



# Celebrity Endorsements and Consumer Decision Making: A Theoretical Framework

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**Abstract**— Celebrity endorsements represent one of the most influential marketing strategies employed by organizations worldwide. The ability of celebrities to evoke emotions, build trust, and foster aspirational value has proven effective in influencing consumer decision-making processes. This research paper proposes a theoretical framework examining the role of celebrity endorsements in shaping consumer decision-making. Drawing on existing literature from psychology, marketing, and communication studies, this paper highlights key determinants are source credibility, attractiveness, parasocial relationships, and consumer attitudes - as significant influencers within the decision-making journey. The study integrates models and theories from past research to propose a conceptual framework that provides insights into how celebrity endorsements affect consumer behavior. Findings suggest that credibility, attractiveness, and emotional identification with celebrity endorsers influence purchasing decisions by altering perceptions and forming connections between consumers and brands. Marketers can use this framework to optimize their endorsement strategies by understanding the psychological mechanisms that drive consumer choices.

**Keywords**— Celebrity Endorsements, Consumer Decision Making, Parasocial Relationships, Source Credibility, Theoretical Framework, Purchase Behavior.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, major companies frequently leverage celebrity endorsements as a major strategy for promoting their products. This approach has gained importance due to its effectiveness in increasing brand visibility, which in turn drives sales for the companies involved. According to Friedman and Friedman (1979), a celebrity is defined as a prominent individual, such as an actor, athlete, or entertainer, who is widely recognized by the public for achievements in areas unrelated to the products they endorse.

This form of advertising uses the celebrity's fame to create a favorable association with the brand. Celebrity endorsement is particularly prevalent in industries such as fashion and jewellery, where brands often utilize high-profile appearances at product launches and engaging television advertisements.

The primary goal of this marketing technique is to tap into the celebrity's own fan base, thereby reaching a broader audience. Finally, a consumer's purchasing behavior is influenced by a complex interplay of their attitudes, preferences, beliefs, and decision-making processes, all of which are shaped by the marketing messages conveyed through celebrity endorsements.



### ***Background of the study***

The concept of utilising celebrity endorsements to boost product sales has long been a topic of discussion within the marketing sector, although not every organization subscribes to this approach equally. The most common observation is that consumers are often impressed with well-known personalities, and when these figures are featured in advertisements for new products, it can lead to increased consumer interest and a greater likelihood of purchase, because they might feel a connection to the celebrity. Numerous high-profile commercials featuring celebrities can be observed in our country, showcasing their influence on consumer behavior. Prominent figures such as Amitabh Bacchan endorsing Zomato, Burger King, Mountain Dew. Shahrukh Khan is an brand ambassador of Hyundai cars from last two decades. Virat Kohli endorsed with Puma, MRF, Audi cars while Ranvir Singh connected with Kotak Mahindra bank, Pepsi etc (source: <https://www.themediaant.com/blog/top-10-celebrities-brands-endorsed-in-2024/>) These examples illustrate the significant role that celebrity endorsements play in shaping consumer perceptions and driving sales across various industries in India and abroad as well.

### ***Celebrity Endorsement in India***

The current year's analysis presenting the growing trend of celebrity-owned businesses across diverse sectors, alongside the remarkable emergence of Indian celebrities as emerging representatives for esteemed international brands. In 2023 and 2024, Bollywood made a significant resurgence in the film landscape, with major hits like "Pushpa - 2," "Pathaan," and "Animal" achieving record-breaking success by surpassing the USD 100 million threshold, thereby reaffirming Bollywood's influential position within the industry.

According to the Brand Endorser Report 2024, the top 10 celebrities in India are:

- **Virat Kohli:** Ranked first due to his popularity, likeability, and consumer interest. His brand value is estimated at \$227.9 million.
- **M.S. Dhoni:** Ranked second. In the first half of 2024, he had the most brand endorsements with 42 companies.
- **Sachin Tendulkar:** Ranked third in this category.
- **Shah Rukh Khan:** Ranked fourth in endorsements.
- **Akshay Kumar:** Ranked fifth.
- **Amitabh Bachchan:** Ranked sixth.
- **Allu Arjun:** Ranked seventh.
- **Deepika Padukone:** Ranked tenth and the only female celebrity in the top 10.
- **Kareena Kapoor:** Ranked fourth in the first half of 2024 with 31 brand endorsements.

(Source: <https://www.storyboard18.com/brand-makers/cricket-heroes-outshine-bollywood-stars-in-brand-value-virat-kohli-tops-the-list-48634.htm>)

Cricketers are often considered to be the most dominant brand endorsers in India because they are able to connect with audiences on an emotional and aspirational level.



