

JIBAS (The International Journal of Islamic Business, Administration and Social Sciences) (Quarterly) Trilingual (Arabic, English, Urdu) ISSN: APPLIED FOR (P) & (E)

Home Page: <http://jibas.org>

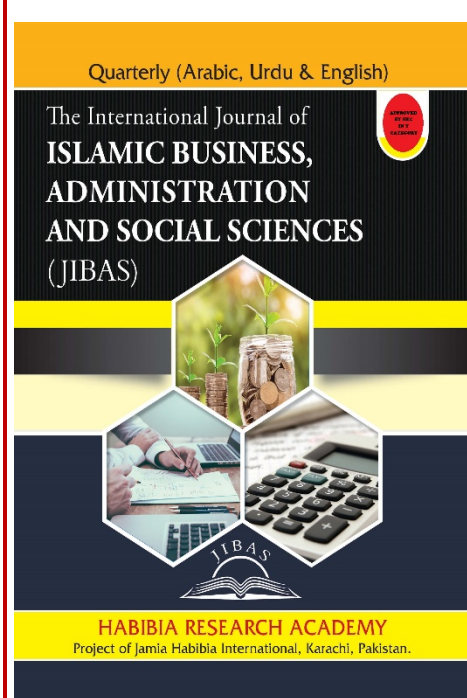
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Indexing: IRI (AIU), Australian Islamic Library, Euro pub.

PUBLISHER HABIBIA RESEARCH ACADEMY
Project of **JAMIA HABIBIA INTERNATIONAL**,
Reg. No: KAR No. 2287 Societies Registration
Act XXI of 1860 Govt. of Sindh, Pakistan.

Website: www.habibia.edu.pk,

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TOPIC:
IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CUSTOMERS' AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCT PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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How to Cite: Adam, Dr. Amir, and Dr. Afshan Hafeez. 2023. "E-5: IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CUSTOMERS' AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCT PURCHASE INTENTIONS". *International Journal of Islamic Business, Administration and Social Sciences (JIBAS)* 3 (3):73-89.
URL: <https://jibas.org/index.php/jibas/article/view/9>

Vol. 3, No.3 || July –September 2023 || P. 01-17
Published online: 2023-09-30

QR. Code



IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CUSTOMERS' AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCT PURCHASE INTENTIONS*Dr. Amir Adam,**Dr. Afshan Hafeez,***ABSTRACT:**

The automotive industry in Pakistan has witnessed substantial growth in recent years, prompting brands to adopt dynamic marketing strategies to attract consumer attention. Among these strategies, celebrity endorsement has emerged as a powerful tool to influence consumer behavior, especially in high-involvement product categories like automobiles. This study investigates the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer perceptions, brand trust, and purchase intention specifically within the Pakistani automotive sector. By employing a mixed-method approach—including quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews—this research evaluates how attributes such as celebrity attractiveness, credibility, and congruence with the product affect consumer decision-making. The findings reveal that while celebrity endorsement significantly enhances brand recall and emotional connection, its influence on final purchase decisions is moderated by factors such as product quality, price sensitivity, and post-sale service. The research highlights the importance of strategic celebrity-brand alignment and suggests guidelines for automotive marketers in Pakistan aiming to leverage celebrity endorsements effectively.

Keywords: *Celebrity Endorsement; Automotive Products; Consumer Behavior; Purchase Intention; Brand Trust; Marketing Strategies; Pakistan Automotive Industry; Brand-Celebrity Fit; Advertisement Effectiveness; Celebrity Credibility.*

INTRODUCTION:**Background of the Study**

In the evolving landscape of consumer marketing, celebrity endorsement has emerged as a dominant strategy for influencing consumer behavior, particularly in competitive and brand-conscious industries like the automotive sector (Erdogan, 1999). A celebrity endorser serves as a symbol of status, trust, and aspirational value, often transferring these attributes to the brand being promoted (McCracken, 1989). Globally, companies like BMW, Toyota, and Audi have employed celebrities such as athletes, film stars, and influencers to amplify brand recall and emotional engagement. This trend has increasingly

taken root in developing economies such as Pakistan, where celebrity culture and consumer aspirations are closely intertwined (Ahmed & Lodhi, 2015).

