# ETHNOCENTRISM AS A MODERATOR ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CELEBRITY'S SOURCE CREDIBILITY AND THE PURCHASE INTENTION OF COSMETIC PRODUCTS AMONG MALAYSIANS

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTANCY UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH 2019



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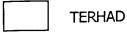
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### ABSTRACT

Globalization has led to an increased competition as firms expand their coverage including various domestic and international markets. One of the industries that has been influenced by the globalization is the cosmetic industry. This industry has been growing and expanding around the world in both developed and developing countries. As a result, customers have a growing selection of purchase options, including an increasing proportion of foreign products and brands. It is clear that there is a need for better understanding of the factors that determine the choice of consumers of domestic and foreign products in different market settings. One of the strategies that are used by companies to differentiate their cosmetic products is through celebrity endorsement. Other than that, another important factor that affects consumers' purchase intention is the consumer ethnocentrism level. Consumers in different countries have different preference over local and international celebrity. Thus, the objective of this research is to propose a suitable approach and develop a conceptual framework to examine the factors influencing the purchase intention of cosmetic products. The study has used the Partial Least Square statistical analysis to test the model developed through an empirical sample size of 189 respondents. The results have shown that attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity endorser had significant positive relationship on the cosmetic product purchase intention. Moreover, the moderating role of consumer ethnocentrism between the attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness and cosmetic product purchase intention were analyzed. Based on the results obtained, the attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of a celebrity endorser would be able to increase the purchase intention of the endorsed product. The outcome of the study also indicated that when the ethnocentrism of consumer is higher, the attractiveness and trustworthiness are stronger. The finding of this study could help cosmetic products marketers to design more suitable ads in terms of celebrity characteristics and understand the role of consumer ethnocentrism in the consumer's decision making. Local and international companies interested in expanding their cosmetic products market in Malaysia could consider the findings of this study while drafting a more effective strategy to better market their products and to encourage higher cosmetic products purchase intention. Therefore, companies would be able stand out of the chaos by using endorser which is more suitable to reach the consumers in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Cosmetic products purchase intention, ethnocentrism, attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness



#### ABSTRAK

### PERANAN ETNOSENTRISME SEBAGAI PENGANTARA DALAM HUBUNGAN ANTARA SELEBRITI SUMBER KREDIBILITI DAN NIAT PEMBELIAN PRODUK KOSMETIK DIKALANGAN PENDUDUK MALAYSIA

Globalisasi telah membawa kepada persaingan yang semakin meningkat apabila firma mengembangkan liputan mereka termasuk pelbagai pasaran domestik dan antarabangsa. Salah satu industri yang telah dipengaruhi oleh globalisasi ialah industri kosmetik. Industri ini sedang berkembang di seluruh dunia termasuk di negara maju dan juga negara sedang membangun. Hasilnya, pelanggan mempunyai banyak pilihan pembelian termasuk peningkatan jumlah produk dan jenama asing. Adalah jelas bahawa terdapat keperluan bagi memahami faktor-faktor yang menentukan pilihan pengguna bagi produk domestik dan asing dalam tetapan pasaran yang berbeza. Salah satu strategi yang digunakan oleh syarikat untuk membezakan produk kosmetik mereka adalah melalui duta selebriti. Selain daripada itu, satu lagi faktor penting yang mempengaruhi niat pembelian pengguna adalah tahap etnosentrisme pengguna. Pengguna di negara yang berbeza mempunyai pilihan berbeza terhadap selebriti tempatan dan antarabangsa. Oleh itu, objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mencadangkan pendekatan yang sesuai dan membangunkan rangka kerja konseptual untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi niat pembelian produk kosmetik. Kajian ini menggunakan analisis statistik Partial Least Square untuk menguji model yang dibangunkan melalui saiz sampel empirikal dengan menggunakan 189 orang subjek. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa daya tarikan, kepakaran dan kepercayaan terhadap selebriti mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan terhadap niat membeli produk kosmetik. Selain itu, peranan etnosentrisme pengguna antara daya tarikan, kepakaran dan kepercayaan dengan niat membeli produk kosmetik dianalisa. Berdasarkan hasil yang diperoleh, daya tarikan, kepercayaan dan kepakaran seseorang duta selebriti dapat meningkatkan niat pembelian produk yang diendorskan. Hasil kajian turut menunjukkan bahawa apabila etnosentrisme pengguna lebih tinggi, daya tarikan dan kepercayaan akan lebih kuat. Penemuan kajian ini dapat membantu pemasar produk kosmetik untuk merancang iklan yang lebih sesuai dari segi ciri-ciri selebriti dan memahami peranan etnosentrisme pengguna dalam membuat keputusan pengguna. Syarikat-syarikat tempatan dan antarabangsa yang berminat untuk memperluaskan pasaran produk kosmetik mereka di Malaysia boleh mempertimbangkan penemuan kajian ini sambil merangka strategi yang lebih berkesan untuk memasarkan produk mereka dengan lebih baik dan untuk menggalakkan niat pembelian produk kosmetik yang lebih tinggi. Oleh itu, syarikat akan dapat menonjol dari kekacauan dengan menggunakan duta yang lebih sesuai untuk mendekati pengguna di Malaysia.

