The Effect of Celebrity Endorser Selection on Consumer Purchase Intention

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Abstract: *While companies often use celebrity endorsement to increase their sales, they fail to realize that the selection of the endorser greatly influences consumer purchase intention. Consequently, they may end up using an endorser based solely on their popularity, with a poor match between the product/brand and the endorser. This study explores the factors of celebrity endorsement that significantly influence purchase intention. A sample of 560 survey respondents was used to collect data. Closed-ended questionnaires were distributed in person and online. SmartPLS was used for data analysis. The results indicate that product/brand and celebrity match plays a significant role in influencing all other variables of celebrity endorsement, namely the credibility of the endorser and meaning transfer, which then influences the consumer's intention to purchase the product. Therefore, marketers in Pakistan should focus on the three pillars of celebrity endorsement: the product/brand and celebrity match, credibility, and meaning transfer. Specifically, giving primary importance to the product/brand and celebrity match while designing an advertisement is crucial.*

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, product celebrity match-up, meaning transfer, attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise.

JEL Classification: C3, C8, M1, M3.

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1. Introduction

Adam and Hussain (2017) observe that one of the most effective strategies for companies to boost sales is to convert well-known personalities into sales representatives. This approach involves using celebrities as spokespersons for products or brands, commonly referred to as celebrity endorsements (Macheka et al., 2024). In line with this, D'Ambrogio et al. (2023) find that marketers leverage celebrity endorsements to create strong associations with products and enhance brand recall. Such endorsements not only help establish associations and foster bonds but also enhance credibility in the minds of consumers, ultimately increasing their intention to purchase. When consumers see their favorite celebrity promoting a product, it captures their attention immediately (Al Mamun et al., 2023; Ha & Lam, 2017; Khan, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Zhang & Xu, 2024).

Consumers are more inclined to purchase products endorsed by celebrities they view as credible and trustworthy. Furthermore, they tend to associate this credibility and trustworthiness with celebrities who align with the product/brand they are endorsing (Khan, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Zhang & Xu, 2024). Therefore, it is essential to select celebrity endorsers whose characteristics, personalities, and expertise align with the product/brand to establish credibility, trustworthiness, meaning transfer, and positive purchase intentions.

Aurangzeb et al. (2017) emphasize that to enhance the likability of a product/brand and drive sales, employing celebrity endorsements is a key strategy. When a celebrity discusses a product/brand, it generates more word-of-mouth promotion and boosts brand recall. However, if the celebrity does not resonate with the product, the intended message loses its impact, and the meaning may not effectively transfer to consumers. This lack of meaning transfer diminishes credibility and trustworthiness, resulting in lower purchase intentions (Khan, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Tian et al., 2022).

To achieve optimal results from advertising and marketing campaigns, a strong alignment between the product/brand features and the characteristics of the endorsing celebrity is crucial. However, matching a celebrity with a product for an advertisement is not a straightforward task. Companies must possess a deep understanding of the celebrity—considering

their personality, characteristics, expertise, and how consumers perceive them—as well as the product being endorsed. Consequently, it is vital to identify factors that influence the effective use of celebrity endorsement to enhance consumer purchase intentions (Afifah, 2022; Khan, 2018).

Marketers frequently enlist celebrities who are either at the peak of their careers or have recently gained renown due to a successful project. However, they often struggle to establish a meaningful connection between the celebrity and their product/brand, leading to the common pitfall of choosing the wrong endorser based solely on current popularity. A weak association between the endorser and the promoted product can result in ineffective marketing campaigns and minimal sales increases. Hollensen and Schimmelpfennig (2013) point out that the assumption that creative agencies thoroughly vet endorsers before hiring them is often incorrect and not universally applicable. Similarly, Ofori-Okyere and Asamoah (2015) and Shukla and Dubey (2022) express concerns regarding improper selection.

Hsu and Hsu (2018) find that the alignment between a celebrity and a product/brand is a crucial factor often overlooked by companies. The repercussions of this misalignment include diminished meaning transfer and reduced credibility of the endorser, which affects consumers' purchase intentions negatively (Kim & Park, 2023). This study aims to empirically validate the importance of celebrity-product/brand alignment in relation to factors such as the celebrity's credibility, meaning transfer and consumer purchase intention. It investigates whether a strong match between a celebrity and a product/brand can lead to successful marketing campaigns and improved consumer purchase intentions. Furthermore, we examine meaning transfer as a mediator between celebrity-product/brand alignment and credibility. By doing so, we provide a comprehensive understanding of how a well-matched celebrity can enhance the intended message and overall credibility of an advertisement.