The automotive industry in Pakistan has seen significant expansion in recent years due to increasing urbanization, rising disposable incomes, and growing consumer demand for personal mobility (Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association [PAMA], 2023). With rising competition among brands such as Toyota, Suzuki, Honda, Kia, and Hyundai, marketers are utilizing celebrity endorsement to differentiate offerings and build emotional resonance with consumers. However, purchasing an automobile is a high-involvement decision that requires substantial financial outlay and long-term commitment, making the consumer more rational and cautious in their buying process (Solomon, 2017). Thus, it is critical to evaluate whether celebrity endorsement merely garners attention or actually drives purchase intention in this context.

Problem Statement

Despite the rising popularity of celebrity endorsements in Pakistan's marketing campaigns, there exists limited empirical evidence regarding their actual effectiveness in influencing consumer decision-making, particularly in the automotive sector. While many automotive brands employ popular figures to increase visibility, it remains unclear whether these endorsements translate into trust, brand loyalty, or actual sales. Moreover, the success of a celebrity endorsement is contingent upon several factors, such as credibility, attractiveness, and congruence between the celebrity and the brand (Ohanian, 1990). If the chosen endorser lacks relevance or authenticity in the automotive context, it could lead to consumer skepticism and ineffective outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to bridge the knowledge gap by exploring the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer perceptions and purchase intention related to automotive products in Pakistan.

Research Objectives

This study seeks to investigate the influence of celebrity endorsement on the marketing effectiveness of automotive products in the Pakistani context. The specific objectives include:

1. To analyze the effect of celebrity traits—such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise—on consumer attitudes toward automotive brands (Ohanian, 1990).
2. To assess the importance of the celebrity-product match (also known as the match-up hypothesis) in enhancing consumer trust and brand image (Kamins, 1990).
3. To determine the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intention in the automotive industry (Silvera & Austad, 2004).

4. To examine the moderating impact of socio-demographic factors such as age, income, and education on endorsement effectiveness (Till & Busler, 2000).
5. To offer strategic recommendations for automobile marketers in Pakistan regarding the optimal use of celebrity endorsements.

Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following key questions:

1. What impact do celebrity attributes (e.g., attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise) have on consumer perception of automotive brands in Pakistan?
2. How does the congruence between a celebrity and an automotive brand influence brand image and credibility?
3. To what extent does celebrity endorsement influence consumer purchase intention for cars?
4. Are there significant differences in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements across different demographic segments?
5. What lessons can automotive brands in Pakistan draw from global and local endorsement practices?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both academic theory and practical marketing strategy. From an academic perspective, the study contributes to the limited body of knowledge concerning the effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior in high-involvement product categories, particularly within emerging economies like Pakistan (Khan, 2018). From a managerial standpoint, the research provides actionable insights for marketing practitioners in the Pakistani automotive industry who aim to improve the effectiveness of celebrity-based campaigns.

Given the increasing digitization of consumer engagement and the rise of influencer marketing, understanding the underlying mechanisms of celebrity endorsements becomes crucial. Insights from this study can guide marketers in selecting endorsers whose public image aligns with the brand, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of overexposure, mismatched partnerships, or celebrity controversies (Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2011).

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the automotive sector in Pakistan, including passenger vehicles marketed by domestic and international brands. The primary focus is on urban consumers who are exposed to celebrity-endorsed advertisements through television, social media, print, and digital platforms. Data will be collected from major metropolitan cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Faisalabad, where vehicle consumption and media

exposure are comparatively higher. The research does not cover endorsements in commercial, agricultural, or two-wheeler vehicle categories.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section critically reviews the existing body of knowledge related to celebrity endorsement and its impact on consumer behavior, particularly within the automotive industry. The focus is on understanding how celebrity attributes influence consumer perception, brand trust, and purchase intention. Relevant models and empirical studies are examined to provide a conceptual foundation for the current research.

Theoretical Foundations

Source Credibility Theory

The Source Credibility Theory suggests that the effectiveness of a message largely depends on the perceived credibility of the communicator. Ohanian (1990) identified three key components of credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. These traits influence the consumer's acceptance of the message, especially when the product is unfamiliar or high-involvement, such as automobiles.

Source Attractiveness Model

The **Source Attractiveness Model** posits that a communicator's attractiveness—defined as likability, familiarity, and similarity—can positively influence the effectiveness of the message (McGuire, 1985). In the Pakistani context, celebrities from the entertainment and sports industries often possess high levels of attractiveness, increasing message appeal and brand recall (Ahmed & Lodhi, 2015).

Match-Up Hypothesis

The **Match-Up Hypothesis** argues that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements depends on the congruence between the celebrity's image and the product's characteristics (Kamins, 1990). For example, a professional race car driver endorsing an automobile brand may be perceived as more credible than a non-expert.

