

Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention: A Study of the Role of Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise and Subjective Norm in Soft Drink Industry in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - This study seeks to help marketers in developing an effective marketing promotional strategy, particularly in the soft drink industry. Celebrity advertising has become a common practice in marketing, but the selection of appropriate celebrities is still a challenge. Among the factors that determine the extent to which celebrity endorsement would be effective, attributes of celebrity are of great importance which include physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise of the celebrity. Moreover, the effect of the attributes of celebrity on purchase intention may also be moderated by subjective norms of the consumers as suggested by the theory of planned behavior. Therefore, the present study intends to explore the role of a celebrity's physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise on consumers' purchase intention along with the moderating role of subjective norms for all three attributes among soft drink consumers in Pakistan.

Study Design/methodology/approach - This study involved a survey method. Adapted questionnaires were used for data collection through convenience sampling from 392 participants. Multiple linear regression was used to evaluate the effect of a celebrity's physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise on the purchase intention of the consumers.

Findings - The results showed a significant relationship between celebrity physical attractiveness and purchase intention and between trustworthiness and purchase intention. A non-significant relationship between celebrity expertise and purchase intention was found.

Research Practical Implications - The findings of this study can provide a basis for future research and business to understand and predict the behavior of soft drink consumers. It particularly suggests that marketers consider physical attractiveness and trustworthiness more seriously while recruiting celebrities for advertising.

Originality/value - Since research on the impact of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention with the moderating role of the subjective norm in the soft drink industry of Pakistan is scarce, the present study is expected to make a new and insightful contribution to the field.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, purchase intention, subjective norm

JEL Classification Codes: L66, M30, M31, M3

1 | INTRODUCTION

Advertising is the basic tool for achieving sales targets in the business world today. The word 'advertising' has its origin in the Latin word 'adventure' which means to attract or to get attention ([Abdumutaljonovna, 2022](#)). Advertisement is a special type of paid form of message that is non-personal and

usually persuasive with some identified source communicated through various media ([Norris, 1984](#); [Oduor et al., 2023](#)).

Different innovative ways are used to develop effective advertising messages which include celebrity endorsement ([Purwanto & Praditya, 2024](#)). Celebrities are individuals who have public recognition due to their achievements in their respective fields and they can influence their fans ([Isna Shofaranti, 2024](#)). The positive impact of celebrity on the public has encouraged marketers to use celebrity-endorsed advertisements to achieve sales and other business targets ([Erdogan, 1999](#); [Khan et al., 2022](#); [McCracken, 1989](#)). Moreover, they are extensively used in advertisements regardless of the type or size of the business ([Wang & Liu, 2022](#)).

There are many ways to explain the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumers, but celebrity credibility is one of the most important aspects ([Bauer et al., 2022](#); [Halder et al., 2021](#)). Celebrity credibility is assumed to have three components; physical attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness ([Ohanian, 1990](#)). This can also be traced back to the [Kelman \(1961\)](#) of source credibility.

Celebrity endorsement is used in almost every category of products, but this study is related to soft drinks only. The soft drink industry is among the most rapidly growing industries in many countries. Irrespective of age, race, religion, and culture, the consumption of soft drinks is increasing across the world ([Chua & Teo, 2017](#)). [Yang et al. \(2017\)](#) found that after the Second World War, the consumption of soft drinks (Coke, Pepsi, Sprite, and Fanta) has increased significantly in lower-and middle-income countries.

In Pakistan as well the consumption of fast food, smoking, and physical inactivity are increasing due to increasingly Westernized lifestyles among young people ([Nawab et al., 2021](#)). Similarly, a recent study by [Jabeen et al. \(2022\)](#) provided the fact that consumption of soft drinks is increasing at a significant rate in Pakistan. In 2012 almost 29.4 percent of adolescents were found to be consuming soft drinks regularly and this percentage has increased significantly over time ([Farid et al., 2023](#)). Moreover, approximately 36.6% of young adults were found to be consuming at least 1 carbonated soft drink a day in Pakistan ([Manan et al., 2017](#)). A study conducted by [Badil \(2023\)](#) revealed that the majority of the participants consumed soft drinks even though they were aware of the health hazards of their consumption. Similarly, another study by [Mughal et al. \(2022\)](#) conducted in Islamabad also found that many youngsters are consuming 5-6 glasses of soft drinks weekly. However, the purchase of soft drinks in Pakistan is also dependent on other factors like non-availability of alcoholic drinks, income level, price, subculture, and social factors like reference group ([Manan et al., 2017](#)). Marketing strategies, specifically celebrity endorsement and its components should therefore be explored as one of the factors in influencing soft drink consumption in Pakistan.