# *Kata kunci:* Niat membeli produk kosmetik, etnosentrisme, daya tarikan, kepakaran, kepercayaan



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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AT	-	Attractiveness
CETSCALE	-	Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale
CPPI	-	Cosmetic product purchase intention
EC	-	Ethnocentrism
EXP	-	Expertise
PLS-SEM	-	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modeling
SPSS	-	Stastistical Package for Social Science
TR	-	Trustworthiness
тν	-	Television
US	-	United States



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# **CHAPTER 1**

### INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Background and Motivation

Nowadays, consumers are overwhelmed with images of celebrities regularly which the trend is more obviously supported by actors or actresses, athletes, other celebrities and famous athletes that appears as the endorser who is closely related to both the products and the target audience (Slinker, 1984; Miller, 1969). Celebrities are not only endorsing a variety of consumer products, but they are also found gracing the covers of magazines which can aid in familiarization of celebrities (McCormick, 2016). They have a distinctive position in the landscape of advertising due to their careers and also from the constant attention received through media. Celebrity endorsements enjoy enduring fame as a way to improve marketing communications (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2016).

When celebrity endorsement is used for a brand, they can attract more attention to the advertisement, breakthrough the confusion of competing brands and have a greater influence on consumer's attitudes and buying intentions. Celebrities have the ability to make people notice what they endorse and determine an immediate identity or persona for a product or brand (Worchel and Cooper, 1979). Some companies enter deals with celebrities having the expectation that this will help them stand out from the chaos and give them a matchless and important position in the minds of consumers (Temperley and Tangen, 2006). These celebrities then act as the spokespersons or endorsers to publicize and market the company's products, services or ideas. In modern marketing, celebrity endorsement has become very popular as one of the most well-known medium in improving marketing communications (Amos et al., 2008; Choi and Rifon, 2007).

A global study found that TV advertising featuring celebrities is typically used on every continent, although there are great differences in prevalence



between countries (Praet, 2001). Lately, the number of celebrities promoting the brand through different online environments are increasing (Wood and Burkhalter, 2014). According to Praet (2001), celebrity endorsement is noticeably more common in Asian countries than in Europe and United States (US). This was proved by a cross-national comparison of 6,359 TV ads from 25 countries, found celebrities in less than 15% of the ads in a number of European countries and the US, while the share in Asia ranged from 25% in China to 61% in South Korea.

Some scholars such as Sherry and McGrath (1989), O'Guinn and Faber (1989), McCracken (1989, 1988, 1986), Mick (1986), Atkin and Block (1983), suggested that celebrity endorsers represent symbolic meanings that go beyond those directly contained in them. McCracken (1989) proposed an example of meaning transfer process are celebrity endorsement. The meaning is allocated in the physical and social world established by the prevailing culture. It then transfers to consumer goods from the culturally established world through advertising and fashion systems and next from consumer goods to individual consumers' lives via the efforts of the consumers. Therefore, in this transfer, celebrity endorsement plays an important role.

