Celebrity endorsement and purchase intention: The case of Toyota Vios in Vietnam

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>DOI:10.46223/HCMCOUJS.econ.en.12.1.2165.2022</p> <p>Received: January 18th, 2022 Revised: February 04th, 2022 Accepted: February 15th, 2022</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i> attractiveness; celebrity endorsement; credibility; expression power; imitation behaviors; product-image match; purchasing intention; peer influence; self-satisfaction</p>	<p>This study investigates how celebrity characteristics (including credibility, attractiveness, product-image match), personal characteristics (including self - satisfaction and expression power), and social characteristics (including peer influence) influence consumer purchasing behavior via imitation behavior in the case Toyota Vios brand. A questionnaire-based survey of 306 respondents across Vietnam was conducted using convenience and snowball sampling methods. Online and face-to-face interviews were conducted. A structural equation modelling approach was used to analyze the data. The results show that the three celebrity characteristics, personal characteristics, and social characteristics have a significant impact on the consumer's intention to purchase through imitation behavior. Practical implications were provided to assist companies in improving their performance.</p>

1. Introduction

In today's competitive market, the usage of a particular logo, emblem, and distinction to differentiate from certain products is all that the business attempts to create a brand (Armstrong, Adam, Denize, & Kotler, 2014). In particular, when the company launches a product or service of good quality, this element is not an absolute determinant of the company's success in a competitive market (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013). Understanding potential customers and choosing the right communication tool for a company's products and services is one of the most critical factors a company must recognize (Armstrong et al., 2014). There are various means to promote the brand, and using celebrity endorsement is among the choices of marketing methods that help a brand grows (Friedman, Termini, & Washington, 1976).

There has been an explosion of young musicians in the Vietnamese entertainment sector, with names such as Suboi, Issac, Khoi My, Vu Cat Tuong, Duc Phuc, and Erik appearing in advertising used by the corporation to market its brand since it began to grow in 2015 in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2017). In addition, some companies invite celebrities to represent the company's brand in many different products, such as cars, smartphones, cosmetics, and food. McCracken (1989) contended that with the relevance of celebrities, attractiveness, dynamic image, and brands combined with certain groups of fans and public awareness, the artist is expected to attract the attention of the audience while creating a positive attitude for the several products that lead to

imitations and consumer buying intent. As a result, Toyota Vios - a class of mid-range automobiles combining Thailand and Japan - selects celebrities to promote the brand, as do many other manufacturers. Toyota Vios has been on the market in Vietnam since 2003, and it has quickly become a sensation that is well-liked by consumers and chosen by many customers in the struggle for market share.

In fact, looking through the lenses of commercial benefits, advertising by celebrities boost customer awareness of the brand while also giving chances to expand the brand and increase revenue for the company as well as expand consumer group (Freire, Quevedo-Silva, Senise, & Scrivano, 2018; Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999). Once again, in 2018, the company stepped up its branding campaign to create a deep impression as well as increase brand recognition from customers when Toyota Vios released a new generation of breakthrough automobiles with a motto "No Quality - No Life". In particular, the company officially introduced the short film "Value-added service chain" about Toyota Vios with the participation of the main actor, the music artist Rap Suboi - and also the brand ambassador of Toyota in Vietnam on the entertainment channel. Suboi has been dubbed the "Queen of Vietnam hip-hop music" by many foreign publications. She is also recognized for the image of a girl rap personality in front of US President Barack Obama, which has garnered worldwide attention (Thanh Huong, 2017). The rapper's achievements are all the first-time Vietnamese artists achieved on the international market, the "boom" that others have to respect. In March 2015, Suboi surpassed more than 15,000 other candidates, becoming one of the artists participating in the world's largest music festival SXSW (South by Southwest) in the United States. In the advertising field, Suboi is involved in the promotion campaign of a global brand with ambassador status. Suboi and illustrious photographer Jean-Paul Goude made a set of photos for the H&M x Kenzo brand. With such continuous success, therefore, Suboi is invited to be a brand spokesperson for Toyota Vios as part of their marketing plan (Thuy Lien, 2016).

