

Mapping Celebrity Endorsements in the Food Industry : A Bibliometric Study

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Abstract

Purpose : This study examined the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior, particularly in the food and beverage industries. Using a systematic literature review approach, this study identified critical themes, models, and variables, including celebrity expertise and brand fit.

Design/Methodology/Approach : A systematic literature review combined with a bibliometric analysis was conducted using 39 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2007 and 2022. The Scopus database was used to extract relevant studies, which were analyzed using Bibliometrics and Biblioshiny. Using an online web-based data analysis framework for a systematic literature review, this study used code commands for conceptual mapping, trend identification, and historiographic evaluation.

Findings : The study revealed three dominant themes in the celebrity endorsement literature: celebrity characteristics (expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness), cultural dimensions, and health-related concerns. The results of the systematic literature review analysis identified celebrity expertise and brand fit as key determinants of consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the food sector. The proposed conceptual model linked celebrity expertise and brand fit to behavioral outcomes, which were mediated by consumer attitudes.

Practical Implications : Marketers should focus on selecting celebrities with relevant expertise and an ethical orientation to enhance brand credibility, especially in the food sector, which is sensitive to quality and health aspects. Misleading advertisements and endorsements could have negative consequences, potentially leading to consumer backlash or reduced trust. Misleading advertisements and endorsements motivated by false claims and exaggerated benefits that push sales and generate additional revenue may erode consumer trust and loyalty. This study called for marketers to take active action in formulating their marketing strategies, backed by customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, to increase consumer confidence.

Originality/Value : This study deviated from earlier studies by emphasizing the importance of customer loyalty, celebrity endorsement, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as indicators of consumer attitudes and confidence. This study highlighted the relevance of expertise and congruence in the food sector. This work also introduced a conceptual model supported by a dual-method approach that combines a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis to provide deeper insights into the area of celebrity endorsements and consumer behavior.

Keywords : celebrity endorsement, expertise, brand fit, consumer behavior, food industry, purchase behavior

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Celebrity endorsement has historical roots dating back to the late 19th century, when the American star Lillian Russell endorsed a soap product line. While many successful marketing campaigns do not rely on celebrity endorsers, this strategy is increasingly favored to amplify brand recognition and global outreach in today's media environment. A product endorsed by a celebrity is often perceived as having increased trust, which enhances its appeal and visibility. For instance, in South Korea, major personalities account for over 60 percent of primetime advertisements aired on leading networks (Shenje, 2017). In India, celebrity endorsements have been associated with increased product visibility among households with satellite TV (Jha, 2020). In recent years, celebrity endorsements have evolved from traditional television advertisements to powerful digital strategies leveraged across social media platforms. This evolution has intensified the reach and impact of celebrity endorsements, particularly in the food sector, where emotional and cultural drivers strongly influence purchase decisions (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021; Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Brands increasingly rely on celebrities to enhance authenticity and foster emotional resonance (Lueck, 2015).

Despite their popularity, celebrity endorsements have both benefits and drawbacks. While they can elevate product recall and drive purchase intentions (Atkin & Block, 1983; Erdogan, 1999), they may also reduce brand credibility or overshadow the product, especially in the case of a poor celebrity-brand match or scandals (Muda et al., 2017; Till, 1998). The food industry, which is closely tied to personal health, lifestyle, and ethics, has intensified risks such as diminished credibility and negative brand association. However, it remains underexplored compared with other consumer sectors. Existing research has often explored the relationship between celebrity attributes and consumer behavior (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2019). However, most of these studies have focused on attributes such as attractiveness and trustworthiness, with relatively limited attention paid to how “celebrity expertise” and “celebrity-brand fit” influence consumer perceptions, particularly in the context of food and beverage endorsements. This lack of attention creates a pressing need to bridge the gap in understanding.

This study aims to critically examine emerging trends, dominant themes, and gaps in the literature on celebrity endorsement, with a focus on its application in the food and beverage industry. Using a dual-method approach—systematic literature review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis—it evaluates how celebrity characteristics influence consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviors while identifying areas of risk and opportunity for marketers.

Considering these gaps, this study aimed to achieve the following clearly defined objectives:

- (1)** Identify emerging trends and influential contributors in celebrity endorsement research using a bibliometric analysis.
- (2)** To examine the role of celebrity expertise and brand fit in shaping consumer perceptions in the food and beverage industries.
- (3)** Bridge conceptual gaps in endorsement literature with a sector-specific focus.
- (4)** Propose a conceptual model linking celebrity endorsement characteristics to consumer attitudes and behavioral outcomes.
- (5)** Evaluate the practical, theoretical, and policy-level implications of celebrity endorsements.
- (6)** Map the intellectual and thematic structure of the research through co-word and historiographic analysis.

This study makes three major contributions to the literature. First, it provides an organized summary of the literature in a field where endorsement practices are under-researched. Second, it provides a conceptual

framework for celebrity expertise and brand fit, which can serve as a foundation for future theoretical and empirical work. Third, it offers practical implications for marketers and recommendations for policymakers to address the ethical and health impacts of endorsements, particularly in a digitally driven post-pandemic food consumption world (Halder et al., 2021; Park et al., 2022; Peña-García et al., 2020).

Justification of Relevance

This study is also timely, given the changing consumer dynamics in the post-pandemic digital-based market. In the current post-pandemic era of digital dominance, celebrity endorsements are even more relevant and impactful in the hearts and minds of consumers. Celebrities, influencers, and public figures are now influencing food choices, as an increasing number of consumers use the internet as a source of food discovery and as a means of accessing health information (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). This move has elevated the profile of digital endorsements, particularly in areas such as food, where choices are deeply intertwined with health, culture, and social values.

This trend is exacerbated by the emergence of short-form video platforms and the increasing acceptance of parasocial relationships in food marketing (Halder et al., 2021). Simultaneously, health professionals and advocates are increasingly concerned about the potential role that celebrities play in creating unhealthy eating practices and greater levels of weight gain and obesity, particularly among children (Dixon et al., 2019). Accordingly, examining celebrity endorsements of food and beverages is timely and essential. This study addresses these contemporary challenges by mapping current endorsement trends and proposing future-oriented frameworks. It contributes to the literature by contextualizing the effectiveness of endorsement within the broader sociocultural and ethical concerns of food marketing while offering a practical guide for responsible celebrity-brand alignment.