The remainder of the study is organized as follows: Section 2 elaborates on the relationships among variables in the literature review and presents the development of hypotheses. Section 3 details the methodology employed in the research. Section 4 offers data analysis and interpretations for each test conducted. The discussion of the results is found in Section 5, and Section 6 concludes the study.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Purchase Intention

Carvalho (2012) argues that a positive relationship exists between consumer purchase intention and the endorser. Consumers often seek out and buy products/brands associated with their favorite celebrities. Additionally, they tend to align themselves with the personality, style and behavior of these celebrities, fostering a perception of similarity. Recognizing this aspect of consumer behavior, many companies leverage celebrity endorsements to market products that consumers believe will bring them closer to their favorite celebrities (Zhang & Xu, 2024). However, Singh and Banerjee (2018) and Halder et al. (2021) emphasize that the credibility of the endorser is a more significant factor influencing consumer purchase intention.

Zafar and Rafique (2012) note that celebrities are also consumers who use products to meet their own needs. By showcasing these products, celebrities create a desire among their fans to emulate their lifestyles. Companies capitalize on this yearning to replicate celebrity lifestyles by employing celebrity endorsements to boost purchase intentions for their products (Moslehpour et al., 2024). Rehman et al. (2018) investigate the effects of celebrity involvement in promotional campaigns, finding that factors such as purchasing behavior, celebrity-product fit, quality, expertise, trust, and the celebrity's image are all interconnected with celebrity endorsements. Furthermore, these factors significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Zhang & Xu, 2024).

Emmadi (2017) and D'Ambrogio et al. (2023) note that celebrity endorsement has become a highly sought-after marketing strategy, forming the foundation of many brands' promotional campaigns and driving changes in marketing trends. As celebrities serve as role models for many, consumers often imitate their styles and fashion choices. Consequently, many firms hire celebrities to influence buyers' purchase intentions.

2.2. Credibility

Goldsmith et al. (2000) confirm that higher credibility of the endorser correlates with increased purchase intention. When credible sources are used in advertisements, they can influence consumers' judgments, evaluations, attitudes, and behaviors, leading them to accept the information as accurate. Singh and Banerjee (2018) and Giri and

Alfaruqi (2023) emphasize that celebrity credibility plays a crucial role in forming a positive attitude towards a product/brand, which subsequently enhances consumer purchase intention.

Amos et al. (2008) and Rifon et al. (2023) find that any negative information about a celebrity can severely damage an advertising campaign. The success of these campaigns relies heavily on source credibility, celebrity reliability, expertise, and the fit between the celebrity and the product. These factors are among the most influential in shaping purchase expectations, brand attitudes, and perceptions of advertisements, thereby enhancing consumer purchase intention. Similarly, Yoo et al. (2018) highlight that credibility is derived from three subdomains: trustworthiness, expertise, and celebrity attractiveness. These sub-factors are further discussed below for clarity.

2.2.1. *Trustworthiness*

Hussain et al. (2020) and Sutia et al. (2023) argue that trustworthiness not only influences attitudes toward a celebrity but also shapes consumer perceptions of the product, brand and parent company. Negative consumer attitudes can result in diminished purchase intentions, potentially leading to substantial losses for the company. Therefore, it is crucial for companies to choose endorsers who are perceived as trustworthy by consumers. Wang and Scheinbaum (2017) and Ramli et al. (2023) note that trustworthiness fosters a positive brand attitude, particularly when consumers have limited prior associations with the brand. A trustworthy celebrity can encourage consumers to take risks and try a product/brand for the first time, thus increasing purchase intentions.

2.2.2. *Expertise*

According to Adam and Hussain (2017) and Ramli et al. (2023), credibility encompasses three components: trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise. Notably, these studies indicate that in the beauty care industry, consumers prefer products endorsed by celebrities who are both trustworthy and possess relevant expertise. When both expertise and trustworthiness are evident in a celebrity endorser, the endorser is perceived as credible, positively influencing consumer purchase intentions (Sutia et al., 2023). Wang and Scheinbaum (2017) also argue that a celebrity endorsing a product should be regarded as an expert in the respective field; otherwise, the trustworthiness of both the celebrity and the product/brand may be questioned.

