

THE EFFECT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON BRAND ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract

This research examines how Celebrity Endorsement affects Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention. In this study, the effect of Endorser Credibility, Endorser Likeability, Brand Image and Brand Credibility on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention was examined. The respondents were 96 university students in Malaysia. Correlation analyses showed that all four independent variables positively and significantly affected Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention. Further multiple linear regression analyses showed that Brand Credibility was more important than Endorser Credibility in positively affecting Brand Attitude. In addition, both Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability were more important than Brand Credibility in positively affecting Purchase Intentions. The findings add to previous research on the importance of Celebrity Endorsement and provides practical guidance in marketing. In particular, the significance of Celebrity Endorsement over Brand Credibility in Purchase Intentions suggests further research. The findings in this research is limited to the purchase behaviour of urban young adults in Malaysia.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Brand Attitude, Purchase Intention.

2017 GBSE Journal

1.0 Introduction

In recent years, Malaysian organisations have increased their budget on promotional activities and have invested millions on celebrity advertisement (Freeman & Chen, 2015). Favourite Malaysian celebrities usually endorse more than one brand at any one time. An example is Malaysia's badminton player Dato' Lee Chong Wei, who endorses 100 plus isotonic drink, Yonex badminton rackets, Kaspersky antivirus program and many other products. In 2012, Dato' Lee Chong Wei's earnings from endorsement amounted to RM2.5

million (TCNW, 2016). This reflects the high demand of celebrity endorsement in Malaysia. While Celebrity Endorsement is expected to affect Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention, Brand Image and Brand Credibility are also important factors that affect Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention too. Therefore, this study explores the effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement in the form of Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability; and Brand Image and Brand Credibility in influencing Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention.

2.0 Prior Literature

Brand Attitude is a person's lasting internal evaluation towards a brand (Mitchell and Olson, 1981). Consumers' favourable internal evaluation towards a brand will lead to long-term preferential association with the brand. Brand Attitude can be positively influenced by two factors which are Brand Image and Brand Credibility. Brand Credibility is the trust that consumers have in a brand. Thus, brands who are considered by consumers to be trustworthy will acquire favourable Brand Attitude amongst the consumers. The second factor that influences Brand Attitude is Brand Image or a mental picture of a brand created through the brand's logo, slogan or other identifiers to signify the brand's key values. In addition, Brand Attitude is also positively influenced by Celebrity Endorsement. A study on the relationship between Celebrity Endorsements factors and Brand Attitude found that the respondents' attitude towards the celebrity endorser positively affected Brand Attitude (Bergkvist, Hijalmarson & Magi, 2016).

Purchase Intention is a behaviour that is shown by consumers after the product evaluation process (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Brand Image helps consumers identify a brand with its key values whereas Brand Credibility is the trust that consumers have in goods or services identified by a brand. Therefore, Brand Image and Brand Credibility affects consumers' Purchase Intentions. In addition, Purchase Intention is known to be influenced by celebrity endorsers as observed in the high demand for celebrity endorsers in Malaysia. Celebrity Endorsement can be thought of as comprising of Endorser Likeability and Endorser Credibility.

Since both Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention are influenced by Endorser Likeability and Endorser Credibility, Brand Credibility and Brand Image, this study will examine the relationships between the factors. Previous research on these factors are discussed next.

Brand Image is defined as a person perceptions' towards a brand that is emulated by brand association from one's memory (Keller, 1993). Furthermore, the distinction between self-congruity and ideal congruity is explained as the match between consumer's actual self-image and organisation brand's image. Graeff (1966) proposes that the congruence between the consumer's self-concepts and brands will lead to favourable Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention. Therefore,

H1: Brand Image has a positive impact on Brand Attitude

H2: Brand Image has a positive impact on the Purchase Intention

Brand credibility is defined as the ability and willingness of the organisation in fulfilling their promises hence forming the consumers' validity of product information of a brand (Erdem, Swait & Valenzuela, 2006). Spry, Pappy & Cornwell (2009) have studied celebrity credibility on consumer based equity with the mediating role of Brand Credibility. Their findings, showed that there is significant relationship between Endorser Credibility and Brand Credibility. Additionally, the study proved that Celebrity Endorsement is indeed an effective instrument in building brand equity indirectly when it is mediated by Brand Credibility. Therefore,