Literature Review

Evolution and History of Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsements have evolved significantly from traditional advertising formats in the early 20th century to current integrated digital campaigns. While early campaigns, such as those featuring Jean Harlow for Lux soap, laid the groundwork, recent developments have shifted to digital media, global branding, and consumer interactivity (Erdogan, 1999; McCracken, 1989). Scholars have identified multiple theoretical models explaining the mechanisms of celebrity endorsement. These include the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1991), the Source Attractiveness Model (Kamins & Gupta, 1994), the Product Match-up Hypothesis (Atay, 2011), and the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989). These frameworks remain relevant, especially when adapted to digital and influencer marketing formats (Chakraborty, 2018; Halder et al., 2021; Yang, 2018). Contemporary endorsement tactics focus not only on recognition but also on relevance or how closely a celebrity's value and persona are perceived to match the product being promoted. This is particularly true in the food and beverage sector, where emotional, ethical, and cultural ties are becoming increasingly central to brand positioning (Calvo-Porrá et al., 2021; Gupta & Jain, 2019; Khandare & Suryawanshi, 2016; Sabokwiggins et al., 2022).

Recent research highlights the need to consider adolescents' susceptibility to celebrity-based advertising. Adolescents without fully mature decision-making capacities are particularly susceptible to digital campaigns, including those featuring celebrities or influencers. This has raised concerns about health risks, including frequent intake of sugary and processed foods (Dixon et al., 2019; Moses et al., 2021). Research shows that such endorsements often promote unhealthy products through integrated marketing communication (IMC) methods, including social media, streaming sites, and mobile apps (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

As a result, one needs to rethink what celebrity endorsements were when they were passive TV ads to what they have become – a dynamic, cross-platform campaign. The current frameworks provide a useful framework; however, further studies require a more detailed analysis in sector-specific contexts, such as food and health (Halder et al., 2021; Park et al., 2022). The purpose of the present study is to fill this gap by investigating two unexamined constructs, namely celebrity expertise and brand fit, in the food category in particular.

Celebrity Expertise and Consumer Attitudes Toward the Brand and Celebrity

Expertise is a crucial factor in determining source credibility. It is defined as the celebrity's perceived knowledge or skill regarding the endorsed product (Ohanian, 1991). When celebrities are perceived as experts, consumers tend to form a more favorable attitude toward the brand and are also more likely to trust the endorsed product (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Ohanian, 1990; Thompson, 1978). The influence of an endorsement is typically a function of the perceived fit between the celebrity's expertise and product category. For instance, a sports personality endorsing an energy drink may be seen as more believable than a skincare product. This congruence amplifies the impact of endorsements on brand evaluation, perceived product quality, and purchase intention (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Ha & Lam, 2017; Saldanha & Aranha, 2022).

Recent research has shown that expertise-based endorsers are more influential than other attractive or popular endorsements, particularly when consumers encounter high-risk or health-related products, such as those related to food, nutrition, and wellness (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021; Halder et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant in the food marketing context, where consumers seek trustworthy signals before making choices that affect their health. While previous research has established scales and theoretical models of expertise to measure celebrity expertise (e.g., Ohanian, 1990), there is an increasing demand to update these models to reflect digital and influencer-based endorsement settings (Yang, 2018). This research builds upon existing work by utilizing key dimensions of celebrity expertise, such as perceived knowledge, experience, and credibility, in the context of the food industry, which has not been thoroughly studied in terms of celebrity endorsement.

Celebrity Brand Fit and Consumer Attitudes Toward the Brand and Celebrity

“Brand fit,” often termed as congruence or alignment, refers to the perceived logical connection between a celebrity's image and the product or brand they endorse (Spry et al., 2011). A well-matched celebrity-brand pairing enhances credibility, facilitates meaning transfer, and reinforces positive brand attitudes (Choi & Rifon, 2012; McCracken, 1989). A high degree of fit influences how effectively consumers accept messages and trust their endorsers. When consumers perceive harmony between a celebrity's persona and the product's identity—be it through lifestyle, profession, or values—they are more likely to respond positively (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Thompson, 1978). Conversely, a poor fit can trigger skepticism and reduce brand effectiveness (Lafferty, 2007; Simonin & Ruth, 1998).

The recent literature reaffirms the centrality of fit across modern digitally driven endorsements. In influencer marketing and short-form media campaigns such as those used in the food industry, brand fit helps mitigate consumer cynicism and strengthens emotional engagement (Kim et al., 2018; Lee & Thorson, 2008). In the food and beverage sector, the endorsement of health products or indulgent foods is credible when there is a visible alignment with a celebrity's perceived lifestyle or expertise (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021). Although earlier studies debated whether brand fit is more important than attractiveness or expertise, contemporary findings suggest that “fit” moderates the effectiveness of other celebrity traits (Halder et al., 2021). Thus, understanding “fit” is vital in modeling consumer responses to food-related endorsements, especially given the increasing scrutiny of nutritional messaging and ethical branding.

Consumer Purchase Intention and Behaviour

Purchase intention is the likelihood that a consumer will purchase a product based on their assessment, beliefs, and emotional attachment (Alex & Thomas, 2014; Ha & Lam, 2017; Peña-García et al., 2020). It is frequently used as a predictor in marketing experiments to forecast consumer behavior. This intention is particularly influenced by celebrity endorsements in the celebrity endorser literature, as existing consumer attachments to the endorser carry over to the endorsed product (Amos et al., 2008; Erdogan, 1999). If endorsements are viewed as credible, persuasive, and appropriate, consumers are more likely to transform positive attitudes into purchasing intentions (Grover & Arora, 2024; Kim et al., 2018; Spry et al., 2011).

The food and beverage context is particularly distinctive in terms of emotional, cultural, and health messages, which further influence this behavior. Recent studies have observed that when celebrities' food endorsements are genuine and consistent with health-conscious or lifestyle-based values, their purchase intentions increase (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021; Dash et al., 2023; Park et al., 2022). By contrast, incongruent or overly commercial endorsements can lead to backlash effects, lowered trust, and reduced purchase intention. Therefore, traditional endorsement models can explain the general reaction of consumers, but they need to be adjusted to account for the complexity of food choices. This study conceptualizes purchase intention as a dependent construct affected by two underlying endorsement attributes in the food marketing industry: celebrity expertise and brand fit. This focus represents a significant gap in the literature and is perceived as a crucial area of investigation.

While existing research has extensively examined celebrity endorsement strategies, most studies have focused on general industries or relied on traditional source credibility dimensions, such as attractiveness and trustworthiness (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Erdogan, 1999). There is a notable scarcity of focused research on celebrity expertise and brand fit in the food and beverage sector (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021). Furthermore, few studies have bridged bibliometric insights with a systematic synthesis to analyze endorsement strategies. This literature gap serves as the foundation for this study, which examines endorsement dynamics through bibliometric mapping and thematic synthesis.