Given the factors above, it can be claimed that the selection of a celebrity for endorsement is a crucial, difficult, and risky decision. One way to reduce the risk of choosing celebrities is to choose those perceived as credible, this is because the majority of empirical evidence has shown that a more persuasive celebrity will be a more credible source (Bannister, 1986; Lirtzman and Shuv-Ami, 1986; Moore, Hausknecht, and Thamodaran, 1986; Maddux and Rogers, 1980; Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Fireworker and Friedman, 1977; Kamen, Azhan, and Kragh, 1975). Ohanion (1990) stated that "Source credibility" is a term commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message. This construct has been operationalized as including a variety of dimensions, such as trustworthiness (Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, 1953; Bowers and Phillips, 1967; Whitehead, 1968; Applbaum and Anatol, 1972; DeSarbo and Richard, 1985), expertness (Hovland et al., 1953; Applbaum and Anatol, 1972; Simpson and Kahler, 1980-81; DeSarbo and Richard, 1985; Wynn, 1987), dynamism (Whitehead, 1968; Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz, 1969; Applbaum and Anatol, 1972; Simpson and





Kahler, 1980-81; Wynn, 1987), objectivity (Whitehead, 1968; Applbaum and Anatol, 1972), attractiveness (DeSarbo and Richard, 1985), likability (DeSarbo and Richard, 1985), believability (Simpson and Kahler, 1980-81; Wynn, 1987), and sociability (Wynn, 1987; Simpson and Kahler, 1980-81).

Celebrity endorsement's study and reflection are divided into two general models which are the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model (Wei and Li, 2013). The source credibility model resulted from a landmark study by Hovland et al., (1953). They studied the factors that led to the perceived credibility of the communicator and concluded that two factors which are, expertness and trustworthiness would emphasize the concept of source credibility. While the source-attractiveness model is a model of McGuire (1958) that has its origins in the social psychological research and is a component of the "source valence" model. The attractiveness model emphasises that the effectiveness of a message depends on the source's "familiarity," "likability," "similarity," and "attractiveness" towards the respondent (McGuire, 1958).

Due to market globalization, more firms worldwide large and small, embrace global marketing as a feasible business expansion strategy. There have been an overabundance of goods and services either foreign or locally produced available in the market. Consumers around the world have numerous selections of products and services from various countries. As firms expand into global markets, they face several critical decision alternatives, including entry modes, production locations, promotions and advertising, which have an important impact on corporate global performance. The choices of specific strategic alternatives that are made may also have significant impacts on consumer product evaluations.

One of the important factors that affect consumers during decision making is the consumer ethnocentrism level. According to Shimp and Sharma (1987), consumer ethnocentrism focuses on the consumer loyalty to locally produced goods also the appropriateness and morality perceived when purchasing foreign goods. Furthermore, consumer ethnocentrism predictive ability of the buying intention varies from country to country (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, and Melewar, 2001). The theoretical basis of this behaviour can be traced to Sumner's (1906)



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general construct of ethnocentrism that is "the view of things in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it".

Consumers in a developed country generally would most likely to have a higher quality perception of domestic products than foreign products. This perception will tend to increase the influence of consumer ethnocentrism on the rejection of foreign products and the purchase of domestic products (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2001). However, in developing countries, the opposite has been observed such as Romania and Turkey (Ger et al., 1993), China (Li, Fu, and Murray, 1997), and India (Batra et al., 2000). Consumers in these developing countries perceive products from foreign countries, especially those made in higher origin countries, as being greater in quality compared to domestic or local products. For example, **\*** Vietnamese (developing-country) consumers prefer Japanese (developed-country) brands over domestic brands (Kim and Tania, 2017) also according to Wang and Chen (2004), in China, consumers prefer to purchase foreign products such as apparel and automobiles from developed countries. Even ethnocentric consumers would perceive foreign products as having higher quality, particularly if the country of origin has a better image (Yagci, 2001).

According to Brodowsky (1998), individuals or consumers with high levels of ethnocentrism have positive beliefs and attitudes towards buying products that are locally produced. Pecotich and Rosenthal (2001) also found that ethnocentrism had a direct effect on consumer's views in regard to price and purchase intentions, but not product quality. Therefore, it is beneficial for researchers, marketers and advertisers to identify the level of ethnocentrism among consumers in Malaysia so that they can better appeal or meet customer needs and wants.

