

# BRAND TRUST AS CELEBRITY ENDORSER MARKETING MODERATOR'S ROLE

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**Abstract:** Celebrity endorsement is a form of marketing communication done both online and offline as it creates a positive brand attitude. However, its effectiveness in influencing customers' purchase decision needs to be considered. This quantitative research took the sample from 249 respondents who experience in shopping and comprehend the role of celebrity endorsement. The SmartPls 3.0 was used in data analyzing techniques, and bootstrap testing was also employed. The results show that celebrity endorsement affects customers' attitudes, but it does not affect their purchasing behavior. Adding brand trust as a moderator variable enhances the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand attitude. Therefore, marketers need to be able to see how big brand trust is owned before deciding to use celebrity endorsement to market their product. Future researchers can apply models in cultures of other countries and focus on the profile of specific celebrities so that the results can be generalized more.

**Keywords:** Celebrity Endorsement, Brand Trust, Brand Attitude, Purchase Intention



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In marketing communication strategy, there are several techniques in supporting brand or company image, one of which is celebrity endorsement (Erdogan, 1999). Currently, celebrity endorsement is widely used by online marketers in promoting products and services to increase brand image. Celebrity endorsement is proven effective in increasing brand image with some considerations by the marketers on its ef-

fectiveness to achieve customer target (Till, 1998). The use of celebrities for product marketing has been discussed in many previous types of research especially to see the influence on brand attitude (Arora et al., 2019; Paul and Bhakar, 2018) as well as to see influence to purchase intention (Loureiro and Sarmento, 2019; Martínez-lópez et al., 2020).

Currently, in practice, marketers use social media to communicate with consumers interactively to create value for customers (Baumöl et al., 2016; Odoom et al., 2017). For example, the influence of celebrity endorsement on social media Instagram which is used as a channel for brand management (Jin and Ryu, 2020), and on Facebook, which can influence consumer perspectives on products con-

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veyed by celebrities (Jin and Ryu, 2018). The conceptualization shows that the customer easily remembers the advertisement given by the celebrities because of its attractiveness, familiarity, and trustworthiness to increase the customers' purchase intention (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). The final goal of celebrity endorsement is influencing the customers' purchase intention. There have been numerous previous researches that stated that the attractiveness of celebrities will give a positive impact on the purchase intention (Arora et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2007).

However, different results show inconsistency e.g. celebrity endorsement did not affect attitude toward the brand (Zhu et al., 2020) because there are some factors such as celebrities' attitude which is less communicative and intimate to the customers (Cuomo et al., 2019). However, another study shows that there is a significant impact on the attitude toward the brand (Chin et al., 2019). Another study also stated that a celebrity who promotes a product of a brand will give more influence to the customer's purchase intention rather than other people who are experts in that products. The customer also feels more natural and more comfortable when the product is presented by celebrities (Kusumasondjaja and Tjiptono, 2019; Loureiro and Sarmento, 2019). The results are in contrast to the previous one which stated that celebrities did not affect the customers' purchase intention because they are not considered as an expert, cannot judge certain products, and is necessary to have a special ability to give opinions (Dogra and Sharma, 2019; Martínez-lópez et al., 2020). Based on the gap of the previous research, this study offers other variables to get clear results and complete the research gap that is by adding brand trust as the moderator variable. Brand trust is the key to a successful brand-customers relationship (Portal et al., 2018).

This study is interesting because when a company chooses celebrity endorsement to be used as a marketing tool, most previous researches have only seen the direct impact of the celebrity influence without looking at the brand perspective itself. When a brand has high credibility built by the influence of celebrity endorsements, customers tend to

have a positive brand attitude (Chin et al., 2019). Therefore, when using celebrities to market products, the company must be able to see the suitability of the product with the character of the celebrities and knows whether the brand already has high trust in the heart of customers.

## HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### Celebrity Endorsement

A celebrity endorser is defined as someone who gets public recognition from several achievements in their respective disciplines and uses that recognition to display products and show them to the public (McCracken, 1989; Spry et al., 2011). In measuring how effective the use of celebrity endorsement is, the researcher uses indicators of attractiveness, familiarity, and trustworthiness (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). Attractiveness is defined as the attractiveness of celebrities that refers to physical, attributes or other characteristics, such as intelligence or lifestyle. Familiarity shows the intimacy of celebrity endorsement in providing information to the general public through social publicity. Customers who think that the celebrities have similarity with the customer will give a positive impact. Trustworthiness refers to the honesty, integrity, and confidence of a supporter. A celebrity can be judged whether he/she is honest or dishonest, and whether he/she can be trusted or not depending on the perception of others who see him/her (Erdogan, 1999). Proper use of celebrities will influence purchase intention (Pradhan et al., 2014).

To get customer's attention and brand loyalty, the use of celebrity endorsement in marketing is considered a very effective strategy (Roy, 2016). Positive recommendations from a celebrity have a positive impact on the purchase intention of the customers of both sexes (Loureiro and Sarmento, 2019). The main purpose of an endorsement is product sales, thus it is necessary to explore the relationship between advertising and customer's reactions to being trustworthy and credible, especially the reaction of interest to buy products (Pickett and Brison, 2019). The ability of celebrities can influence the behavior of their followers as customers. Therefore, it will also affect attitudes, perceptions, evalu-

ations, and purchase intention of the brands recommended by the celebrity endorser (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019). The brand attitude that is influenced by the trust of the brands themselves has not received attention in retail and modern marketing literature. This attitude is affected by some elements such as information, product nature, social media, advertising, and other behavioral factors (Pérez-Villarreal et al., 2019). Thus, the researcher creates hypotheses:

H1: celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on purchase intentions

H2: celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on brand attitude

### **Brand Attitude and Brand Trust**

Brand attitude is defined as an individual's internal evaluation, and it is used as the basis of purchasing decisions as well as customer's brand selection (Keller, 1993). However, it will be different if it is influenced by customer association and trust toward the brand reputation itself (Foroudi et al., 2018). Brand attitude will drive the increasing purchase intentions because it can indirectly influence the intention (Wang et al., 2019). On the other hand, the previous research did not consider the brand trust that would contribute to the brand attitude. Brand trust is defined as a psychological state con-

sisting of an intention to accept based on the intention of positive expectations or the behavior of others (Rousseau et al., 1998). Because it is related to marketing and exchange, (Moorman et al., 1993) describe trust as a willingness to depend on partners to make exchanges and have confidence when doing so. This research discusses brand trust that is defined as customers' security that the brand will fulfill their expectations. This feeling is based on customers perception that the brand is reliable and has capacity to respond customers' need as well as the believe that the brand will not take opportunistic benefit from costumer vulnerability (Delgado and Munuera, 2001). The trust towards an object is the result of the relationship between attitude and behavior, and will determine behavioral intentions towards the object (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975).

H3: Brand trust moderates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand attitude

H4: Brand Attitude has a significant effect on purchase intentions

### **METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to 249 respondents. Likert scale is used in making questionnaires adopted from previous studies which are then modified according to the research case.

**Table 1. Measures and Factor Loadings**

Item	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability
<b>Attitude Toward Brand</b>	(Chin et al., 2019; Singh and Banerjee, 2018)	0,886
I think the brand endorsed by my favorite celebrity is very good.	0,837	
I think the brand endorsed by my favorite celebrity is very useful	0,843	
My opinion of the brand endorsed by my favorite celebrity very favorable.	0,801	
I have bought products under the influence of a brand	0,703	
I remember the brand because of the celebrity endorser		