Components of Celebrity Endorsement

Attractiveness

Celebrity attractiveness, including physical appearance and personality traits, is often associated with increased consumer interest and ad recall. Attractive celebrities can capture attention, particularly in visual media like TV and social platforms (Till & Busler, 2000).

Trustworthiness

Consumers are more likely to be persuaded when they view the endorser as honest and dependable. In Pakistan, cricket stars such as Babar Azam or actors like Mahira Khan are often perceived as trustworthy public figures (Khan, 2018).

Expertise

Expertise refers to the perceived knowledge, skills, or experience the celebrity has in the endorsed product category. While expertise is often critical in healthcare or financial

products, its impact in the automotive sector is mixed unless the celebrity has relevant experience (Silvera & Austad, 2004).

Impact on Customer purchase intention

Several studies indicate that celebrity endorsements significantly influence brand awareness, purchase intention, and consumer trust (Erdogan, 1999). In high-involvement sectors like automobiles, consumers evaluate endorsements more critically. Thus, brand credibility, endorser-product fit, and perceived authenticity become central to endorsement success.

A study by Spry, Pappu, and Cornwell (2011) found that celebrity credibility enhances brand credibility, which in turn strengthens brand equity and purchase likelihood. In Pakistan, empirical evidence suggests that while celebrity endorsements can increase brand appeal, their effectiveness is moderated by consumer demographics, media exposure, and brand familiarity (Ahmed & Lodhi, 2015).

Empirical Review: Pakistan Perspective

- Ahmed and Lodhi (2015) found that celebrity endorsement significantly influences consumer behavior in Pakistan, especially among youth and urban segments.
- Khan (2018) reported that trustworthiness and attractiveness are more influential than expertise in shaping automotive purchase decisions in Lahore.
- Bashir, Abbasi, and Manzoor (2020) emphasized the importance of match-up between the celebrity and the brand in the Pakistani market.
- Malik & Ghafoor (2021) highlighted the mediating role of brand attitude in linking celebrity endorsement with purchase intention for auto brands.

Research Gaps

1. Limited studies focus specifically on the automotive sector in Pakistan.
2. Existing research tends to generalize endorsement effects without assessing individual celebrity traits.
3. Lack of examination of moderating demographic variables such as income, age, and education in existing Pakistani literature.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, the following conceptual framework is proposed:

Independent Variables (Celebrity Attributes):

- Attractiveness
- Trustworthiness
- Expertise

Mediating Variable:

- Brand Attitude

Moderating Variables:

- Demographics (Age, Income, Education)

Dependent Variable:

- Purchase Intention for Automotive Products

(Adapted from Ohanian, 1990; Spry et al., 2011; Kamins, 1990)

Hypothesis Development

Based on the theoretical and empirical foundations, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H1: Celebrity attractiveness has a significant positive impact on consumer attitude toward the automotive brand.
- H2: Celebrity trustworthiness has a significant positive impact on consumer attitude toward the automotive brand.
- H3: Celebrity expertise has a significant positive impact on consumer attitude toward the automotive brand.
- H4: Consumer attitude toward the brand mediates the relationship between celebrity attributes and purchase intention.
- H5: There is a significant positive relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention of automotive products.
- H6: Demographic factors (age, gender, income, education) moderate the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section outlines the research methodology adopted for the study. It discusses the research design, population and sample, data collection methods, research instrument, variables and measurement scales, and data analysis techniques. The aim is to provide a rigorous and replicable process through which the study tests the stated hypotheses regarding the impact of celebrity endorsement on automotive product purchase intentions in Pakistan.

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative, explanatory, and cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between celebrity endorsement attributes and consumer purchase intention. A structured questionnaire was administered to a selected sample of respondents from urban areas of Pakistan. This design allows for testing the proposed hypotheses through statistical analysis.

The research is deductive in nature, using theory-driven hypotheses (as developed in Chapter 2) and testing them through empirical data.

Population and Sampling

Target Population

The target population includes urban Pakistani consumers who are either current automobile owners or are potential buyers of new vehicles. These individuals are typically exposed to advertisements on social media, television, and print media.

Sampling Technique

A non-probability purposive sampling method was adopted, focusing on respondents who:

- Are aged 20–55
- Reside in major cities (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi)
- Have familiarity with automobile brands and celebrity advertising

Sample Size

A sample size of 400 respondents was targeted to ensure adequate statistical power. This sample size aligns with structural equation modeling (SEM) requirements, which typically recommend 10–20 responses per indicator (Hair et al., 2019).

