

# Celebrity Endorsements on Social Media and Interest in Purchasing Mobile Phones: A Consumer Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the influence of celebrity endorsements, specifically the dimensions of trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, on consumers' purchase interest at Gallery Phone Makassar. A quantitative research design was employed, using a survey to gather primary data from the consumer population. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling to evaluate the structural relationships among the variables and test the research hypotheses. The results revealed that trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness each had a significant positive effect on purchase interest. Among these dimensions, attractiveness and expertise emerged as the most dominant factors in attracting attention and influencing consumer perceptions toward mobile technology products. These findings suggest that consumers are highly influenced by a celebrity's visual appeal and perceived technical competence when forming interest in purchasing a smartphone. This study provides practical insights for marketers to optimize their digital marketing strategies by selecting influencers who strike a strong balance between aesthetic appeal and professional credibility, thereby effectively driving purchase interest.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh dukungan selebriti, khususnya yang berfokus pada dimensi kepercayaan, keahlian, dan daya tarik, terhadap minat beli konsumen di Gallery Phone Makassar. Desain penelitian kuantitatif telah diterapkan dengan menggunakan metode survei untuk mengumpulkan data primer dari populasi konsumen. Data dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling untuk mengevaluasi hubungan struktural antarvariabel dan menguji hipotesis penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepercayaan, keahlian, dan daya tarik masing-masing memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap minat beli. Di antara dimensi-dimensi tersebut, daya tarik dan keahlian muncul sebagai faktor yang paling dominan dalam menarik perhatian dan memengaruhi persepsi konsumen terhadap produk teknologi telepon seluler. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa konsumen sangat dipengaruhi oleh daya tarik visual dan persepsi kompetensi teknis dari seorang selebriti saat membentuk minat untuk membeli sebuah ponsel pintar. Studi ini memberikan wawasan praktis bagi pemasar untuk mengoptimalkan strategi pemasaran digital mereka dengan memilih influencer yang memiliki keseimbangan kuat antara daya tarik estetika dan kredibilitas profesional untuk mendorong minat beli secara efektif.



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## INTRODUCTION

The presence of mass media in modern society is undeniable, with the internet emerging as a communication medium with characteristics distinct from letters, radio, television, and newspapers (Nasrullah, 2022). The development of information and communication technology has significantly changed people's lifestyles, especially through the increased use of gadgets and

digital activities such as online shopping. In the era of globalization, high levels of human mobility require the commercial world to provide goods and services quickly and on demand. Technology then plays an important role in facilitating various social and economic activities, including the marketing and dissemination of product information. This shift in consumption patterns is evident in Makassar, where businesses are increasingly using celebrity endorsements to expand their market reach and boost sales. One notable case is Gallery Phone, located on Jalan Rappocini. Before using celebrity endorsements, the store's daily sales only reached 2 to 4 products. However, after implementing an endorsement strategy, sales increased significantly to 9 to 14 products per day. This phenomenon shows the influence of public figures on social media on consumers' purchasing decisions. Purchase interest is a form of post-purchase evaluation when consumers compare their experience with their expectations (Yamit). Emotions, personal needs, desires, and the guidance of the surrounding environment also influence purchase interest. Based on field observations, the gap between what consumers have and what they need often prompts them to seek additional information, including by perceiving influencers as relevant to their physical needs and individual preferences.

This phenomenon is an important basis for further research on the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase interest in Makassar. Research on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements shows that celebrity attributes such as attractiveness, credibility, and likability play an important role in shaping purchase intent. In studies involving 100–800 participants, researchers found that celebrities with these characteristics consistently had a positive impact on purchase intent (Adam & Hussain, 2017). Celebrity attractiveness was even the main driver of purchase intent, as evidenced by Mateen Khan (2018). Rajasekar's (2018) research confirms that celebrity endorsements can strengthen brand attitudes and generate higher purchase intentions. In a recent study, Nabil et al. (2022) showed that celebrity endorsements influence the intention to purchase luxury brands, with trust being the most significant factor. Similarly, Sufian et al. (2021) identified appeal, trust, and product fit as the main drivers of endorsement effectiveness. A more nuanced perspective emerges in the findings of Razi et al. (2021), which show that consumers prefer national celebrities for high-involvement products, while international celebrities are more effective for low-risk products. Calvo-Porrall et al. (2021) also confirmed that the alignment between the product and the celebrity is the main mechanism of influence. Nine studies with more than 1,500 participants reinforced the positive correlation between celebrity endorsements and purchase intent. Mushtaq et al. (2024) assert that celebrity endorsements make advertisements more appealing and directly influence purchasing decisions. Calvo-Porrall & Lévy-Mangin (2024) found that the effectiveness of endorsements is greatly influenced by product category and celebrity credibility. In particular, Frmansah & Komalasari (2024) and Mohan (2025) show that social media influencers are highly effective in shaping purchase intent, especially among young consumers. In line with the views of Ningrum & Tresnati (2018), celebrities' unique personalities make them brand representatives that are difficult for competitors to imitate.