Celebrities have been endorsing soft drinks since the late 1980s, such as Pepsi being endorsed by Pakistan's national cricket team and later by other celebrities. Currently, soft drink ads in Pakistan, such as those of Coke, Sprite, and Pepsi include celebrities like Naseem Shah, Mahira Khan, Fawad Khan, Momina Mustahsim, and Salman Khan. These celebrities have been used to endorse the products because of their popularity in the country. Coca-Cola has started a musical show Coke Studio since 2008 that not only brings in music-related celebrities but also brings in new singers and makes them popular celebrities, who in turn serve as an endorsement of the brand ([Dhanwani, 2014](#)). [Rasool et al. \(2017\)](#) exploring how soft drink advertisements affect late adolescents and young adults in Lahore, found that one of the reasons for the

increased intake of soft drinks and other beverages among youth was advertisement strategies which included using popular celebrities.

Purchase intention is simply defined as the possibility of consumers buying or not buying the product ([Sutia et al., 2023](#)). The probability of customers buying the product can be affected by many factors such as price, product performance and expectations, availability of product, and type of advertisement ([Balakrishnan & Kumar, 2011](#)). The theory of planned behavior TPB ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), explains the development of intention to perform some act, and this theory can also be used in the present context to explain the development of purchase intention. This theory explains that factors like a person's attitude and perceived behavioral control are the primary determinants of behavioral intentions. Whereas, subjective norm, which refers to the attitude of people around a person towards a product or a celebrity endorser in the present context, is a weak predictor of behavioral intention ([Shetu, 2024](#)). A study by however, found that the predictive ability of subjective norms can influence purchase intention. Similarly, a study by [Jain \(2020\)](#) also reported subjective norms as having a significant relationship with purchase intention. Recent studies conducted in Pakistan also report that not only the consumption of soft drinks has increased significantly ([Jabeen et al., 2022](#); [Shakoor et al., 2024](#)) but the increased consumption is mainly affected by the choices of friends and family of the consumers ([Badil, 2023](#)). Therefore, the present study explored the moderating role of subjective norms on celebrity endorsement and purchase intention.

As there is no existing research that has investigated the impact of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention with the moderating role of subjective norms in the soft drink industry of Pakistan, the present study intends to fill this gap.

1.1 | Research Objectives

Based on the above discussion, the following research objectives were developed.

- To explore the relationship between a celebrity's physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise with consumer purchase intention in the soft drink industry of Pakistan.
- To investigate the moderating role of subjective norms on the relationship of celebrity physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise with consumer purchase intention.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

[Kelman \(1961\)](#) presented the source credibility model and explained that different words expressed or written by different sources may lead to different effects on consumers/the public. This model can however be better understood by the tri-component model by [Ohanian \(1990\)](#). This model explains the effectiveness of celebrity credibility in terms of three underlying factors, which are attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Thus, choosing the right celebrity depends upon his/her attractiveness, expertise, or trustworthiness ([Macheka et al., 2024](#); [Pur et al., 2024](#)). However, it is not clear which dimension of celebrity endorsement is more influential in developing purchase intention. Since the tri-component model has also been found to be relevant for developing countries ([Deshbhag & Mohan, 2020](#)), the current study intended to explore the role of these three components of celebrity credibility in the context of Pakistan.

2.1 | Celebrity Credibility (Physical attractiveness, Trustworthiness, and expertise)

Celebrity credibility can be considered as one of the most important factors in deciding the effect of celebrity endorsement ([Koay et al., 2024](#); [Vidyanata et al., 2022](#)). It has been described by [Ohanian \(1990\)](#) as having three major components: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness.

The physical attractiveness of the source is a very important component in advertisement as far as message effectiveness is concerned ([Kahle & Homer, 1985](#)). The most examined aspect of celebrity credibility is physical attractiveness. However, it is not clear that the physical attractiveness of the endorser is effective for every product or attractiveness-related products only ([Patel & Basil, 2018](#)). Although the perception of physical attractiveness is different for different societies generally it is believed that a physically attractive celebrity can have more influence.

In terms of the attractiveness dimension of credibility, [Kamins \(1990\)](#) found that an attractive celebrity endorser had a very positive effect on consumer attitude toward the product. A few recent studies also reported similar findings ([Abbas & Billah, 2022](#); [AlFarraj et al., 2021](#); [Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim, 2021](#)). Similarly, in the context of Pakistan, a study ([Rafique & Zafar, 2012](#)) suggested that a celebrity's physical attractiveness has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of consumers in Pakistan.