2.2.3. *Attractiveness*

Adam and Hussain (2017) and Ramli et al. (2023) show that attractiveness is another key aspect of credibility, which can be further divided into similarity, likability, and familiarity. An attractive celebrity is often seen as the ideal figure to promote products/brands, particularly in the beauty sector. However, the beauty industry is fraught with risks and potential lawsuits and thus, endorsers cannot claim that the product will enhance a consumer's attractiveness or alter their appearance, making attractiveness a secondary consideration compared to expertise and trustworthiness (Calvo-Porral & Lévy-Mangin, 2024; Kim & Park, 2023). Lili et al. (2022) find that attractiveness significantly impacts young consumers' purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 1: The credibility (comprising attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) of a celebrity endorser positively influences purchase intention.

2.3. *Credibility as a Mediator*

Iyengar and Valentino (2000) demonstrate that credibility is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of an advertisement. If the endorser is perceived as unreliable, the entire marketing effort is undermined, reducing the advertisement to mere background noise. Similarly, Schrodt et al. (2009) and Sutia et al. (2023) find that credibility plays a significant mediating role in achieving desired outcomes, such as brand satisfaction. Furthermore, Vidyanata et al. (2018) show that while celebrity endorsement alone does not directly influence consumer purchase intentions, its effectiveness can be greatly enhanced when the endorser is perceived as credible. The endorser's credibility is vital for meaning transfer; when the endorser is deemed untrustworthy, the communicated message loses its significance and effectiveness, which negatively impacts consumer purchase intentions. Schouten et al. (2020) also support this idea, stating that credibility mediates advertisement effectiveness by improving meaning transfer and, in turn, increasing consumer purchase intentions. Therefore, companies should select endorsers who are perceived as credible by their target audience.

Hypothesis 2: The credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) of the celebrity endorser mediates the relationship between product-celebrity match and purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3: The credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) of the celebrity endorser mediates the relationship between meaning transfer and purchase intention.

2.4. Product/Brand and Celebrity Match

Choi and Rifon (2012) and Yang et al. (2022) discuss the close connection between a celebrity's personality and a consumer's self-concept. They note that when an endorser promotes a product/brand that is not aligned with their image, the endorsement is likely to be ineffective, as consumers may question the credibility of the message. When consumers fail to associate the endorser with the product/brand, they also struggle to connect it to their self-concept, which is intertwined with that of the endorser (Zhang & Xu, 2024). Therefore, a match between the product/brand and the endorser is essential for effective advertising.

Brand and celebrity associations significantly influence the believability of the advertisement and the intention to purchase the product/brand. Mishra (2015) examines two brands: one with a high-level match between the endorser and the product/brand and another with a low-level match. The study shows differences in believability and attitudes toward the advertisement between the two brands. However, attitudes toward the brand itself and intentions to purchase remain similar in both cases (Jun et al., 2023).

The choice of an endorser is critical for promoting and publicizing a product/brand. Even more crucial is finding a suitable match between the product/brand and the endorser, as this alignment influences consumer attitudes and their purchasing intentions. This necessity is why companies often take considerable time to select the right representative for their products/brands (Fleck et al., 2012). Vidyanata et al. (2018) and Jun et al. (2023) note that when companies overlook the congruence between the endorser and the product, the advertisement's intended message fails to transfer effectively, negatively impacting consumer purchase intentions. Similarly, Khan et al. (2019) point out that a poor match between the endorser and the product/brand can diminish both credibility and purchase intention.

Hypothesis 4: The match between the product/brand and the celebrity endorser positively impacts purchase intention.

Hypothesis 5: The match between the product/brand and the celebrity endorser positively impacts meaning transfer.

Hypothesis 6: The match between the product/brand and the celebrity endorser positively impacts the credibility of the endorser.

2.5. Meaning Transfer

Roy and Jain (2017) empirically measure and validate the model of meaning transfer. They find that a celebrity significantly influences the meaning transfer of an advertisement, as intended by the company, which ultimately affects consumer purchase intention. Additionally, the endorser's knowledge of the product and the level of product involvement also contribute to successful meaning transfer, leading to increased positive purchase intentions among consumers.

