

ICBSI 2018
International Conference on Business Sustainability and
Innovation

ENDORSER CREDIBILITY, ATTITUDE TOWARDS
ADVERTISING AND CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION OF
BEAUTY SOAP

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Abstract

Numerous researchers have proven empirically the effectiveness and the positive influence of celebrity or endorser credibility in advertising. There are three dimensions of celebrity credibility proposed by Ohanian namely, the expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of an endorser. This study attempts to add other factor which is similarity of an endorser to the existing acknowledged celebrity credibility dimensions and to carry out tests on the dimensions to find out whether celebrity credibility is indeed made up of four dimensions as proposed, as well as to test on whether they are correlated to attitude toward advertising factor (as mediator) and to purchase intention (as dependent variable). From online survey, this study was participated by 210 respondents who had experienced seeing beauty soap advertisements before. The study found that except for trustworthiness dimension, endorser credibility (expertise, attractiveness of an endorser and similarity) shows significant correlation with purchase intention through attitude toward advertising as the mediator. This implies that future studies should consider adding similarity of endorser to be part of endorser credibility's dimensions.

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Keywords: Endorser credibility, purchase intention, attitude toward advertising, celebrity, beauty soap, consumer.



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1. Introduction

Advertising is a form of paid communication using media from a clear source to persuade audience to take action (e.g. to purchase products/brands) now or in the future (Richards & Curran, 2002; Nan & Faber, 2004). The objectives include increasing the notoriety of the advertiser or brand, developing favourable attitudes, developing brand identity, market positioning of a product, and persuading the consumer (Martin-Santana & Beerli-Palacio, 2013). Advertising conveys message and communicate them via recognizable mass media. Marketers or advertisers have full control over who the targets are, when and how the specified audience would receive their messages effectively through selected channels (Caemmerer, 2009). This is where the importance of endorser credibility's role is very much acknowledged by marketers or advertisers as they help to communicate the message to their target audiences through advertising campaign. Endorsers (e.g. celebrity) are used in advertisements as they benefited advertisers in many ways; these include building consumers' awareness, creating positive attitudes towards advertising, brands and increasing buying intentions (Gupta, Kishor, & Verma, 2017). Advertising message influences consumer not only to identify possible resemblance between their daily life and the product promoted by the endorser but also about the meaning contained in the advertisement (Sheehan, 2014; Maddock & Hill, 2016). Past studies relate endorser credibility to consumers' interest in buying the endorsed product (Munnukka, Uusitalo, & Toivonen, 2016; Aziz, Ghani, & Niazi, 2013; Ohanian, 1990). This study attempts to find out whether similarity can be considered a dimension in endorser credibility in addition to the other existing dimensions the variable has; namely, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness; and on whether all four dimensions would influence on consumers' purchase intentions, directly or indirectly through the mediation role of attitudes towards advertising with the scope set on beauty soap products and consumers in Indonesia.

2. Problem statement

Giant retail companies in Indonesia have been observed to succeed in selling volumes of household products through effective advertising campaigns portraying endorser(s) like celebrities or common people to communicate the benefits of consuming the advertised products. This is more apparent for big retailers selling beauty soap products. Since in Indonesia, big retailers selling household products are using celebrities as product endorsers, it is interesting to find out whether similarity as part of endorser credibility, would play a role in influencing consumers' intention to purchase beauty soap products directly or indirectly through proposed mediator, i.e. attitude toward advertising. It is important to note that intent to purchase is a proxy or representation of a product purchase action. Many of past studies consider endorser credibility (particularly when celebrity is used) to consist of three dimensions; namely, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness following Ohanian (1990). Recently, researchers have started to investigate the role of peer endorsers which is measured through similarity variable. Munnukka, Uusitalo and Toivonen's (2016) has found the importance of peer endorsers to be assessed in terms of how much similarity they share with consumers at large. This finding indicates the possibility for this new variable to be considered as part of endorser credibility. In other words, it is possible that endorser credibility has four dimensions instead of current accepted three dimensions.

3. Research Questions

- Does endorser credibility (EC) (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity) positively influence consumer's purchase intention (PI)?
- Does endorser credibility (EC) (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity) positively influence consumer's attitude towards advertising (AAD)?
- Does attitude towards advertisement (AAD) positively influence consumer's purchase intention (PI)?
- Does attitude towards advertisement (AAD) mediates the relationship between endorser credibility (EC) (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity) and purchase intention (PI)?