### 1.2 Research Problem

The cosmetic industry has been growing and expanding around the world in both developed and developing countries. The continued growth and evolution of the cosmetic industry offer good opportunities for those interested in the business to promote their cosmetic products (Ministry of Health, Malaysia, 2009). According to the U.S. Commercial Service (2014), Asia Pacific market value has increased to





more than US\$ 70 billion, which makes it as the second highest after the Western European market. Asian cosmetics market has become one of the fastest growing markets.

Beauty and health market in Malaysia are growing rapidly. The rate of consumer spending on cosmetics and toiletries increased by 40% from the year 1995 to 2007 (Swidi et al., 2010) and projecting sales volume to continue increasing by time. According to the statistics department of Malaysia, total spending on cosmetics and toiletries is about US\$ 407 million in 2013. Malaysian consumers tend to obtain beauty products from top name brands that are marketing specifically in term of enhancing youthful appearance (The U.S. Commercial Service, 2014). Among the sale of cosmetics and toiletries, Skincare products and eye cosmetics colour represented around US\$ 229 million and US\$ 20.6 million respectively by value in 2013, followed by powder make-up, lip make-up preparation, manicure and pedicure (The U.S. Commercial Service, 2014).

Consumers' interest has been affected by heavy advertising, marketing and the growing prosperity that increased their interest in premium brands (Hassali et al. 2015). According to the U.S. Commercial Service (2014), Malaysia's market of cosmetics and toiletries has a growth rate of 13% per year. In Malaysia, there are more than 60,000 kinds of cosmetics available in the local market (Ministry of Health, Malaysia, 2009). Cosmetics business in Malaysia tends to use competitive strategies to promote a high discount for cosmetics brand and sales instalments for expensive products (Hassali et al. 2015). Meanwhile, for the inexpensive products, advertising in the media and magazines are the most effective way to increase the purchase of cosmetic products among consumers (The U.S. Commercial Service, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2015). Besides, promoting the prestige cosmetics brand in the local magazine in Malaysia as well as advertising in magazines around the world made a lot of American and European cosmetic brands popular and famous among Malaysian consumers (Hassali et al. 2015).

Moreover, thanks to the global trade that consumers are able to purchase not only local products but also international products easily (Kim, 2012). Therefore, consumers would be having a higher number of product choices which either have



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advertisement and whether celebrity endorsers are used or not as an advertisement strategy. Consumers would be exposed to a vast number of celebrity endorsers, either international or local celebrity endorser through the certain products that hire a celebrity as the product endorser (Kim, 2012). This would be a difficult time for consumers to choose since there are many factors influencing the purchase intention.

Other than that, consumers' ethnocentrism level is also an important factor that influences the consumers' decision making. Consumers in different countries have different preference over local and international products. Research from the United States, Canada and some other developed countries commonly backing the belief that ethnocentric consumers are overrate the domestic products, underrate imports, have the preference for, and feel the moral obligation to buy domestic goods (Wang et al., 2000; Sharma et al., 1995; Netemeyer et al., 1991; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). This perception would tend to enhance the influence of consumer ethnocentrism on both the purchase of domestic and the rejection of foreign products (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2001). However, in developing countries the reverse has been observed such as in Romania and Turkey (Ger et al., 1993), India (Batra et al., 2000) and China (Li et al., 1997). In these developing countries, consumers generally perceive foreign products, particularly those made in higher origin countries, as being of higher quality than domestic products (Batra et al., 2000; Li et al., 1997; Ger et al., 1993). Even if some of the consumers are ethnocentric but they would still perceive foreign products to be of higher quality (Yagci, 2001). This situation has posed confusing effect and implication about ethnocentrism in marketing and consumer behaviour studies (Isa et al. 2016; Wong et al. 2008).

