



## ENHANCING CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS: MODERATING ROLE OF BRAND LOYALTY ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

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**ABSTRACT** Celebrity Endorsement is a common tactic for understanding the marketing communication strategy. The researcher explores three features of celebrity endorsement—trustworthiness, knowledge, and attractiveness—with the brand loyalty as the moderating function for consumer purchase intention. The researcher focused on the relation between the variables – celebrity endorsement, brand loyalty and purchase intention in order to evaluate a conceptual model prepared by the researcher. Results from a survey with 824 participants support the idea that consumer intentions to purchase personal care products are significantly influenced by celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty has a moderating role in the relation between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. The study has implications for development of theory, industrial operations and the development of existing literature. The limitations of the study is described in detail and suggestions for further research is also taken into account.

**KEYWORDS :** Celebrity Endorsement, Brand Loyalty, Purchase Intention, Moderating Role

### INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsement has emerged as one of the most potent forms of persuasive communication within the marketing industry, significantly influencing consumer behaviour. According to Lim, Chock, and Golan (2020), celebrity endorsements are widely utilised as a marketing tool to effectively convey sponsors' messages to target audiences. These audiences consist of individuals who purchase specific brands or products that fulfil their needs, as well as organisations and individuals engaged in business-to-business marketing who may adopt suggested ideas or take specific actions. The global prevalence of celebrity endorsements demonstrates its effectiveness in leveraging celebrities' fame to promote products, positively impacting brand attitudes and purchase decisions (Carlson, Donovan, Bauer, & V, 2020; Carrillat, O'Rourke, & Plourde, 2019).

In addition to their general influence on consumer behaviour, celebrity endorsements also convey an image of social responsibility, enhancing the credibility of the product through the endorsement of well-known personalities (Singh & Banerjee, 2019). This external validation from celebrities provides a powerful communication channel, often perceived as more trustworthy than messages from the brand itself (Ateke, Onwujiariri, & Nnennanya, 2015). This study aims to explore the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions, particularly focusing on the food and beverage sector in India. By examining the moderating role of brand loyalty, this research seeks to develop a conceptual framework that elucidates the relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions, ultimately providing insights into how these endorsements can be strategically utilised to enhance brand loyalty and influence purchasing behaviour.

### LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

#### Celebrity Endorsements

Marketers use celebrity endorsements to promote a product or idea. In marketing communications and promotion activities, organisations frequently use well-known names to support or make statements (Osei-Frimpong, G., & Owusu-Frimpong, 2019). According to McCormick (2016), celebrity endorsements play an important role in changing consumers perceptions of brands and influencing their expectations. According to Raja (2020), endorsements increase brand evaluation and recognition, change negative attitudes towards the brand, and develop credibility. Furthermore, Lewallen, Miller, & Behm-Morawitz (2016) found that celebrity-endorsed advertisements encourage high levels of friendliness among consumers, which leads to businesses overspending on large aggregates to link significant people to support their companies (Stafford & Day, 2002). Through celebrity endorsement, the consumer's perception of the product based on its benefits and features increases its perceived value. Because they trust celebrities, people generally replace their opinion of a well-known company with the one they embrace. (Schimmelpennig, (2018)). Therefore, companies view celebrity endorsements as a successful marketing strategy that not only persuades consumers but also enhances the perceived value of their product or brand. Celebrities

usually serve as role models for consumers as they change their behaviour to accept brand endorsers. (Priyankara, Weerasiri, Dissanayaka, & M, 2017). This process influences the preferences and viewpoints of customers. Celebrity endorsements have proven to be crucial in marketing communication because they enhance the brand and the product. (Nelson & Deborah, 2017). This positive brand image helps to increase sales. (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016). Celebrity endorsements enhance the effectiveness of advertising by influencing people's perceptions, which in turn influences consumer behavior. (Albert, Ambroise, & Valette-Florence, 2017).

Celebrity endorsements foster a positive brand image, prompting sponsors to align the celebrity with the recommended product features (Liu, M., B., & Wei, 2020). In their 2019 study, Santos, Barros, & Azevedo (2019) developed an essential relationship between brand attitude, brand purchase intention, and brand-celebrity and user-brand personality congruence. According to Khamis, Ang, and Welling (2017), celebrities are able to influence the desire of consumers to purchase an item. Businesses usually select celebrities based on their attractiveness and reputation to promote their products (Moradi & Zarei, 2011). According to Augustina, Suryandar, and Kirana (2022), celebrity endorsement has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty and purchase intention.