4. Purpose of study

- To investigate whether endorser credibility (EC) (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity) has positive influence on consumer's purchase intention (PI).
- To investigate whether endorser credibility (EC) (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity) has positive influence on consumer's attitude towards advertisement (AAD).
- To investigate whether attitude towards advertisement (AAD) has positive influence on consumer's purchase intention (PI).
- To investigate whether attitude towards advertisement (AAD) mediates the relationship between endorser credibility (EC) and purchase intention (PI)

5. Endorser Credibility, Attitude Toward Advertising and Purchase Intention

Celebrity endorsement in advertising can be understood as a channel of communication on which celebrities act as a spokesperson of a commercial product; whereby their popularity and personality are used to help certify the product's claim and position (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). The literature on celebrity as well as peer endorser suggested that endorser credibility in general is constructed by three dimensions; namely, trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990; Amos, Gary & David, 2008; Aziz, Ghani & Niazi, 2013; Gupta, Kishor & Verma, 2017). However, similarity has also been investigated as a factor representing endorser credibility recently. Munnukka, Uusitalo and Toivonen (2016) for instance suggest that consumers usually would try to conform towards endorsers in advertisements by trying to find possible similarity between them. Their study found that similarity to be significant in influencing consumers' behavioural intention to buy an advertised product. Following this evidence, it is fair to suggest that similarity should be considered as the fourth dimension of endorser credibility. As argued by Friedman and Friedman (1979), higher level of compatibility between endorser and products assessed by consumers would lead to higher effectiveness of endorsers on the consumers.

Attitude toward advertising refers to the affective response one have over commercial stimulus and not connected to the cognitive or behavioural response (Mackenzie & Lutz, 1998). Thus, it has been characterised as one that has an appeal, different (unusual), good to look at, informative, objective,

satisfying and convincing among others (Dianoux & Linhart, 2010). Sallam (2011) believes that endorser credibility has strong influence over attitude towards advertising.

Purchase intention (PI) is defined as how likely the individual is to buy a certain brand or product (Phelps & Hoy, 1996; Lutz, 1985). Purchase intention is another measure of advertising effectiveness and is often used by studies conducting empirical investigations of consumer behaviour after being exposed to advertising stimuli (Vanwesenbeeck, Walrave & Ponnet, 2017). Recent studies found positive relationship between endorser credibility and purchase intention (Gupta, Nawal & Verma, 2015; Ong & Ong, 2015). Sallam and AbdulWahid (2012) found endorser credibility effect on Yemeni male consumers' attitude towards advertising and purchase intention. They also found that endorser credibility has indirect effect on purchase intention through attitude toward advertising.

6. Framework

The literature support described previously lead to the development of this proposed model. In this model, four variables are proposed as dimensions for the endorser credibility. Apart from all four being hypothesized to have direct influence with purchase intention, they (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness and similarity) are also hypothesized to have indirect relationship with purchase intentions through mediating variable of attitude toward advertising. The framework is as displayed in Figure 01.