Although previous studies have shown that celebrity attributes such as attractiveness, credibility, product suitability, and transferred meaning strongly influence purchase intention, several empirical and theoretical gaps remain unaddressed. Most studies have been conducted in the context of fashion, cosmetics, luxury goods, or low-risk product categories, so the results may not be entirely relevant when applied to high-value technology product categories such as

mobile phones. The characteristics of technology products that require greater consideration and more complex cognitive engagement have not been extensively tested for their relationship to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. In addition, previous studies have often relied on large-scale national or cross-national population samples, thereby failing to capture specific local dynamics, such as consumer behavior in Makassar City, which exhibits distinct social media usage patterns, celebrity preferences, and market characteristics. Another gap arises in the psychological mechanisms explaining how emotions, personal needs, and social perceptions interact with influencers to shape purchase interest. Although studies such as Nabil et al. (2022), Sufian et al. (2021), and Razi et al. (2021) have identified factors such as trust, product suitability, and preferences for national or international celebrities, these studies have not examined how these factors work in the context of purchasing electronic devices, which requires more rational evaluation. Empirically, the phenomenon of increased sales at Gallery Phone Makassar from 2–4 to 9–14 products after using Instagram celebrities shows that there are important local dynamics that have not been mapped in the literature.

Based on the theoretical and empirical gaps identified, this study offers a novel contribution by situating the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in the context of high-value technology products and the local market dynamics of Makassar. This context has not been widely explored in prior literature, which generally focuses on fashion, cosmetics, and low-risk goods. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of how influencer attributes such as attractiveness, credibility, and product suitability interact with consumer psychological factors such as emotions, personal needs, and social influence to shape purchase interest in electronic devices, which require greater rational consideration than other product categories. In addition, this study broadens the understanding of the effectiveness of endorsements by combining the empirical phenomenon of increased sales at Gallery Phone Makassar – from 2–4 products to 9–14 products per day – to demonstrate how influencer-based marketing strategies operate within a specific local market ecosystem. Thus, the purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchase interest at Gallery Phone Makassar, and to contribute new insights to the development of consumer behavior theory and digital marketing strategies in the context of technology products and regional markets in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE

### *Meaning Transfer Theory*

Meaning Transfer Theory (MTT) was first introduced by McCracken (1989) to explain how the social and cultural meanings attached to a celebrity can be transferred to the products they endorse. In recent developments, this theory has been further expanded to better understand modern marketing mechanisms, especially when celebrities or influencers serve as sources of meaning that shape consumers' interpretations of a brand. Jun et al. (2023) explain that the meaning transfer process occurs through symbolic relationships formed between celebrity figures and brand images, in which certain associations associated with celebrities – such as social status, lifestyle, or professional reputation – become part of consumers' assessment of a product. This perspective is reinforced by Tian et al. (2022), who emphasize that the meaning transfer process is not merely a shift in perception but a cultural construction that binds the celebrity's identity to the product's character, so that consumers interpret the product through

the lens of a figure they recognize. In the context of modern marketing communication, MTT has become an important foundation for understanding how consumers perceive the symbolic messages conveyed by endorsers through visual appeal, self-expression, and other social associations that accompany these figures.

