

## Impact of Role Model on Behavioral and Purchase Intentions among Youngsters: Empirical Evidence from Karachi, Pakistan

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**Abstract:** *Concept of celebrity endorsement evolved in last few decades and it has strengthened its roots. Companies spend millions of dollar on celebrity endorsement. Marketers are trying to identify the impact of celebrity endorsement on companies' profitability and advertising objectives. The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of vicarious role model such as showbiz celebrity or sports celebrity on purchase intentions, brand loyalty and positive word of mouth among young adults of Karachi. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data through survey research method and data was collected from 252 students by using convenience sampling technique. Factor analysis and MANOVA were used as statistical techniques to test the model. Result showed that role model has significant impact on young adults' purchase intentions, brand loyalty and positive word of mouth.*

**Keywords:** vicarious role model, celebrity endorsement, brand loyalty, purchase intention, positive word of mouth.

### Introduction

Marketers have always been keen to find the unique ways to promote their products and services. Millions of dollars are being spent by the companies to catch consumers' attention (Thomaselli, 2008; Harris, 2008; Blades, Bower, & Mateer, 2008). In past, 25 percent of electronic ads had celebrities in Asian countries but in 2008 it rose from 25 to 62 percent (Saxena, 2008). Many studies have been conducted on celebrity endorsement (Ahmed, Mir, & Farooq, 2012; Rafique, 2012) and buying behavior (Jawaid, Rajput, & Naqvi, 2013; Haq, Khan, & Ghouri, 2014) but celebrities have not been taken as role model in past studies.

From print to electronic media, marketers try to come up with unique and innovative ways to get consumer's attention and generate revenue and celebrity endorsement is one of their techniques which are being widely used by the marketers. The importance of celebrity endorsement has been widely recognized in advertisement (K. Chan, Leung Ng, & Luk, 2013; Slinker, 1984). Millions of dollars are being spent by the businesses to relate their products to well-known sports celebrities (Thomaselli, 2008). When celebrities are recognized and get popularity, they are given respect by the consumers (Pringle, 2004). That's why marketers believe that endorsing a celebrity increases the effectiveness of the ads by influencing brand recognition, brand recall and purchase intention (Spry, Pappu, & Bettina Cornwell, 2011).

Celebrity endorsement helps new brand to get recognized as well as it facilitates in positioning and repositioning of the brand (Kaikati, 1987). It also helps to build trust and reliability to the endorsed brand (Challapalli, 2007). Celebrities are also considered as fashion icon and people consider them as their role model in terms of fashion icon and there is a positive impact of fashion involvements on impulsive buying (Haq et al., 2014).

Almost every well-known brand has endorsed a celebrity and Pakistani companies like smartphone brands have started to endorse Bollywood celebrities. In past studies researchers have focused on the attractiveness, trustworthiness and creditability of celebrities. In the reviewed literature, very few studies have considered celebrities as role model; and therefore there is a need of instigate the influence of vicarious role model on behavioral and purchase intentions in Pakistan's context. Role models like celebrities are

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socializing agents and young people learn norms, behaviour, attitude and values from these socializing agents through indirect and direct contact. This study helps to fill up this gap by examining the influence of vicarious role model on purchase intention, brand loyalty and positive word of mouth (PWOM). The study also gives marketers a new dimension to consider celebrities as a role model and gives useful insights about its impact on purchase and behavioral intentions among young consumers of Karachi, Pakistan. Therefore, following research questions require a deep and careful study:

1. Does vicarious role model have impact on purchase intention among young consumers?
2. Does vicarious role model have impact on brand loyalty among young consumers?
3. Does vicarious role model have impact on positive word of mouth among young consumers?

This paper consists of five sections. First section sets the foundation of the study. The second section discusses the theoretical and empirical review of past studies. Section three describes the research methods employed to conduct this study. The next section expounds the results and findings and the last section concludes the study.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Background

In the literature reviewed, in the reviewed literature, two theories were found to have significant attention in defining how consumers learn social behavioural tendencies? namely (1) social learning theory and (2) cognitive developmental theory. The foundation of this research was based on social learning theory as it had been widely utilized by practitioners in advertising and communication domain (Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004). In addition to that, it was also appreciated by researchers in understanding the role of socialization agents (Martin & Bush, 2000; King & Multon, 1996).