Source attributes such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise alone are inadequate for achieving effective results in celebrity endorsements. Instead, the celebrity-product match and meaning transfer model provides a more reliable framework for ensuring the success of celebrity endorsements. Numerous campaigns that excelled in source attributes and product differentiation but fell short in relevance to celebrity meanings and match-ups have proven unsuccessful (Zhang & Xu, 2024). Notably, when a product involves high levels of physical, financial, and performance risks, the match between the celebrity and the product becomes even more crucial; marketing campaigns that fail to establish this congruence in consumers' minds tend to underperform (Hussain & Khan, 2015).

Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) reveal that celebrity endorsements involve a two-way transfer. This means that not only does the celebrity endorser's image affect the product/brand image, but the product/brand's image can also impact the endorser's image. Their research demonstrated that a brand's negative image could transfer to the celebrity, resulting in negative publicity for the endorser. Moreover, meanings are typically associated more directly with the celebrity endorser than with the brand itself (Rifon et al., 2023). Interestingly, Malodia et al. (2017) note that when a single celebrity endorses multiple products or brands simultaneously, the potential for meaning transfer diminishes, often negatively influencing consumer purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 7: Meaning transfer has a positive impact on purchase intention.

Hypothesis 8: Meaning transfer enhances the credibility of the endorser.

2.6. Meaning Transfer as a Mediator

Meaning transfer is a critical component of celebrity endorsement. The match between the product/brand and the endorser significantly influences consumer purchase intention, particularly when meaning

transfer is executed effectively. Therefore, it is essential for the selected celebrity endorser to convey the intended message of the product/brand to consumers (Rifon et al., 2023). If the celebrity can connect to the meaning of the product/brand, the intended message is accurately conveyed to consumers, positively affecting both the credibility of the endorser and consumer purchase intention (Hussain & Khan, 2015). Additionally, companies should be cautious in selecting endorsers who promote multiple products/brands simultaneously to prevent negative or confusing meaning transfer (Jun et al., 2023; Malodia et al., 2017).

Hypothesis 9: Meaning transfer mediates the relationship between product/brand and celebrity match and purchase intention.

Hypothesis 10: Meaning transfer mediates the relationship between product/brand and celebrity match and endorser credibility.

Hypothesis 11: Meaning transfer and credibility act as mediators between product/brand and celebrity match and purchase intention (double mediation).

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework illustrating the relationships and paths tested in this study.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework
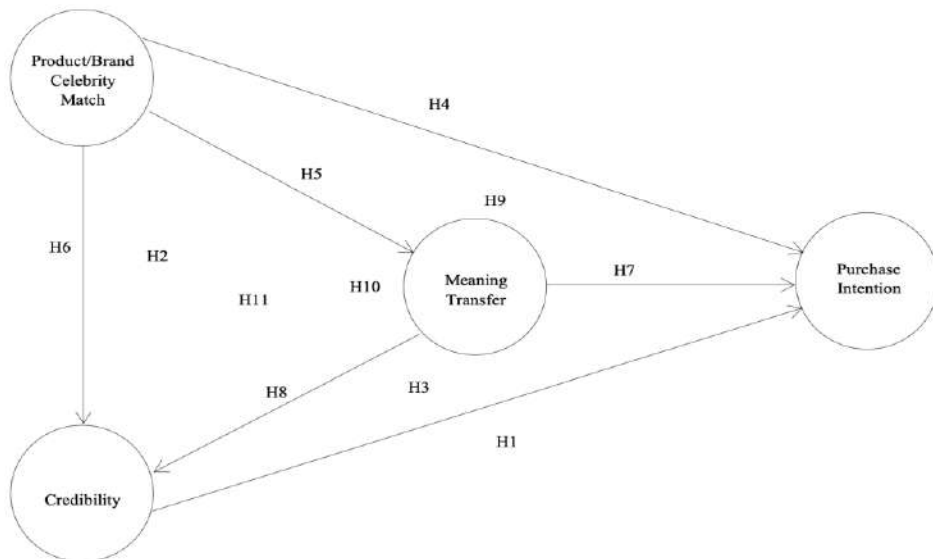
3. Research Methodology

3.1. Population and Sample Size

This study focuses on the purchase intentions of young consumers in Pakistan, where over 64 percent of the population is under the age of 30, with 29 percent between the ages of 15 and 19 (The News, 2018). Karachi, a metropolitan city known for its diverse backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles (Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, 2018), is chosen as the target city for the research. A questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale was employed for data collection. According to the World Population Review (2016), Karachi's population is approximately 15.7 million. The choice of Karachi for this study was motivated by its status as a metropolitan hub, which offers a broad pool of respondents from various origins and backgrounds.