Recent research shows that Meaning Transfer Theory not only explains the symbolic relationship between endorsers and products but also describes how the cultural values attached to celebrities shape consumer perceptions more broadly. A study by Al Mamun et al. (2023) confirms that the meaning transfer process involves three main stages: the cultural stage, the endorsement stage, and the consumption stage. In the first stage, meanings derived from popular culture are attached to celebrities; in the second stage, these meanings are linked to products through promotional activities; and in the third stage, consumers internalize these meanings as part of their consumption experience. Lee & Jeong (2023) show that the transferred meaning is not only visual or physical but also includes psychological aspects, such as trust, professionalism, or elegance, that are interpersonally attached to celebrity figures. In the study by Osei et al. (2024), meaning transfer is seen as a process that reinforces brand uniqueness through emotional associations, so that consumers evaluate products not only on functional features but also on symbolic values that complement the user experience. This approach is also evident in Aliyev's (2025) understanding, who explains that in perfume advertisements, celebrities can transform sensory perceptions into the social image desired by consumers, showing that the meaning transfer process can work across various product categories, both symbolic and utilitarian.

Recent literature also shows how Meaning Transfer Theory has expanded in the context of digital marketing and influencer marketing. In the research by Calvo-Porrall & Lévy-Mangin (2024), meaning transfer is conceptualized as a cognitive and emotional mechanism whereby consumers interpret product quality through the social characteristics associated with the endorser. Research by Gupta et al. (2025) shows that celebrity popularity and the power of their social representation accelerate the formation of meaning, especially among consumer groups active in digital culture. Furthermore, Nabil et al. (2022) highlight that meaning transfer is particularly strong for luxury products, as consumers evaluate them not only on functionality but also on the prestige value they borrow from the endorser. In a global context, Sufian et al. (2021) explain that transferred meaning encompasses not only physical appeal but also the identity fit between celebrities and brands, thereby strengthening the message's relevance to consumers.

#### *Celebrity Instagram endorsement*

Celebrity endorsements are promotional practices in which individuals with popularity, social influence, and large followings on platforms such as Instagram serve as intermediaries, recommending products or services to their audiences. This concept has grown rapidly with the increasing use of social media as a digital marketing channel. According to Belanche et al. (2021), the effectiveness of endorsements is influenced by the degree of compatibility among the celebrity, the product, and consumer characteristics, meaning that every promotional effort requires harmony between the endorser's identity and the brand they represent. In line with this, Jin & Ryu (2020) emphasize that emotional relationships, in the form of parasocial interaction—where followers feel psychologically close to influencers—can enhance the

effectiveness of endorsements, as consumers view influencers as trusted friends who can provide product recommendations. This phenomenon shows that influencer endorsements do not work mechanically but rather through the formation of interpersonal perceptions and social closeness that make their recommendations seem authentic. Weismueller et al. (2020) add that the combination of source credibility and advertising transparency plays an important role in influencing the audience's attitudes and intentions towards products, indicating that celebrities need to maintain a consistent image so that their recommendations are perceived as honest and trustworthy. This is in line with the findings of Rahma et al. (2025), which confirm that celebrity endorsements significantly increase purchase interest by strengthening consumer trust, indicating that endorsement effectiveness is highly dependent on the audience's perception of the endorser's honesty and credibility.

The role of Instagram celebrities as endorsers has grown stronger, as research shows that public figures on social media can build intense psychological bonds with their audiences. Aw & Labrecque (2020) state that celebrities have the power to create parasocial relationships that strengthen audiences' attachment to the brands they promote, so that the presence of celebrities functions not only as an advertising role but also as "identity connectors" between brands and consumers. Herrando & Martín-De Hoyos (2022) support this view by showing that endorsement content from influencers can shape audience attitudes toward advertising and increase purchase intent, especially when the message is conveyed naturally and aligns with the influencer's communication style. In this context, celebrity endorsements are no longer mere promotions, but rather a practice of symbolic representation in which celebrities lend their image, lifestyle, values, and personality to the products they promote. Joshi et al. (2025) view influencers as strategic media that combine content expertise, authenticity of communication, and social connectedness to create marketing messages that are more convincing than traditional advertisements, making the role of celebrities increasingly strategic in the modern digital marketing ecosystem. In a further development, Sardar & Vijay (2025) show that influencers have great potential to shape purchase intentions through social identification, in which audiences see celebrities as representations of their desired lifestyles, making their recommendations more persuasive.