Social learning theory defines that norms, attitudes, motivations, behavior and values are acquired by young consumers with the help of reinforcement and social interaction (Moschis & Churchill Jr, 1978). Values, attitudes, behavior and norms can be transferred from socialization agents to young adults with the help of direct as well as indirect interaction (Subramanian & Subramanian, 1995). Social Learning Theory is related to the current study in which celebrities are considered as socialization agents and consumers acquire consumption related behavior through these agents. Moreover, Makgosa (2010) incorporated social learning theory in understanding the role of celebrities in consumption related behaviors.

### Empirical Studies

There was a time when firms used to pay attention on manufacturing and selling of goods and consumer preferences were widely ignored. Nevertheless, with the evolution of marketing orientation era, firms have started to find the new ways to attract consumers. During last three decades, marketers deployed many innovative strategies and ways to attract the attention of their target chunk; celebrity endorsement is one of those techniques to attract consumers. This section is structured in four major themes - namely, influence of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention, word of mouth, brand loyalty and switching behaviour. The prime focus of this research is on behavioural intentions due to celebrity considered as role model.

### Celebrities as a Role Model

Young people learn norms, behavior, attitude and values of socializing agents through indirect and direct contact (Subramanian & Subramanian, 1995). Endorsement helps manufacturer to boost sales of retail products and improve stock value (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Mathur, Mathur, & Rangan, 1997). Consumers' product recall and product choice behavior are improved when celebrities are endorsed (Bowman, 2002; Shimp, 2003). It has become generally adopted strategy to use role model (Kotler, Roberto, Lee, & Lee, 2002). Marketing tactics can be more persuasive when celebrities are endorsed (Knott & James, 2004). Marketing communication can be more useful when celebrities are endorsed (Biswas, Biswas, & Das, 2006). Considerable spontaneous appeal is generated by role model (Warhurst, 2011).

Many researchers have examined the influence of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention in sub-continent region. Studies from Pakistan shows that relationship does not exist between celebrity endorsed ads and impetuous purchasing activities (Hussain & Manzoor, 2011). It also shows that consumer give more preferences on product-celebrity match-up over physical attractiveness. Non celebrity endorsement has negative relation with buying behavior (Ahmed et al., 2012). Result shows that celebrity endorsement has significant effect on impetuous buying manner among youth (Jawaid et al., 2013). Zafar and Rafique (2012) found Result shows that celebrity endorsement has significant impact on consumer perception and consumer purchase intention.

Celebrities have always been the focus of Indian and many studies have been conducted on this topic in India. It is found that celebrity effectiveness had positive impact on consumer buying decision. Bollywood stars were more effective than sports star (Agarwal & Dubey, 2012). Rai and Sharma (2013) found that celebrity attractiveness, performance, popularity, territory and credibility have significant influence on consumer behavior. Result also shows that gender, profession and controversy do not have impact on consumer behavior.

Different researchers from different region have studied the impact of celebrity endorsement on buying behavior. Zahaf and Anderson (2008) found that celebrity endorsement does not effect in willingness to buy but credibility of commercial and endorser has impact on buying intention. Wang and Yang (2010) found that product image and product understanding are absolutely directing the relationship between independent and dependent variable.

Balakrishnan and Kumar (2011) found that celebrity based advertisement enhances consumer's product information as well as it helps to create awareness. Result also shows that celebrity based advertisement motivate consumers to buy durable products. Celebrity endorsement factors, brand recognition and product evaluation have influence on purchase attitude. Jain, Roy, Daswani, and Sudha (2011) found that human celebrities are more effective than fictional celebrity on purchase intention of teenagers in low involvement food and non-food products. Results also show that human celebrity does not create favorable consumer attitude.