<b>Brand Trust</b>	(Khan and Fatma, 2019; Portal et al., 2018)	0,896
This brand makes me feel a sense of security	0,708	
I trust in the quality of this brand	0,750	
The services of this brand is a quality assurance	0,729	
This brand is interested in its customers	0,749	
The brand always disappoints me	0,709	
The brand name guarantees satisfaction	0,690	
The brand would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns	0,724	
The brand would compensate me in some way for a problem with the product	0,721	
	0,686	
<b>Celebrity Endorsement</b>		0,914
Attractive – Unattractive	0,686	
Classy – not classy	0,782	
Elegant – plain	0,628	
Do not recognize – do recognize	0,683	
Have not heard of before – have heard of before	0,628	
Dependable – undependable	0,789	
Honest –dishonest	0,740	
Reliable – unreliable	0,710	
Sincere – insincere	0,742	
Trustworthy – untrustworthy	0,777	
<b>Purchase Intention</b>		0,567
I would purchase a brand based on the advice I am given by the influencers that I follow	0,806	
I would follow brand recommendations from the influencers that I follow.	0,835	
In the future, I will purchase the products of brands recommended by the influencers that I follow	0,823	
Brands endorsed by celebrities draw my attention easily	0,702	
Brands endorsed by celebrities easily come to mind whenever I have to make a purchase	0,782	
If my favorite celebrity endorses a brand, I will buy it no matter what	0,722	
I buy a brand because I like the celebrity endorsing it	0,725	
I will consider buying a product endorsed by my favorite celebrity	0,521	
I am happy to buy a brand endorsed by my favorite celebrity	0,810	

Table 2. Constructs Validity

	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>rho_A</b>	<b>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</b>
Attitude Brand	0,838	0,843	0,610
Brand Trust	0,867	0,869	0,518
celebrities Endorsment	0,895	0,900	0,517
Moderating Effect 1	1,000	1,000	1,000
Purchase Intention	0,902	0,915	0,567

The analysis of complex relationships between observed and latent variables uses the structural equation model (PLS-SEM) (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The testing of the results of the data is processed using smartPLS because of its most comprehensive ability to test the relationship between constructs with many measurement items (Henseler, 2017). Table 1 explains the measurement of question items that have significant value informing the constructs. The questions were adapted from some previous studies, such as celebrity endorsement (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019), brand attitude (Chin et al., 2019; Singh and Banerjee, 2018), brand trust (Khan and Fatma, 2019; Portal et al., 2018), and purchase intention (Jiménez-Castillo and Sánchez-Fernández, 2019; Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019).

(Sarstedt and Cheah, 2019) explain how to evaluate models in PLS-SEM. The structural model with a significant and relevant path coefficient was used to check the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant. Reliability and validity scales were tested to see Cronbach's Alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and instrument reliability. Convergent validity shows the various variables observed from one latent construct relating to each other. As seen in Table 2, all constructs have a good value which has an average variance extracted (AVE) higher than 0.50 and composite reliability (CR) > 0.70. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.838 to 1,000 indicates that all constructs have good results because they are greater than the recommended minimum Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2018).

## RESULTS

After measuring the model according to the criteria, the researchers then tested the coefficient of the model. Figure 1 describes the results of data of relationships between constructs that show significance value. The researcher performed a bootstrap analysis with a significance level of 95% to get a standard value and a p-value <0.05 (Hair et al., 2018). The output of hypothesis testing is presented in Table 3. The first hypothesis states that the value of attractiveness, familiarity, and trustworthiness that forms celebrity endorsement negatively

affects customers' purchase intentions. The results show the value ( $\beta = 0.031$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected.

These results support previous research which states that there is no significant effect of celebrity endorsement on purchase intentions due to several reasons such as the ability of celebrities who are not able to communicate the value of the product and the distrust of customers because they feel that the celebrity is not an expert in the product being delivered (Dogra and Sharma, 2019; Martínez-lópez et al., 2020). Marketers who use celebrities need to consider content that is following product characteristics so that it can be effective in influencing customer purchase intentions.

The second hypothesis states that celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on brand attitude. The results show value ( $\beta = 0.598$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ). Thus, the second hypothesis is supported and is in line with the previous studies that have significant results (Chin et al., 2019). Celebrity endorsement can create a positive brand attitude so that customers will provide feedback to the brand with an attitude that can benefit marketers (Pradhan et al., 2014).

The third hypothesis states that brand trust moderates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand attitude. The results show the value ( $\beta = 0.092$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ). It can be interpreted that the higher the value of brand trust, the higher the relationship between celebrity endorsement and the brand attitude. Thus, the third hypothesis is supported. The results of this study are in line with previous research which states that the stronger the personality of a brand is attached to the minds of customers resulting from the role of celebrity endorsement, the more customers desire to buy (Sambath and Jeng, 2011). The strong personality of the brand leads to higher consumer trust in the brand (Pradhan et al., 2014).