The final sample comprised 560 respondents, which is an appropriate size according to Hair et al. (2013) and Kline (2015). A similar sample size was utilized in a study by Khan et al. (2019). This research employed purposive sampling to target respondents who were aware of and had been exposed to celebrity endorsements within the previous two weeks. Young consumers were chosen as respondents because marketers aim to capture their attention, and this demographic is often more influenced by celebrity endorsements due to peer pressure and the desire for symbolic value (Ahmad et al., 2019). Questionnaires were administered only to those respondents who were comfortable reading and understanding English.

3.2. Measurement

The measurement scale for this study was based on Ohanian (1990), with the purchase intention scale adapted from Tingchi-Liu and Brock (2011), and the meaning transfer scale adapted from Roy and Jain (2017). In the instrument, 'strongly disagree' corresponds to 5, while 'strongly agree' corresponds to 1. Although the reliability of the instrument is supported by prior literature, it was also tested in this study. Credibility was measured using seven items, meaning transfer with five items, product/brand and celebrity match with four items, and purchase intention with twelve items. However, due to low factor loadings, one item was removed from the product/brand and celebrity match, three items from meaning transfer, and nine items from purchase intention.

The questionnaires were distributed in universities and malls through two methods: (a) via Google Forms to Karachi residents, and (b)

face-to-face distribution at malls and universities in Karachi. Respondents were selected based on their familiarity with celebrity endorsements and their ability to recall three recent advertisements featuring a celebrity. Screening questions were implemented to ensure eligibility for the study. Out of 800 questionnaires distributed, 560 usable responses were collected, resulting in a response rate of 70 percent.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 summarizes the demographics of the respondents, including their gender, age, and income. Most respondents (60 percent) were female, and a large majority (66 percent) were aged 18–23. Additionally, a majority of respondents reported an income over Rs 70,000 (58.5 percent).

Table 1: Respondent Demographics

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	225	40%
	Female	335	60%
Age (in years)	15-17	42	8%
	18-23	370	66%
	24-30	148	26%
Income	30k-50K	102	18%
	50k-70K	132	23.5%
	70k-90K	217	39%
	90k and above	109	19.5%

We conducted a descriptive analysis to assess univariate normality and internal consistency. The summary is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Construct	Mean (M)	SD	Kurtosis (K)	Skewness (SK)	Cronbach's Alpha(α)
Credibility	2.895	0.842	-0.635	0.051	0.906
Meaning Transfer	2.432	0.765	-0.206	0.181	0.771
Product/Brand Celebrity Match	2.938	0.800	0.026	0.297	0.819
Purchase Intention	2.432	0.529	0.618	0.201	0.709

The results show that product/brand and celebrity match (M = 2.938, SD = 0.800, SK = 0.297) has the highest skewness, while credibility (M = 2.895, SD = 0.842, SK = 0.051) exhibits the lowest skewness. In terms of kurtosis, credibility (M = 2.895, SD = 0.842, K = –0.635) shows the highest value, while product/brand and celebrity match (M = 2.938, SD = 0.800, K =

0.026) has the lowest. The skewness and kurtosis for all constructs fall within ±2, indicating that the data exhibits univariate normality (George, 2011; Hair et al., 2013). Furthermore, all values of α are greater than 0.70, confirming the presence of internal consistency.