A more in-depth theoretical approach to celebrity endorsements can be seen from the perspective of social identity and audience psychological dynamics. Farivar & Wang (2022) explain that influencer marketing strategies work when the audience feels their identity aligns with the celebrity's, thereby giving the message legitimacy and social value in the eyes of their followers. In addition, recent research shows that the quality of the relationship between celebrities and their followers is determined not only by follower count but also by perceived authenticity, interaction quality, and the consistency of the celebrity's personal image. Thus, influencer endorsements are not merely popularity-driven promotional strategies but rather a communication process involving credibility, emotional closeness, value alignment, and the influencer's ability to craft persuasive narratives for their audience. The success of an endorsement is measured not only by how often the influencer displays the product, but also by how strongly they can influence their followers' perceptions, emotions, and consumption preferences. With the development of social media as an intense space for interaction, the concept of celebrity endorsements has become increasingly relevant because audiences are not only looking for product information but also for figures who serve as references for identity,

lifestyle inspiration, and sources of trust in the purchasing decision-making process. Celebrity endorsements in this study are measured using several indicators: visibility (likelihood of being seen), credibility (including expertise and trust), attractiveness (including politeness and similarity), and power.

#### *Purchase Interest*

Purchase intention is a person's psychological tendency to purchase a product based on their evaluation, perception, and beliefs about it. This concept not only describes a momentary desire but also reflects the cognitive and affective processes integrated within consumers. Wang et al. (2023) explain that purchase intention is formed when consumers' perceptions of a product's quality, value, and superiority generate positive beliefs that encourage purchasing actions, thus serving as a bridge between perception and actual behavior. Peña-García et al. (2020) also emphasize that purchase intention does not stand alone but results from interactions among cultural factors, digital experiences, and consumer expectations as consumers navigate various forms of information in the context of online shopping. This perspective confirms that purchase intention develops through an assessment process involving external stimuli, consumers' ability to interpret information, and the match between personal needs and product attributes. In the modern marketing ecosystem, purchase intention is an important indicator of consumer behavior, especially when consumers face a variety of product choices with different qualities and symbolic values.

Recent research shows that purchase intention is strongly influenced by psychological factors such as trust, impulsivity, and sensory perceptions shaped by digital experiences. Yang et al. (2024) found that in the context of live-streaming commerce, purchase interest can increase significantly when consumers trust the content presenter and are prompted by impulsive urges arising from the interactive atmosphere of the live broadcast. This shows that purchase interest is a complex phenomenon driven not only by rational information but also by the emotional atmosphere created in the marketing communication process. Cheng & Lin (2022) added that sensory aspects, such as product visualization, presentation style, and the social atmosphere on digital platforms, also shape consumer perceptions, which in turn drive purchase interest. Thus, purchase interest acts as an integrated response to the visual, emotional, and social stimuli offered by digital marketing. In a different context, Rizwan et al. (2021) show that brand equity directly strengthens purchase interest, especially when consumers have a positive assessment of the brand's reputation and quality. These studies confirm that purchase interest is a multidimensional construct involving trust, value perception, and the holistic consumer experience.

Recent consumption trends indicate that environmental factors, sustainability values, and social identity dynamics increasingly influence purchase intent. Cavite (2025) found that millennials develop purchase interest in organic products through psychological mechanisms rooted in social norms, health preferences, and personal beliefs, such that purchase interest results from an interaction between an individual's internal values and external perceptions of the product. Ansu-Mensah (2021) reinforced this finding by explaining that consumer awareness of environmental issues can increase interest in green purchasing through higher perceived value, indicating that interest in purchasing now also reflects consumer concern for social and environmental impacts. From a sustainability behavior perspective, Duarte et al.

(2024) assert that purchasing interest in environmentally friendly products is built through consumers' understanding of the long-term benefits and positive impacts of products on the environment, so that purchasing interest in this context is not only oriented towards personal needs but also moral and social values. Thus, the concept of purchase interest has evolved from a mere tendency to buy products to a representation of the values, beliefs, and social identity that consumers internalize.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design with a descriptive-verification approach to examine the structural relationships between celebrity qualities and consumer behavior at Gallery Phone Makassar. The research model was constructed around three distinct independent variables: Trustworthiness (TRW), Expertise (EXP), and Attractiveness (ATT), which were evaluated for their impact on Purchase Interest (PUI). This multidimensional framework was used to provide a granular analysis of how different facets of celebrity credibility influence consumer decision-making in the digital technology market. The primary focus of TRW was to measure the extent to which consumers perceived the celebrity as providing honest and sincere information. The indicators for this variable included the celebrity's perceived honesty, sincerity in their reviews, and their established track record of integrity. In contrast, EXP focused on consumers' perceptions of the celebrity's technical competence and knowledge of mobile technology. This was measured through indicators such as the celebrity's technical understanding of smartphone features, their experience with similar products, and the professional congruence between the celebrity's image and the technology brand.