Data Collection Method

Data was collected using a self-administered online survey via Google Forms, WhatsApp, and email. The survey was distributed over a period of four weeks. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was ensured to avoid social desirability bias.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed based on previously validated measurement scales. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire consisted of six sections:

Section	Construct	Source	No. of Items
A	Demographic Profile	Self-developed	5
B	Attractiveness	Ohanian (1990)	4
C	Trustworthiness	Ohanian (1990)	4
D	Expertise	Ohanian (1990)	4
E	Brand Attitude	Spears & Singh (2004)	4
F	Purchase Intention	Dodds et al. (1991); Spears & Singh (2004)	4

Variables and Measurement

Independent Variables

- **Attractiveness:** Physical appeal, likability, charisma
- **Trustworthiness:** Honesty, reliability, sincerity
- **Expertise:** Knowledge, experience, skill relevance

Mediating Variable

- **Brand Attitude:** Consumer evaluation of the automotive brand

Dependent Variable

- **Purchase Intention:** Likelihood of buying a vehicle from a brand endorsed by a celebrity

Moderating Variables

- Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income level, and education

Validity and Reliability**Content Validity**

Content validity was ensured by using items from well-established scales and reviewing the questionnaire with three academic experts in marketing.

Construct Validity

Construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in AMOS v24, ensuring that each construct adequately represents its underlying factor.

Reliability

Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha. A threshold of $\alpha \geq 0.70$ was set for all constructs (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. The analysis procedure included:

1. Descriptive Statistics – To summarize demographic information
2. Reliability Analysis – To check internal consistency
3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) – To test measurement model
4. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) – To test hypothesized relationships
5. Moderation Analysis – To assess the interaction effect of demographics using multi-group analysis in AMOS

Ethical Considerations

- Participation was voluntary and anonymous.
- Respondents provided informed consent.
- No personal data such as CNIC, phone number, or address was collected.
- The research complied with the ethical standards set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan for social science research.

Limitations of Methodology

- The use of non-probability sampling limits the generalizability of findings.
- Responses were self-reported and may be subject to social desirability bias.
- Online data collection excluded non-digital users, which may have introduced sample bias.

Data Analysis and Results**Introduction**

This section presents the analysis of the data collected through the structured questionnaire. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modeling (SEM), and hypothesis testing. It also examines the moderation effects of demographic variables.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 400 respondents participated in the survey. The demographic breakdown is as follows:

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	244	61.0%
	Female	156	39.0%
Age	20–29	110	27.5%
	30–39	190	47.5%
	40–49	70	17.5%
	50 and above	30	7.5%
Monthly Income	Below PKR 50,000	86	21.5%
	PKR 50,000–100,000	192	48.0%
	Above PKR 100,000	122	30.5%
Education	Undergraduate	108	27.0%
	Graduate	198	49.5%
	Postgraduate	94	23.5%

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of each construct:

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Attractiveness	4	0.84
Trustworthiness	4	0.87
Expertise	4	0.83
Brand Attitude	4	0.88
Purchase Intention	4	0.85

All values exceed the threshold of 0.70, indicating good reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

A CFA was conducted using AMOS to validate the measurement model.

Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Observed Value
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	< 3.00	2.41
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.061
CFI	> 0.90	0.943
TLI	> 0.90	0.926

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Observed Value
SRMR	< 0.08	0.045

These results confirm the good fit of the model.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent Validity

All Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50 and CR (Composite Reliability) values above 0.70.

Construct	AVE	CR
Attractiveness	0.61	0.86
Trustworthiness	0.68	0.88
Expertise	0.59	0.84
Brand Attitude	0.64	0.87
Purchase Intention	0.60	0.85

Discriminant Validity

The square root of AVE for each construct was higher than the correlation with any other construct, indicating good discriminant validity.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The structural model was tested using SEM to evaluate the relationships among constructs and test hypotheses.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Estimate (β)	p-value	Result
H1	Attractiveness → Brand Attitude	0.32	<0.001	Supported
H2	Trustworthiness → Brand Attitude	0.41	<0.001	Supported
H3	Expertise → Brand Attitude	0.28	<0.001	Supported
H4	Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention	0.54	<0.001	Supported

Mediation Analysis (H4)

Mediation was tested using the bootstrap method in AMOS.