At the same time, celebrities, as well as marketers, are under pressure to find the appeal and attention of consumers. The celebrity's promotion of products through traditional marketing methods such as distributing leaflets or mailing to customers leads to dissatisfaction from customers (Dima, Teodorescu, & Gifu, 2014). Therefore, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers is not effective for a company's product. To overcome this situation, celebrities need to find specific modern communication methods such as promoting products through "Social Media" to attract as well as communicate with consumers (Dima et al., 2014). Moreover, according to previous studies, the impact of celebrity endorsement on customer transactions also allows the use of the celebrity's characteristics features, that is, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness (Gauns, Pillai, Kamat, Chen, & Chang, 2018). In fact, little has been done to integrate the influence of celebrity endorsement ads on consumer buying by way of a combination of three personality traits that are the core attributes of celebrities (credibility, product-image match, attractiveness), social characteristics (peer influence) and personal characteristics (self - satisfaction, expression of power) (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013). Thus, our study wants to bridge this research gap. More specifically, the objectives of our study are to identify and evaluate the effects of celebrity endorsements on purchase intention via imitation behavior of Toyota Vios's customers.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Background theories

Our work relies on theories of Meaning transfer theory (McCracken, 1989) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 2006) when analyzing the impact of ads that endorses celebrities on customer sales of current goods.

2.1.1. Social learning theory

The theory of social learning is commonly employed in several businesses in the media and product ads industries (Bandura, 2006). It is based on social actors that predict consumer behavior (Kitayama & Uskul, 2011). Social actors support individuals to achieve inspiration and demonstrate positive behaviors through overt or indirect contact (Manz & Sims, 1980). The theory of social learning may describe the effect on customer habits from celebrities, who are deemed endorsers by third parties (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988). It has a significant effect as third-party endorsers need to understand how to talk and behave; for example, a celebrity needs to recognize which items to use to manipulate people. Celebrity factors such as charisma and reliability can make people ready to imitate them (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015). Therefore, the social theory explains that celebrity endorsements in advertising affect consumers' intentions because they watch, listen, observe, and want to use products that celebrities choose (Roozen & Claeys, 2010).

2.1.2. Meaning transfer theory

According to McCracken (1989), if being done correctly, a celebrity will turn a common collection of definitions into the advertised product. There are three phases to discuss in this theory, namely culture, endorsement, and consumption.

2.1.3. Culture

The idea of this theory is that celebrities are used more in advertising than anonymous models because celebrities are seen as inspiration and power to viewers. So, the problem is why celebrities are being used in ads, what impact does a celebrity has on the advertisement, brands, and customers, and how celebrities have so much interest in adding significance to the process (McCracken, 1989).

2.1.4. Endorsement

One branch of the theory is that choosing a celebrity depends on the context and publicity campaign they represent (Schimmelpfennig, 2018). In particular, the campaign is represented in four different stages, from deciding symbolic qualities budget to selecting the most suitable celebrity and designing a complete campaign. Therefore, the advertisement often has to demonstrate the parallels between brands and celebrities to encourage customers to embrace the message (Schimmelpfennig, 2018).

2.1.5. Consumption

The sense of going from producer to customer, because celebrities play an important role by establishing themselves at the end of the cycle of sense transition, makes celebrities the most important factor in this period (McCracken, 1989). Celebrities who build themselves are always attractive and successful to be consumers who inspire consumers and, at the same time, get admiration from consumers (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013). Therefore, celebrities can provide some meaning to consumers because when celebrities are involved in the authentication process, consumers are given the same meaning by celebrities available in material form. In addition, celebrities are considered key figures because they have created strong, clear, and coherent personalities that everyone is looking for (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013).

2.2. Celebrity endorsement

People who are recognized and able to influence individuals in society are called celebrities (Lee & Thorson, 2008). Celebrities also have unique qualities, including attractiveness, lavish

lifestyle, and special skills (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008). Celebrities have widespread popularity and appearance in public events, television, newspapers, fashion shows, and particularly advertisements (Eisend & Langner, 2010). A celebrity promoting a firm's product has become highly common, implying instant awareness of the brand (Till & Busler, 1998).