4.2. Instrument Validity and Reliability

We employ average variance extracted and composite reliability to assess convergent validity. The results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Convergent Validity

Construct	Mean	SD	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Credibility	2.895	0.842	0.927	0.681
Meaning Transfer	2.432	0.765	0.896	0.811
Product/Brand Celebrity Match	2.938	0.800	0.892	0.734
Purchase Intention	2.432	0.529	0.833	0.628

Credibility (M = 2.895, SD = 0.842, CR = 0.927) has the highest composite reliability, while purchase intention (M = 2.432, SD = 0.529, CR = 0.833) has the lowest. Similarly, meaning transfer (M = 2.432, SD = 0.765, AVE = 0.811) shows the highest AVE, while purchase intention (M = 2.432, SD = 0.529, AVE = 0.628) has the lowest AVE. All composite reliability values exceed 0.7, and all AVE values are above 0.5, indicating the existence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2013). This suggests that the items for each concept are closely correlated, with no item correlating with an external concept.

To establish discriminant validity, we use the criteria outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Table 4 presents the summarized results and shows that the square root of AVE (in diagonal) for each construct is greater than the square of correlation of each pair. The presence of discriminant validity implies that all variables used in this research are distinct and unique. This means that each variable is different from the others, with no overlap among them, and there is no repetition of concepts in this research.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

	Credibility	Meaning Transfer	Product/Brand Celebrity Match	Purchase Intention
Credibility	0.825			
Meaning Transfer	0.264	0.901		
Product/Brand Celebrity Match	0.407	0.246	0.857	
Purchase Intention	0.236	0.143	0.141	0.792

4.3. Structural Equation Modeling

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is applied using Smart PLS 3 to test the hypotheses. The summarized results are in Table 5, indicating that all hypotheses are supported.

Table 5: Statistical Results from SEM

	Beta	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Direct Effects					
Credibility->Purchase Intention	0.362	0.362	0.053	6.844	0.000
Meaning Transfer->Credibility	0.262	0.262	0.033	7.954	0.000
Meaning Transfer->Purchase Intention	0.254	0.255	0.052	4.888	0.000
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Credibility	0.638	0.638	0.027	23.602	0.000
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Meaning Transfer	0.496	0.497	0.035	14.215	0.000
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Purchase Intention	0.376	0.378	0.042	8.905	0.000
Indirect Effects					
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Meaning Transfer->Credibility	0.130	0.130	0.017	7.804	0.000
Meaning Transfer->Credibility->Purchase Intention	0.095	0.094	0.016	5.914	0.000
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Meaning Transfer->Credibility->Purchase Intention	0.047	0.047	0.008	5.938	0.000
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Credibility->Purchase Intention	0.184	0.184	0.030	6.103	0.000
Product/Brand Celebrity Match->Meaning Transfer->Purchase Intention	0.079	0.079	0.024	3.310	0.001

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships between items and their respective latent constructs: product/brand-celebrity match, credibility, meaning transfer, and purchase intention. The factor loadings for each item suggest the degree to which each item contributes to its construct. All items

exhibit factor loadings above 0.8, except for one item related to purchase intention, which has a factor loading of 0.669.
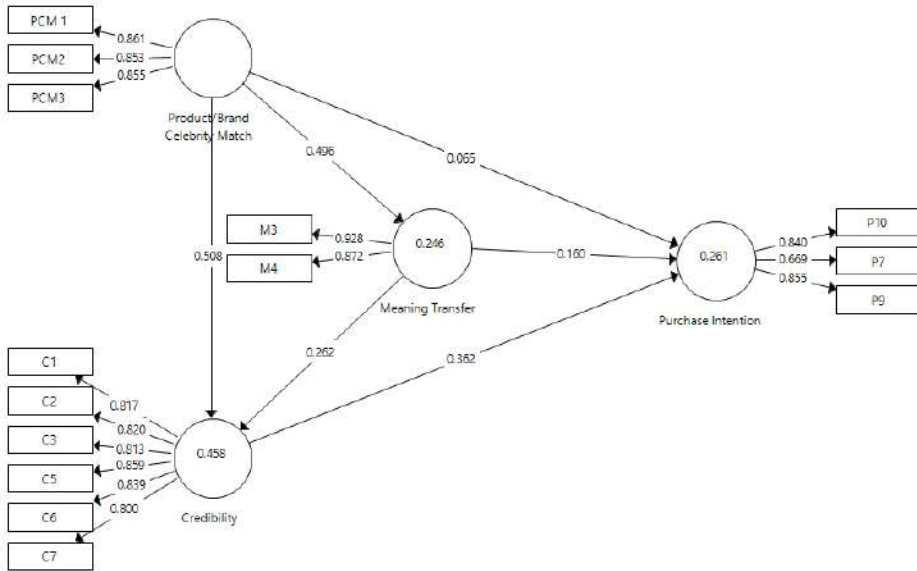
Figure 2: Measurement Model

Figure 3 depicts the relationships between latent constructs: product/brand-celebrity match, credibility, meaning transfer, and purchase intention. The path coefficients indicate the strength of influence each construct has on the others. As shown in Figure 3, the relationships among the constructs are strong, with the most significant effect observed between product/brand-celebrity match and credibility.

