

## Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Buying Behavior in Saudi Society. A Cross-Sectional Study from Jeddah, KSA, 2018.

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### Abstract

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Marketing is a vital activity with a high degree of importance for all organizations. A descriptive cross-sectional study conducted to collect data from the respondents who are likely to have witnessed the celebrity endorsements who are prone to frequent shopping. A random sample of 120 individuals was chosen with a response rate of (83.3%). We aimed to report on the behavior of the participants towards celebrity endorsement on buying goods and the impact of it in the decision of buying. The majority of the respondents were female, between 25 and 30 years, Saudis national, singles, and most of them had a bachelor degree along with a monthly income between 10,000 and 15000. Most of the respondents spend 2 to 4 hours a day on Social Media. It is clear that higher attractiveness of celebrity positively impacts the customer's perception about the advisor and its products, and also we noticed the higher attractiveness of celebrity encourages consumers to buy the product. Using celebrity endorsement to promote the image of a brand or to sell a product is therefore done with the presumption that consumers can be convinced to buy the products endorsed by their favorite celebrities.

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**Keywords:** Celebrity Endorsement; Marketing; Saudi Arabia; Social Media.

### 1. Introduction

Marketing is a vital activity with a high degree of importance for all organizations regardless if they are producing goods or services, it is currently the real challenge for the success of these organizations, their sustainability or booming, and they can plan and develop their products consistent with the consumers' neediness (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Recently, there has been increasing attention by the organizations and marketing principals on the reference group (celebrities), and their impact on buying decision of the consumer in addition to their role in stimulating to buy the targeted product (Ranjbarian et al., 2010). The impact study of those celebrities on the consumer and identifying the specific dimensions for this impact is an important factor that advertiser or organization must consider. They are trends now on marketing are distinguished with the consumer control; and the intensity of the competition; therefore, these organizations seek effort to study consumer's behavior, discover his motives; and how they can be satisfied (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014).

This research is needed as the celebrity endorsement has become one of the major marketing strategies of successful brands, and it entails a huge investment in terms of advertising costs. Celebrity endorsements are also complex because the choice of celebrity has the potential to boost or undermine the marketing objectives of the organization. Celebrities leave a huge impact on everyone and attract attention in whatever they do. This attraction can be the source that attracts the consumers towards the ad campaign. In today's age, advertisement is imperative, and because of that, ad campaigns are produced in huge numbers every day. However, the negative side is that because of so many advertisements; it is very easy for the consumer to forget about a product endorsement very easily (Kumar & Singh, 2015).

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In such cases, using a celebrity is a very good idea because consumers have a higher association with the celebrity and through celebrity attraction; the consumers can recollect the brand and the product in a better way. Moreover, social media has an important role in consumer's making decisions and buying behavior. Social media is the platform or interface that can be used by celebrities to advertise the organization's products, aiming to convince those consumers to buy such a product.

Individuals who stand out in the world of movies, modeling, sports, and entertainment industry have always stood out in the world of product endorsements. It is a known fact that most of the top brands in the world have a 'brand ambassador' who endorses the brand. An endorsement can be defined as "a channel of brand communication where a celebrity acts as the brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claim and position by extending his/her personality, popularity, stature in the society or expertise in their respective fields to the brand" (Roll, 2010).

### **1.1. Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumers**

A brand or a product can influence a customer directly with the help of its features, the price the availability, and other logistical reasons. However, consumers also take many decisions based on their perceptions. In many cases, individuals who are presenting or involved in the advertisement help them to form these perceptions. This is where the role of celebrity endorsement comes in the advertisement. Among the factors that influence a consumer to buy a product, a celebrity endorsement has a very high place (White et al., 2009). While endorsing a brand or a product, the celebrity gives out the image that the brand is a reliable one, and the popularity of the celebrity makes the people trust on the brand.

### **1.2. Advantages of celebrity endorsement**

Many researchers were interested in finding out the exact nature of the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer perception, especially since the endorser fee is very high in today's world. The theories mentioned above show how numerous reasons can attract a consumer to the product with the help of celebrity endorsement. There are many big advantages that a product or a brand may have because of the presence of a celebrity.

Moreover, celebrity endorsement is one of the most common advertising methods used by companies to create awareness, help recover, and gain positive feedback about their products and services (Khan & Lodhi, 2016). In order to make advertising more attractive and effective, celebrity advertising agencies and companies are using it. Today, many companies spend millions of Saudi riyals each year to endorse their products by celebrities. Moreover, the negative impression of celebrities can be affected or transferred to the product or service they have approved. Sometimes the product is forgotten, and a big emphasis is placed on celebrities, while the focus should be on the product.