Hence, the first hypothesis is:

H1: There is a significant relationship between Celebrity Endorsement (CL) and Purchase Intention (PI)

#### Brand Loyalty

One of the topics that has received a lot of attention in recent years in marketing literature is brand loyalty (Dapena-Baron, Gruen, & Guo, 2020). According to (Liu, M., B., & Wei, 2020), customer brand loyalty is popular in achieving both financial and competitive benefits. Brand loyalty creates a positive attitude in the customers which results in repeat purchases (Inegbedion & Obadiaru, 2019).

Because they are seen as more profitable for the company than new customers, loyal consumers are valued more in today's cutthroat business environment. According to (Leckie, Nyadzayo, & Johnson, (2016)), brand loyalty includes a customer's promise to keep using a product or service or by other positive activities like word-of-mouth marketing. Every brand should strive to cultivate a loyal customer base because they are a great source of potential revenue.

Loyal customers remain loyal to a brand that makes them feel good and content rather than switching to a new brand (Foroudi, Jin, Gupta, Foroudi, & Kitchen, 2018).

Companies benefit from interchange use and don't need to advertise as much as those with loyal customers (Wang, Capon, Wang, & Guo, 2018) Higher gainfulness can also result from enhanced verbal exchanges between brand loyal customers and advertising points of interest (Giovannis, (2018)).

Hence the second hypothesis is:

H2: There is a significant relationship between Brand Loyalty (BL) and Purchase Intention (PI).

**Purchase Intention**

Previous research has extensively employed purchase intentions to be a predictor of subsequent purchases (Pradhan, Duraipandian, & Sethi, 2016). According to (Malodia, Singh, Goyal, & Sengupta, 2017), "consumers' eagerness to purchase certain brand" is a clear definition of purchase intention. In previous empirical studies, buyer intention has been widely used as a central construct to illustrate consumers' purchase behaviour (Ali, (2016)). There is a difference between the buying willingness of the consumer and the actual buying behaviour. The financial status of the consumer, procedures to buy, searching options, unavailability and other contingencies have an impact on the buying behaviour of the consumers (Foroudi, Jin, Gupta, Foroudi, & Kitchen, 2018). Thus, even though customers have the buy aim, they most likely won't end up purchasing the good or service. However, studies on behaviour and attitude have shown that expectations and mindsets work together to predict specific behaviours (Osei-Frimpong, G., & Owusu-Frimpong, (2019)). In general, purchase intention is the main factor that encourage and influence the consumers to purchase goods and services (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2017).

Goal of the consumers are taken into account gain a better understanding of consumers' actual behaviour (Malodia, Singh, Goyal, & Sengupta, (2017)). According to Singh and Banerjee (2019), there is a compact relationship between buying willingness of the consumers and purchase intention.

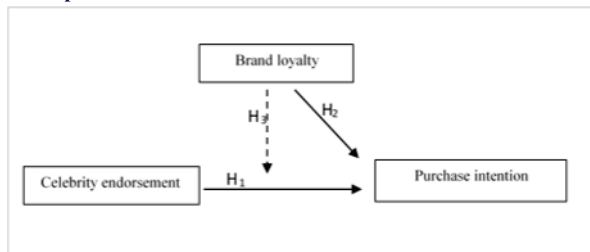
In this way, the goal of purchasers toward a particular brand has continued to be the centre of attention for prominent theories such as the theory of reasoned action (TRA).

This is further supported by (Azjen, 1991), who found that the personal goals of the consumers highly motivate the consumers and influences their behaviour. Undoubtedly, it reveals the extent to which consumers are willing to put effort as well as the amount of work they plan to apply in order to carry out a specific habit. Scholars have shown that people's intentions play a major role in determining how likely they are to carry out a particular behaviour. When there are strong goals behind carrying out a specific behaviour, the likelihood that the behaviour will be carried out increases. According to (Majid, Sholahuddin, Soepatin, & Kuswati, 2023) celebrity endorsement attracts consumer attention and the product will get easily recognized because of the artist, especially when the product includes photocard of the artist.