Figure 3: Structural Model
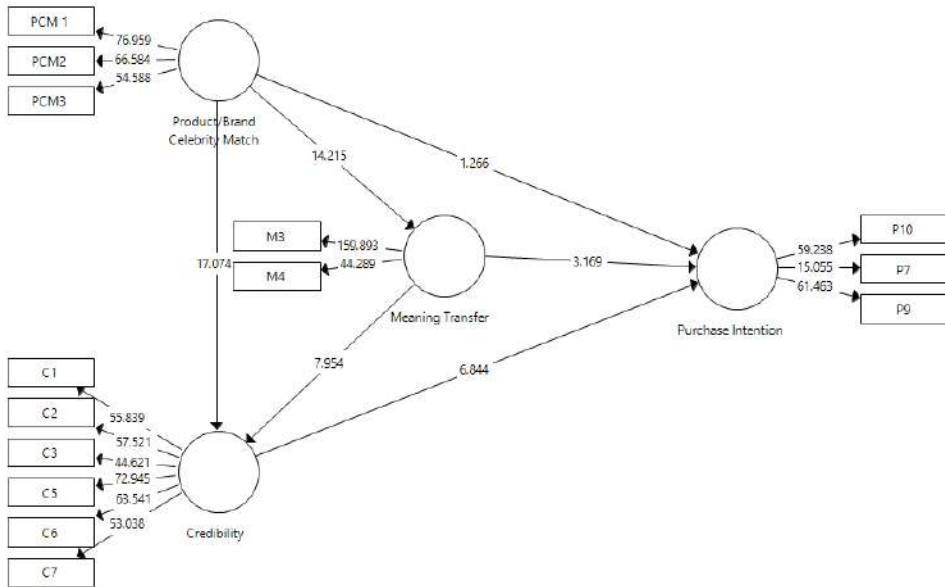
5.   Discussion of Findings

The results provide strong support for the hypotheses established during the literature review, demonstrating the connections between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention. More importantly, they highlight the role of meaning transfer as a significant factor in effective celebrity endorsements. All hypotheses were validated, and further discussion of these results follows below.

5.1. Credibility

Credibility is assessed through three sub-variables: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise of the celebrity endorser. The findings reveal that all three sources of credibility positively influence consumers' intentions to purchase the endorsed product (β = 0.362, t = 6.844, p < 0.05). An endorser's credibility significantly impacts consumer purchase intentions and enhances the effects of celebrity match and meaning transfer on these intentions (Rifon et al., 2023; Zhang & Xu, 2024). Similar conclusions are reached by Teng et al. (2014), who emphasize that sources of credibility are crucial for persuasion and can trigger consumer purchase intentions towards endorsed products. Additionally, source credibility shapes consumer attitudes towards the brand/product, which in turn significantly

affects purchase intentions. High-involvement consumers tend to focus on both the trustworthiness and attractiveness of the celebrity, while those with low involvement prioritize trustworthiness alone (Fam et al., 2023; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2017).

Modern consumers, who are highly influenced by social media, now perceive celebrities as symbols. Their purchase decisions can quickly be swayed by the credibility and relevance of a celebrity endorser, often relegating the product's features to secondary importance (Yendra et al., 2023; Zafar & Rafique, 2012). In this context, our results indicate that the endorser's credibility mediates the relationship between the product/brand-celebrity match and consumer purchase intention ($\beta = 0.184$, $t = 6.103$, $p < 0.05$). A stronger alignment between the product/brand and the endorser enhances the endorser's credibility in consumers' minds, fostering a positive inclination towards the product and increasing purchase intentions. Additionally, credibility positively mediates the beneficial effect of meaning transfer on purchase intention, suggesting that a credible endorser facilitates the process of meaning transfer in advertisements and positively influences the purchase of the endorsed product.