Keeping in view the theoretical arguments and empirical findings in the existing literature, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H1: *A celebrity's physical attractiveness would significantly affect purchase intention.*

Trustworthiness is another dimension of celebrity credibility which is important for the consumers in evaluating a celebrity-endorsed advertisement and product. It is a natural phenomenon that people will believe what is said if they are confident about the trustworthiness of the source, therefore, a trustworthy source can have more influence as compared to a non-trustworthy one ([Erdogan, 1999](#); [Goldsmith et al., 2000](#); [Hovland & Weiss, 1951](#)). In businesses the effectiveness of the source and honesty of celebrity is used in advertisements and purchase intention is significantly influenced by celebrity trustworthiness ([Andita et al., 2021](#); [Punjani & Kumar, 2021](#); [Tri, 2022](#); [Wazir & Zahoor, 2014](#)). The synthesis of existing literature leads us to the conclusion that the trustworthiness of celebrity can have a significant positive impact on consumer purchase intention, therefore' we posit that.

H2: *Celebrity's trustworthiness would significantly affect purchase intention.*

The expertise dimension of celebrity credibility is related to the skills and experience of a celebrity. Several experts support the notion that celebrity expertise is a very important determinant of celebrity credibility ([Afifah, 2022](#); [Chiu & Ho, 2023](#); [Nabil et al., 2022](#)). Similarly, the findings of [Khan et al. \(2019\)](#) as well as those by [Rafique and Zafar \(2012\)](#) revealed that in the case of Pakistan expertise dimension of a celebrity's credibility was positively related to purchase intention. From the theoretical arguments and the existing empirical research literature, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H3: *Celebrity's expertise would significantly affect purchase intention.*

2.2 | Subjective Norms as Moderator

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) helps to predict the logical links among intentions, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms ([Loussaief et al., 2024](#)). [Akhter et al. \(2024\)](#) explained the various components of the theory of planned behavior as; attitude toward the behavior (It is described as the extent to which a person evaluates a specific behavior which he/she is going to/willing to perform), subjective norm (It is a social factor which determines the amount of pressure on the individual to perform or not to perform a behavior) and perceived behavioral control (It is the perception of an individual about the ease or difficulty about performing a behavior based on his/her experience). TPB is used extensively to predict behavioral intentions ([Qalati et al., 2022](#)), but the moderating effect of subjective norms on the purchase intention of consumers has not been given much attention, particularly in the context of soft drink consumption.

Subjective norm is the socially determined factor that plays a very important role in a person's decision-making process. Subjective norms can take the form of the influence of friends and family on an individual's purchase intentions ([Ajzen, 1991](#); [Harjadi & Gunardi, 2022](#); [Loussaief et al., 2024](#); [Suk et al., 2021](#)). In the collectivist culture of Pakistan, the role of subjective norms becomes even more relevant. Discussing the role of subjective norms, [Manan et al. \(2017\)](#) proposed that these reference groups along with other factors shape consumer preferences for beverages in Pakistan as well. However, as the research on subjective norms and purchase intention in the context of soft drink consumption in Pakistan is scarce, therefore for the present study, the following hypotheses were developed:

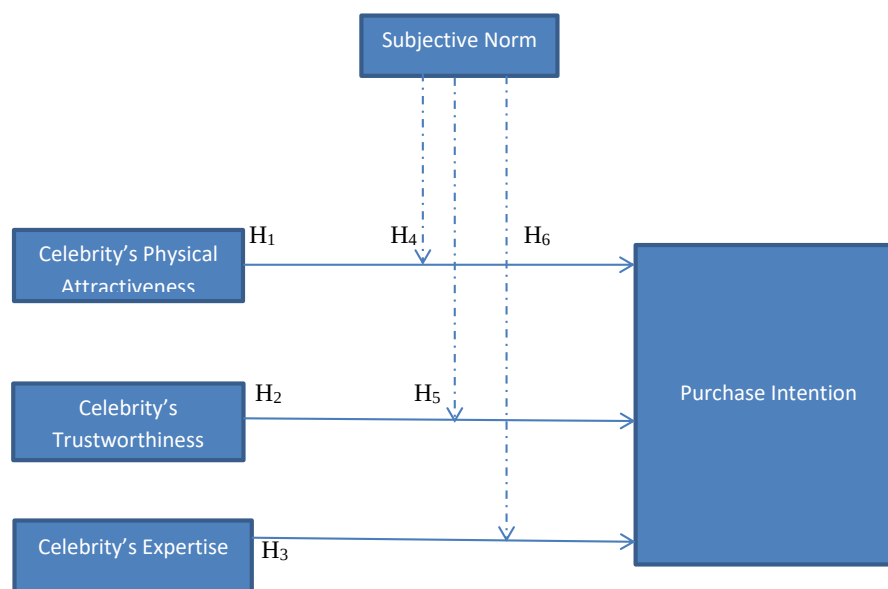
H4: *Subjective norms will moderate the effect of a celebrity's physical attractiveness on purchase intentions.*

H5: *Subjective norms will moderate the effects of a celebrity's trustworthiness on purchase intentions.*

H6: *Subjective norms will moderate the effects of a celebrity's expertise on purchase intentions.*