### ***Review of Literature***

(K, 2024) article titled 'Impact of Celebrity Endorsements on Consumer Buying Decisions - A Conceptual Framework' represented fundamental aspects of celebrity endorsements and conceptual discussion. The study described exploratory research methods alongside a qualitative framework, which included an extensive review of existing literature, leading to the development of a conceptual model. The findings of the research indicate that certain major attributes are essential for a celebrity to be deemed suitable for endorsement roles. These attributes include congruency, flexibility, expertise, attractiveness, longevity, and likeability, all of which contribute to the effectiveness of the endorsement in enhancing brand visibility and consumer engagement in the product.

(Hennayake, 2017) in the article described that Celebrity Endorsement increase awareness of a company's advertising, create positive feelings towards brands and are perceived by consumers as more entertaining. Using a celebrity in advertising is, therefore, likely to positively affect consumers 'brand attitudes and purchase intentions. It is noticed that services sector brands intensively depend on celebrity endorsement strategies in a noticeable trend. This concept paper attempts to review the notion of effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, mechanism of celebrity worship motives and influence of effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in line with brand related contexts. Accordingly, this paper populates to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on perceived brand evaluations leading to brand-related behaviours in the service sectors namely telecommunication, insurance and financial sector.

(Gopal, 2021) in the article represented conceptual model development for celebrity endorsement in social advertising. The conceptual framework examines the source credibility factors (Ohanian,1990) of source attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness and proposes the influence of celebrity-fan relationship as measured through Celebrity Attitude Scale (CAS) (McCutcheon et al., 2004) on the attitude outcomes mediated by Need for Cognition (Cacioppo and Petty, 1982). The conceptual research model is developed using the Eight-Step Theory Building Framework of Dubin (1978).

(Putri, A., & Haryanto, 2023) in their article titled 'A Conceptual Model of the Role of Perception of Celebrity Endorsement in Consumer Purchase Intention of MS Glow Beauty Products' described the influence of perception of celebrity endorser on purchase intention which is mediated by attitude towards ads and attitude towards brand. This article is to identify the variables used to build a conceptual model.

The expected finding is that there is a positive relationship between perception of celebrity endorser, attitude towards ads and attitude towards brand on purchase intention which is moderated by type of endorser. This study also explained the dimensions of trustworthiness, expertise, and similarity that produce the perception of celebrity endorsers.

### ***Research Gap***

This study attempts to fill the information gap about the conceptual framework in the influence of celebrity traits on consumer purchasing behavior, despite the fact that many notable researchers have studied this topic in great detail.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research refers to the methodical approaches, techniques, and tools used in business analysis to pinpoint problems, create research frameworks and reach well-informed conclusions meant to resolve problems or produce novel ideas while assessing existing theories. This study is exploratory in nature and places a great emphasis on a thorough assessment of the body of existing literature. The crucial foundation for the research is provided by studies carried out in related fields' secondary data that is used.

### ***Objective of the study***

- To provide a conceptual framework describing the traits of a celebrity that affect customers' purchasing decisions.
- To provide basic conceptual clarity regarding consumer decision making process.

### ***Research Design***

- An exploratory research design has been identified to be the most appropriate for this investigation due to the exploratory character of the study.
- This approach is especially relevant as it makes it possible to conduct a thorough analysis of the body of existing literature and makes it easier to create a conceptual framework, both of which are in line with the goals of the study.

### ***Data Collection***

- This study mainly uses Secondary data sources.
- It is collected from various journal articles, internet and the studies related to the topic which provide theoretical framework for understanding the topic in a well manner.

### ***Conceptual Framework of Consumer Decision making***

"All marketing decisions are based on assumptions and knowledge of consumer behaviour." (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh & Best, 2007)

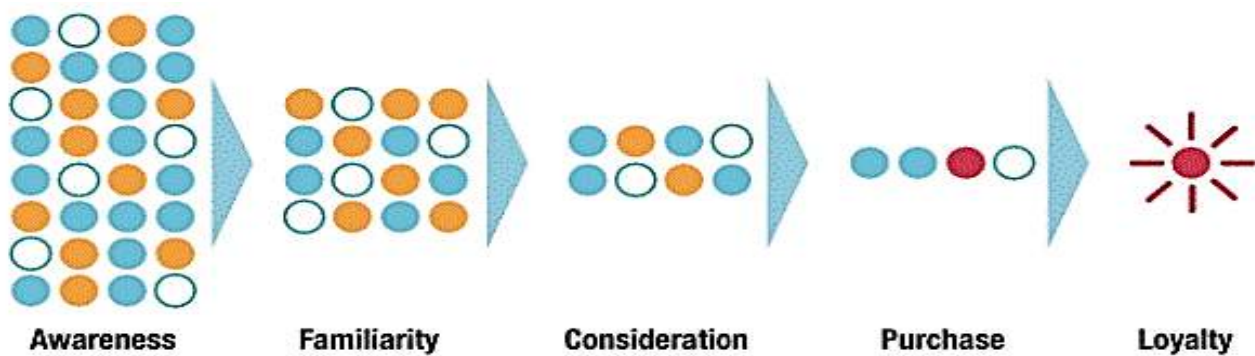
The consumer behavior has always been a popular marketing question, due to the fact that knowing how and why customers act in a specific way making their purchase decisions helps organizations better communicate with consumers and be more successful on the market. Thus, a difficulty faced by all marketers today is how to influence the buying behaviour of consumers in favour of their products or services. Therefore, understanding the buying process provides insight into the psychology of how consumers think, feel, argue, and choose among available options (such as brands, products, and retailers), as well as how the consumer's surroundings (such as culture, family, and the media) affect him or her. It also reveals how consumer motivation and decision-making strategies differ among products. All of it leads to knowledge on how marketers might enhance their marketing strategies to more effectively reach the consumer.