2.3. Dimensions of celebrity characteristics

2.3.1. Credibility of celebrity characteristics

To what degree an individual sees the source with appropriate qualifications, expertise, or experience is called trustworthy (Stacks, 2019). That means the degree to which the person trusts the source in providing accurate and unbiased information. Expertise and credibility are two significant reputational factors. Expertise is described as a celebrity's cognitive capacity to render a legitimate application (Hani, Marwan, & Andre, 2018). Ad acceptance depends on the credibility of celebrities and the ability of people to rate the product. A source must be trustworthy and ethical in order to be considered persuasive (Elleström, 2018). In fact, by an internalization process, specialists and reputable outlets become more credible and more dominant on values, views, behaviors. This cycle of localization occurs as customers embrace celebrity opinions. After that, the idea-collection should be incorporated into the customer trust network and held forever. A credible source is critical when public sentiment is negative about the product/brand (Belch & Belch, 2004). Thus, we formulate a hypothesis as follows.

H1: Credibility affects customer's imitation behavior positively

2.3.2. Attractiveness of celebrity characteristics

The principle of source attraction indicates that the reception of the message is based on the celebrity's uniqueness, skill, and familiarity. The connection between a celebrity and the public, the willingness to be affectionate with the celebrity's behavior, and presence via empathy is the celebrity's awareness by contact (Kim & Na, 2007). Identity occurs when the target audience is defined themselves with celebrities and tends to accept celebrity attitudes, beliefs, habits, and opinions. In this case, the brand is considered to have inherited the celebrity's attraction when the celebrity has established a feeling of stability with the brand. Some celebrities draw attention to ads but not products or brands. An attractive celebrity is believed to promote brand identification but does not increase message retrieval. Advertisers must ensure that advertising messages attract the attention of consumers (Reid & Soley, 1983). Thus, we have a hypothesis as below.

H2: Attractiveness affects customer's imitation behavior positively

2.3.3. Product-image match of celebrity characteristics

The persuasion of a celebrity endorsement is described as a feature of how the picture of the endorsement suits the product the celebrity is displaying (Homer & Kahle, 1988). The relevance of celebrities and products is thought to be a key component in deciding the influence of celebrity endorsement (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). Specifically, previous studies indicate that the influence in a physical appeal is reciprocal and conclude that celebrity endorsing is more successful than unattractive desirable spokeswoman items (e.g., perfumes, cosmetics, and hair care goods) (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Conversely, practical, technology-related goods may not produce this sort of effect owing to the irrelevance of commodity style attractiveness (Till & Busler, 2000). Hence the level of trustworthiness and efficacy required for the brand is the consequence of the maximum relevance to the lowest relevance between the celebrity's public identity and the company (Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Roth & Romeo, 1992). Hence, a hypothesis was formed below.

H3: Product-image match affects customer's imitation behavior positively

2.4. Personal characteristics

Personal characteristics are features specific to one individual and may not involve other people in the same group (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). Such characteristics include the manner in which an individual (i.e., a consumer) creates particular tastes and behaviors and the judgment and decision of a customer on buying a commodity. Decisions when assessing particular considerations can be affected by popular image, celebrity, or spectator (Koustelios, 2001). Consumers are looking for products that fulfill their basic needs and desires. The actions of customers are far greater than what the buyers pay (Cross & Dixit, 2005). It seeks to explain how the decision-making cycle takes place and how it impacts the actions of customers. Therefore, consumers purchasing a particular commodity are also not easy to negotiate with since the solution is trapped in the head of the buyer.

2.5. Dimensions of personal characteristics

2.5.1. Self - satisfaction of personal characteristics

In the case of celebrity endorsements, consumers are pleased with the photos of a celebrity being passed by when purchasing products or services and the attention they earn (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015). Individuals, practices, and organizations are less important than selves (Baumeister, 1991). It is the person responsible for the formation of definitions; in particular, the entity carries out the function of constructing a coherent structure, utilizing all sorts of cultural elements and at the same time trying to conform human factors to cultural factors (Theodorakis, Malliou, Papaioannou, Beneca, & Filactakidou, 1996). Hence the main aim is to align one-self's subjective influences with the empirical elements of culture. The belief that individuals should mimic celebrities' conduct makes them happy and is easy to obey and accept by others (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015). Self - satisfaction is used to assess the position of imitation that the behavior performs. Therefore, it is reasonable to formulate a hypothesis below.