Figure 1

Theoretical Framework



3 | METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

The population for this study was 18 to 50-year-old consumers of soft drinks. School-going children are not considered potential consumers of soft drinks as majority of the parents in Pakistan do not allow children to consume soft drinks ([Bashir et al., 2023](#)). The data was collected from three major cities: Karachi, Lahore, and Quetta, and other relatively smaller cities: Pashin, Turbat, Sargodha, and Sialkot. Two categories were made of cities. One was big cities in which Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Quetta were reported, whereas the other cluster was of small cities in which Sialkot, Sargodha, Pishin and Turbat were reported. It was also considered to collect more data from big cities as the number of consumers of soft drinks is more in big cities as compared to smaller other cities. The towns and villages are not considered in the population and the economic and social reasons affect the consumption and purchasing habits of the consumers. A non-probability sample of 392 participated in the study, which is an adequate sample size for social science research ([Kotrlík & Higgins, 2001](#)). A few other recent studies also used a similar sample size ([Bashir et al., 2023](#); [Farid et al., 2023](#)). Previous studies in this area of research have also used a sample size ranging from 100 to 500 ([Bhatti & Fiaz, 2016](#); [Gautam, 2013](#); [Wongweeranonchai & McClelland, 2016](#); [Zhou & Whitla, 2013](#)). The sampling technique employed was convenience sampling which has also been used in many studies on celebrity credibility and purchase intention in the past few years ([Rasool et al., 2017](#); [Wazir & Zahoor, 2014](#)). Convenience sampling was selected as the sampling strategy due to the unavailability of a database of soft drink consumers. Also, the budget and time constraints did not allow the researcher to choose any other sampling technique.

Demographic characteristics like age, gender, marital status, city, and education were not included in the analysis. Previous studies, such as those by [Shah et al. \(2016\)](#), [Jebarajakirthy and Lobo \(2014\)](#), [Yoo et al. \(2000\)](#) also used the demographic (age, gender, education) variables as control variables in their studies. A recent study gave the results that gender, age, and education can affect the consumption of soft drinks in Pakistan ([Bashir et al., 2023](#)). However, keeping in view the scope of the present study, the role of demographic variables was not studied.

3.1 | Instruments for measurement of variables

3.1.1. Independent Variable: Celebrity Credibility

Celebrity credibility was measured by making use of three subscales of celebrity credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise ([McCracken, 1989](#)). All three subscales measure these variables on the 7-point Likert scale. Following is the description of the scales. Trustworthiness: trustworthiness was measured using nine items on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree. The scale showed an internal consistency of .82 ([McCracken, 1989](#)). The sample items for trustworthiness are 1. I prefer watching advertisements in which a dependable celebrity is endorsing the soft drink. 2. A celebrity endorser of soft drink advertisements should be honest. Expertise: expertise was measured by 9 items on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree. Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was found to be .81 ([McCracken, 1989](#)). The following are the sample items. 1. A celebrity endorser in soft drink advertising should be experienced in his/her field. 2. A celebrity endorser in soft drink advertisement should know in his/her field. Attractiveness: Attractiveness was measured using eight items on a 7-point scale

ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 7 for strongly agree. The scale has shown internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha = .85 ([McCracken, 1989](#)). Sample items, including the celebrity endorser in a soft drink ad should be classy.

3.1.2. Dependent variable: Purchase Intention

Purchase intention was measured through five items with ratings required on a 7-point scale ([Dodds et al., 1991](#)). The purchase intention measure has also shown satisfactory internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha = .85 ([Dodds et al., 1991](#)). The following is a sample item from the measure of purchase intention. How likely you are to purchase a soft drink that is endorsed by a celebrity?

3.1.3. Moderating Variable: Subjective norms

Subjective norms were measured by making use of 6 items ([Kassem & Lee, 2004](#)) and adapted for use in the context of soft drinks. The measure of subjective norms also showed good internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha = .83 ([Kassem & Lee, 2004](#)). Following is a sample item from the measure of subjective norms. Most people who are important to me recommend drinking celebrity-endorsed soft drinks.

3.1.4. Procedure

As the nature of the product under study (soft drinks) was a common product it was very easy to recruit participants for the study. A pretesting of all the instruments was carried out on a pilot sample of 30 participants. The items were not difficult to understand for the participants. For the main study, the questionnaires along with the consent form were distributed to the study participants online (WhatsApp and Email) and in paper and pencil form.

In the present study, 120 questionnaires were distributed in paper and pencil form. Out of these 120 questionnaires, 100 were returned by the respondents, thus making an 83 % response rate. 17 questionnaires were discarded due to invalid responses/incomplete responses. In the online format, the questionnaire was sent to 370 individuals through email, Facebook, and WhatsApp using personal contacts. The response rate in online data collection turned out to be 88%. Out of the online 325 questionnaires, sixteen were discarded due to incomplete information. Thus, the final sample included 392 questionnaires. Keeping in view the ethical guidelines of APA, the participants were also assured of the anonymity and academic use of the information they would provide. Informed consent of the participants was taken.