H3: Brand Credibility has a positive impact on Brand Attitude

H4: Brand Credibility has a positive impact on Purchase Intention

A successful Celebrity Endorsement can lead to a positive impact on product information, brand recognition as well as purchase intention by the consumers (Liu, Huang & Minghua, 2007). Wang, Cheng & Chu (2012) conducted a research using a cell phone advertisement that is endorsed by a popular Taiwanese singer. Their findings indicate that Celebrity Endorsement have a significant and positive effect on purchase intention as well as advertising appeal. In addition the advertising effect plays a partial mediating role between the relationship of Celebrity Endorsement and consumer effect. Endorser credibility can be shown from three dimensions which is the credibility of the celebrity endorser of consumer evaluation is adopted by measuring the level of trust, expertise and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). Celebrity endorsement is an advertising tool that the endorser's credibility can be reflected through brand that is endorsed by the celebrity (Spry, Pappy & Cornwell 2009). A research was conducted to study the impact of endorser's credibility and consumer self-brand connection and brand evaluation. The findings shown that endorser-brand fit formed a strong relationship between consumer self-brand connection with Endorser Credibility (Dwivedi, Mcdonald & Johnson, 2014). Therefore,

H5: Endorser Credibility has a positive impact on Brand Attitude

H6: Endorser Credibility has a positive impact on Purchase Intention.

Endorser Likeability is part of the characteristic of celebrity attractiveness, (Dwivedi, Mcdonald & Johnson, 2014) mentioned that Endorser Likeability are able to attract more consumers towards the brand. Past research that studied on the relationship between Celebrity Endorsement source factors and the effectiveness of advertising. The researchers used Endorser Likeability as one of the source factor to determine the effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement towards the brand. It was found that celebrity attractiveness was the fourth source effect that have significant influence towards the effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2015). Therefore,

H7: Endorser Likeability has a positive impact on Brand Attitude

H8: Endorser Likeability has a will positive impact on Purchase Intention

3.0 Methodology

The targeted population in this research are the participants that are currently are the university students in Malaysia, between the ages of 19 to 25 years old. University students were chosen to be the target population in this study as Celebrity Endorsement appeals to the Generation Y. In the questionnaire survey, Section A consists of questions that represents each factor from this research and Section B consists of demographic questions. Questions will be asked in a formed of 7 point Likert Scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" in order to test and verify the predetermined hypotheses. Quantitative method is adopted in this research as the conceptual framework is examined with hypothesis approach. Questionnaire design is formed through the adoption of scale-items from previous research studies.

4.0 Findings

Data collection was distributed to 200 students via email and only 96 students respondent to the email before the dateline. In the demographic section, males consist of 33.3% and females consist of 66.7% out of the total respondents. The highest age group that participated in this research was between the ages of 21 to 22 years old consisting of 92.7%. The participants are mostly undergraduate students which consist of 89.6% of the total respondents.

4.1 Reliability Analysis

The factors were tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, as shown in Table 1. The Cronbach's Alpha value for all variables were shown to be above 0.9 which explains that the reliability of the scales is strong. Thus, all the questions for all the factors from the analysis for both the independent and dependent variables were retained for further analysis.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha for Dependent Variable, Brand Attitude

Factors	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability	Mean Score
Brand Attitude	3	0.972	Strong	3.8993
Purchase Intention	3	0.978	Strong	3.5521
Brand Image	3	0.966	Strong	4.5243
Brand Credibility	3	0.962	Strong	4.2543
Endorser Credibility	4	0.975	Strong	4.3496
Endorser Likeability	3	0.941	Strong	4.3333

4.2 Hypothesis Testing by Correlation Analysis

In Table 2, Pearson's correlation was used to test for positive associations between the independent variables of Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability and the dependent variable, Brand Attitude, The findings show that all four hypotheses have a high positive Pearson's correlation which proves the positive associations between the independent variables to be significant with the dependent variable. The results are consistent with previous literature reviewed. For example, Brand Credibility is found to be positively related to Brand Attitude which is consistent with the study conducted by Spry,

Pappy & Cornwell (2009). Endorser Credibility is also found to have a significant influence towards Brand Attitude by Dwivedi, McDonald & Johnson (2014) who studied the impact of endorser's credibility and brand evaluation. The researchers found that endorser-brand fit formed a strong relationship between consumer self-brand connections with endorser credibility.