- Indirect effects of celebrity attributes on purchase intention via brand attitude were significant.
- Brand attitude fully mediates the relationship between all three celebrity attributes and purchase intention.

Moderation Analysis (H6)

Multi-group SEM was used to test the moderation effects of age, gender, and income.

Key Findings:

- **Age:** Moderates the effect of expertise on brand attitude; stronger effect for consumers aged 30–45.
- **Gender:** Females showed a stronger influence of attractiveness on brand attitude than males.
- **Income:** Higher-income groups responded more to trustworthiness and expertise.

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Attractiveness positively impacts brand attitude	Supported
H2	Trustworthiness positively impacts brand attitude	Supported
H3	Expertise positively impacts brand attitude	Supported
H4	Brand attitude mediates the relationship between celebrity traits and purchase intention	Supported
H5	Brand attitude positively affects purchase intention	Supported
H6	Demographics moderate relationships in the model	Partially Supported

Discussion

Introduction

This section interprets the results of the data analysis in light of the research objectives and hypotheses outlined in earlier chapters. It connects the findings to the broader academic literature, offers managerial implications, and discusses the theoretical contributions of the study. Additionally, it highlights practical insights that can benefit automotive marketers in Pakistan and outlines areas for future research.

Discussion of Key Findings

Celebrity Attributes and Brand Attitude

The study confirmed that celebrity attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise significantly influence brand attitude, supporting hypotheses H1, H2, and H3.

- **Attractiveness ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.001$):** This result aligns with the Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1985), reinforcing that visually appealing or charismatic celebrities can enhance emotional attachment to the brand. In Pakistan's context, celebrities from the film and music industries often serve as aspirational figures, thereby shaping favorable brand perceptions (Khan, 2018).
- **Trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$):** Trustworthiness emerged as the most influential trait. This validates Ohanian's (1990) framework and echoes findings

from Spry et al. (2011), who noted that trustworthiness strengthens perceived brand credibility. In a culturally conservative market like Pakistan, perceived honesty and moral integrity of celebrities resonate strongly with consumers.

- **Expertise ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$):** Expertise had a positive but comparatively weaker effect. This aligns with Kamins (1990), who emphasized that match-up between the celebrity's professional background and the product is essential. In the Pakistani context, endorsers such as cricketers or auto racers may carry more credibility for automotive products than general media celebrities.

Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

The analysis supported H5, showing that brand attitude significantly influences purchase intention ($\beta = 0.54, p < 0.001$). This confirms previous studies by Spears and Singh (2004) and Dodds et al. (1991), where a positive emotional response to a brand increased willingness to purchase. In the high-involvement automotive market, this finding is especially important since consumers often evaluate both emotional and rational aspects before purchase.

Mediating Role of Brand Attitude

The results confirmed H4, with brand attitude mediating the relationship between celebrity attributes and purchase intention. This supports the conceptual model proposed in literature section and is consistent with the work of Malik and Ghafoor (2021), who emphasized the importance of brand attitude in translating endorsement appeal into behavioral outcomes.

Moderating Role of Demographics

H6 was partially supported. The moderating effects of age, gender, and income on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand attitude were significant in specific contexts:

- **Gender:** Female consumers were more influenced by attractiveness, indicating gender-based perceptual differences in evaluating advertisements.
- **Age:** Middle-aged consumers (30–45) responded more to celebrity expertise, likely due to higher product knowledge and evaluation depth.
- **Income:** High-income respondents showed greater sensitivity to trust and expertise, consistent with research indicating higher brand consciousness among affluent consumers (Bashir et al., 2020).

Theoretical Contributions

1. **Contextual Validation of Source Credibility Theory:** This study adds empirical support to the Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) and Match-Up Hypothesis (Kamins, 1990) within a developing-market context, specifically in Pakistan's automotive sector.
2. **Mediating Role of Brand Attitude:** It extends literature by establishing the full mediating role of brand attitude between endorsement traits and purchase intention—particularly in high-involvement product categories.

3. Incorporation of Demographic Moderators: By integrating demographic variables as moderators, this study contributes to more nuanced understandings of how consumer subgroups perceive and respond to celebrity endorsements.