3.2 | Statistical Analyses

Analysis of the data was carried out through the following statistical tests.

3.2.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The objective of the present study is to check the proposed hypothesis using a predeveloped scale for Celebrity Endorsement, Purchase Intention, and Subjective Norm, so confirmatory factor analysis is used to validate the scale used in this study. Similarly, to evaluate the Model Fit Measures of the constructs adapted for this study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling. As the tool was adapted CFA is the best way to check for model fitness. As the survey context is different from the context where the questionnaire was developed, CFA is a good measure to assess the model fitness in the context of Pakistan.

3.2.2. Multiple Linear Regression

Multiple Linear Regression is a good technique to investigate the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software was used to run the analysis and report the findings. The purpose of this technique is to evaluate the effect of a celebrity's physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise on the purchase intention of the consumers.

3.2.3. Process Matrix

The theoretical framework has a moderator variable, a subjective norm. The effect of this moderator is investigated using PROCESS Procedure for SPSS using the Preacher and Heyes plugin in IBM SPSS as this is a recent technique to measure the moderation effect. The Model type for this analysis is type 1.

4 | RESULTS and ANALYSIS

4.1 | Pilot Study

Two marketing research experts from different universities evaluated the questionnaire and then a pilot study was carried out on 30 participants to assess the reliability of the tool. The evaluation of experts and results of the pilot study provided evidence of the content validity of the scale. Thirty participants were selected based on convenience sampling, and they were given the questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used because there was no sampling frame available for the soft drink consumers of Pakistan. The results of the pilot study showed that the tool was appropriate and suitable for carrying out the main study. The language was easy to understand, and the topic was interesting for the respondents, so everyone participated with enthusiasm and commitment.

Table 1

Internal Consistency Values of the Scales

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Attractiveness	0.908
Expertise	0.913
Trustworthiness	0.935
Purchase Intention	0.875
Subjective norm	0.887

4.2 | Main Study

The results of the pilot study allowed the researcher to move forward for further analysis. A sample of 392 respondents was used for the main study. The number of male and female respondents was almost equal, also all the respondents were educated enough to understand the questionnaire. Most of the respondents were unmarried young adults, who are assumed to be the major consumers of soft drinks.

Table 2*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

Gender		
Males	216	(55.1 %)
Females	176	(44.9 %)
Education		
Intermediate	75	(19%)
Bachelor	181	(46.2%)
Master's	113	(28.8)
Above Master's	23	(5.9%)
Marital Status		
Single	253	(64.5%)
Married	131	(33.4%)
Divorced	3	(0.8%)
Widowed	5	(1.3%)
City		
Big cities	215	(54.8%)
Small cities	177	(45.2%)
Employment Status		
Employed	205	(52.3%)
Unemployed	187	(47.7%)

Table 3*Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables of Study*

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Sd. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Subjective Norms	392	1.00	7.00	3.64	1.71	.019	-1.10
Purchase Intention	392	1.00	7.00	3.54	1.58	.169	-.924
Physical Attractiveness	392	1.00	7.00	4.40	1.41	-.355	-.729
Trustworthiness	392	1.00	7.00	4.70	1.47	-.599	-.453
Expertise	392	1.00	7.00	4.97	1.33	-.742	.301

The overall descriptive statistics of the major variables used in the study are mentioned in table 3. The normality of the data is checked through the values of skewness and kurtosis which are in an acceptable range.

Table 4*Correlations Among the Factors (N =392)*

	SN	PI	PA	Trust	Expert
SN	-				
PI	.587**	-			
PA	.472**	.558*	-		
Trust	.347**	.458**	.646*	-	
Expert	.498**	.381**	.556**	.610**	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SN= Subjective Norm

PI= Purchase Intention

PA= Physical Attractiveness

Trust= Trustworthiness

Expert= Expertise

The statistics in Table 4 show that the variables are weakly to moderately correlated with each other. It is also evident that variables have a direct relationship with each other as there is no negative value of correlation. Also, the data is normally distributed with no outliers and missing value issues, the tool used for this study is reliable and valid for further analyses.