The third independent variable, ATT, evaluated both physical and non-physical attributes, such as visual appeal, the consumer's affinity for the celebrity's personality, and the similarity between the celebrity's lifestyle and the target audience. These dimensions were tested against PUI, which assessed the consumers' tendency and intent to plan a purchase. Data were collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire with a 1–5 Likert scale, ensuring that the data reflected participants' levels of agreement with each indicator. To analyze the structural influence of TRW, EXP, and ATT on PUI, this study applied Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The analytical process involved evaluating the Measurement Model (Outer Model) to ensure the reliability and validity of each construct, followed by the Structural Model (Inner Model) to test the hypothesized relationships through bootstrapping procedures. This approach allowed for the determination of the specific path coefficients and significance levels for each variable, providing a robust empirical foundation for the study's conclusions at Gallery Phone Makassar.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Results*

The descriptive analysis of respondent demographics was conducted to provide a foundational understanding of the sample distribution at Gallery Phone Makassar. For this study, data were gathered from 100 participants, with characteristics categorized by gender, age, occupation, and monthly income to ensure a representative sample of the mobile technology consumer base. The results in Table 1 revealed that the sample was slightly male-dominated,

accounting for 55.0% (55 individuals). In terms of age distribution, the largest segment was the 18–25-year-old category (40.0%), followed closely by the 26–35-year-old group (35.0%), indicating that 75% of respondents were young adults. Regarding occupation, the majority were private sector employees (40.0%) and students (35.0%). Furthermore, nearly half of the total sample (45.0%) reported a monthly income or allowance ranging from Rp 2,500,000 to Rp 5,000,000, suggesting that the participants had moderate purchasing power suitable for smartphone purchases.

**Table 1** Demographic profile of respondents at Gallery Phone Makassar

Demographic Profile	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	55	55.0%
	Female	45	45.0%
Age Group	18 – 25 years old	40	40.0%
	26 – 35 years old	35	35.0%
	36 – 45 years old	15	15.0%
	> 45 years old	10	10.0%
Occupation	Private Sector Employee	40	40.0%
	Student / University Student	35	35.0%
	Entrepreneur / Self-employed	15	15.0%
	Others (e.g., Civil Servant)	10	10.0%
Monthly Income / Allowance	< Rp 2,500,000	30	30.0%
	Rp 2,500,000 – Rp 5,000,000	45	45.0%
	> Rp 5,000,000	25	25.0%

**Table 2** Measurement model evaluation (Outer Model)

Construct	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Conclusion
TRW		0.825	0.884	0.655	Valid & Reliable
TRW1	0.810				
TRW2	0.845				
TRW3	0.772				
EXP		0.840	0.895	0.682	Valid & Reliable
EXP1	0.850				
EXP2	0.815				
EXP3	0.812				
ATT		0.815	0.875	0.638	Valid & Reliable
ATT1	0.825				
ATT2	0.790				
ATT3	0.780				
PUI		0.865	0.908	0.712	Valid & Reliable
PUI1	0.855				
PUI2	0.880				
PUI3	0.795				

The measurement model was evaluated to ensure that all constructs fulfilled the requirements for internal consistency and validity. According to established PLS-SEM criteria, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values should exceed the threshold of 0.70, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must be above 0.50 to confirm convergent validity. Additionally, Outer Loadings for each indicator should be at least 0.70 to be considered valid and reliable.

Based on the evaluation results in Table 2, all research constructs were confirmed to be valid and reliable. Trustworthiness (TRW) demonstrated high consistency with a CR of 0.884 and an AVE of 0.655. Expertise (EXP) and Attractiveness (ATT) also showed strong metrics, with AVE values of 0.682 and 0.638, respectively. The endogenous construct, Purchase Interest (PUI), exhibited the highest validity, with an AVE of 0.712 and a CR of 0.908. Since all outer loadings – ranging from 0.772 to 0.880 – exceeded the 0.70 benchmark, the measurement instrument was deemed robust for structural analysis.