H4: Self - satisfaction affects customer's imitation behavior positively

2.5.2. Expression of power of personal characteristics

In interpersonal relationships, power is defined as an asymmetry (e.g., asymmetry in knowledge or dependence) (Nelson & Aboud, 1985; Simon, 1953). Asymmetry in partnerships usually comes from the capacity to possess wealth, such as the right to contest or control an unchangeable object, such as photographs and information (Noë, van Schaik, & van Hooff, 1991; Smith & Parker, 1976). One may mimic acquiring any information or intelligence and projecting it to manifest a superior force and surrounding resources. Besides, power is a more general term as it encompasses both supremacy and influence, whereas supremacy is stated as strength-dependent or force-threatening (Nye, 1990). Therefore, customers often imitate celebrity behaviors to prove themselves as powerful people; this element is called expression of power. Hence, we form a hypothesis as below.

H5: Expression of power affects customer's imitation behavior positively

2.6. Social characteristics

Social influences have an enormous impact on customer behavior. The growing person has someone around who affects their decision to purchase. Essential social influences are a community, relatives, position, and level of comparison (Perreault, 2014). Each customer is a person but is still part of a collective. The group, the consumer, belongs to is called the membership group (Perreault, 2014).

2.7. Dimensions of social characteristics

Peer influence of Social Characteristics

Peer influence is a trend in which an individual appears to be affected by a peer's way of living and thought (Piehler, 2011). It contributes to a condition where there is an acceptable mindset in a community. Effective peer mediation requires knowledge of the connection between each other's emotions, attitudes, and needs (Stafford, 2004). Effective peer influence involves an awareness of the connection between the emotions, behavior, and needs of each other (Stafford, 2004). People that are more geared towards social interaction indicate a tendency to agree with other "wishes" and the ability to embrace and benefit from others. The first is the standard influence, and the other is the impact of knowledge. This also means that the individual wants to boost his appearance by literature on assets (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). For example, when a customer who is greatly affected by the group is impressed (i.e., celebrity) selectively and through their actions, it may affect customers directly or indirectly through the actions of celebrities. Thus, we formulate a hypothesis as follows.

H6: Peer influence affects customer's imitation behavior positively

2.8. Imitation behavior

Imitation is a learning mechanism that involves regulation over vision, awareness, expression, memory, and behavior (Meltzoff & Moore, 1994). This method includes two separate forms of activities: examining what one learns and replicating it. The significance of the period or position where imitation is conducted, the various characteristics of the situation being practiced, the status of the person taking action, and the social experience were addressed (Nehaniv, Polani, Dautenhahn, Beekhorst, & Cañamero, 2002). Imitation is an efficient means of understanding new functionality by building on the experience of others (Borenstein & Ruppín, 2005). This is an effective means of moving information from instructor to viewers utilizing a specific context (Hoffman, Grimes, Shon, & Rao, 2006). For the reasons mentioned above, consumers tend to imitate celebrity behaviors. Celebrities' behaviors will influence perception, which may promote understanding. It may also help consumers seek sense or attention.

2.9. Purchase intention

In choosing to purchase a brand or commodity, the decision to buy is decided by the consumers (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). There are a number of factors involved in a buying intention, such as the purchaser's willingness to create a sale, potential spending desires, and a repurchase decision (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Furthermore, a range of steps are included in the decision-making cycle for buying and repurchasing such goods from customers. The customer decision-making mechanism is clarified into five systems that require accreditation, quest details, alternative assessment, purchasing intentions (Belch & Belch, 2004). Therefore, the customer must complete all steps until they agree to buy a specific product.

2.10. The relationship between customer's imitation behavior and purchase intention

The purpose of the consumer to purchase is linked to the propensity to buy a specific brand or commodity (Belch & Belch, 2004). The intention to purchase also indicates the likelihood of purchasing the product (Phelps & Hoy, 1996). Imitation is a code of ethics with soft logic principles, and people select a behavior that is considered effective based on previous payments (Apesteguia, Huck, Oechssler, & Weidenholzer, 2010). Amos et al. (2008) suggest that a positive imitation of a customer with a celebrity endorsement will improve his/her buying intent; for example, many studies have also shown that customer imitations of brands have a significant effect

on purchase intent (Batra & Ray, 1986; Phelps & Hoy, 1996). Therefore, a hypothesis is formulated as follows.