The fourth hypothesis states that the brand attitude has a significant effect on purchase intentions. The results show the value ( $\beta = 0.663$ ,  $p = <0.001$ ). Then the fourth hypothesis is supported and in line with previous research which states that brand attitude is identified as an important construction affecting purchase intention that begins because

Table 3. Path Estimates for Proposed Model

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Attitude Brand → Purchase Intention	0,663	0,665	0,063	10,497	0,000
Brand Trust → Attitude Brand	0,330	0,329	0,044	7,550	0,000
celebrities Endorsment → Attitude Brand	0,598	0,602	0,042	14,239	0,000
celebrities Endorsment → Purchase Intention	0,031	0,033	0,069	0,454	0,650
Moderating Effect 1 → Attitude Brand	0,092	0,092	0,036	2,526	0,012

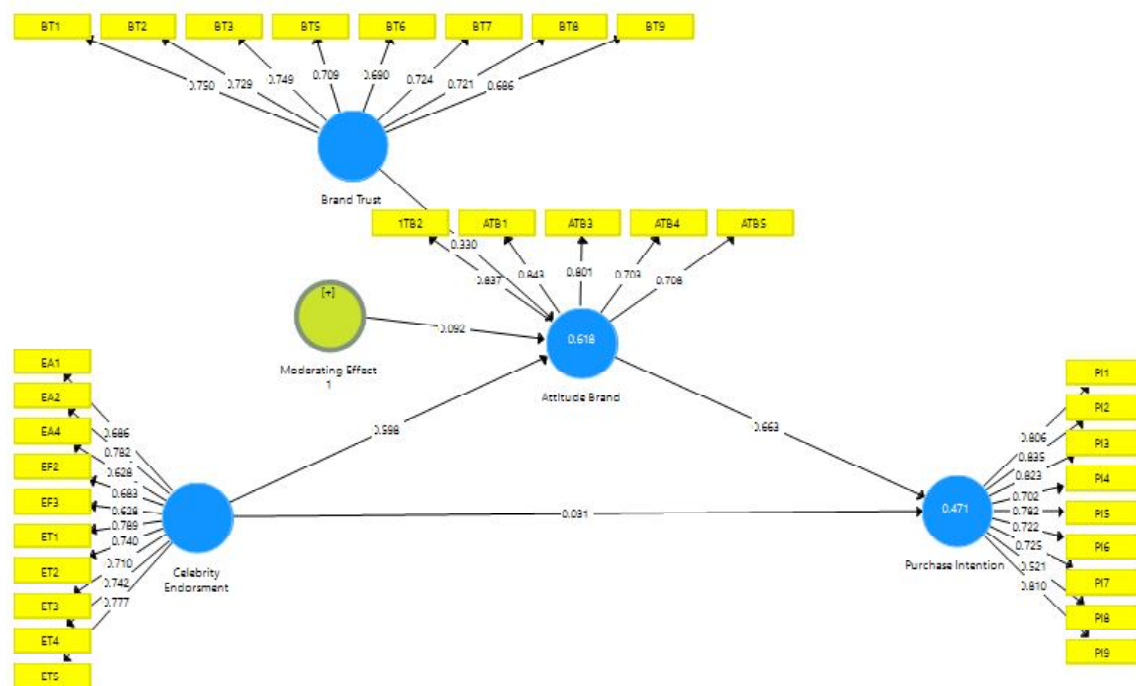


Figure 1. Data Processing Results

of the stimulus provided by celebrity endorsement (Arora et al., 2019).

## DISCUSSION

There are still gaps that can be filled from the previous celebrity endorsement studies. These gaps are the basis for the researcher to focus on celebrities as an antecedent. The previous marketing using celebrity endorsement only saw a direct relationship with brand attitude and did not focus on the influence of brand trust itself (Pradhan et al., 2014;

Singh and Banerjee, 2018; Wang et al., 2017). Brand trust has an important role in forming exchange relationships between marketers and customers that have an impact on marketing success (Barney and Hansen, 1994; Delgado and Munuera, 2001). With the addition of brand trust as a moderation variable, the results are more positive. It is because the higher the level of customer brand trust, the higher the customer brand attitude. The moderator variable acts as a reinforcement of the relationship between celebrities and brand attitude. This is the renewal of

this study and becomes interesting because previous studies have not discussed the same thing.