Table 2: Results of correlation analysis for Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude

Hypothesis	Construct	Pearson's correlation, <i>r</i>	Sig.	Remarks
H1	Brand Image	0.659	0.00	Not Rejected
H3	Brand Credibility	0.862	0.00	Not Rejected
H5	Endorser Credibility	0.845	0.00	Not Rejected
H7	Endorser Likeability	0.694	0.00	Not Rejected

In Table 3, correlation analysis for the second dependent variable for this research is formed. It was determined that all four hypotheses have a high positive correlation with the significance level at 0.01. It is again proven then all four hypotheses are not rejected. Thus, it is found that the hypothesized positive associations between the independent variables of Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability and the dependent variable Purchase Intention is significant. The results are consistent with previous literature reviewed. For example, Pradhan, Duraipandian & Sethi (2014) suggested that the the greater the effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement will lead to greater enhancement of Purchase Intention by the consumers. Furthermore, consistent with past researches, Liu, Huang & Minghua (2007) explored the relationship among attractiveness of athlete endorser towards Consumer Purchase Intention and found that the attractiveness have significant impact in Consumer Purchase Intention.

Table 3: Results of correlation analysis for Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Hypothesis	Construct	Pearson's correlation, <i>r</i>	Sig.	Remarks
H2	Brand Image	0.562	0.00	Not Rejected
H4	Brand Credibility	0.754	0.00	Not Rejected
H6	Endorser Credibility	0.752	0.00	Not Rejected
H8	Endorser Likeability	0.681	0.00	Not Rejected

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Two multiple linear regression analyses were carried out to test the relationships between Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability and the dependent variable, Brand Attitude. The first multiple linear regression analysis generated a significant regression model ($F = 91.589$, $p < 0.01$), as shown in Table 4. The four independent variables of Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability explained 80.1% of the variance in Brand Attitude ($R^2 = .801$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, Brand Credibility was found to have a significant positive effect on Brand Attitude ($t = 3.999$, $p\text{-value} = 0.00$). In addition, Endorser Credibility also was found to have a significant positive effect on Brand Attitude ($t = 4.335$, $p < 0.01$). As the t -value for Brand Credibility is tested significant, the standardized beta coefficient for Brand Credibility is $\beta = 0.425$ $p < 0.01$. Next, the beta coefficient for Endorser Credibility is $\beta = .393$, $p < 0.01$. In comparison of the standardized coefficient beta between Brand Credibility and Endorser

Credibility, it is shown that Brand Credibility have a higher coefficient beta compared to Endorser Credibility. The significant positive influence of both Brand Credibility and Endorser Credibility on Brand Attitude is consistent with the literature (Dwivedi, Mcdonald & Johnson, 2014; Spry, Pappy & Cornwell, 2009). The multiple regression analysis show that Brand Credibility is more influential on Brand Attitude as compared to Endorser Credibility. The findings show that, although the brands selected for this survey are brands that are endorsed by Dato' Lee, the respondents' attitude towards the brand is affected more by their perceived brand credibility than by their perceived credibility in Dato' Lee. This response is reasonable because brand attitude is more likely to be affected by the direct messages of brand credibility.

Table 4: Results of Multiple Linear Analysis for Dependent Variable, Brand Attitude

Dependent Variable: Brand Attitude					
Independent Variable: Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility, Likeability					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Coefficients		
	Beta	Std Error	β	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.714	0.260		-2.746	0.007
Brand Image	0.078	0.064	0.085	1.208	0.230
Brand Credibility	0.467	0.117	0.425	3.999	0.00
Endorser Credibility	0.471	0.109	0.393	4.335	0.00
Endorser Likeability	0.052	0.055	0.067	0.945	0.347
R-Square = 0.801	p-value = 0.0001		F = 91.589		

A second multiple linear regression analysis was carried out to test the relationships between factors with the dependent variable, Purchase Intention. The analysis have generated a significant regression model ($F = 40.256$, $p < 0.01$), as shown in Table 5. The four independent variables of Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability explained 63.9% of Purchase Intention ($R^2 = .639$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, Brand Credibility was found to have a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = .301$, $t = 2.107$, $p < .05$). Next, Endorser Credibility was found to have a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = .313$, $t = 2.56$, $p < .05$). Endorser Likeability also was found to have a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention ($\beta = .214$, $t = 2.244$, $p < .05$). This shows that Purchase Intention is influenced by Endorser Credibility, Brand Credibility and Endorser Likeability in decreasing order of importance.