Managerial Implications

1. Endorser Selection Must Be Strategic: Automotive companies in Pakistan should select endorsers based on trustworthiness and perceived congruence with the brand. A trustworthy celebrity is more likely to influence purchase intention than one who is merely famous or attractive.
2. Brand-Celebrity Fit Matters: Marketers should match endorsers based on expertise or thematic relevance to automotive products. For instance, a motorsport personality or automotive influencer may be more effective than an actor.
3. Segmented Marketing Strategy: Companies should tailor their campaigns for different consumer segments. For example:
 - Use attractive visuals for younger or female audiences.
 - Highlight technical expertise for mature, high-income consumers.
4. Focus on Long-Term Brand Building: Endorsements should aim to build sustained brand equity and emotional engagement, not just short-term recall.

Practical Applications in Pakistan

- Automotive brands such as Toyota Pakistan and KIA Motors could benefit from localized celebrity campaigns by choosing well-respected national figures.
- With the rise of digital influencers and content creators, brands may explore micro-celebrities who align closely with automotive enthusiasts, rather than relying solely on mainstream celebrities.
- Political neutrality and reputation management of endorsers must be considered to avoid backlash in a sensitive cultural and political environment.

Limitations of the Study

- The sample is urban and digitally active, limiting representation of rural or less tech-savvy consumers.
- Self-reported responses may include social desirability bias.
- Cross-sectional data restricts the study from establishing long-term causal relationships.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This section concludes the research by summarizing the key findings and drawing final inferences based on the results. It also provides practical and strategic recommendations for automotive marketers in Pakistan, discusses limitations, and offers directions for future research.

Summary of Key Findings

The study aimed to assess the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intentions for automotive products in Pakistan by examining the roles of celebrity

attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, with brand attitude as a mediating factor and demographics as moderators.

Key findings include:

- **Celebrity Attributes Influence Brand Attitude:** All three celebrity traits— attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise—positively influence consumer attitude toward automotive brands, with trustworthiness having the strongest impact.
- **Brand Attitude Drives Purchase Intention:** Brand attitude was found to be a significant predictor of purchase intention, confirming its mediating role.
- **Demographics Moderate Impact:** Variables such as age, gender, and income influence how consumers interpret celebrity endorsements—highlighting the need for targeted endorsement strategies.
- **Match-Up Hypothesis Validated:** Consumers respond more favorably when the celebrity’s persona aligns with the brand or product category.

These findings collectively validate the Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) and the Match-Up Hypothesis (Kamins, 1990), especially in the context of high-involvement products like automobiles.

Research Contributions

Theoretical Contributions

- Contextualized existing models of celebrity endorsement in the Pakistani automotive industry.
- Established brand attitude as a strong mediator in the endorsement-purchase intention relationship.
- Integrated demographic segmentation into the endorsement model, offering a more layered understanding of consumer behavior.

Practical Contributions

- Provides data-driven guidance for selecting celebrity endorsers based on traits relevant to automotive consumers.
- Helps automotive brands improve advertising efficiency, consumer engagement, and strategic positioning in a highly competitive market.

Recommendations for Marketers

1. Prioritize Trustworthy Endorsers

Marketers should focus on selecting celebrities who are perceived as credible, ethical, and socially responsible. In Pakistan, this includes respected sports figures, social advocates, and non-controversial actors.

2. Ensure Brand-Celebrity Congruence

The endorsement must reflect logical and emotional fit between the celebrity and the automotive product. For example:

- Use auto racers or car reviewers for sports or luxury models.
- Use family-friendly actors or social influencers for economy or family cars.

3. Customize Campaigns by Demographics

- Younger audiences respond more to visual appeal and aspirational personalities.
- Middle-aged professionals are more influenced by expertise and reliability.
- Higher-income segments value informed and persuasive communication over entertainment.

4. Combine Endorsement with Value Propositions

Celebrity endorsement should be part of a broader brand narrative. Emphasize product quality, performance, safety, and service support along with the endorsement.

5. Monitor and Manage Celebrity Reputation

Brands must actively assess the risk of association. Public controversies involving endorsers can quickly damage brand equity.

Directions for Future Research

- Longitudinal Studies: Future research can examine long-term effects of celebrity endorsements on brand loyalty and customer retention.
- Influencer Marketing Comparison: Explore the differences between traditional celebrity endorsements and social media influencer promotions.
- Brand Performance Metrics: Include sales data, dealership feedback, or test-drive conversion rates for triangulating findings.
- Experimental Research: Controlled experiments can provide deeper insights into consumer reaction to different endorsement stimuli (e.g., video ads, social media posts, TVCs).
- Cross-Cultural Comparison: Investigate how celebrity endorsement effectiveness varies across cultures within South Asia or MENA regions.

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