

A Review of Theories Relating to Celebrity Endorsements

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Abstract: *It examines public views on celebrity endorsement and suggests ways to utilize them as a basis for future research. This article uses a wide theoretical framework to connect endorsement theory with celebrity-endorsed advertising effectiveness. A comprehensive theoretical framework is required to explain the variety of celebrity endorsements in marketing initiatives. This study uses qualitative data collection and analysis to explore celebrity endorsement notions. The study shows how five celebrity endorsement concepts might influence future research. This article provides a basic summary of celebrity endorsement, emphasizes the five primary theories of celebrity endorsement as a framework for further study, and reviews previous studies and data.*

Keywords: Source Credibility, Attribution Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsement (CE) uses a celebrity's reputation or social capital to promote a product, service, or brand. Advertising has been present since the late 1800s, but celebrities didn't start appearing frequently until the 1980s. Over a century, marketers have used celebrities to sell their products. CEs make up over 10% of business investments (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 2004). Michael Jordan made \$100 million while playing in the NBA; Venus Williams and Reebok signed a \$40 million endorsement deal; Virat Kohli makes \$31 million from Blue Star, Himalaya, Blue Tribe, Puma, and Wrogn endorsements; and TVS pays MS Dhoni Rs. 23 crore to promote their product. CEs succeed when the endorser is the finest and clients trust them.

Celebrities from sports, acting, and other fields are increasingly appearing in ads, lending symbolic and cultural value to the products they promote (Charbonneau & Garland, 2010). Their increased media presence makes this transition more noticeable in popular culture and society. Celebrities already affect businesses, but social media has increased their power (Keel & Natarajan, 2012; Kramer, 2010; Lu & Seah, 2018). Marketers spend a lot on celebrities to promote their brands. Given the rise in CEs, which cost billions yearly, in-depth research is needed (Amos et al., 2008; Batra & Homer, 2004).

Academics and researchers are increasingly interested in marketing research since CEs may help marketers promote their brands and products. Some marketing and advertising periodicals publish CE research. Over the past 30 years, CE studies have examined endorser credibility, attractiveness, elaboration likelihood model (ELM), and celebrity product "match-up" (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Goldsmith et al., 2000; Ohanian, 1990). However, CE literature is contradictory, and researchers are continually looking for the best hypothesis to explain CE's various effects.

This review summarizes CE literature, noting conflicting results. This study aims to demonstrate how the five CE theories and their variables, when taken together, provide a comprehensive CE framework that helps marketers make better decisions and create ads that positively affect attitudes and behaviors.

Celebrity Endorsement

McCracken (1989) defines a celebrity endorser as a famous person who co-stars in commercial ads to promote them. With television's arrival in the late 1960s, celebrity product marketing intensified (Kaikati, 1987), and it grew rapidly in the first decade of the 21st century. Advertising has traditionally employed business, sports, entertainment, and political

personalities. The first scientific research comparing celebrity efficacy was in 1985 (Kahle & Homer). The rise in academic interest in CE prompted the first thorough literature review (Kaikati, 1987).

CEs improve brand growth, competitive benchmarking, and message reinforcement. Rich clients may object, the celebrity's personal troubles may damage the company's image, oversales, changing customer tastes, and brand obscurity may occur. In addition to advertising, non-profits and NGOs employ CEs, according to Wood and Burkhalter (2014). Aamir Khan and Yuvraj Singh support Satyameva Jayate and children's education, respectively. CEs provide B2B products and services, as seen by Tiger Woods' support of Accenture and Virat Kohli's One8. Remember that celebrity endorsements (CEs) are agreements in which celebrities allow a company, brand, or product to utilize their names and/or looks.

Overview of the Celebrity Endorsement Literature

McCracken (1989) used the phrase "celebrity endorser" to characterize a famous person who promotes a brand of consumer goods. Since celebrities make people more inclined to buy any goods, using them to sell it is a great idea. In accordance with Friedman et al. (1976), fame has a substantial impact on the product's attributes and consumers' willingness to purchase it, but not on its cost or the product's promises.

Celebrities may promote items, and theories explain why some work and others don't. Several studies have determined the ideal endorser traits for different situations (such product categories) and how they work together to enhance advertising effect. However, the data hasn't provided any universally applicable advice to help marketers choose the best communication medium. No study has attempted to consolidate the enormous corpus of CE literature into a single model that explains the apparent contradictions and offers marketers the optimum approach for a specific situation (Knoll & Matthes, 2017).