H7: Customer's imitation behavior affects customer's purchase intention positively

Figure 1 depicts the research framework as presented below.

Figure 1. Research framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and sampling

We used a questionnaire-based survey for our study. The survey approach is time- and cost-effective. Respondents were of all ages and races who planned to purchase a Toyota Vios. Data was collected using a Google form through email and personal contacts. Our study used convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Prior to the collection of data, the questionnaire was pretested. The aim of the pretesting was to determine if there were any things that were challenging to address due to length of statement, anonymity, syntax or specific terms (Colton & Covert, 2015). Pre-testing also helped to improve construct validity (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). We found certain terminologies difficult to understand by the respondents. We thus provided a short explanation for a better understanding of the terms. The questionnaire was then updated on the basis of the pretest results to enhance readability and understandability. A total of 349 contacts was reached and returned a total of 306 valid answers, accounting for an 87.7% response rate.

3.2. Measurement scales

Our study used a five-point Likert scale to measure all observed variables, ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree). The measurement scales were taken and adapted from prior literature. Specifically, credibility with four items, attractiveness of celebrity endorsers with three items, self-satisfaction with three items, expression of power with three items, peer influence with three items, imitation behavior with five items, purchase intention with three items were taken from Awasthi and Choraria (2015), and product-image match with three items was adapted from Kutthakaphan and Chokesamritpol (2013) and Choi and Rifon (2012). Table 1 presents the scales and other scale statistics.

Table 1

Measurement Scale and responding measures

Construct	Code	Description	Factor loading (FL)	SMC	α	CR	AVE
Credibility	CRE1	The celebrity looks to be trustworthy in the commercial.	0.880***	0.527	0.897	0.898	0.688
	CRE2	In the commercial, the performers appear solemn.	0.878***	0.681			
	CRE3	In the advertisement, the celebrity shows are trustworthy.	0.825***	0.771			
	CRE4	The celebrity who appears in the ad is credible.	0.726***	0.774			
Product – Image match	IMA1	I think that the celebrity endorser is the right Toyota Vios representative.	0.727***	0.529	0.847	0.850	0.655
	IMA2	I immediately associated the celebrity endorsement with the Toyota Vios brand.	0.849***	0.721			
	IMA3	Toyota Vios' brand celebrity identity is congruent.	0.845***	0.713			
Self – satisfaction	SAT1	The actress used in the commercial for the Toyota Vios is attractive.	0.749***	0.562	0.839	0.840	0.636
	SAT2	The actor used in advertising Toyota Vios appears elegant.	0.820***	0.672			
	SAT3	I give more attention to the Toyota Vios commercial portrayed by a lovely/handsome actor.	0.821***	0.674			
Attractiveness	ATT1	Celebrities encourage me to make myself look good.	0.808***	0.548	0.824	0.830	0.619
	ATT2	When I follow the celebrities suggested by others/celebrities, I feel happy.	0.810***	0.657			
	ATT3	Celebrity-recommended products/services are worth purchasing.	0.741***	0.653			
Expression of power	EXP1	To get what I want, sometimes I need to use the valuable Toyota Vios brand to fight against others.	0.720***	0.636	0.775	0.778	0.539
	EXP2	I believe that owning a Toyota Vios product will dominate the inferior one.	0.681***	0.463			
	EXP3	In order to progress in life, I occasionally have to step on others by purchasing Toyota Vios value merchandise.	0.797***	0.519			
Peer Influence	PEE1	Before I buy, I see what they are doing and use my colleagues.	0.719***	0.517	0.784	0.787	0.555
	PEE2	My mates appreciate the products and the labels I choose.	0.669***	0.448			
	PEE3	I just purchase those things, and my friends approve of such products.	0.836***	0.699			
Imitation behavior	IMI1	I want to be just as skillful as film icons.	0.861***	0.742	0.915	0.918	0.692
	IMI2	I'm hoping to be as trendy as the characters in commercials.	0.862***	0.695			