Anjum, Dhanda, and Nagra (2012) found that celebrity endorsement has impact on consumers as well as on brand too. Giridhar (2012) found that celebrity endorsement helps consumer to recall the brand. Celebrity endorsements motives consumer to buy celebrity endorsed products. Roy, Jain, and Rana (2013) studied the effect of celebrity on consumer attitude by taking celebrity credibility as the moderating variable. Result shows that film celebrities are more influential on consumer attitude than sports celebrity. Result also shows 3 dimensions of consumer personality; agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness are found moderating variables that have effects on consumer attitude. Source credibility also found as moderating variable between celebrity and consumer attitude relationship. Shukre and Dugar (2013) found that gender and time frame has association with buying intention and celebrity endorsed advertisement helps in getting attention.

$H_1$  : Vicarious role model has significant impact on purchase intention among young adults of Karachi.

## Celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty

Concept of brand loyalty evolved in 1920s (Bennett, 2001). Those companies that have large number of brand loyalist, have larger market share as well as higher rates of ROI (Buzzell, Gale, & Sultan, 1975; Raj, 1985; Møller Jensen & Hansen, 2006). Brand loyalty is the result of trust (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992). Positive word of mouth is created by the loyal customers (Dick & Basu, 1994). Dominant importance is given to brand loyalty by marketers and researcher (Reinhold, 1996). When companies have large number of loyal customer, it will become competitive advantage for those companies (Mellens, Dekimpe, & Steenkamp, 1995). Creating and maintaining of Brand loyalty is the center point of firms' marketing strategies (Fournier & Yao, 1997). Brand equity increases when brand loyalty increases. Brand loyalty is as same as brand commitment (Assel, 1998). Brand loyalty helps companies in managing customer relationship management for long term investment and profitability purpose (Samadi & Yaghoob-Nejadi, 2009). There are many component in brand equity and Brand loyalty is one of them, it shows good tendency is shown by the consumers towards particular brands as compare to other same brands (Hanzaee

& Andervazh, 2012).

A study was conducted in Pakistan and it was found that celebrity endorsement and advertisement based on consumer perception has positive impact on consumer purchase intention (Hayat, Ghayyur, & Siddique, 2013). Apart from Pakistan many studies have been conducted in different region of the world and it was found that celebrity credibility does not have direct influence over brand equity but indirect effect is found in presence of brand credibility as mediating variable and branding moderated that relationship (Spry et al., 2011). It is also found that celebrities are positively influence on buying intention among teenagers especially on their response to the problem and switching behavior (Makgosa, 2010).

$H_2$  : Vicarious role model has significant impact on brand loyalty among young adults of Karachi.

## Celebrity endorsement and positive word of mouth

Negative WOM does not have more effective impact than PWOM (Arndt, 1967). WOM can have positive effect on selection (Engel, Kegerreis, & Blackwell, 1969; Richins, 1983) as well as negative impact on decision (Tybout, Calder, & Sternthal, 1981; Bolting, 1989). Positive word of mouth helps companies to reduce advertising expenditures as well as increase revenue (Frederick & Sasser, 1990). It is word of mouth that has more assertive impact on purchase decision than any other source (Murray, 1991). Personal sources could be one of the reasons because these views are considered as trustworthy by the consumers (Murray, 1991). Word of mouth is considered as informal way of communication among consumers (Filser, 1996). Credibility of word of mouth is nine times higher than advertising (Mazzarol, Sweeney, & Soutar, 2007). Word of mouth is used to measure consumer behavior such as impact of word mouth on consumer attitudes, judgments and decisions (Duan, Gu, & Whinston, 2008). According to consumers, it is friends' advice which motivates them to buy particular brand or services, especially when it's a new product or they plan to switch to another brand (Y. Y. Chan & Ngai, 2011).