The quality of the structural model was assessed using fit indices and predictive power metrics to evaluate its ability to capture the data. The SRMR value was utilized with a "Good Fit" threshold of < 0.08, while the NFI value was expected to be closer to 1. For explanatory power, the R-Square (R2) values were categorized as weak (0.25), moderate (0.50), and substantial (0.75), and the Q-Square (Q2) was assessed, with values > 0 indicating predictive relevance.

**Table 3** Goodness of Fit (GoF) and Predictive Relevance

Category / Fit Criteria	Value	Threshold / Rule of Thumb	Evaluation
SRMR	0.058	< 0.08	Good Fit
d_ULS	0.945	> 0 (Smaller is better)	Acceptable
d_G	0.312	> 0 (Smaller is better)	Acceptable
NFI	0.892	Closer to 1 represents a better fit	Acceptable Fit
R-Square	0.545	0.25 (Weak), 0.50 (Mod), 0.75 (Subst)	Moderate-to-Substantial
Q-Square	0.362	> 0 indicates predictive relevance	High Predictive Relevance

**Table 4** Structural model and hypothesis testing results (Bootstrapping)

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	TRW → PUI	0.355	3.650	0.000	Supported
H2	EXP → PUI	0.428	4.820	0.000	Supported
H3	ATT → PUI	0.445	3.925	0.000	Supported

The diagnostic results in Table 3 indicated a "Good Fit" for the model, evidenced by an SRMR value of 0.058 and an NFI of 0.892. The R-Square was 0.545, which implied that TRW, EXP, and ATT collectively explained 54.5% of the variance in Purchase Interest, representing a moderate-to-substantial level of explanatory power. Furthermore, the Q-Square value of 0.362 was significantly greater than zero, confirming that the model possessed high predictive relevance for the endogenous variable.

The final stage of analysis was conducted to test the hypothesized relationships between variables using a bootstrapping procedure. Statistical significance was determined based on a T-statistic threshold of  $> 1.96$  and a p-value of  $< 0.05$  for a 95% confidence level. These metrics revealed the strength and direction of the impact that each celebrity quality had on consumers' purchase interest.

The hypothesis testing results, derived from the bootstrapping procedure, demonstrated that all three proposed hypotheses were statistically supported. The first hypothesis (H1), which examined the impact of Trustworthiness (TRW) on Purchase Interest (PUI), was significant, with a path coefficient of 0.355, a T-statistic of 3.650, and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, the second hypothesis (H2) concerning the relationship between Expertise (EXP) and Purchase Interest (PUI) showed a strong positive influence, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.428, a T-statistic of 4.820, and a p-value of 0.000. Furthermore, the third hypothesis (H3), which examines the effect of Attractiveness (ATT) on Purchase Interest (PUI), was also highly significant, yielding the highest path coefficient of 0.445, with a T-statistic of 3.925 and a p-value of 0.000. Collectively, these findings indicated that all dimensions of celebrity credibility played a critical role in driving consumer interest at Gallery Phone Makassar, with ATT and EXP emerging as the strongest predictors in the structural model.

### *Discussion*

The results of this study demonstrate that celebrity endorsement dimensions, including attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, play a critical role in shaping consumer Purchase Interest at Gallery Phone Makassar. In contrast to traditional marketing perspectives that often prioritize fame alone, these findings indicate that Attractiveness is the dominant factor influencing consumer interest. The attractiveness of an endorser serves as the primary trigger for consumers, suggesting that the celebrity's physical appeal, personality, and lifestyle create an aspirational effect. Consumers tend to emulate the celebrity's style by developing an interest in the same mobile devices the celebrity promotes. At Gallery Phone Makassar, the selection of celebrities who resonate visually and in lifestyle with the target audience has proven highly effective in capturing attention and driving initial interest.