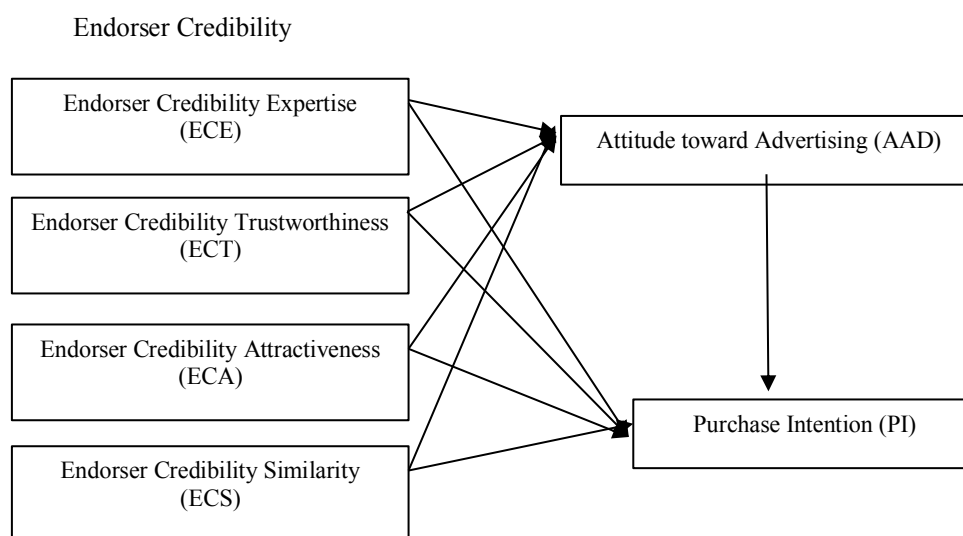


Figure 01. The Framework

7. Research Method

This quantitative research is scoped to cover only respondents living in Jakarta, Indonesia. Respondents participated in online questionnaire using Google's form conducted for three weeks. Only those who answered Yes to screening questions, including "Have you seen any beauty soap advertisement in mass media before?" and "In the beauty soap ads that you have seen, did you notice whether a person or persons being portrayed to endorse the beauty soap product?" were allowed to participate in the survey. The items were either adopted or adapted from past studies as shown in Table 01 (endorser credibility from

Munnukka, Uusitalo & Toivonen (2016); attitude toward advertising from Dianoux & Linhart (2010); purchase intention from (Aziz, Ghani, & Niazi, 2013; Fleck, Korchia & Le Roy, 2012) measured using a 5-point Likert Scale, with “1” representing “strongly disagree” and “5” representing “strongly agree”. The collected data were analysed using Smart PLS.

Table 01. Items used in questionnaire

Variable	No Code	Measurement item
Attitude Toward Advertising (AAD)	AAD1	I like this ad
	AAD2	This ad is good (nice to look at)
	AAD3	The message is completely convincing
	AAD4	The information in this ad is objective
	AAD5	The quantity of information in this ad satisfies you
	AAD6	This ad appeals more to feelings than to reason
	AAD7	This ad is unusual (different from other ads)
Endorser Expertise credibility (ECE)	EC1	I feel the endorser knows a lot about the product
	EC2	I feel the endorser is competent to make assertions about the product
	EC3	I consider the endorser an expert on the product
	EC4	I consider the endorser an expert on promoting the product
	EC5	I consider the endorser sufficiently experienced to make assertions about the product
Endorser Credibility Trustworthiness (ECT)	EC6	I feel the endorser is truthful
	EC7	I feel the endorser is honest
	EC8	I consider the endorser is trustworthy
	EC9	I consider the endorser is earnest
Endorser Credibility Attractiveness (ECA)	EC10	I consider the endorser is very attractive
	EC11	I consider the endorser is very stylish
	EC12	I think the endorser is good looking
	EC13	I think the endorser is sexy
Endorser Credibility Similarity (ECS)	EC14	The endorser and I have a lot in common
	EC15	The endorser and I are a lot alike
	EC16	I can easily identify with the endorser
	EC18	I consider the endorser as a normal looking person
Purchase Intention	PI1	All things considered, if you were to purchase beauty soap on one of your next trips to store, what are the chances that you would purchase your desired brand if it is available?
	PI2	You are at the beauty shop intend to buy a kind of soap; would you buy it directly or will you choose another brand?
	PI3	If I had to buy a beauty soap, I would probably buy the advertised brand.

8. Findings

The study managed to get 210 respondents who qualified to participate in the survey. Their profile show that the respondents were dominated by female (141 or 67.14%), from the age group of 21-30 years old (90 or 42.86%), and educated individuals (124 earned Bachelor degrees or 59.05%).

Validity of the PLS model was confirmed through three tests made on construct, convergent and discriminant validity as suggested by Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, (2014). Test results on construct validity show that the requirements for minimum threshold value to be more than 0.5 have been met. Convergent validity was verified by factor loadings, composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) whereby all Hair et al's. (2014) recommendation to have a threshold value for loadings at 0.5; AVE of construct more than 0.5, and composite reliability more than 0.7 for validity were met (Table 1). Diagonals in bold represents the squared root of average variance extracted (AVE) while the other entries represent the correlations. Results in Tables 2 and 3 overall measurement of discriminant validity show good results as the values of all the indicators' loadings were more than 0.70 indicating no issue with cross-loading. Diagonals in bold represent the squared root of the average variance extracted (AVE) between the contracts and their measures. Off-diagonal elements represent the correlations between construct. in discriminant validity, the diagonal element should be larger than off-diagonal elements in the same row and column.