Methodology

Study Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive, and exploratory research design, relying entirely on secondary data. It employs a systematic literature review (SLR) and bibliometric analysis to examine scholarly output on celebrity endorsements in the food industry (Donthu et al., 2021; Pahari et al., 2023; Tranfield et al., 2003).

Data Collection Tools and Justification

We used the Scopus database as the primary source because of its broad coverage of peer-reviewed journals and high citation accuracy (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). This study followed the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021). Articles were filtered based on the following parameters as Document Type: Journal articles only, Language: English, Subject Keywords: "Celebrity endorsement," "Advertising," "Social Media," "Purchase Intention," "Public Figure," "Consumer Behavior," "Brand Attitude."

Search String Used:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Celebrity Endorsement")AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar"))AND

(LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Celebrity Endorsement”)) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Advertising”)

OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Social Media”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Purchase Intention”)

OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Public Figure”) OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Consumer Behavior”)

OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, “Brand Attitude”) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, “English”))

AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE, “j”))

This yielded 770 initial articles, which were narrowed to 39 final articles after three rounds of screening for scope, relevance, and quality. The tools used were Bibliometrix (an R-based package) and Biblioshiny (a web interface for Bibliometrix). These tools are well-established in bibliometric research for conceptual structure mapping, trend identification, and historiographic visualization (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Moral-Muñoz et al., 2020).

Sampling Framework

Because this was a secondary data study, sampling referred to the selection of articles rather than human participants. The sampling unit consisted of peer-reviewed articles, selected based on their thematic alignment with celebrity endorsements in the food sector, indexed in Scopus. The language used was English, and the years covered were 2007–2022. Purposive sampling ensured the relevance and quality of the selected studies (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Analysis Method and Software Used

We applied quantitative bibliometric analysis, including co-word analysis (to identify key themes), factorial analysis (to group conceptual clusters), historiographic mapping, and dendrograms (to trace research evolution). All analyses were conducted using Bibliometrix and Biblioshiny in the R programming environment (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

Time Frame and Geographic Scope

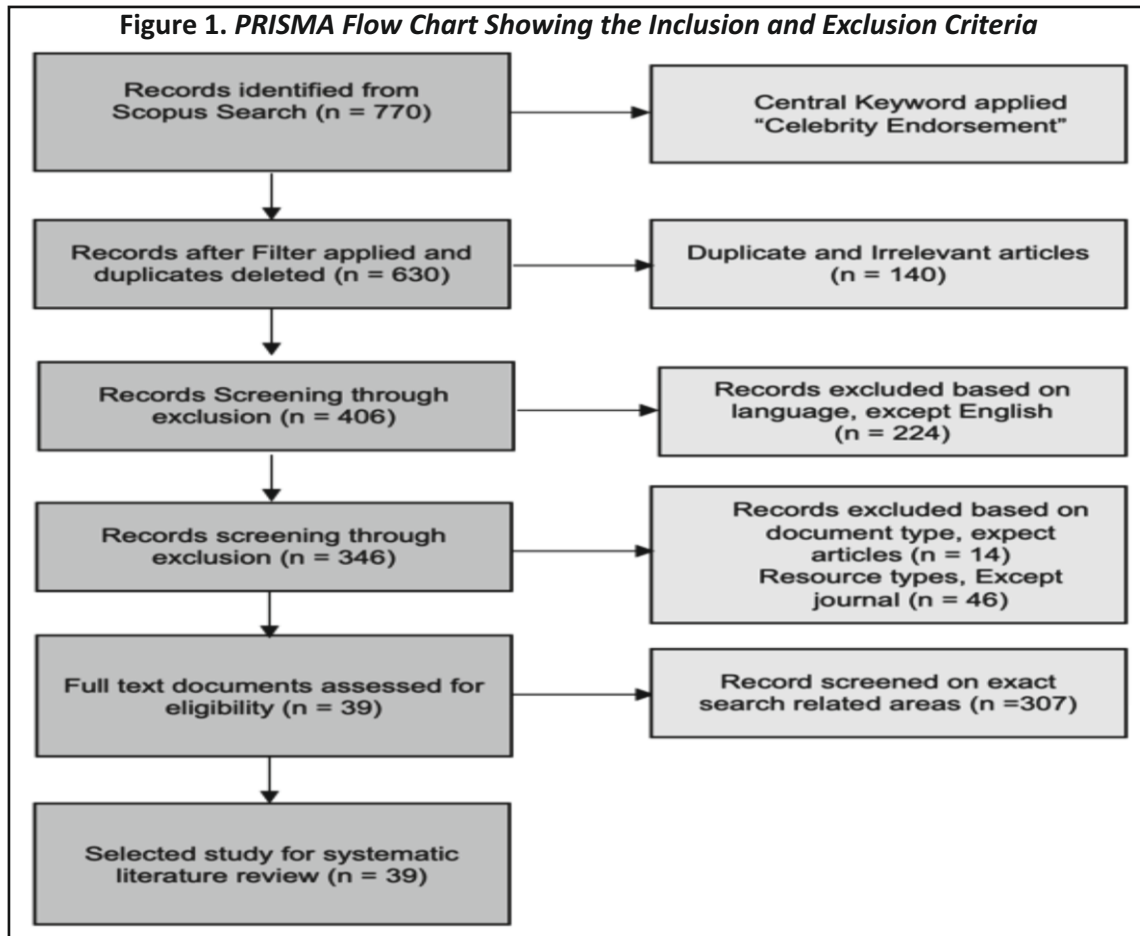
This study encompassed literature published between 2007 and 2022. The included articles were from a global pool of journals, reflecting the perspectives of both developed and emerging economies (Figure 1).

Data Analysis and Results

To address objectives 1 and 6, we conducted a bibliometric analysis to discern emerging trends and map the intellectual structure of celebrity endorsement research across various industries and product categories.

Bibliographic Mapping

Bibliometrics pertains to the quantitative assessment of scientific and technological performance. It also explores the cognitive and organizational structures of science and technology. This method involves a scientific review



process that assesses previous studies on a specific subject and subsequently maps clusters of thematically related publications. The 'bibliometrix' package, developed in *R* (an open-source language), enables users to import bibliography databases from Scopus, which can then be stored in BibTeX or CSV formats. The 'biblioshiny' tool facilitates scientific mapping analysis, harnessing the core functionalities of the 'bibliometrix' package. To address the first research question, we conducted a bibliometric study using co-word and factor analysis. This approach enabled us to pinpoint significant research domains and identify emerging trends and prospective directions in celebrity endorsements.