The topic of purchase decision-making is significant for understanding consumer behavior and effective marketing strategies. It helps marketers target customers, improve products and services, and understand customer

perceptions of competitors. This knowledge leads to increased value, customer satisfaction, and a competitive advantage, ultimately enhancing the company's value. Understanding the factors influencing personal buying decisions is essential for both consumers and marketers.

It is necessary to define the term "consumer behaviour". Business Dictionary offers the following definition. "Consumer buying behaviour is the process by which individuals search for, select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods and services, in satisfaction of their needs and wants".

Marketing has one goal - to reach consumers at the moments that most influence their decisions when consumers are open to influence, so-called "moments that matter" or "touch points". Marketers are always seeking those moments. For years, touch points have been understood through the metaphor of a "funnel" (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: The traditional Funnel**

Consumers start with some potential brands in mind (left side of the funnel), then marketing directs them and consumers reduce that number of brands and move through the funnel, and to the end, they arrive with the one brand they chose to purchase (right end of the funnel).

But today, the funnel concept fails to capture all the touch points and key buying factors resulting from the wide varieties of product choices and digital media, coupled with the evolution of an increasingly well-informed consumer. A more sophisticated approach is required to help marketers guide through this environment, which is more complicated than the funnel suggests. McKinsey found that because the communication has been changed from one-way - marketers to consumers - toward a two-way communication - marketers to consumers and consumers to marketers - marketers need a systematic way to satisfy consumer demand and manage word-of-mouth (Court et al., 2009).

When discussing recent themes, it's crucial to start up building relationships with clients. Businesses may find more opportunities for customer involvement before, during, and after the purchase by having a better understanding of the buying experience. For example, the marketer's job is only just getting started when customers decide to buy. Many customers pursue additional research online after making a purchase. It is a never-ending cycle, with the post-sale experience influencing their view for every following decision. Additionally, organizations can create these consumer engagement moments memorable and meaningful by knowing the customer moments (e.g., the underlying values).

Now, here describing various consumer decision making models developed by different authors with the passage of time and during their research journey.

**Table 1: Decision Making Models**

<b>Name of the Model</b>	<b>Authors, Year</b>	<b>Short description</b>
<b>Simon model</b>	Simon H., 1960	This model conceptualizes the decision-making process in three stages of activities: intelligence activity, design activity, and choice activity. Simon argues that decision-making is a cognitive process that can be separated into simple, sequential steps.
<b>Nicosia model</b>	Nicosia F.M., 1966	This model concentrates on the communication process that occurs between a brand and a consumer. It uses a flow of events through different stages that are reidentified as fields.
<b>Engel, Kollat &amp; Blackwell model</b>	Engel J.F., Kollat D.T., and Blackwell R.D., 1968	Input, information processing, decision-making, and factors influencing the decision-making process are the elements of this consumer model's decision-making process. The five steps that make up the decision process component are need identification, search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and results.
<b>Theory of buyer behaviour</b>	Sheth J. & Howard J. A., 1969	The idea describes how people behave as buyers over time. More precisely, the buyer's brand choosing behavior. A set of motives, multiple alternative courses of action, and decision mediators that match the motives with the alternatives are the elements of the consumer decision process that the authors identify. They also note changes in these elements over time due to their repetitive nature and demonstrate how a combination of decision elements influences search processes and the incorporation of information from the buyer's social and commercial environment. Three degrees of consumer decision-making are proposed by this model: habitual reaction behavior, limited problem-solving, and comprehensive problem-solving.
<b>An alternative conceptualization for consumer behaviour</b>	Narayana C.L. & Markin R.J., 1975	The phrase "evoked set," which includes and categorizes all the brands that can be in the customer's "awareness set," "inert set," and "inept set," is used by the authors to