This study can become consideration material for managers in studying the use of celebrity endorsement in marketing products. This is a lesson for the company in evaluating the use of celebrity endorser, when consumers have the belief that brands carry out marketing activities sincerely and honestly, they will believe it as part of the benefits that can be useful (Portal et al., 2018). As the result, before using celebrities' endorsements, the company has to ensure that the brand is known well. This study is also stated that the company can concentrate on the dimensions of brand reliability and brand intentions that shape brand trust (Portal et al., 2018).

The celebrities' ability to deliver messages of the product to customers has proven to influence customer brand attitudes. Celebrity is considered to be a trustworthy figure because he/she looks natural in informing products compared to companies that seem more intentional. Of the three dimensions of celebrity endorsement (attractiveness, familiarity, and trustworthiness), the value of trustworthiness has the highest value. Therefore, when customers consider celebrities as people who can be trusted in informing products on certain brands, customers will voluntarily give a good brand attitude. The brand attitude is defined as customers' recognition toward the brand perception so that customers recognize their needs for the brand.

There is one unsupported hypothesis in this finding that is celebrity endorsement cannot influence purchase intentions. These results differ from the results of previous studies which state that celebrity has a positive influence on the formation of purchase intentions (Jin & Ryu, 2020). Respondents assume that there is no compatibility between endorsers and the product being promoted. This is an important factor in fostering positive behavioral intentions between influencer and brand (Belanche et al., 2020) which will have implications on influencing purchase intentions. Marketers need to enhance knowledge on customer interests that are interested in certain celebrities who fit the product so that it creates more effective actions of the endorse-

ment. Given that celebrity delivers digitally on social media platforms or websites, what can be done in increasing brand trust is by providing a good experience to consumers so that trust can maintain a long-term relationship between the brand and customers (Ebrahim, 2019).

Celebrity endorsement should be considered by customers as a part of the purchasing decision process. Celebrities are not able to reach out to involvements in influencing intentions because the celebrities are only conveyors of beneficial information to customers. They might be able to influence purchase intentions if they are considered product experts so that the information is more credible and interesting to be considered (Martínez-lópez et al., 2020).

In the end, Celebrity can be an alternative for marketers to advertise and can win the competition between brands. Consumers will judge celebrities based on credible characteristics and goodwill created by celebrities in supporting the products delivered (Hussain et al., 2020). This is consistent with the results of this study so that it can be used by Marketers in recruiting celebrities are based on an understanding of the characteristics of products that are relevant and appropriate.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to examine the impact of celebrity endorsement on customers' brand attitudes. There is a renewal from the previous study by adding the brand trust as moderator variable which significantly increases the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand attitude variable. The researcher's reason for adding the moderator variable was because there were still inconsistencies in the findings of similar previous studies. These findings are useful for the marketer in preparing celebrity endorsement as a marketing communication strategy to not only focuses on the characteristics of celebrities but also sees whether the brand is already trusted or not yet. If it is not yet, the marketer must first increase customers' brand trust so that the results of celebrity endorsement can maximally influence customers' brand attitudes. Other results indicate that customer attitudes toward a good brand

will be able to influence customers' purchase intentions. Customers will show a good brand attitude because of the influence made from celebrity endorsement. A good brand attitude will affect the purchase intention because customers feel that the brand can provide benefits and has attractiveness.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Even this study contributes to the development of theory and practice related to celebrity endorsement, there are still some limitations to the study. First, celebrity endorsement discussed in this study is still too general. It might get more maximum results when the product is determined and the celebrities are more specific such as actresses, athletes, or comedians. Second, this study was conducted in Indonesia which the previous study explained that Indonesia has a collectivist culture (Wijaya et al., 2018). It may have different results in different countries with different cultures. For further research, this limitation can be seen as a conceptual or practical foundation.

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