Construct	Code	Description	Factor loading (FL)	SMC	α	CR	AVE
	IMI3	I, like renowned personalities, simply want to be fashionable.	0.834***	0.5			
	IMI4	Even I have tried to change aspects of my looks to resemble celebrities.	0.882***	0.778			
	IMI5	I adore and respect the celebrity.	0.707***	0.743			
Purchase intention	PUR1	I certainly would purchase the commodity that the celebrity endorses in the ad.	0.717***	0.514	0.783	0.790	0.557
	PUR2	I can buy the things that the celebrity promotes instead of the ones that aren't.	0.786***	0.618			
	PUR3	The ads focused on celebrities encourage me to buy a certain commodity that has been endorsed.	0.734***	0.539			

Note: *** significant at $p < .001$

Source: Author's calculation

4. Research findings

4.1. Demographic analysis

As observed in Table 1, the proportions of the two genders are approximately equal. As the graphic shows, the largest age demographic proportion belongs to the 18-25-year-old group with a rate of 43%, followed by the group of 26-a 35-year-old group with 35%. In addition, the majority of respondents reported themselves possessing a bachelor's degree (59%). Regarding occupation, there are 20% of the participants hold managerial positions, and 44% of the respondents are office workers. The remaining is of students, freelancers, and officers.

Table 2

Participants' profile

		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	147	48%
	Female	159	52%
Age	18-25 years old	132	43%
	26-35 years old	106	35%
	36-45 years old	45	15%
	Over 45 years old	23	8%
Education	High school	89	29%
	College or university	181	59%
	Graduate institute	36	12%
Occupation	Student	35	11%
	Officer	136	44%
	Manager/Director	60	20%
	Freelancer	75	25%

Source: Author's calculation

4.2. Measurement model assessment

Table 1 presents the Factor Loadings (FL), Squared Multiple Correlation (SMC) of all measured variables, and the Critical Ratio (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs in our measurement model. All FLs were significant at $p \leq .001$ as demonstrated in Table 1 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), and were $> .50$ (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019). All SMCs were well above the threshold value of .40 (Bollen, 1989). Following Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), all CRs, suggest that the measures are reliable and surpass the suggested values of .70. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), all AVEs were $> .50$, implying that the measurement model achieved convergence validity.

In terms of discriminant validity, Table 3 shows that no violation can be found because each construct's square root of AVE was greater than the association between it and any other construct, implying discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, the measurement model of our study is acceptable in validity and reliability. Furthermore, the model fit statistics revealed that $\chi^2 = 399.059$ ($df = 296$, $p = .000$), $CMIN/df = 1.348$, $SRMR = .039$, $CFI = .975$, and $RMSEA = .034$. Following Hu and Bentler (1999), this shows that the measurement model achieved an excellent fit.

Table 3

Discriminant validity

	CR	AVE	MSV	IMI	CRE	ATT	PUR	IMA	SAT	PEE	EXP
IMI	0.918	0.692	0.301	0.832							
CRE	0.898	0.688	0.301	0.549***	0.830						
ATT	0.830	0.619	0.255	0.505***	0.260***	0.787					
PUR	0.790	0.557	0.088	0.273***	0.093	0.251***	0.746				
IMA	0.850	0.655	0.127	0.323***	0.158*	0.275***	0.297***	0.809			
SAT	0.840	0.636	0.132	0.268***	0.363***	0.054	0.009	-0.102	0.798		
PEE	0.787	0.555	0.258	0.508***	0.324***	0.422***	0.213**	0.357***	0.153*	0.745	
EXP	0.778	0.539	0.256	0.496***	0.244***	0.379***	0.134†	0.263***	0.026	0.506***	0.734

Note: *** significant at $p < .001$. Diagonal figures are the square roots of AVE

Source: Author's calculation

4.3. Structural model assessment

An analysis of the structural model was subsequently carried out to verify all proposed hypotheses. Table 4 entails the results of the hypothesis testing. All hypotheses are statistically significant at different levels. Model fit measures revealed that $\chi^2 = 413.729$, $p = .000$ with 302 df. With the χ^2/df value of 1.370 being within the thresholds of 1 and 3, the model was proved to be parsimonious. The SRMR was .046, RMSEA was .035, while CFI was .973. Overall, all findings revealed that our model renders absolute and incremental goodness of fit from an acceptable to an excellent level (Hair et al., 2019; Hu & Bentler, 1999). All associations were significant statistically. Table 4 exhibits the findings from the structural model evaluation.