Conceptual Structure Analysis

Co-Occurrence Network

Conceptual structure analysis explored the relationships among frequently co-occurring keywords in a bibliometric dataset. This analysis aimed to : (a) categorize knowledge into coherent research themes and (b) identify the dominant and emerging topics that shape the field of celebrity endorsement. Figure 2 illustrates the co-word network developed using the authors' keywords, offering a visual representation of the conceptual structure in this research domain. To identify research trends, the co-word method was employed to map associations between keywords that frequently appear together in scholarly works. This approach helps uncover clusters of thematic focus, thereby signaling areas of intensive scholarly engagement.

Figure 2. Co-Occurrence Network

➤ **Endorsement Strategy and Psychology Cluster** : This primary cluster revolves around the core theme of celebrity endorsement, linking strongly with terms such as brand image, match-up hypothesis, brand equity, brand attitude, influencer marketing, social media influencers, and product involvement. It highlights how celebrity endorsements are connected to strategic marketing, digital influence, and psychological engagement mechanisms such as parasocial interaction and self-brand connection.

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advertisements, advertising, experimental design, destination marketing, and the meaning transfer model. Though relatively peripheral, these terms conceptually overlap with endorsement research, especially in media-based and cultural contexts (e.g., India).

↳ **Consumer Identity and Response Cluster** : This cluster encompasses consumer-related terms such as consumer behavior, product endorsement, brands, and celebrities. This cluster emphasizes the consumer's role in shaping endorsement effectiveness through behavioral and identity-related responses.

↳ **Source Credibility and Effectiveness Cluster** : Closely tied to source credibility theory, this cluster features trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness—three major traits shaping perceived credibility and influencing advertising effectiveness and purchase intent. It underlines how credibility-related attributes of endorsers contribute to persuasive communication.

↳ **Congruence and Brand Alignment Cluster** : This smaller yet critical cluster focuses on congruence, credibility, and brand management, highlighting how value alignment and perception of fit mediate endorsement outcomes.

↳ **Demographic and Moderation Effects Cluster** : This cluster incorporates terms like gender, branding, purchase decision, and celebrity, pointing to demographic and psychographic moderators in endorsement strategies. It reveals how audience characteristics can affect endorsement impact.

Collectively, these thematic clusters reveal the interdisciplinary and multidimensional scope of the celebrity endorsement literature, integrating perspectives from branding, psychology, influencer marketing, and advertising theory. The central role of celebrity endorsement is to link key constructs across the applied and theoretical domains.

Dendrogram Analysis

To further investigate thematic structures within the field, we constructed a dendrogram using hierarchical clustering. This tree-like diagram illustrates the relational proximities between keywords, effectively capturing the grouping logic underpinning contemporary celebrity endorsement research. The height of the linkage lines in the dendrogram denotes the degree of similarity between the clusters, with closer linkages indicating stronger conceptual relationships.

As shown in Figure 3, the dendrogram visually segments the broader research domain into multiple nested clusters, each representing an interrelated group of keywords. These clusters reflect the intellectual architecture of the field, offering insights into how specific themes, such as credibility, social media influence, and advertising effectiveness, are interrelated.

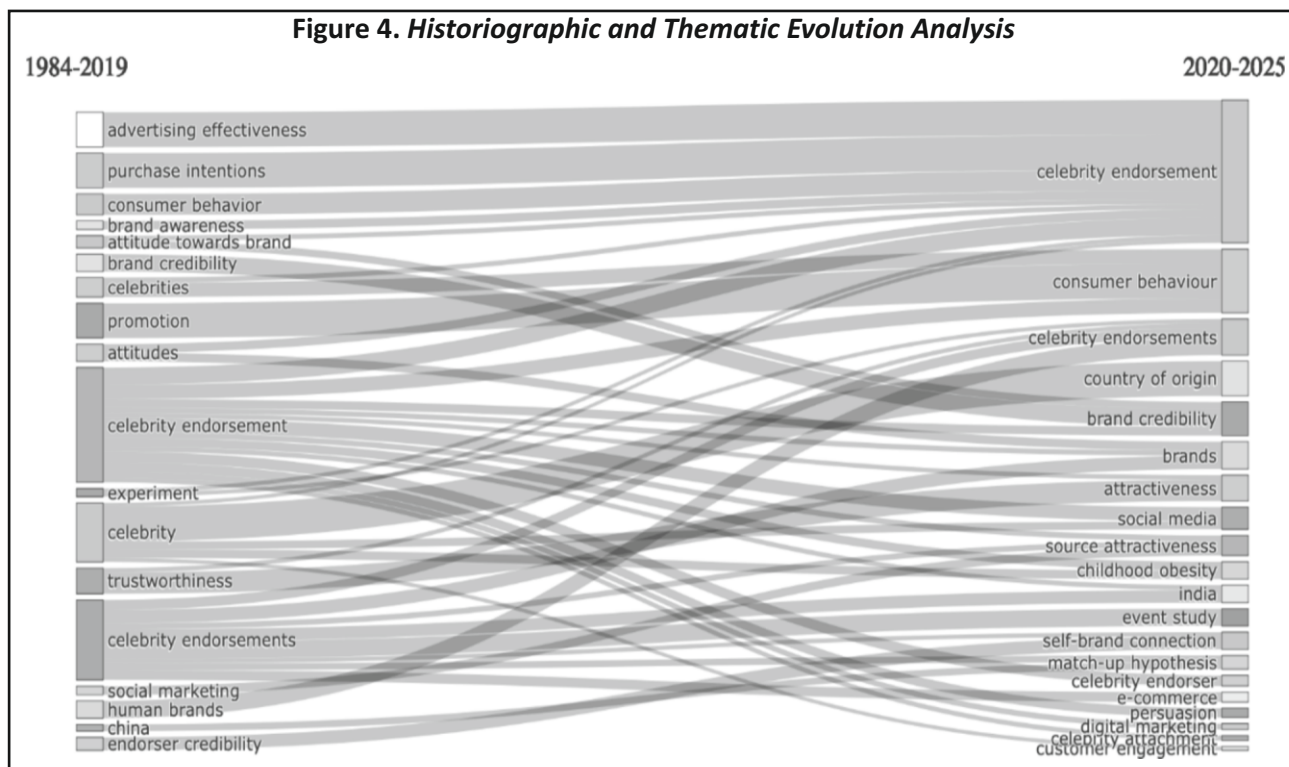
On the left side, a tightly linked sub-cluster forms around expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and credibility, suggesting a robust foundation in source credibility theory. Terms such as product endorsement, brand credibility, congruence, and brand image form a complementary grouping emphasizing brand-related consumer perceptions. Moving toward the center, themes such as the match-up hypothesis, parasocial interaction, product involvement, and self-brand connection indicate evolution toward psychological and engagement-oriented constructs within endorsement studies. The right segment of the dendrogram reveals a broader and more dispersed set of clusters, including advertising, branding, experimental design, India, Instagram, and purchase decisions. These may indicate emerging or interdisciplinary linkages, especially those relating to cultural context, digital media, and consumer decision-making. The central cluster also encompasses key relational terms, including social media, influencer marketing, consumer behavior, brand attitude, and advertising effectiveness, reflecting the convergence of traditional endorsement strategies with digital marketing paradigms. Notably, peripheral