Table 5: Results of Multiple Linear Analysis for Dependent Variable, Purchase Intention

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention					
Independent Variable: Brand Image, Brand Credibility, Endorser Credibility, Likeability					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Std. Coefficients		
	Beta	Std Error	β	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.914	0.392		-2.33	0.022
Brand Image	0.056	0.097	0.054	0.578	0.565
Brand Credibility	0.371	0.176	0.301	2.107	0.038
Endorser Credibility	0.42	0.164	0.313	2.56	0.012
Endorser Likeability	0.186	0.083	0.214	2.244	0.027
R Square = 0.639	P-value = 0.00001		F = 40.256		

The significant positive influence of Endorser Credibility and Endorser Likeability on Purchase Intention is consistent with the literature, for example, Rossiter and Percy (1989) believed that Celebrity Endorsement characteristics such as endorser likeability and endorser expertise are important in order for the campaign to be effective and also increase consumer's involvement and intention to purchase. In particular, Pradhan, Duraipandian & Sethi (2014) mentioned when consumers perceived the celebrity endorsers to be attractive, trustworthy and reliable, the researchers affirm that it leads to a positive impact on the intention to purchase the brand that is endorsed by the celebrity. In this research, this can be explained that the celebrity endorser that was used in data collection was Dato Lee Chong Wei. Thus, being the world top ranking badminton player, Dato' Lee attractiveness to Malaysians with his expertise through his endorsement in different brands shown a positive impact on Consumer Purchase Intention among Malaysians.

Meanwhile, Brand Credibility was found to significantly influence Purchase Intention too. The findings for this hypothesis is supported by Wang and Yang (2010) who found that the relationship between Brand Credibility and Consumer Purchase Intention is significant. Erdem and Swait (2004) also reaffirms this hypothesis as the researchers believes that the probability of consumer consideration upon purchasing the brand can be able to increase through Brand Credibility.

Thus, the findings are supported by previous research. However, the second multiple regression analysis show that Endorser Credibility is more influential on Purchase Intention as compared with Brand Credibility. The reason is that the brands discussed in this research were brands endorsed by Dato' Lee. The findings suggest that the respondents' Purchase Intention is influenced more by their trust and confidence in Dato' Lee than by their trust and confidence in the brands.

5.0 Conclusion

The recent increase in celebrity advertisements and the larger proportion of the marketing spend on celebrity endorsement in Malaysia raised an interesting question on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention. A survey on 96 undergraduates who are mostly in their third year of study was conducted. The findings show that Endorser Likeability, Endorser Credibility, Brand Credibility and Brand Image significantly positively influenced Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention which were consistent with previous research. Therefore, this research added evidence from the Malaysian context to the previous research on Celebrity Endorsement.

Further analyses show that Brand Credibility was more important than Endorser Credibility in influencing Brand Attitude; whereas Endorser Credibility, Brand Credibility and Endorser Likeability were more influential in decreasing order importance in affecting Purchase Intention. These findings provided original contribution the research on Celebrity Endorsement in examining the relative influence between brand promotion and Celebrity Endorsement.

The practical implications from this research are that marketers should consider their consumers' perception of the credibility and likeability of the Celebrity Endorsers that they engage for their marketing activities. Of course, marketers should also be aware of their

consumers' perceptions of their brands' credibility and image and if necessary they could increase their brands' credibility and image to positively improve purchase intentions or to positively improve their consumers' attitude towards their brands. To improve their consumers' attitude towards their brands, marketers should also be aware of the positive influence of their endorsers' credibility too, as shown in the results above.

Following from the finding in that the respondents' Purchase Intention is influenced more by their trust and confidence in Dato' Lee than by their trust and confidence in the brands, the practical implication is that when the Brand Credibility is not high amongst the target market then the marketers may consider associating with a celebrity with high Endorser Credibility to increase Purchase Intention and subsequent sales. The finding that Endorser Likeability influenced Purchase Intention would suggest that marketers should select celebrities who are perceived to be more likeable and attractive over celebrities who are less more likeable and attractive when the objective is to increase Purchase Intention.

The findings from this research on the significance of Endorser Celebrity over Brand Credibility in Purchase Intentions suggests further research. The sample size of this current research is rather small as only 96 respondents who are undergraduates that participated in this research. Future research could include respondents from other age or gender segments.

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