<b>and product performance</b>		describe consumer behavior. When provided with a variety of brands, they offered a conceptual framework for likely buyer behavior.
<b>Mintzberg model</b>	Mintzberg H, Raisinghani D.&Theoret A., 1976	The key premise of this model is that a basic structure underlies these “unstructured” processes.
<b>Keeney’s four- stage decision- making model</b>	Keeney R.L., 1982	In this four-stage model, the decision problem is structured (alternatives are generated and objectives are specified), potential impacts of each alternative are evaluated, decision makers' preferences (values) are ascertained, and alternatives are evaluated and compared. The expected difficulties at each level are shown in this model.
<b>Rassuli &amp;Harrell model</b>	Rassuli K.M. & Harrell G.D., 1990	According to the perspective presented here, choice and purchase may be viewed as inputs into a process rather than merely the result of consumer decision-making efforts. This makes it possible to detect the feedback, which might range from decision to other traits associated with consumer behavior.
<b>Sheth, Newman &amp; Gross model</b>	Sheth J.N., Newman B.I. & Gross B.L., 1991	This model presents five consumption values influencing consumer choice behaviour: functional, social, conditional, emotional, an epistemic value. Any oral of the five consumption value may influence the decision.
<b>Smith &amp; Rupp’s model</b>	Smith A. & Rupp W., 2003	This model is an Internet- based model that takes into account external influences of website marketing, the socio- cultural environment, and psychological issues on online consumer tasks which is followed by to a purchase and post purchase behaviour.
<b>The Marketing Spiral</b>	Armano D., 2007	Consumer behaviour is like a spiral that begins with an interaction as opposed to communication. The spiral amplifies as the consumer increases engagement.
<b>McKinsey’s dynamic model of the consumer decision journey</b>	Court D., Elzinga D., Mulder S. & Vetnik O.J., 2009	This model is more circular that sequential and has four primary phases: initial consideration; active evaluation, or the process of researching potential purchases; closure, when consumer buy brands; and post-purchase, when consumer experience them.

(Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.26.3001>)



## FINAL DISCUSSION

From the above discussion regarding literature reviewed on celebrity endorsement, following key variables are identified:

1. **Likeability:** It is a key factor in consumer behavior, indicating a celebrity's popularity within their industry and their reputable image. A celebrity with high likeability attracts a larger audience to advertisements, thereby influencing consumers' purchasing decisions positively. This positive impact is evident across various age demographics.
2. **Attractive:** Attractiveness significantly influences consumer behavior, especially in celebrity endorsements. It refers to the extent consumers are compelled to engage with advertisements featuring appealing celebrities. Celebrities with attractive qualities attract a larger audience, potentially positively impacting purchasing decisions.
3. **Longevity:** It is the duration of a celebrity's association with a brand, positively influences consumer behavior. Trustworthiness leads to longer association with the brand, resulting in consumers linking the celebrity with the endorsed brand. This longevity positively impacts purchasing decisions, as consumers are more likely to associate the celebrity with the brand.
4. **Expertise:** It refers to the level of achievement a celebrity has attained in their respective field, plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior. Research indicates that well-established celebrities are more effective in endorsing brands, leading to an enhanced brand image and increased sales. Consequently, the expertise of a celebrity has a favorable impact on consumers' purchasing decisions.
5. **Flexibility:** The flexibility of a celebrity plays a great role in affecting consumer purchasing decisions. By engaging with multiple brands under one umbrella, the celebrity can effectively reach a broader audience, thereby positively impacting consumer behavior. This dynamic provides a sense of trust and familiarity among consumers, which leads to increased brand loyalty and sales for the organization.
6. **Congruency:** Congruency has a positive impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. When consumers perceive a clear alignment between the product and the celebrity, it can lead to increased trust and a greater likelihood of making a purchase, which increases sales and brand loyalty.

## LIMITATIONS

In contrary to descriptive research, which provides empirical analysis, this study is exploratory in manner that it does not produce a single result.

Also, the conceptual framework offered might not be generally relevant to different geo-demographic attributes.

Further, the range of factors taken into account could not be sufficient for the goal for which it was designed.

## SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings may be more widely applicable in the future if empirical research includes a wider range of factors and an enhanced geodemographic profile.





## CONCLUSION

According to studies on how celebrity endorsements affect customer purchasing decisions, marketers and celebrities must have a solid, cordial working relationship in order to effectively reach consumers. Celebrity endorsements are more encouraging and powerful to many people than those from non-celebrities. Negative publicity about a celebrity is often ignored by a significant proportion of the audience, which has little impact on their brand-related purchases. Many well-known businesses use celebrities' influence to increase the attraction of their goods and services to their target market. It follows that celebrities provide products a significant boost in brand value. Notably, younger audiences respond favourably to celebrity endorsements. The brand or product being advertised must be closely aligned with the celebrity who is endorsing it.

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