Few studies have been conducted on word of mouth in developing countries but lots of work has been done in developed countries. Buksa and Mitsis (2011) found that athletes are perceived as role model in generation Y and it influences generation Y engaging in PWOM behavior in Australia. Some other studies also found that role model has positive influence on PWOM, loyalty, changing and complaint behavior (Dix, Phau, & Pougnet, 2010). In developing countries like Brazil, it is found that celebrity has influence on the behavior of consumers towards words of mouth, brand loyalty, changing and complaining behavior (Grohmann, Battistella, & Radons, 2013).

$H_3$  : Vicarious role model has significant impact on positive word of mouth among young adults of Karachi.

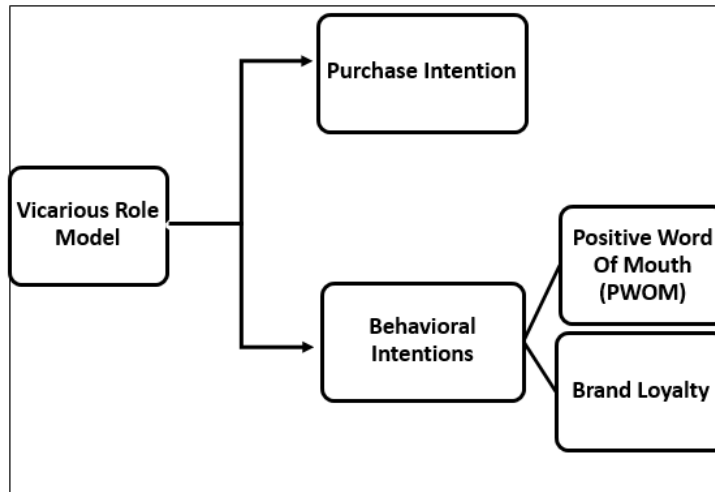
Celebrity based advertisement helps in promoting a product (Atkin & Block, 1983). Celebrity endorsement helps in creating positive attitude and intentions rather than non-celebrity based advertisement (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983; Ohanian, 1991; Kamins, 1990; Atkin & Block, 1983; O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997). Endorser credibility is another factor that marketer should consider while endorsing celebrity into the advertisement. Celebrity based advertisement can be more effective in high involvement products. Many studies show that celebrity endorsement has positive impact on purchase intentions but it can have a negative influence as well.

## Methodology

### Theoretical Framework

Based on social learning theory, four constructs were considered in this study. Celebrity endorsement as an independent construct deemed to affect three dependent constructs - PWOM, buying intentions and loyalty. These constructs and their relationships were described in the schematic model given below (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



## Research Method

The researchers deployed quantitative approach in this study. Quantitative approach was appropriate because data was collected from large population through a structured questionnaire and relatively generalize findings were aimed (Bhat, 2013). Data was collected from 252 young respondents aged between 15 and 35 using convenience sampling (Makgosa, 2010; Dix et al., 2010) residing in Karachi, Pakistan. Convenience sampling is frequently used in studying buyer consumption behaviour (Martin & Bush, 2000) and it is appropriate due to inaccessibility to sampling frame.

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. This questionnaire was divided into two sections. First section contained items of study variables, whereas next section enclosed demographics questions. In the first section, items for role model influence were adopted from (Richins, 1983). Moreover, to measure purchase and behavioural construct, an 11 item scale was adopted from (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Details of these items were reported in table 2.

Face and content validity of instrument was tested by a panel of six members including practitioners, linguistic experts and marketing teachers. Minor improvement had been made in the questionnaire based upon their recommendations. After that, reliability of all the study variables was tested and ensured. Table 2 contains the value of cronbach's alpha of each variable.

## Descriptive Profile of the data

A survey was administered on 282 respondents out of which 252 responses were considered valid after eliminating blurred and doubtful responses. Table 1 describes the demographic profile of respondents. 64.3% of them were males while remaining 35.7% were females.