5.2. Product/Brand Celebrity Match

According to Adam and Hussain (2017), an effective match-up is determined by the degree of fit between the celebrity and the endorsed product. The celebrity should be compatible with and possess expertise related to the product. The product and celebrity match is critical for boosting purchase intentions. The effectiveness of the conveyed message relies on the alignment between the product and the celebrity endorsing it. Companies must ensure that the celebrity they choose to endorse their product embodies the appropriate personality, traits, characteristics, and expertise that align well with the product, thereby enhancing the message's impact and leaving a positive impression on consumers (Khan, 2018; Zhang & Xu, 2024).

This study's results show a positive relationship between product/brand-celebrity match and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.376$, $t = 8.905$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, product/brand-celebrity match has the strongest positive influence ($\beta = 0.638$, $t = 23.602$, $p < 0.05$) on the credibility of the endorser. This suggests that a good match between the endorser and the product/brand enhances the credibility of the message conveyed by the endorser in the advertisement, which, in turn, increases the purchase intention for the endorsed product. It also indicates that the product/brand

match with the celebrity is of utmost importance to consumers, with other variables being linked to it and mediating its effect on purchase intention.

5.3. *Meaning Transfer*

The results further indicate that meaning transfer positively impacts consumer purchase intention ($\beta = 0.254$, $t = 4.888$, $p < 0.05$). Consumers often believe that celebrities endorsing products, particularly cosmetics, will enhance their attractiveness and glamour (Adam & Hussain, 2017; Jun et al., 2023). In such cases, the attractiveness of the celebrity with cosmetic brands creates a balanced match, and the idea of looking attractive through the use of those brands is effectively transferred by the endorser, which also influences purchase intention for those brands (Rifon et al., 2023; Zhang & Xu, 2024).

The high relevance of the celebrity-product match leads to a significant level of meaning transfer for both the brand and the targeted consumer. Furthermore, meaning transfer offers a more comprehensive explanation for the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. Most consumers tend to perceive cultural meanings in advertisements featuring celebrities they admire, associating the products with the celebrities' symbols and personas (Hussain & Khan, 2015). Thus, meaning transfer positively mediates the influence of product/brand-celebrity match on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.079$, $t = 3.310$, $p < 0.05$).

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the factors of celebrity endorsement that significantly influence consumer purchase intention. The results suggest that the celebrity's credibility, the product/brand match-up with the celebrity, and the meaning transferred by the celebrity all positively influence consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, marketers in Pakistan should consider all three aspects when incorporating celebrity endorsement into their marketing and advertising campaigns. Notably, the product/brand and celebrity match has the strongest influence on the transfer of meaning in the intended message and on consumer purchase intention. Thus, it is recommended that marketers select endorsers who best align with the product being advertised to achieve the most effective outcomes from the endorsement campaign. The alignment between the endorser and the brand will maximize the campaign's effectiveness and enhance purchase intention.

These findings indicate that marketers and advertisers should avoid selecting endorsers who are merely popular at a given moment but have no connection to the brand being endorsed. Ignoring the match between the product/brand and the celebrity can lead to consumer dislike of the advertisement, potentially causing the entire campaign to backfire. This misalignment can create doubt in consumers' minds regarding the credibility of the information provided by the endorser, often resulting in a loss of meaning transfer due to diminished credibility and increased skepticism. For credibility, marketers and advertisers should consider the trustworthiness and expertise of the endorser, along with the attractiveness of the celebrity's appearance and personality.

Although this study provides valuable insights for both theory and practice, it has several limitations. For instance, this study does not incorporate any moderators, which may either weaken or strengthen the explored relationships. Future research should examine the effect of moderators. Furthermore, no specific stimulus was used in the current research, which might provide additional contextualization to the results. Future studies should focus on analyzing changes in results based on different stimuli. Moreover, the current research did not investigate differences in urban and rural preferences, intentions, and behaviors. Therefore, future studies could analyze these results across different areas, cities, and geographical contexts. Lastly, this study focused solely on the perceptions and opinions of young consumers. Future research can build on this by incorporating various age groups to assess how the observed relationships differ.

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