Figure 3. Dendrogram of Factorial Analysis

This dendrogram organizes the conceptual map derived from the 346 core articles, allowing us to trace both dominant research themes and emerging trends. A subset of these articles—specifically, 39 papers related to the food and beverage industry between 2007 and 2022—were examined for deeper domain-specific insights. This subset reflects a compound annual growth rate of 4.24%, with research output fluctuating over time: from two articles in 2007, none in 2008, a rise to three in 2010, and a peak of six articles by 2022, marking a consistent growth trajectory in this niche area.

For the period 1984–2019, the key themes were celebrity endorsement, purchase intentions, trust, advertising effectiveness, and consumer attitudes. These basic issues provided a foundation for a significant portion of the early work on endorsement theory, brand credibility, and attitudinal research. Keywords such as brand awareness, attitude toward the brand, endorser credibility, and social advertising were among the top priorities, indicating a focus on persuasive messaging, promotional strategy, and influence psychology. Entering the period 2020–2025 and examining the diagram, we can see that these 'building blocks' have evolved into a series of more

Figure 4. Historiographic and Thematic Evolution Analysis



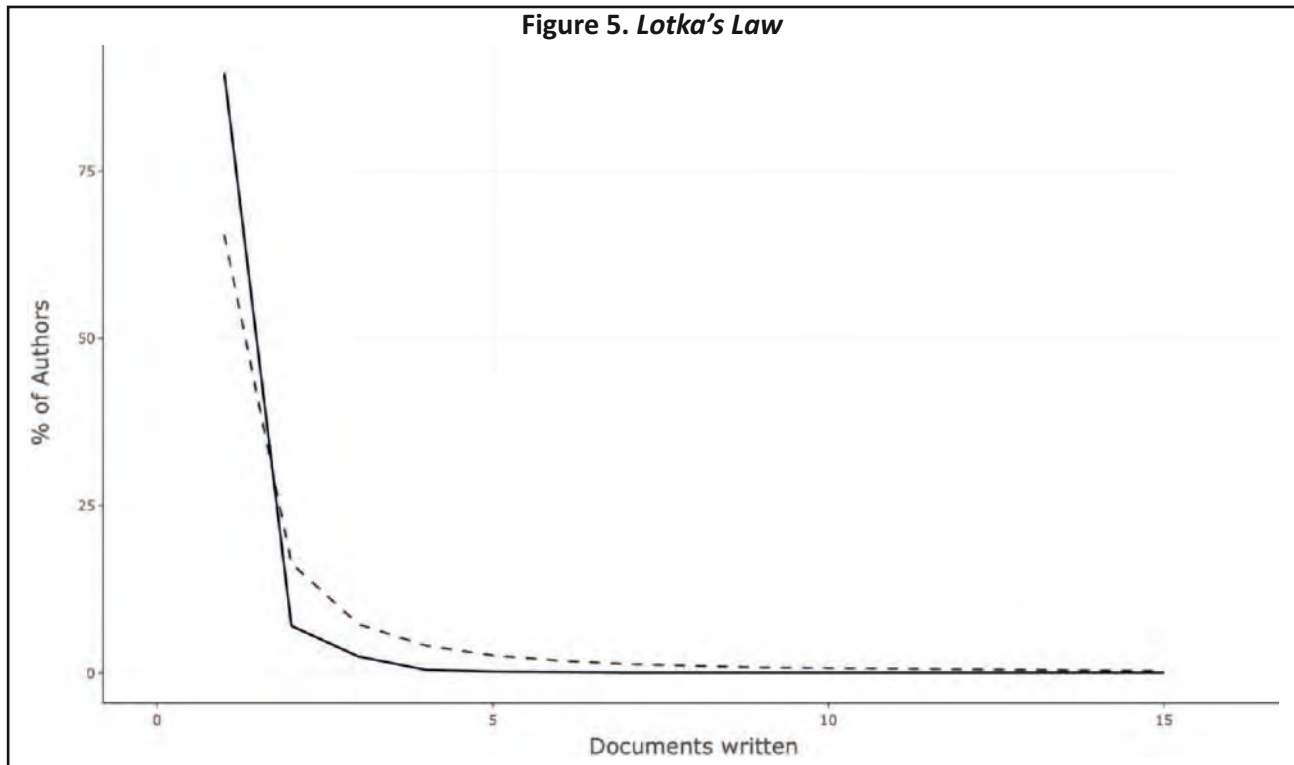
sophisticated, digitally nuanced concepts. For instance, celebrity endorsement remains key but is now integrated with consumer behavior, client credibility, and social media to represent a comprehensive approach to influencing both traditional and digital media. Topics such as attractiveness, source attractiveness, and self-brand connection indicate a shift in approach to the underlying psychological mechanisms of endorsement effectiveness. India is the home country of origin, and e-commerce reflects increasing interest in regional studies and market-targeted endorsement appeal. Emerging topics, including digital marketing, celebrity endorsement, and customer engagement, suggest potential synergy with existing literature on influencer culture, emotional branding, and platform-specific customer engagement metrics.

The emergence of childhood obesity as a top thematic node in the latest cluster is also noteworthy, indicating maturing research literature on the health effects of celebrity endorsement in food advertising. This aligns well with previous research by Boyland et al. (2013), who demonstrated that celebrity endorsements of foods lead to children consuming more unhealthy snacks, and Dixon et al. (2019), who investigated the impact of sports celebrity endorsements on food preferences and obesity rates among children. Sivathanu (2017) analyzed fast food branding of young people, and Calvo-Porral et al. (2021) examined how celebrity credibility influences consumer perceptions of the healthiness of food, while Sokolova and Kefi (2020) highlighted the significance of parasocial interaction to mediate emotional attachment and thereby affect food choice among consumers in areas related to health.