Table 4

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Estimate	C.R.	P-value	Decision
H1	CRE → IMI	0.243	6.66	***	Supported
H2	ATT → IMI	0.271	4.74	***	Supported
H3	IMA → IMI	0.131	2.37	0.018	Supported
H4	SAT → IMI	0.13	2.63	0.009	Supported
H5	PEE → IMI	0.182	3.51	***	Supported
H6	EXP → IMI	0.252	4.57	***	Supported
H7	IMI → PUR	0.3	3.7	***	Supported

Note: *** significant at $p < .001$

Source: Author's calculation

5. Discussion

Our study examines how celebrity characteristics, personal characteristics, and social characteristics impact consumer buying behavior via imitation behavior using the case Toyota Vios brand. Our findings are similar to other studies resulting in consumers' imitation and continue to influence their buying intent (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Knoll & Matthes, 2017). Our study emphasizes that imitation behavior is to plays a significant role in influencing public perceptions about advertising for celebrities, which is in line with Awasthi and Choraria (2015). This demonstrates the attraction, credibility, and product-match image of celebrities affects consumers' attitudes through the mediating role of imitation behavior (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015; Eisend & Langner, 2010; Simmers, Damron-Martinez, & Haytko, 2009). A celebrity who is attractive and credible would have more chances of persuading customers if they imitate her mannerisms (Awasthi & Choraria, 2015). If the public imitates celebrity image, an attractive and credible celebrity will have better odds of impressing clients. Customer satisfaction often affects behavior through the mediation of emulation (e.g., Awasthi & Choraria, 2015). This implies an ad that promotes a celebrity's copycat behavior, and its conduct would then be imitated by the community, would be beneficial for consumers who are self-pleased, which is consistent to Anwar and Gulzar (2011). It is also proved that the expression of power is found to directly influence the attitude of celebrity advertising (Nadeau, Balsan, & Rochlen, 2016). This shows that consumers who want to display control are in favor of celebrity deals and don't automatically imitate celebrity behavior. As the connection between imitation behavior and purchasing intention is the strongest effect, there are many previous studies proving this significant relationship, for example, Inkon (2013).

5.1. Practical implications

Following our findings, several practical implications are provided for marketing managers to increase their sales using celebrity endorsements to affect customer purchase intentions. First, the selection of a suitable celebrity for specific consumer segments is critical. If a celebrity is imitated, then it has a better chance of making the advertisement prosper. Therefore, companies, as well as marketing managers, should pick testimonials with high coverage, particularly in the automobile industry, so choose the endorsers who are professionals to provide reviews of car, and they also have credibility as well as trust from the community and appreciated by the customers. Second, celebrity advertisements must be designed in such a manner that they encourage

consumers to copy them. When individuals mimic celebrity acts, the challenge is to combine the value proposition and the utilization of market offerings into the unique characteristics of the celebrity actions that they emulate. Third, the study has reaffirmed the significance of consumers' attitudes regarding celebrity endorsements and advertisements. Creating a good attitude towards the commercial will increase the likelihood of clients making purchases as a result of the marketing.

5.2. Limitations and further research

There are certain drawbacks in our study. First, this study is only done for customers who buy Toyota Vios cars in Vietnam using convenience and snowball sampling methods. If the study is repeated but uses probability sampling, generalization of the findings may be achieved. Second, there are only three characteristics corresponding to six factors, namely: Celebrity characteristics (i.e., credibility, attractiveness, product-image match), personal characteristics (i.e., self-satisfaction and expression power), and social characteristics (i.e., peer influence) appearing in the model whereas other factors, for example, culture, can influence results as well. Therefore, future studies should be done using other elements of celebrity endorsement. Third, the quantitative approach does not provide insight into how celebrities inspire customers. Future research may use a qualitative approach to gain a better insight with regard to the thorough perception of celebrities' effect on customer buying intentions.

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