In this study, we aimed to examine the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behavior in Saudi society along with exploring the complex nature of the impacts of celebrity endorsement on the customer buying behavior by increasing the popularity of the ads; customers' perception about the products and company; and on the customer's motivation to purchase the products.

## **2. Methods**

A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted to collect data from the respondents who are likely to have witnessed the celebrity endorsements in the recent past and who are also prone to frequent shopping in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2018.

A random sample of 120 individuals was taken and they were invited to fill the questionnaires. The participants who responded well with a completed questionnaire were only 100 with a response rate of (83.3%). The sample size consisted of consumers of both gender (male and female) of above 18 years of age because maturity and the sensibility of the consumer is an important consideration of this study. Moreover, we selected participants who were relatively more exposed to media advertisements and had social media accounts (e.g., Snap Chat & Instagram). And who was frequently go for shopping. The questionnaire sent to contacts of the social-networking profiles such as WhatsApp, Snap Chat, Twitter, and Instagram. It included 15 items, divided into two parties, the first section indicated to the profile information regarding the age, nationality, gender, education, marital status, monthly income, time spending on the internet and the social networking app in which celebrities are followed.

The second section discussed the attitudes of respondents towards the celebrity endorsement if it is interested, full of information, credible, if they interested to make a purchase after visual content in the social media with the product demonstrated by the celebrity, and finally if they recommend friends, taking into account the verbal information provided by social media celebrity, whether spoken or in the explanatory notes.

### 3. Results:

#### 3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants:

In this study we found that the majority of the participants were female (72%), while the males accounted (28%). And most of them were between 25 and 30 years of age (50%) and most of them were Saudi (90%), while Non-Saudi were accounted (10%).

Most of the participants were single (90%), while married one was (10%). Regarding educational level, most of them were had a bachelor degree (60%), while the master degree holder was (20%). Regarding the income of the participants, most of them (60%) were having a monthly income between 10,000 and 15000 Saudi Rial (SAR), and (20%) of them had a monthly income less than 10,000 SAR as shown in table (1).

**Table (1) show the Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants (No.100)**

Character	No. (%)	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	28 (28.0%)
	Female	72 (72.0%)
<b>Age (years old)</b>	18 – Less than 25	10 (10.0%)
	25 – less than 30	50 (50.0%)
	30 – Less than 40	30 (30.0%)
	40 – less than 50	10 (10.0%)
<b>Nationality</b>	Saudi	90 (90.0%)
	Non-Saudi	10 (10.0%)
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	90 (90.0%)
	Married	10 (10.0%)
<b>Education</b>	Secondary Schools	10 (10.0%)
	Bachelor	60 (60.0%)
	Master	20 (20.0%)
	PhD	10 (10.0%)
<b>Income</b>	less than 10,000	20 (20.0%)
	10,000 –less than 15,000	60 (60.0%)
	15,000 – less than 20,000	10 (10.0%)
	20,000 and more	10 (10.0%)

Regarding the social networking app in which celebrities followed by the participants, we found that most of them agreed that Snape Chat and Instagram were the most popular social media used by celebrities with a percentage of (50%) and (30%) respectively as shown in table (2).

**Table (2) show the social networking app in which celebrities follow by the participants (No.100)**

Social networking app	No. (%)
Snapchat	50 (50.0%)
Twitter	20 (20.0%)
Instagram	30 (30.0%)
Total	100 (100%)

Moreover, we found that most of the participants were spending 2 to 4 hours a day on Social Media with a percentage of (40%) as shown in table (3).

**Table (4) show the daily time spent on social media by the participants (No.100)**

Daily time spend on social media	No. (%)
less than 30 minutes	10 (10%)
30 minutes -1 hour	10 (10%)
1- less than 2 hours	20 (20%)
2 – less than 4 hours	40 (40%)
4 hours and more	20 (20%)
Total	100 (100%)

Regarding the interesting genre of products, we found that most of the respondents agree that makeup and Healthy food was the most interesting genre of products that they were browsing in the social media with a percentage of (45%) and (28%), respectively. As well, (18%) of the respondents were interested in clothes and (9%) were interested in sports products. Since most of the participants were women, a high percentage of them were interested in many products of makeup for various companies, besides that overweight and following-up a diet were the main reasons for concern about the healthcare products as shown in table (5).