67.9% respondents are registered in MBA program. 21.4% are enrolled in BBA program. 7.1% respondent belongs to BS-Computer science program and 2.4% are from BS-Media science programs. Remaining 1.2% belongs to other degree programs. 14.7% of the total respondents' age is between 16-20 years. 58.7% of the respondents who are age between 21-25 years. 23% belongs to 26-30 years age group. While remaining 3.6% belongs to 31-35 years age group (See Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive Profile

Descriptive Profile		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	162	64.3
	Female	90	35.7
Age	15-20	37	14.7
	21-25	148	6
	26-30	58	23
	31-35	9	3.6
	Program	MBA	171
	BBA	54	21.4
	BS-CS	18	7.1
	BS-MS	6	2.4
	Others	3	1.2

Total Sample Size= 252

Source: Authors' Estimation

## Results

Initially, factor analysis was performed to examine the dimensionality of the data. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test and Bartlett's test of sphericity depicted overall intercorrelation among the data as KMO was greater than 0.5 (0.872) and Bartlett's test was found significant. Four factors were extracted out of data that explained 67.599% variance of overall data.

Factor analysis also explored the items lie in the same factor or not. 16 items were used initially in the analysis but four items were dropped due to the issue of cross loading. Table 2 presented the items retained to form four factors as well as their associated reliability.

In order to examine the impact celebrity role model on purchase and behavioral intentions, multivariate analysis of variance test (MANOVA) was used there was only one independent variable and three dependent variables. Following tables indicates the results of MANOVA.

Table 2: Factor Analysis Results and Reliability

	Cronbach Alpha	Component			
		1	2	3	4
Role_Model_1		0.839			
Role_Model_2		0.762			
Role_Model_3	0.818	0.716			
Role_Model_4		0.691			
Role_Model_5		0.643			
Brand_Loyalty_1			0.813		
Brand_Loyalty_2	0.751		0.705		
PWOM_01				-0.854	
PWOM_02	0.803			-0.848	
PWOM_03				-0.739	
PI_01					0.725
PI_02	0.695				0.660
Eigenvalues		4.780	1.573	1.054	0.700
% of Variance Explained		39.837	13.109	8.784	5.830
Cumulative % of variance Explained		39.837	52.946	61.73	67.559

a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Source: Authors' Estimation

Fitness of one way Manova is shows in table 3. Wilks' Lambda value is 0.671 and F value is 40.480. Significant (p value < 0.05) for both intercept and role model. These results warrant fitness of one way MANOVA in the data.

Table 3: Fitness of one way MANOVA

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	0.264	29.727 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
	Wilks' Lambda	0.736	29.727 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
	Hotelling's Trace	0.360	29.727 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
	Roy's Largest Root	0.360	29.727 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
role_model	Pillai's Trace	0.329	40.480 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
	Wilks' Lambda	0.671	40.480 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
	Hotelling's Trace	0.490	40.480 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000
	Roy's Largest Root	0.490	40.480 <sup>a</sup>	3.000	248.000	0.000

a. Exact statistic

Source: Authors' Estimation

Table 4 refers to the fitness of the three models because current study had three dependent variables. All three models were significant as F value of positive word of mouth was 108.164, brand loyalty was 29.119 and purchase intention was 39.562 and associated p-values were less than 0.05 i.e. 0.000.

Table 4: Fitness of models

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	positive_wom	56.564 <sup>a</sup>	1	56.564	108.164	0.000
	brand_loyalty	20.943 <sup>b</sup>	1	20.943	29.119	0.000
	purchase_intention	24.547 <sup>c</sup>	1	24.547	39.562	0.000
Intercept	positive_wom	20.795	1	20.795	39.764	0.000
	brand_loyalty	35.846	1	35.846	49.84	0.000
	purchase_intention	38.689	1	38.689	62.354	0.000
role_model	positive_wom	56.564	1	56.564	108.164	0.000
	brand_loyalty	20.943	1	20.943	29.119	0.000
	purchase_intention	24.547	1	24.547	39.562	0.000
Error	positive_wom	130.737	250	0.523		
	brand_loyalty	179.806	250	0.719		
	purchase_intention	155.116	250	0.62		
Total	positive_wom	3122.222	252			
	brand_loyalty	2465.75	252			
	purchase_intention	2713	252			
Corrected Total	positive_wom	187.302	251			
	brand_loyalty	200.749	251			
	purchase_intention	179.663	251			

a. R Squared = .302 (Adjusted R Squared = .299)

b. R Squared = .104 (Adjusted R Squared = .101)

c. R Squared = .137 (Adjusted R Squared = .133)