Table 02. Results of measurement model

Variable	Measurement item	CV Loading	(AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha	CR
Attitude toward Advertising (AAD)	AAD1	0.817	0.618	0.897 (N- 7)	0.919
	AAD2	0.801			
	AAD3	0.823			
	AAD4	0.724			
	AAD5	0.830			
	AAD6	0.751			
	AAD7	0.753			
Endorser Credibility's Expertise (ECE)	EC1	0.806	0.699	0.892 (N- 5)	0.921
	EC2	0.864			
	EC3	0.828			
	EC4	0.819			
	EC5	0.861			
Endorser Credibility's Trustworthiness (ECT)	EC6	0.909	0.835	0.934 (N- 4)	0.953
	EC7	0.932			
	EC8	0.924			
	EC9	0.891			
Endorser Credibility's Attractiveness (ECA)	EC10	0.775	0.657	0.823 (N- 4)	0.884
	EC11	0.849			
	EC12	0.888			
	EC13	0.722			
Endorser Credibility's Similarity (ECS)	EC14	0.849	0.618	0.796 (N- 4)	0.866
	EC15	0.715			
	EC16	0.828			
	EC18	0.745			
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.869	0.755	0.838 (N- 3)	0.902
	PI2	0.886			
	PI3	0.851			

Table 03. Loading and cross loadings

	AAD	ECA	ECE	ECS	ECT	PI
AAD	0.786					
ECA	0.608	0.811				
ECE	0.602	0.564	0.836			
ECS	0.588	0.479	0.537	0.786		
ECT	0.601	0.518	0.729	0.674	0.914	
PI	0.573	0.409	0.409	0.460	0.518	0.869

Hair et al. (2014) stated that discriminant validity implicates the degree to which the constructs are different from others or in fact unrelated. It also signifies the indicators represent a single construct and the level of correlation with other constructs. Discriminant validity can be measured by using Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) value should be less than 0.9 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Referring to results in Table 4, all ratios in this study are less than 0.9, which indicates that the discriminant validity has been established. The model in this study therefore is accepted and it can proceed with hypothesis testing.

Table 04. Heterotrait- Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	AAD	ECA	ECE	ECS	ECT	PI
AAD						
ECA	0.708					
ECE	0.669	0.657				
ECS	0.666	0.551	0.615			
ECT	0.656	0.591	0.799	0.768		
PI	0.656	0.492	0.467	0.553	0.580	

For hypotheses testing, Hair et al. (2013) has stated that the t value for one-tailed test must be greater than 1.645 at 0.05 level of significance level and 2.33 at 0.01 level of significance. The tests on the significance of the path and hypothesis in the path model were performed using the SmartPLS's bootstrap re-sampling technique (5000 re-samples).

The summary of results for mediating variable tests on all variables (t-value, p-value and β) are shown in Table 5. The results of the structural model with coefficients for each path indicate existence of causal relationship among the constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2013). All the five hypothesised relationships were supported with path coefficients larger than 1.645 and significant $p < 0.05$. A total of 10 of the 13 positive paths of the model were found to explain endorser credibility's (expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness and similarity) significant effects on purchase intention through mediating attitude towards advertising.

The results show that only three dimensions, namely, trustworthiness (ECT) with a large t-value of 3.504 (H1b), followed by attraction credibility (ECA) with t-value of 2.125 (H1c), and similarity (ECS) with t-value of 1.825 (H1d) have direct relationship with purchase intention. Only expertise (ECE) one endorser credibility does not support buying intention (H1a) (t-value is 0.163).

This study also found that for the direct relationship between endorser’s credibility and attitudes towards advertising, three of them show positive correlations; attractiveness (ECA) is the most significant predictor (H2c) with t-value of 5.766, followed by similarity (ECS) with t-value of 3.532 (H2d) and expertise (ECE) with t-value of 2.685 (H2a). The only one that is not supported is does not support is trustworthiness (ECT) with a t-value of 1.584 (H2b).

The relationship of attitudes towards advertising with purchase intention (H3) has a positive correlation with 4.455 t-values.