This theme of maturity suggests a shift in scholarly attention from classic advertising and credibility constructs to a more consumer-oriented, affect-based, and digitally embedded understanding of celebrity endorsements, particularly in sensitive categories such as food, health, and youth marketing.

Lotka's Law

Lotka's law is a recognized concept in bibliometric studies (Kushairi & Ahmi, 2021). This law suggests that the



total number of authors making “x” contributions during a specified period is inversely proportional to those making a single contribution. This is mathematically represented by James Lotka's formula, $1/x^a$, where “a” is a given exponent. The equation $y = c/x^n$ represents Lotka's law, where y is the percentage of authors, x is the number of articles published by an author, c is a constant, and n is a positive exponent that appears as a negative slope ($-n$) when plotted on a log-log scale. This law illuminates the dynamics of scientific output by examining the correlation between authors and the volume of publications. By analyzing the data, Lotka identified patterns in the distribution of authors with their publications. He introduced the concept of scientific productivity, defining it as the number of articles published by specific scholars over a specified period. This figure highlights the total number of times an individual produced or co-authored a publication. Six (4.9%) papers were bi-authored, 110 (90.2%) were single-authored, and the remainder were multi-authored publications, spanning one to four documents, as shown in Figure 5.

Celebrity Endorsements and Their Characteristics

Numerous studies have focused on celebrity characteristics, such as expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, as these traits significantly influence consumer attitudes toward brands and products. Historically, celebrity endorsement research has emphasized the endorser's inherent qualities and the transference of meaning between the celebrity and the endorsed brand (McCracken, 1989). Significant strides have been made in marketing research to understand how these factors influence consumer behavior. For instance, Calvo-Porrall et al. (2021) found that these characteristics correlate positively with perceived celebrity credibility and purchase behavior in the food industry. Similarly, Park et al. (2022) demonstrated that the type of celebrity, whether actor or influencer, can influence the willingness to try novel food products. These findings underscore the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in shaping consumer perceptions, particularly when the endorser is perceived as an expert, attractive, or trustworthy.

Health Concerns Relating to Celebrity Endorsement

Amid the growing emphasis on health and wellness, numerous studies have examined the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' perceptions of the health benefits of food and beverage products. Boyland et al. (2013) studied the ad libitum consumption of potato chips by adolescents. They found that children exposed to endorsed commercial food consumed significantly more potato chips than those who were not. The influence of celebrity endorsers on children's food intake has implications beyond the endorsed food advertisements. This can lead to the overconsumption of the endorsed brand, even outside the food context. Dixon et al. (2019) revealed that parents who saw counter-advertisements perceived foods with front-of-package motions (FOPPs) as less healthy. These parents had less intention to purchase such products and were more likely to review their nutritional information before making a decision. Childhood obesity and overconsumption have emerged as the principal concerns regarding celebrity-endorsed food products.

Cultural Concerns Within Celebrity Endorsement

Cultural elements play a pivotal role in shaping consumers' perspectives on food and beverages. The broad appeal of celebrities in their native regions can often be attributed to cultural dynamics such as individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). In India, corporations have harnessed regional celebrities for state-specific promotions while retaining nationally recognized stars for broader campaigns. Research has shown that in culturally sensitive markets, endorsements gain effectiveness when aligned with local values and traditions. For example, this can be achieved by leveraging familiar or culturally relevant endorsers to promote traditional food products (Chakraborty, 2018; Saldanha & Aranha, 2022).

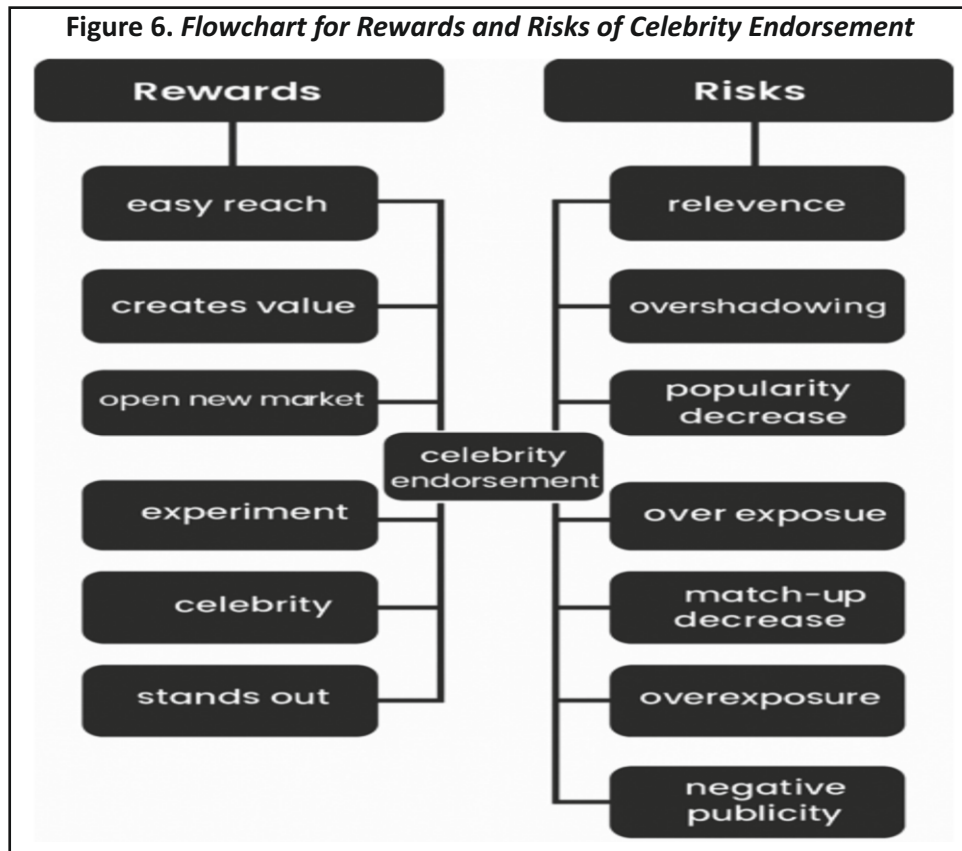
Rewards and Potential Risks of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumers

The merits of celebrity endorsements include wider reach and augmented appeal. Celebrities, as symbolic and aspirational reference groups, enable consumers to align their attitudes and behaviors with those they admire, as illustrated in Figure 6. Buyers often feel more connected to a brand when they associate it with a celebrity endorsing its products. Research suggests that celebrity endorsements enhance advertisement recall and recognition, which can lead to increased purchase behavior (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). Celebrities add considerable value to the brands they represent, which is why top athletes often earn more from endorsements than from their actual professions.