Table 5

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Latent variable	Items	IOL	CR
Purchase Intention			0.915
	PI1	0.844	
	PI2	0.834	
	PI3	0.869	
	PI4	0.787	
Physical Attractiveness			0.904
	PA1	0.704	
	PA4	0.741	
	PA5	0.833	
	PA6	0.797	
	PA7	0.756	
	PA8	0.708	
Trustworthiness			0.937
	Trw2	0.868	
	Trw4	0.858	
	Trw5	0.872	
	Trw6	0.723	
	Trw8	0.821	
	Trw9	0.788	
Expertise			0.898
	Exp1	0.773	
	Exp2	0.820	
	Exp3	0.864	
	Exp5	0.756	
	Exp6	0.773	
Subjective norm	SN1	0.873	0.891
	SN2	0.934	
	SN3	0.753	

Note: The following items were not included in the calculation of CR and AVE due to low loadings (less than 0.7) PI5, PA2, Trw1, Trw7, Exp4, Exp7, Exp8 and Exp9

CR = Composite Reliability

IOL = Item loading

CR is calculated by the statistical pack provided by Gaskin and Lim (2016)

Table 6*Comparison of Convergent & Discriminant Validity*

Scale/Construct	AVE	ASV
SN	.733	.233
PI	.695	.252
PA	.573	.314
Trust	.681	.279
Expertise	.636	.268

As a rule of thumb, the AVE score of a construct greater than .50 indicates good convergent validity, and its corresponding ASV score must be less than its AVE ([Hair Jr et al., 2010](#)). The comparison of AVE & ASV scores of all constructs as summarized in table 6 provides evidence to establish convergent and discriminant validity of all scales/constructs. AMOS is used to find out about the CFA because the instrument is adapted so we do not need to find the EFA for the variables. Table 5 describes the item loadings along with CR values. This method of finding the reliability analysis is more sophisticated than the Cronbach Alpha approach to test the reliability of the instrument, especially when AMOS is to be used ([Hair et al., 2006](#)).

Table 7*Model Fit Measures*

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	1443.505	--	--
DF	515	--	--
CMIN/DF	2.80	Between 1 and 3	Excellent
CFI	.903	>0.95	Acceptable
SRMR	0.077	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.068	<0.06	Acceptable

(Source for threshold values: Gaskin & Lim, 2016. The same standard was also used by Hakanen, Peeters & Schaufeli, 2017).

CMIN = Chained Multilateral Index Number.

DF = Degree of Freedom

CFI = Comparative Fit Index

SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

Model fit measures are very important before going for main analyses. Combinations of different values are used to get an acceptable model fit. Although the values of CFI and RMSEA are not perfect values are still acceptable, and these values do not compromise the validity of results.

4.3 | Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 were tested using multiple regression analysis. Table 8 summarizes the results of the test with a Durbin-Watson value of 1.84 which is in the acceptable range.

Table 8*Multiple Linear Regression*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized		Sig.	Collinearity	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.372	.269		1.382	.168		
PA	.489	.063	.437	7.720	.000	.540	1.851
Trust	.156	.064	.146	2.458	.014	.491	2.035
Expert	.058	.064	.049	.901	.368	.583	1.715

Table 9*Model Summary*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	F	Sig.	Durbin-Watson
.574	.329	.324	1.3008	63.47	.000	1.854

A multiple linear regression was conducted to predict consumer Purchase Intention. The predictor variables were Trustworthiness, Physical Attractiveness, and Expertise. The overall model was significant, $F(3, 388) = 63.476$, $p < .05$, and the model accounted for 32.4 % of the variance. Trustworthiness ($\beta = .156$, $p < .05$) and Physical Attractiveness ($\beta = .489$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors while Expertise ($\beta = .058$, $p > .05$) was non-significant. In table 8 VIF values indicate no multicollinearity among the variables, so the results of the regression model can be considered good in predicting the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. Similarly, the value of Durbin-Watson from **table 9** clearly explains that the observations are independent, so the regression model can be considered a good predictor. The effect size of the model is .49 which is a large effect size (as a rule of thumb .02 is a small effect size, .15 is a medium effect size and .35 is a large effect size).

Table 10*Summarized Results for Multiple Regression*

	Hypothesis	B	Significance	Decision
H1	The Trustworthiness aspect of celebrity endorsers will influence purchase intention.	0.156	$p < .05$	Accepted
H2	The celebrity endorser's physical attractiveness will influence purchase intention.	0.489	$p < .05$	Accepted
H3	The celebrity endorser's perceived expertise will influence purchase intention	0.058	$p > .05$	Rejected

Table 11*Model Summary*

Outcome: PI						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.6817	.4648	1.3678	41.57	8.00	383.00	.000

Model type 1 was run with PROCESS MATRIX Purchase Intention (PI) as the dependent variable, Physical Attractiveness (PA) as an independent variable, and Subjective Norm (SN) as moderation/interaction, with age as a controlled variable on a sample size of 392. The overall model was significant with 46.48% F (8,383) = 41.57 $p < 0.05$.