Hence the third hypothesis is:

H3: Brand Loyalty has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

**Conceptual Model**



**Fig.1** Moderating Role of Brand Loyalty in relation between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention

**Measurement and Data Collection**

Measurements of scales are taken from (Serkan & Gökhan, (2005) The purchase intention was assessed using each component that was modified from (Shukla, 2010.) separately. The study employed a five-point Likert scale to quantify all study variables. The scale went from 1 representing "strongly disagree" to 5 representing "strongly agree." Each of the four elements of celebrity endorsements are used to estimate expertise and reliability. Four elements with five scales of estimate are used from (Serkan & Gökhan, (2005) to measure brand loyalty. A total of three items, each adjusted from (Shukla, 2010.), were used to estimate purchase intentions. All questions related to the study was assessed using a Likert scale with five points, ranging from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree."

The study combines, celebrity endorsement, brand loyalty and purchase intention, using a Likert 5-point scale extending " from 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree". The convenience sampling is preferred to gather information from the respondents in Kerala by a survey. The duration of the study was from January 2024 to April 2024. A total of 1006 questionnaires were distributed of which 859 was received and after the data cleaning there are 824 usable questionnaires and the response rate is 82%.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

**Data Analysis**

The data were subjected to a descriptive analysis using SPSS statistical software, and the structural equation model was done using PL-SEM which involved an incremental two-step process, first fitting the estimate model and then the structural model.

**Sample**

The total sample of this study is based on 824 respondents, 61% (503) are male and 39% (321) are female. Majority of the respondents (57%) belong to the age group of 18-27, 28% belong to the age group of 28-43, 12% belong to 44-59 age group and rest belong to the age group of 60-69. In the below given Table 1, the researcher had given the descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, AVE and CR values for the three variables Celebrity Endorsement (CE), Brand Loyalty (BL) and Purchase Intention (PI).

**Assessment of the Measurement Model**

**Exploratory Factor Analysis**

In order to evaluate the potential underlying factor structure and sample adequacy, 824 responses are randomly chosen and used for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Dimension reduction was explored using Varimax rotation and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Above the crucial value of 0.7, the KMO sample adequacy measurements yield a test value of 0.809. The questions with the greatest value, greater than 0.5, are referred to be unique factors. Discarding the factor loading eigenvalue less than 0.1 for additional analysis. The findings indicate that at least three elements associated with each construct emerged as unique among the various objects chosen for the study.

**Table 1: Principal Component Analysis**

Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			
Component	1	2	3
CE1	0.821		
CE2	0.903		
CE3	0.808		
CE4	0.894		
BL1		0.803	
BL2		0.778	
BL3		0.802	
BL4		0.852	
PI1			0.753
PI2			0.799
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Source: Primary Data

**Table 2: KMO & Bartlett's Test of Sampling Adequacy**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.689
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2112.687
	df	55
	Sig.	.000

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Confirmatory factor analysis is conducted using the remaining 412 responses, with the primary purpose of assessing how well a hypothesized measurement model fits the observed data using SPSS Amos 26.0. It is also used to measure the distinctiveness of observed and unobserved constructs. Generally, tests such as the goodness of model fit, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are conducted in CFA.

**a) Goodness of Fit Parameters**

The model was a good fit to the data with  $\chi^2(52) = 1571.768, P=0.000, CFI=0.83, IFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.05, AIC=87.43, BCC=95.86$ . The relation between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention is

significant ( $\beta = 0.12, p = 0.07$ ). Parsimonious Normal Fit and Parsimonious Comparative Fit Indices are in the acceptance region.

**b) Discriminant Validity**

In CFA, discriminant validity assesses whether a measurement instrument can differentiate between the construct it is designed to measure and other, unrelated constructs. Table 3 illustrates the assessment of discriminant validity using the (Fornell, 1981) criterion. Based on the Fornell and Larcker criterion, it is found that the square root of AVE for each of the constructs is larger than the correlation estimates of the constructs. This denotes that the constructs are distinctively different from one another, thus having discriminant validity (Fornell, 1981).