**Table (5) show the Genre of products interested by the participants (No.100)**

Genre of products	No. (%)
Sport	9 (9%)
Make Up	45 (45 %)
Clothes	18 (18%)
Healthy food	28 (28%)
Total	100 (100%)

In regards to the attitude of the participants towards the celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media, we found that most of the participants were agreed that celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media is interesting with a mean of (3.80), and most of them were strongly agreed that celebrity endorsement of products and services to social media is full of information with a mean of (3.90). moreover, most of them were strongly agreed that celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media is credible with a mean of (4.10), and they were agreed that they became interested in making the purchase, after seeing visual content in the social media when the product demonstrated by the celebrity with a mean of (4.40). Furthermore, they agreed that they would recommend it to their friends, taking into account the verbal information provided by social media celebrity, whether spoken or in the explanatory notes with a mean of (3.85). In general, the responses of the participants showed that the celebrities, either local or international, affect the consumers' decision while buying any product online as shown in table (6).

**Table (6) show the attitude of the participants towards the celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media (No.100)**

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
I feel that celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media are interesting.	10 (10%)	10 (10%)	10 (10%)	30 (30%)	40 (40%)	3.80	1.333
I feel that celebrity endorsement of products and services to social media are full of information.	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	10 (10%)	25 (25%)	55 (55%)	3.90	1.382
I feel that celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media are credible.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (10%)	30 (30%)	60 (60%)	4.10	1.433
I became interested in making the purchase, after seeing visual content in the social media with the product demonstrated by the celebrity.	0 (0%)	5 (5%)	10 (10%)	15 (15%)	70 (70%)	4.40	1.453
I will recommend it to my friends, taking into account the verbal information provided by social media celebrity, whether spoken or in the explanatory notes.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (20%)	35 (35%)	45 (45%)	3.85	1.363

Regarding the type of the celebrities affecting buying decision by the participants, we notice that most of them were getting effects while buying the product online by international celebrities with a percentage of (60%), while the percentage of the participants who were getting the effects by the local celebrities were (40%) as shown in table (7).

**Table (7) show the type of celebrities affecting buying decision by the participants (No.100)**

<b>Type of Celebrities</b>	<b>No. (%)</b>
Local celebrities	40 (40.0%)
International celebrities	60 (60.0%)
Total	100 (100.0%)

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, we report on the behavior of the participants towards celebrity endorsement on buying goods and the impact of it in the decision of buying. The results of this study showed that the majority of the respondents were female more than males due to the easiness of reaching and accessibility, and the females were more active than males in the answering this questionnaire due to their experience in buying products online. Moreover, we found that the majority of the respondents were between 25 and 30 years, and this is the most age category exposed to celebrities and the most age capable of using different applications of social media. Furthermore, we found that the majority of the respondents were Saudis national, singles, and most of them had a bachelor degree along with a monthly income between 10,000 and 15000.

Regarding the social media apps, we found that Snap Chat and Instagram were the most popular social media used by celebrities and most of the respondents spend 2 to 4 hours a day on Social Media. Moreover, the participants agreed that makeup and healthy food was the most interesting genre of products browsing in the social media. On the other hand, we found that most of the participants agreed that celebrity endorsement of products and services on social media were interesting to them, and having full credible information and most of them became interested in making the purchase, after seeing visual content in the social media when the product demonstrated by the celebrity. Furthermore, they agreed that they will recommend it to their friends, taking into account the verbal information provided by social media celebrity, whether spoken or in the explanatory notes.

#### 5. Conclusion

We concluded that there was a strong impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behavior in Saudi society. It is clear that higher attractiveness of celebrity positively impacts the customer's perception about the advisor and its products, and also we noticed the higher attractiveness of celebrity encourages consumers to buy the product. Using celebrity endorsement to promote the image of a brand or to sell a product is therefore done with the presumption that consumers can be convinced to buy the products endorsed by their favorite celebrities. Finally, the celebrity endorsement requires huge investments in terms of advertising costs, and as such, it is justified that a large number of research effects are needed to be directed towards understanding the impact of endorsement practices on the market and the customers. We need further researches to take a deep insight into the impact of celebrity endorsements undertaken by marketing or media organizations or even independent organizations to assess the impact of their marketing strategies.

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