Table 12*Moderation-Model-1 Statistics*

	Coefficient	se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.3615	.5250	2.5935	.0099	.3293	2.3937
SN	.097	.120	.810	.418	-.138	.333
PA	.187	.0934	2.005	.045	.003	.370
Interaction	.060	.024	2.448	.014	.011	.108
Age	-.006	.008	-.738	.460	-.024	.010
Gender	.021	.126	.168	.866	-.227	.270
Marital	-.144	.141	-1.02	.307	-.422	.133
City	.216	.129	1.66	.096	-.038	.472
Education	-.012	.075	-.167	.866	-.161	.135

The values in the table. 11 indicate moderation. LLCI and ULCI are moving from -.138 to .333 which means that 0 lies in between. This is evidence for moderation according to this technique.

Table 13*Interactions of Model 1*

R-square increase due to interaction(s)					
	R2-change	F	df1	df2	P
Interaction	.0084	5.994	1.0000	383.0000	.0148

Model = 1

Y = PI (Purchase Intention)

X = PA (Physical Attractiveness)

M = SN (Subjective Norm)

Interaction = PA x SN

Statistical Controls:

CONTROL= age, gender, and education

Sample size= 392

The overall model was significant with .84% F (1,383) = 5.9945, $p < 0.05$, indicating that subjective norm moderates the effect of a celebrity's physical attraction on consumer purchase intention. Model type 1 was run with PROCESS MATRIX Purchase Intention (PI) as the dependent variable, Trustworthiness (Trust) as the

independent variable, and Subjective Norm (SN) as moderation/interaction, with age as a controlled variable on a sample size of 392. The overall model was significant with 44.37% $F(8,383) = 38.19$ $p < 0.05$.

Table 14

Model Summary

Outcome: PI						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.666	.444	1.42	38.19	8	383	.000

The overall model was significant with .44% $F(8,383) = 38.19$ $p < 0.05$, indicating that Purchase Intention was significantly affected by Trustworthiness of the celebrity.

Table 15

Moderation Model-2 Statistics

	Coefficient	se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.675	.538	3.112	.002	.617	2.733
SN	.110	.120	.910	.363	-.127	.347
Trustworthiness	.086	.086	1.005	.315	-.082	.256
Interaction	.066	.023	2.859	.004	.0207	.111
Age	-.007	.009	-.865	.387	-.025	-.010
Gender	.012	.129	.093	.925	-.242	.266
Marital	-.197	.143	-1.37	.171	-.497	.085
City	.214	.132	1.61	.106	-.045	.474
Education	.017	.0767	.231	.816	-.133	.168

In this case, also values from table 14 indicate moderation. The LLCI and ULCI are moving from -.127 to .347 which means that 0 lies in between. This is evidence for moderation.

Table 16

Interactions Moderation Model-2

R-square increase due to interaction(s)					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
Interaction	.0119	8.1741	1.0000	383.0000	.0045

Model Type = 1

Y = PI (Purchase Intention)

X = Trust (Trustworthiness)

M = SN (Subjective Norm)

Interaction = Trust x SN

Statistical Controls:

CONTROL= age, gender, marital status, city, and education

Sample size= 392

The overall model was significant with .1% $F(8,383) = 8.17$ $p < 0.05$, indicating that subjective norm is moderating the effect of a celebrity's trustworthiness on consumer purchase intention. Model type 1 was run with PROCESS MATRIX Purchase Intention (PI) as the dependent variable, expertise (Expt) as the

independent variable, and Subjective Norm (SN) as moderation/interaction, with age as a controlled variable on a sample size of 392. The overall model was non-significant as $p > 0.05$.

Table 17

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
.6175	.3812	1.581	29.498	8.0000	383.0000	.0000

The overall model was significant with $.38\%$ $F(8,383) = 29.49$ $p < 0.05$, indicating that purchase is intention significantly stimulated by the expertise of the celebrity.

Table 18

Moderation Model-3 Statistics

	Coefficient	Se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.79	.57	3.11	.002	.658	2.92
SN	.402	.157	2.54	.011	.092	.712
Expertise	.119	.096	1.23	.218	-.071	.310
Interaction	.012	.028	.446	.655	-.043	.069
Age	-.014	.0095	-1.50	.131	-.033	-.004
Gender	-.099	.135	-.732	.464	-.365	.167
Marital	-.272	.151	-1.79	.073	-.569	.025
City	.144	.139	1.034	.301	-.130	.419
Education	.077	.080	.958	.338	-.081	.236

In this case values from the table. 17 indicates that there is no moderation. The LLCI and ULCI are moving from .092 to .712 which means that 0 does not lie in between. This means that moderation is not carried out with the Purchase intention and Expertise of the celebrity with Subjective Norm as a moderator.

Table 19

Interactions Model 3

R-square increase due to interaction(s)					
	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	P
Interaction	.0003	.1997	8.0000	383.0000	.655

Model Type = 1

Y = PI (Purchase Intention)

X = Expt (Expertise)

M = SN (Subjective Norm)

Statistical Controls:

CONTROL= age, gender, marital status, city, and education

Sample size= 392

The overall interaction is non-significant with $.003\%$ $F(8, 383) = .1997$ $p > .005$.