Expertise emerged as a significant and strong predictor of consumer interest. This indicates that for technology-driven products like smartphones, consumers do not merely seek visual appeal; they value the endorser's perceived competence and technical expertise. When a celebrity demonstrates a deep understanding of the phone's features or has a public image that aligns with technological innovation, it enhances the persuasive power of the promotional message. The findings suggest that consumers at Gallery Phone Makassar are more likely to develop purchase interest when they perceive the endorser as a knowledgeable figure who genuinely understands the specifications and performance of the advertised technology.

Trustworthiness also has a significant positive influence on purchase interest, although its relative impact is lower than that of the other two dimensions. Trust acts as the emotional foundation of the endorsement, where the celebrity's honesty and integrity in reviewing the product build a sense of security for the consumer. While attractiveness and expertise serve as the initial hooks to draw consumers in, trustworthiness ensures that the promotional message is accepted as sincere rather than purely commercial. Collectively, these three dimensions suggest that a balanced combination of visual appeal and technical authority is the most

effective strategy for Gallery Phone Makassar to convert celebrity influence into actual consumer purchasing interest.

The attractiveness referred to includes politeness, similarity, visual charm, and personality. However, in this study, the attractiveness indicator had the least influence among the indicators. This may be due to the selection of celebrities who lack specific expertise in electronic products, so the product's benefits and advantages are not highlighted. The dissimilarity between the celebrity influencer's characteristics and the product can reduce the influence of attractiveness on the persuasion process. These findings indicate that the physical attractiveness or persona of a celebrity influencer is not always a major factor in driving purchase interest, especially when the promoted product requires technical understanding or specific specifications.

The findings of this study are consistent with the explanation of Meaning Transfer Theory as introduced by McCracken (1989). This theory explains that the meaning associated with influencers as public figures can be transferred to brands through the marketing communication process and then adopted by consumers when they use the product. In the context of this study, influencers with high visibility, broad reach, and a good reputation can convey positive messages, which in turn encourage consumers to be interested in the promoted product. The alignment between the influencer's characteristics and the product identity allows the meaning transfer process to run more effectively.

The findings on the dominance of visibility and power indicators show that the transfer of meaning is indeed stronger when influencers have a high social image and the ability to shape public perception. When linked to previous research, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of Rachmat et al. (2016), which show that Instagram endorsements influence consumer purchase interest. The similarity between the results of the two studies confirms that endorsements significantly influence consumer preferences and decisions, especially on social media platforms that emphasize visual content and interaction. This similarity also reinforces the view that using celebrities in digital marketing strategies can increase communication effectiveness and expand the reach of promotional messages.

## CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to understand how celebrity endorsements influence consumers' purchase interest at Gallery Phone Makassar. Based on data analysis and discussion, this study concludes that the use of celebrity endorsers plays an important role in shaping consumer attention, perceptions, and purchasing tendencies. The findings show that indicators in endorsements—including visibility, influence, credibility, and attractiveness—shape consumers' psychological tendencies, leading to purchase interest. Thus, this study concludes that celebrity endorsements are a strategic element in digital marketing practices that can influence consumer orientation and decisions in the context of electronic retail.

The main value of this study lies in its contribution to scientific understanding of consumer psychological mechanisms in the era of social media-based marketing. Theoretically, this study enriches research on endorsement effectiveness by providing empirical evidence of the most influential indicators shaping purchase interest, particularly in the context of electronic product marketing. In terms of originality, this study provides a new perspective by showing the relative differences in the influence of each indicator, including the low contribution of the

attractiveness aspect, which has not been highlighted in previous studies. Practically, these findings have managerial implications for retail businesses: marketers need to choose influencers who are not only popular but also have a good reputation, product knowledge, and an image that is suitable for the product category being promoted.

Properly designed endorsement practices can increase message effectiveness, strengthen consumer trust, and ultimately drive sales growth. This study has limitations that need to be considered. First, the study focused on a single location, namely Gallery Phone Makassar, so generalizing the results to a broader market context should be done with caution. Second, this study uses only one independent variable, so it cannot yet fully account for other factors that may influence purchasing interest. Given these limitations, further research is recommended to broaden the study's scope and incorporate additional variables, such as brand trust, store image, and the quality of information on social media. Researchers also need to explore variable indicators in greater depth to suit the dynamics of the research object, for example, by assessing celebrities' expertise in specific product categories or the alignment between a celebrity's self-image and the characteristics of their target consumers. With this development, further research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of purchasing interest in the context of digital marketing.

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