Endorsing brands like Colgate with sports icons like Maria Sharapova can attract a diverse consumer base and reposition the brand's identity. Celebrities are also perceived as appealing and likable individuals, increasing the persuasive power of advertisements. Atkin and Block (1983) argued that celebrity-led advertisements stand out and enjoy greater attention. Moreover, in some cases, celebrity endorsements have helped revitalize tarnished brand images by associating them with the positive public image of the celebrity.

Risks in Celebrity Endorsement

While the literature on celebrity endorsements in the food and beverage sector is limited, broader advertising studies highlight critical concerns. One key risk is the misalignment between the celebrity and the product, which can reduce message credibility and lead to consumer skepticism. Additionally, overemphasis on the celebrity may overshadow the brand, dilute recall, and weaken the core marketing message. Celebrity endorsements also involve high financial investment, and any negative publicity surrounding the endorser can jeopardize the brand's

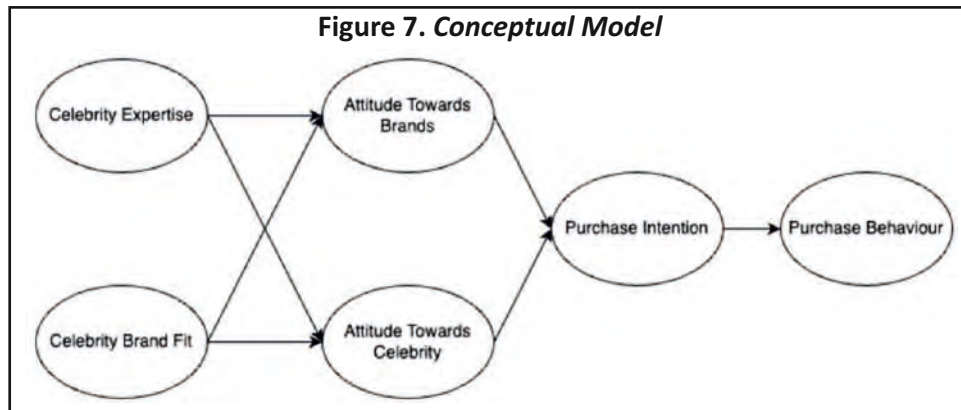


reputation. For instance, Muda et al. (2017) noted that celebrity scandals, such as legal troubles or personal controversies, can have a lasting negative impact on consumer perception. Till (1998) emphasized the importance of rigorous vetting to mitigate the risks associated with potential misbehavior or public backlash. Thus, while endorsements offer reach and emotional appeal, they require strategic oversight to protect the brand's integrity.

Development of the Conceptual Model

From our literature review, we have identified two characteristics of celebrities: celebrity expertise and celebrity brand fit, which we treat as our core independent variables. Celebrity expertise is believed to stimulate consumers' purchase intentions, making the message more persuasive. According to McCracken (1989), celebrities who are most strongly associated with a particular role emerge as the most effective endorsers. Ohanian (1991) argued, however, that even if a celebrity did not possess domain expertise, the perception of expertise alone could influence consumers' trust and behavior. When celebrities are perceived as experts, they enhance the brand's credibility, resulting in more favorable consumer attitudes toward both the brand and its products (Spry et al., 2011).

The relationship between celebrity expertise and consumer attitudes is particularly strong when there is a logical connection between celebrity and product categories, reinforcing the match-up hypothesis (Till & Busler, 2000). Choi and Rifon (2012) demonstrated that consumer attitudes were more positive when an endorser was perceived as having a high level of expertise in a promoted product or service. Using attitude toward the celebrity as a mediator, Choi and Rifon (2012) found that when a celebrity is evaluated favorably, this attitude has a positive influence on consumers' perceptions of the endorsed brand and their purchase intentions. While



expertise is a key variable, other attributes, such as trustworthiness and likeability, may exert an even stronger influence on consumer purchase behavior, especially when combined with strong brand alignment.

Choi and Rifon (2012) further emphasized that celebrity endorsements are most effective when there is a clear and logical association between the endorser and the brand's identity, enhancing message authenticity. Erdogan (1999) also found that brand–celebrity fit is a major determinant of endorsement success, noting that poor alignment can weaken consumer trust. Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) reinforced that compatibility between a celebrity and an endorsed product or service enhances advertising recall and effectiveness. Similarly, Till and Busler (2000) demonstrated that high congruence between a celebrity and a product significantly enhances credibility and likability, ultimately influencing purchase intention. Finally, Peña-García et al. (2020) concluded that purchase intention is a strong predictor of actual buying behavior, particularly in online contexts. However, they also noted that multiple moderating factors, such as trust, social proof, and perceived risk, can influence whether a purchase intention translates into action, as shown in Figure 7.

In conclusion, our analysis of endorsement literature suggests that an endorser's expertise and brand fit have a positive impact on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Based on this, we propose the following:

- ✦ **P1**: Celebrity expertise positively influences consumer attitudes toward the brand.
- ✦ **P2**: Celebrity brand fit positively influences consumer attitudes toward the celebrity.
- ✦ **P3**: Positive attitudes toward the brand enhance consumers' purchase intentions.
- ✦ **P4**: Positive attitudes toward the celebrity enhance consumers' purchase intentions.
- ✦ **P5**: Celebrity expertise positively influences attitudes toward the celebrity.
- ✦ **P6**: Celebrity brand fit positively influences attitudes toward the brand.
- ✦ **P7**: Purchase intention positively influences actual purchase behavior.

Discussion

This study explored the dynamics of celebrity endorsements in the food and beverage sector by systematically reviewing 39 scholarly articles published between 2007 and 2022. The analysis focused on identifying dominant research themes, conceptual relationships, and emerging trends using bibliometric techniques, including co-occurrence networks, dendrogram clustering, and historiographic mapping. Two key endorsement characteristics—celebrity expertise and brand fit—were emphasized, given their potential to influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

Results from co-occurrence network analysis indicated that “celebrity endorsement,” “purchase intention,” and “attitude” are frequently used in conjunction and consistently appear together, suggesting that consumer behavioral consequences remain at the forefront of endorsement research. This is consistent with the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989), which indicates that celebrities transfer symbolic meaning to brands and influence consumers' evaluations of brands. Our results further confirm earlier research that a highly credible and appropriately matched celebrity endorser can positively affect brand image and assimilation in the decision-making process (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Ohanian, 1991). Two major thematic clusters emerged from the dendrogram analysis. One factor was business-related, including sales, sustainability, and consumer behavior, while the other centered on psychological and media factors, such as social media, marketing, and fast food. This disjunction highlights two parallel research tracks within the study of food-related endorsements: one examining commercial effects and the other focusing on consumer psychology.