Table 20*Summarized Results for Moderation Analyses*

	Hypothesis	B	Significance	Decision
H4	Subjective norms will moderate the effects of a celebrity's physical attractiveness on purchase intentions.	0.156	$p < .05$	Accepted
H5	Subjective norms will moderate the effects of a celebrity's trustworthiness on purchase intentions.	0.489	$p < .05$	Accepted
H6	Subjective norms will moderate the effects of a celebrity's expertise on purchase intentions.	0.058	$p > .05$	Rejected

5 | DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study suggest that celebrity endorsement is an important factor in understanding and predicting consumer purchase intention, a finding which is also supported by several other experts ([Ahmed et al., 2012](#); [Elango & Suryakumar, 2022](#); [Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999](#); [Ndlela & Chuchu, 2016](#); [SHAHZAD et al.](#)). A recent study conducted in Lahore Pakistan has also reported the positive effect of celebrity endorsement on soft drink consumption ([Farooq et al., 2024](#)). The present study also provided similar results that there is a significant impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intention.

The current study also supported the arguments developed by that a celebrity's physical attractiveness is an important indicator in evaluating endorsement. Similarly, another study showed that more attention may be given to the physical attraction of the celebrity as compared to the expertise of the celebrity ([Pramesthi et al., 2024](#)), the present study also produced similar results. However, some previous studies do not support the findings of the present study, such as one by [Jamil and Rameez ul Hassan \(2014\)](#), which showed that celebrity attractiveness has a negative impact on purchase intention, however, this result may have been caused by the different nature of product under study.

As far as the relationship between celebrity expertise and purchase intention is concerned, not only the regression but the moderation effect turned out to be non-significant. The same findings were present in a study by [Anyadighibe et al. \(2022\)](#) where the expertise of a celebrity showed a non-significant influence on purchase intention. This might be so because of the different contexts of study. In the present study, the non-significant results might be caused due to the perception of Pakistani consumers that they do not consider celebrities' skills and experiences relevant, and are more concerned with celebrity's physical attractiveness. One reason for the non-significant moderation of subjective norm on the relationship between expertise and purchase intention can also be the non-significant regression between celebrity expertise and purchase intention. The same results were found in a study by [Taylor \(2017\)](#). Another reason for this non-significance can be the nature of the product under study, as the majority of people probably do not consider soft drinks as a product that can be related to someone's expertise in their respective field.

5.2 | Limitations and Implications for Future Research

The present study is cross-sectional. In the future, a longitudinal study should be carried out to test the proposed model. The current study also explored purchase intention as the only dependent variable. Further studies can be carried out with more than one dependent variable. Most of the sample was drawn from young

adults with the age range of 17-35 years. Even though this study took age, gender, and education as control variables, these variables might influence the general purchase behavior of the consumers of this market. The effect of these variables on purchase behavior in this market therefore also needs to be explored. Moreover, since the findings of the present study are not generalizable to other cultures, replication of the present study in various other cultures would also be enlightening.

The findings of this study can provide a basis for future research and can help businesses develop a more sophisticated understanding of customer behavior. The findings of the current study can also help soft drinks marketers in recruiting more appropriate celebrities for advertising by focusing more on the attractiveness and trustworthiness of the celebrity.

The present study took subjective norm as a moderator of the relationship between the three components of celebrity credibility and purchase intention. Future research can take subjective norms also as the main predictor of purchase intention. Similarly, other components of the theory of planned behavior such as perceived behavioral control and attitude toward behavior can also be studied in the context of Pakistan's soft drink industry.

5 | CONCLUSION

The present study is an attempt to highlight the impact of celebrity-endorsed advertisements on the purchase intentions of consumers of the soft drink industry in Pakistan. The physical attractiveness and trustworthiness of a celebrity shown in an advertisement have a significant effect on the purchase intentions of soft drink consumers in Pakistan. Another finding of the study is the significant moderating effect of subjective norm on the relationship of physical attractiveness-purchase intention as well as on the relationship of trustworthiness-purchase intention. This might be caused by the collectivist culture of Pakistan, where people are influenced by the opinions of others around them.

The relationship of expertise and purchase intention was non-significant, this finding has generated a new insight for the researchers to further explore this relationship in new settings. Similarly, the moderating role of subjective norm on celebrity expertise-purchase intention was also found to be non-significant. Originally, the subjective norm in the theory of planned behavior was not taken as a moderator, and the results of the present study also seem in agreement with the theory of planned behavior in that subjective norm should be treated as a main predictor and not as a moderator. The findings of the present study indicating that moderation of subjective norm was either weak or non-significant is evidence in support of TPB's treatment of subjective norm as a main predictor.

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