**Table 3: CFA; AVE & Correlation Values Testing Fornell & Larcker Criterion**

Construct	Celebrity Endorsement	Brand Loyalty	Purchase Intention
Celebrity Endorsement	0.744		
Brand Loyalty	0.010	0.859	
Purchase Intention	0.570**	0.221**	0.910

(\*\* significance at 99% confidence level)

Source: Primary Data

**a) Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity.**

Convergent Validity is the degree to which different measures of the same construct are correlated. In CFA, factor loadings represent the strength of the relationship between latent factors and observed variables. High factor loadings for items on a latent construct contribute to convergent validity. Table 4 describes the assessment of construct reliability and convergent validity of the constructs in this study. The composite reliability (CR) values 0.830, 0.918, 0.906 are between 0.7 and 0.9. These CR values indicate that these constructs have internal consistency. Likewise, these constructs also demonstrate adequate convergent validity after removing items with low loadings. Hence, they achieve the minimum cut-off value of 0.5 for average variance extracted (AVE).

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's alpha, AVE & CR values**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability (CR)
Celebrity Endorsement	2.68	1.03	0.747	0.553	0.830
Brand Loyalty	3.28	0.81	0.883	0.738	0.918
Purchase Intention	3.12	0.90	0.805	0.828	0.906

Source: Primary Data

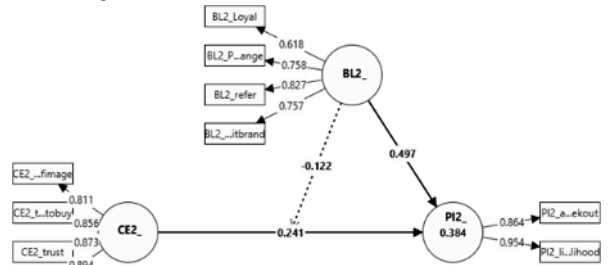
**Moderation Effect Test using PLS-SEM**

Table 5 shows the PLS - Structural Equation Modelling on the relation between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention. The model was a good fit to the data with  $X^2 = 1384.733, P = 0.000, CFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.03, AIC = 88.74, BCC = 95.86$ . The relation between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention is significant ( $\beta = 0.12, p = 0.07$ )

**Table 5 – Test of Relationship Between CE PI and CE x BLPI**

Dependent Variable	Relation Direction	Independent Variables	Un-standardized Regression		Standardized Regression	P	Interpretation
			Estimate	SE			
Purchase Intention	<---	Celebrity Endorsement	-0.314	0.043	-0.352	***	Significant Relationship
Purchase Intention	<---	Brand Loyalty	0.383	0.075	0.287	***	Significant Relationship
Purchase Intention	<---	Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Loyalty	0.162	0.012	0.639	***	Significant Relationship and Moderation Effect

The above table shows a significant relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention with Brand Loyalty having a moderating effect on these variables.



Source: Primary Data

**Fig. 2** PLS - Structural Equation Modeling showing the moderating role of Brand Loyalty in relation between Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention.

**Discussions and Theoretical Implications**

A conceptual model was developed with brand loyalty as an intervening construct with the other two variables – celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. The study concludes that celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty have a significant relationship with the consumer purchase intention. Brand loyalty has a moderating effect in the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty. The idea behind the moderating effect of brand loyalty is that it affects the direction or strength of the link between purchase intention and celebrity endorsement. This is how it could function: When making purchases, customers that have a strong brand loyalty may be less swayed by celebrity endorsements. The benefit of the celebrity endorsement may be outweighed by their brand devotion, which would lead to a reduced correlation between buy intention and endorsement. Conversely, customers that have low brand loyalty could be more influenced by celebrity endorsements. In this instance, customers who are less attached to the brand may be greatly influenced to make a purchase if a celebrity endorses the product. Marketers can more effectively modify their efforts by having a better understanding of the moderating influence of brand loyalty in regard to celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. In markets with low brand loyalty, they might prioritize alternative marketing strategies, whereas in markets with high brand loyalty, they might concentrate more on using celebrity endorsements. (Albert, Ambroise, & Valette-Florence, 2017)

**Study Limitations and Future Scope**

Due to the time constraint and sample frame limits that were mentioned, the analysis relies on convenient sampling to gather its data; this may have an effect on how widely these conclusions can be implemented. The researcher had employed cross-sectional data, however in order to lessen the bias related to popular approaches, hence, longitudinal data may be used in future research.

Future studies may look into the possible effects of celebrity endorsers on traits like trust, buyer expectancy, and brand loyalty that are linked to the negative perceptions of the brand. Therefore, it seems sense to study the impact of celebrity endorsements on the switching behaviour of the consumers.

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