Source: Authors' Estimation

Parameters estimate in table 5 showed that vicarious role model had significant effect on positive word of mouth because P-value is 0.000 that is less than 0.05. It was found that vicarious role model had substantial influence on brand loyal because P-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. It was also found that vicarious role model has significant influence on purchase intention because P-value is 0.000 that is less than 0.05.

Table 5: Parameter Estimates

Dependent Variable	Parameter	$\beta$	Std. Error	t-Stats	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
positive_wom	Intercept	1.308	0.207	6.306	0.000	0.900	1.717
	role_model	0.600	0.058	10.400	0.000	0.486	0.714
brand_loyalty	Intercept	1.717	0.243	7.060	0.000	1.238	2.196
	role_model	0.365	0.068	5.396	0.000	0.232	0.498
purchase_intention	Intercept	1.784	0.226	7.896	0.000	1.339	2.229
	role_model	0.395	0.063	6.290	0.000	0.272	0.519

Source: Authors' Estimation

Table 6: Hypotheses Assessment Summary

Hypothesis	Sig.	Decision
Celebrity endorsement has impact on word-of-mouth behaviour	0.000	Supported
Celebrity endorsement has impact on with brand loyalty	0.000	Supported
Celebrity endorsement has impact on purchase intension	0.000	Supported

Source: Authors' Estimation

Concisely, it was found that vicarious role model had significant impact on purchase intentions. It is also found that role model has significant impact on brand loyalty and positive word of mouth.

## Conclusion

The motivation behind this study was to distinguish the effect of vicarious role model on purchase and behavioral intention among young adults of Karachi between the ages of 15 and 35. Celebrity endorsement is independent variable. Positive word of mouth, purchase intention and brand loyalty are dependent variable. Factor analysis and multivariate techniques are used. Results show that vicarious role model has substantial influence on positive word of mouth. It is found that celebrity endorsement has significant influence on brand loyalty and purchase intention among young adults of Karachi.

## Discussions

The result of this study showed that when celebrities are considered as a role model, it has significant impact on positive word of mouth and brand loyalty. These results were found consistent with past studies (Makgosa, 2010; Grohmann et al., 2013). Moreover, this research presented that celebrities have significant impact on purchase intention, which was also conformed to past researches (Agarwal & Dubey, 2012; Jain et al., 2011; Zafar & Rafique, 2012). In addition to that, these findings were consistent with social learning theory. According to this theory behaviour, attitudes, norms and values were transferred from social agents to young adults through direct or indirect interaction. Results showed that young persons are influenced by social agents such as celebrities and they acquire behaviour patterns from social agents.

There were number of dimensions to the impact of celebrity endorsement. Limited information was the main reason to explore those dimensions. A large amount of literature was devoted to how effective endorser-audience and endorser product relationship influenced consumers (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005; Tingchi Liu, Huang, & Minghua, 2007; Jones & Schumann, 2000; Schaefer & Keillor, 1997). In this study, impacts of celebrity endorsement on different brand and product purchases had not been considered. Showbiz celebrities may have impact on behavioral and purchase intentions for fashion related products. Similarly, sports celebrities may have impact on behavioural and purchase intentions for sports related products.



This research paper had some limitations. These limitations could change the representations of the findings. Major limitation was time constraint. This study was only based on the young adults of Karachi, Pakistan. It was difficult to collect data from those who were not educated and were not familiar with English language.

These findings may help to understand the role of celebrities when they are treated as vicarious role model and these celebrities could be from sports, showbiz, etc. There are various types of role model and researchers are suggested to use both indirect as well as direct role model because parents, teachers and group leaders are also taken as role model.

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