer behavior. In practical terms, it implies that fostering a strong sense of connection between the target audience and the celebrity endorser is more consequential than relying solely on perceived credibility dimensions such as trustworthiness.

Overall, the model suggests that while visual appeal, congruence, attractiveness, and expertise are effective in shaping identification and purchase intention, the pathway through celebrity identification is the most robust driver of consumer behavioral outcomes in this context.

Managerial and Practical Implications

Because physical appearance and attractiveness have a significant effect on purchase intention and celebrity identification, companies need to choose celebrities with strong physical attractiveness, both in terms of appearance, style, and visual personality, that can attract the attention of target audiences, especially on social media. The results of the study confirmed the importance of celebrity-product fit. Therefore, marketers must ensure alignment between the celebrity image and product values so that consumers feel relevant and increase purchase intentions. For example, celebrities known in the sports world are more appropriate for sports shoes than cosmetics.

Celebrity expertise significantly enhances consumer identification, indicating that marketing campaigns should emphasize the endorser's relevant knowledge and experience to strengthen emotional connection and perceived credibility. While trustworthiness does not act as a moderating variable in this model, it remains an essential baseline factor for preserving positive brand and celebrity perceptions.

Given that celebrity identification directly influences purchase intention, companies should focus on building emotional and psychological closeness through authentic storytelling and active engagement on social media. Targeting younger, digitally active audiences is particularly effective because they are more responsive to identification-based endorsement strategies.

Research Suggestions

For marketing practitioners and brand managers, the findings suggest a clear prioritization of celebrity endorsers who possess strong physical appeal and high congruence with the advertised product. These attributes have been empirically shown to enhance purchase intention, particularly in visually driven and lifestyle-oriented industries such as fashion, beauty, and consumer electronics, where symbolic value and image alignment are critical. The results also highlight the central role of celebrity identification in consumer behavior. Accordingly, endorsement strategies should focus on fostering emotional connections between consumers and celebrities. This can be achieved through personalized and authentic content that reflects the celebrity's values and lifestyle, relatable storytelling that resonates with the audience's experiences, and interactive engagement formats such as live streaming, Q&A sessions, and social-media collaborations. These approaches strengthen psychological proximity and increase the persuasive impact of endorsements.

In terms of celebrity selection, firms should adopt a dual-criteria approach that considers both attractiveness and expertise of the celebrity. Celebrities who are not only visually appealing but also possess relevant knowledge or a credible reputation within the product domain are more effective in building consumer identification with the brand. This combination enhances both affective and cognitive responses, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of the campaign. Although trustworthiness does not function as a moderating variable in this model, it remains a critical factor. Maintaining public trust in celebrity endorsers is essential for safeguarding brand credibility and avoiding reputational risk. Therefore, companies should continue to evaluate endorsers based on their track record, integrity, and public image to prevent negative spillover effects on their brands.

From a segmentation perspective, marketers should target consumer groups with a higher propensity for emotional attachment to celebrities. Younger audiences and active social media users are particularly responsive to identification-based endorsement strategies because they are more likely to form psychological connections with public figures and integrate them into their self-concept.

Future research should extend this model by examining trustworthiness as a direct or mediating variable, rather than solely as a moderator. Additionally, further investigation is needed into how these relationships vary across product categories, particularly between functional and symbolic goods, and across different cultural and demographic contexts that may influence consumer-celebrity dynamics.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the scope of the research is restricted to shoes and electronic products endorsed by celebrities. As a result, the generalizability of the findings is limited, particularly for product categories with different characteristics, such as services, healthcare products, or necessities, where consumer decision-making processes may differ substantially.

Second, the non-significant moderating role of trustworthiness may reflect limitations in model specification rather than actual irrelevance. The psychological relationship between consumers and celebrities is inherently complex, and trustworthiness may exert its influence indirectly or function more appropriately as a mediating or direct variable. This suggests that the current model may not fully capture the nuanced roles of credibility dimensions.

Third, the study relies on self-reported data through questionnaires, which introduces potential biases such as social desirability and subjective interpretation. These biases may affect the accuracy of responses, particularly when measuring perceptions of celebrities and behavioral intentions.

Fourth, the sample was limited to respondents aged 17 and above who were active users of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This restricts the representativeness of the sample, as it excludes older demographics and individuals who primarily engage with non-digital or traditional media channels. Consequently, the findings may not reflect broader population perspectives.

Fifth, purchase intention is measured within a cross-sectional design, capturing responses at a single point in time. This limits the ability to assess causal relationships and prevents the evaluation of long-term effects on actual purchasing behavior. Additionally, the model does not incorporate other relevant determinants of purchase intention, such as price sensitivity, perceived product quality, brand image, or prior consumer experience, which may reduce the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

Finally, the absence of a moderating effect for trustworthiness may also be attributed to methodological factors, including limited variability in respondents' perceptions or analytical approach. More advanced techniques, such as multi-group analysis or segmentation based on varying levels of perceived trustworthiness, may yield different insights and should be considered in future research.

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