Historiographic trend analysis (refer to Figure 4) revealed a shift in research concerns over time. While earlier studies focused on brand recall and the impact of advertising, more recent literature has addressed ethical issues, including childhood obesity, misleading endorsements, and the utility of nutrition labeling. These developments reflect growing public scrutiny and regulatory interest in the societal implications of celebrity-driven food marketing. Lotka's law analysis confirmed that a small number of researchers were responsible for a significant portion of the publication output in this area, indicating a concentrated but active scholarly community.

Three broad areas have emerged: (a) endorsement characteristics, such as expertise and attractiveness; (b) cultural considerations, including religious and regional endorsement norms; and ; (c) health and ethical concerns related to product type. These topics are not only of academic interest but also provide vital information for marketers and regulators. Notably, the study also advances the theory by shifting attention from standard endorsement dimensions (e.g., attractiveness and trustworthiness) and highlighting the role of functional congruity through expertise and brand-product fit. The theoretical model developed by Ohanian (1990), which identifies expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as core dimensions of endorser credibility, provides a foundational basis for exploring how celebrity characteristics influence consumer responses to advertisements and brands. Although it remains a theoretical model, it provides a solid foundation for empirical validation in future studies. Finally, the results shed light on the opportunities and threats of endorser usage when celebrities endorse products in the food category. However, successful endorsements can help raise awareness and increase sales. However, when an endorser's image does not align with the ethicality of a product, brand trust is threatened. These two effects suggest that the degree of alignment, transparency, and authenticity are key to the construction of endorsement strategies.

Implications

Managerial Implications

The results of this study have significant implications for both academics and practitioners, particularly brand managers, marketers, and advertisers in the food and beverage (F&B) market. First, it highlights the value of celebrity expertise and brand congruence as key factors influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Thus, managers need to choose endorsers whose image is not associated with the endorser but is also considered relevant to a product category. For example, celebrities known for their health-consciousness can serve as a great medium to promote organic or wellness food brands, whereas regionally embedded celebrities can be more impactful in promoting regional food (Chakraborty, 2018; Saldanha & Aranha, 2022). As consumers become increasingly skeptical of overcommercialised endorsements, brands dare to market an ex-league-oriented image of a star to the ethical dimensions of their products. This alignment can establish trust, reduce resistance, and bolster message credibility, particularly in high-involvement or high-perceived-risk categories, such as children's

nutrition or dietary supplements. Advertisers may use bibliometric findings to predict the development of consumer sentiments and adjust their messaging accordingly.

Theoretical Implications

Our study adds to the literature in three ways. First, it shifts attention away from more traditional source characteristics, such as attractiveness and trustworthiness, and prioritizes celebrity expertise and brand fit, two constructs that are relatively underexplored in the food industry (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021; Halder et al., 2021). Second, it combines bibliometric and systematic review methods, providing a methodological contribution that has not been widely used in celebrity endorsement research. Third, this study develops a conceptual framework that connects celebrity attributes with consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. It helps extend and support the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989) by presenting the mechanics of how expertise-based congruence can drive a more profound consumer-brand relationship. Although the model has not been empirically tested, it provides a theoretical basis for hypothesis-driven research and a structured framework for further investigation.

Existing Theories

This study critiques the overreliance on attractiveness and trustworthiness in classical endorsement frameworks (e.g., the Source Credibility Model) and suggests a realignment toward functional fit and sector-specific expertise. While traditional models offer generalized insights, they often fail to account for product-type sensitivity, particularly in categories where health, ethics, and personal relevance play significant roles. Our findings suggest that future theoretical models should incorporate multidimensional congruence constructs, encompassing not only physical appeal and celebrity fame but also other relevant factors.

Policy Implications

Given the influence of celebrity endorsements on vulnerable populations, particularly adolescents, this study provides insights to regulatory bodies and policymakers. These findings can inform the development of ethical advertising guidelines, particularly in sectors with public health implications (e.g., sugary drinks and processed foods). Policies may also be designed to require the disclosure of sponsorships, restrict endorsements targeted at children, or mandate the nutritional evaluation of endorsed products.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing discourse on celebrity endorsements by offering a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis of the food and beverage industry. Unlike most prior studies that broadly focus on celebrity traits, this study emphasizes the importance of celebrity expertise and brand fit in influencing consumer behavior within food-related categories. Although a conceptual model has been proposed, it is yet to be empirically tested. This represents a key limitation and a direction for future research. Scholars are encouraged to validate the model using primary data and explore additional constructs, such as parasocial interaction and authenticity, especially in the context of digital endorsements.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

Although this study presents valuable findings through a systematic and bibliometric approach, it has several

limitations. First, it is based entirely on secondary data, and the proposed conceptual model has not been empirically validated. Second, the review was limited to articles published in English and indexed in the Scopus database, potentially excluding the relevant regional and non-indexed literature. Third, the focus on only two celebrity attributes—expertise and brand fit—may restrict the comprehensiveness of consumer behavior modeling in endorsement research. Additionally, bibliometric tools, which are powerful tools for mapping trends and themes, cannot fully capture the nuances of consumer psychology, emotional attachment, and the cultural variability embedded in endorsement strategies.

Future studies could expand on this work by conducting primary data collection using experimental or survey-based designs to validate the proposed hypotheses. Researchers may explore other celebrity-related constructs such as parasocial interaction, perceived authenticity, or scandal resilience. It would also be valuable to examine the cross-cultural differences in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, especially between collectivist and individualist societies. Moreover, studies can explore industry-specific variations by comparing food endorsements with those in healthcare, fitness, and education. Emerging themes, such as influencer fatigue, micro-celebrity appeal, and AI-generated celebrity avatars, may also open up rich avenues for future inquiry.

Authors' Contribution

Jessie Menon Avileli performed conceptualization, literature review, and bibliometric analysis and wrote the original draft. Vikram Baliga contributed to supervision, methodology, writing, review, and editing, in addition to being the corresponding author. Mathew Thomas Gil performed validation, data curation, writing, review, and editing. Finally, Krithika Rao was involved in data extraction, visualization, writing, and supporting literature.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of this manuscript.

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Ethical Compliance

This study is based solely on secondary data collected from publicly available academic databases and the published literature. No human participants or animals were involved, and no personal or sensitive data were collected. Therefore, ethical approval was not required for this study. The authors affirm that all sources have been appropriately acknowledged and cited and that the research complies with the ethical standards of academic integrity and responsible research practices.

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