In the case of mediating role of attitude towards advertising, the results are found to be consistent with partial mediation process. A mediation effect is created when a third construct intervenes between two other related constructs in a path model. Indirect effect represents a relationship between an exogenous and endogenous latent variable via mediator.

The results of the study indicate that the credibility of the endorser has a positive value on purchase intentions through consumers’ attitudes towards advertising. The mediating role of attitudes toward advertising is shown to exist between endorser credibility and purchase intention through the support of three hypotheses, namely, expertise (H4a), attractiveness (H4c) and similarity (H4d) while trustworthiness (H4b) does not.

Table 05. Partial least squares (direct effect) structural model result)

Hypothesis	Path	Beta Value	Sample Mean (M)	SE	t- Values	Supported
H1a	ECE -> PI	-0.017	-0.014	0.107	0.163	No
H1b	ECT -> PI	0.334	0.335	0.095	3.504	Yes
H1c	ECA -> PI	0.167	0.173	0.079	2.125	Yes
H1d	ECS -> PI	0.164	0.158	0.090	1.825	Yes
H2a	ECE -> AAD	0.202	0.203	0.075	2.685	Yes
H2b	ECT -> AAD	0.128	0.125	0.081	1.584	No
H2c	ECA -> AAD	0.312	0.316	0.054	5.766	Yes
H2d	ECS -> AAD	0.244	0.245	0.069	3.532	Yes
H3	AAD -> PI	0.394	0.392	0.088	4.455	Yes
H4a	ECE -> AAD -> PI	0.079	0.080	0.036	2.195	Yes
H4b	ECT -> AAD -> PI	0.050	0.049	0.033	1.511	No
H4c	ECA -> AAD -> PI	0.123	0.124	0.034	3.562	Yes
H4d	ECS -> AAD -> PI	0.096	0.096	0.034	2.798	Yes

Note: ECE=endorser credibility’s expertise; ECT=endorser credibility’s trustworthiness; ECA=endorser’s credibility attractiveness; ECS=endorser’s credibility similarity; PI=purchase intention; AAD=attitude toward advertising; Beta value= regression weight, SE= standard error, t-Values are computed though bootstrapping procedure with smart PLS.

The results indicate that both the public’s attitude toward advertising and purchase intentions are influenced after seeing the beauty soap advertisements with endorsers in them. In this study, it seems that when the endorser is trusted, it produces positive results for buying intention, followed by attractiveness and similarity. Endorser attractiveness produces better results than the other three elements or dimensions of credibility in attitudes toward advertising and buying intentions supporting previous findings (Munnukka, Uusitalo, & Toivonen, 2016). In this study the attitude towards advertising towards buying

intentions has a positive value, attitudes toward advertising towards buying intentions in the context of product involvement (Munnukka, Uusitalo, & Toivonen, 2016). In online advertising on a site, evidence that increases buying intention and leads to a more positive attitude towards advertising (Martin-Santana & Beerli-Palacio, 2012; 2013)

This study supports the views endorser credibility affects attitudes toward advertising. Supporting the statement of endorser credibility affects consumer buying interest directly or through mediating attitude toward beauty soap ad in Indonesia using partial least square technique (PLS) in the testing hypothesis. It also examines how the perceived credibility of a perceived artist endorser can predict buying interest. Since each element of credibility is also an intervening variable in the study, attempts are made to assess the effect of mediation on attitudes toward advertising and purchase intentions.

9. Conclusion

The study identified endorser credibility of trustworthiness as most impactful on consumer purchase intentions, among the three other credibility. Endorser's attractiveness has a positive significance related to mediating attitudes towards advertising. Simultaneously the attractiveness of endorser credibility through consumer attitudes towards advertising has a positive impact on consumer purchase intentions. The findings imply the importance of the four dimensions of endorser credibility. Retailers in Indonesia should now consider similarity as part of endorser credibility and to take note of trustworthiness influence on consumers at large.

For further research, it is important to note that influences on purchase intentions are not attributed by endorser's credibility only. Other source credibility variables, such as corporate credibility and credibility of advertising content are important which should be investigated. Apart from source credibility, other factors such as brand, product quality, price, recommendations of people who have used, in-store promotions and others may also be investigated. Future studies can also explore these results for other countries because there is a possibility that cultural differences play a role in the results of the study. Future research can also allow moderating finding related to consumer demographics such as age and gender in seeing endorser credibility in influencing purchase intentions.

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