Furthermore, Wong et al. (2008), stated that while globalization suggests the world is becoming more similar, it is still the case that marketers need to understand this phenomenon within each market, as subtle differences may have substantial implications for practice. Ethnocentrism dimensions may be important in some contexts, but it appears that they may not have global relevance, or at least that relevance varies globally (Wong et al., 2008). However, the inconsistent results found in earlier studies highlight that further studies are needed to investigate the





influence of consumers' ethnocentrism tendencies associated with purchase intention (Isa et al. 2016; Qing et al. 2012; Aneela et al. 2011; Wong et al. 2008). This supports the inclusion of ethnocentrism construct in this study.

Globalization has led to an increased competition as firms expand their coverage including various domestic and international markets. As a result, customers have a growing selection of purchases selections, including an increasing proportion of foreign products and brands. Consumer perceptions and attitudes about their willingness to accept foreign products are becoming increasingly critical for marketers (Klein et al., 2006). It is clear that there is a need for better understanding of the factors that determine the choice of consumers of domestic and foreign products in different market settings (Orth and Firbasova, 2003; Netemeyer et al., 1991). The concept of ethnocentrism, in particular, is a sociological concept that refers to the tendency to regard one's beliefs, standards and codes of conduct as higher than those in other societies (Bizumic, 2015). Ethnocentrism that has historically gained a lot of attention by sociologists and psychologists has now become important in marketing literature (Jacoby, 1978; Shimp and Sharma, 1987). Globalization has made the role of consumer ethnocentrism as an important factor in marketing (Caruana, 2005).

The importance of ethnocentricity becomes a critical issue when one considers the increasing trend toward free trade and the high rate at which national economies are turning global. Over the years, consumer's feeling of foreign products is a subject of good interest. Therefore, marketers need to understand the user's ethnocentric tendencies to develop effective marketing and communication strategies within and beyond the borders of the country. Some studies have examined the factors related to the purchase of foreign products in the domestic market (Shimp and Sharma, 1987; Netemeyer et al., 1991; Klein et al., 1998; Klein 2002; Samiee et al., 2005). In general, through these studies it was found that consumer ethnocentrism was a significant influence on the willingness of consumers to purchase foreign products (Wang and Chen 2004); undeniably, it has been emphasized that ethnocentrism gives a stronger influence than the marketing strategy of buying decisions (Herche, 1994). While according to some studies in Malaysia, based on Nik-mat et al. (2015) and Hasimini et al. (2017), the level of





ethnocentrism among Malaysian is high meanwhile as stated by Othman et al. (2008), the ethnocentrism of consumers in Malaysia is averagely low. Therefore, this could be seen that past research are inconsistent whether Malaysians' ethnocentrism level is high or low. Moreover, cosmetic products marketers using celebrity endorsers does not have a guideline as whether local or international celebrity endorser is more preferred by the consumers in Malaysia.

Moreover, according to O'Mahony and Meenaghan (1997), marketers invest a high amount of money to align products with the well-known celebrities having the belief that celebrities draw attention to the endorsed product and could transfer image values to the product involved by virtue of their celebrity profile and engaging attributes. Moreover, celebrities could also influence consumers in a positive manner. Through public appearances, celebrity holds significance in the eyes of the audience or consumers. Marketing communication has tried to use different meanings personified by celebrities to help achieve the specific objectives of the communication.

The underlying reason for using celebrity is the belief that the profile and attributes of celebrities draw attention to the message they deliver and, through rub-off effect would transfer the image values into a message communication and, therefore, affect the consumer purchase intention (Farhat and Khan, 2011; Pringle and Binet, 2005; Pornpitakpan, 2004; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997). In fact, companies in Malaysia are spending millions on celebrity endorsements and are expanding their budget on promotional activities (Freeman and Chen, 2015; Tan, 2011). This has led not only to the increased use of celebrities in advertising strategies but also their use in a more sophisticated and complicated way (Kambitsis et al., 2002). Advertisers and marketers are willing to pay huge salaries to celebrities who are liked and respected by target audiences and consumers who will favourably influence consumers' attitudes and behaviour (Shimp and Andrews, 2013).

On the other hand, Tom et al., (1992) concluded that the non-celebrity endorsers are more effective in creating a link to the product because their characters can be developed and shaped to fit with the brand and the target





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