Academics disagree on how to choose celebrity endorsers, despite their best attempts to give a clear standard for practitioners and marketers. This disagreement makes it difficult to determine the ideal celebrity-business combination throughout the endorsement process. Thus, uncertainty over selection criteria may cause misconceptions and hinder celebrity endorsement campaigns. (Knoll & Matthes, 2017) disregarded fifty years of CE research and suggested studying the disease's psychological and behavioral foundations. One of the five endorsement hypotheses has been studied to explain endorsements' impact. Celebrities who are highly credible, appealing, or meaningful are the ideal candidates for selection criteria, according to theories of source credibility (SC), attractiveness, brand fit, and SC.

The evolution of theories and models in endorsement

Early psychology research showed the value of dependability and beauty as messenger features, therefore celebrity endorsement effectiveness studies started with these two traits. The Matching hypothesis, based on SC and attractiveness research, states that an endorser's image and product alignment affects their effectiveness. This theory argues that the endorser's credibility and attractiveness affect the product's rating, while other variables affect their perceived congruence. Hsu and McDonald (2002) say an endorsement campaign's success depends on how well an endorser's personality matches the product. Consumer attitudes and buying intentions are also influenced by this alignment. The meaning transfer model (MTM) states that endorsements that communicate the endorser's meaning to the product are influential (McCracken, 1989). First, researchers have studied source models' attraction and trustworthiness, therefore there is much study. Then, endorsements may have likeability, trustworthiness, credibility, familiarity, congruence, and attractiveness. Studies on the match-up theory flooded in. Interestingly, most studies have shown that the endorsement model under consideration is a credible idea that explains endorsement theory and identifies trustworthy celebrities that support political candidates (Seno & Lukas, 2007).

The paper's authors emphasize CE research principles' importance. The research clearly shows that authority and beauty influence customers' attitudes. According to academic suggestions, most endorsement research has focused on the endorsing source's legitimacy and appeal. Zwilling & Fruchter (2013) found that celebrity attractiveness increases consumer intention to buy the advertised product, but Winterich et al. (2018) found that trustworthiness and expertise—the two components of credibility—are equally important in determining celebrity endorsers' effects on attitudes and evaluations. The source attractiveness (SA) and conformity (SC) models explain certain endorsements, but they seldom account for the endorser's full multidimensionality. Thus, many researchers believe the SC and match-up theory give

better answers. These new models better comprehend celebrity endorsement dynamics and integrate additional components, making it easier to assess their impact on consumer perceptions and behavior. According to Fleck et al. (2012), research on congruity or trustworthiness is inadequate to support the match-up hypothesis since the dimensions under examination are not validated. Many real-world endorsements are not effectively captured by source or matchup models, hence McCracken (1989) suggested the SC fill this gap. According to Carroll (2009) and Fleck et al. (2012), the SC best expresses the endorsement process's essence and functioning. As noted by (Erdogan, 1999), the match-up hypothesis fills some of the gaps left by the SC model and credibility model, however the three theories fail to address major CE usage issues.

Former customers may positively effect brands, which is the strongest case for comparing them to celebrities (Erdogan & Drollinger, 2008). Research on these models' effectiveness typically downplays the original models. The matchup theory and SC were developed because to the large gap between scientific research and business practice. Due to criticism that both source models only filled certain holes, the SC was created. The following sections detail the models.

The Source Credibility Model

Hovland et al. (1953) and Hovland & Weiss (1951) found that source credibility affects message persuasiveness. Internalization happens when trustworthy knowledge applies to the consumer's condition (Biswas et al., 2006; Kelman, 2017). Credibility and experience comprise the SC. An endorser's history, education, and interpersonal skills determine their competence. Horai et al. (1974) say expertise indicates a sender's training, experience, and competency. Additionally, integrity, impartiality, and honesty are crucial aspects of a trustworthy suggestion, which impacts customers' buying decisions (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991). One of the SC factors influencing customer buying choices is celebrity competency, which is more credible than the celebrity in person.

CE research requires SC (Choi & Rifon, 2007). After the inquiry, information and dependability are confused and contradictory. Academics debated this (Stafford et al., 2002). Research shows that individuals are more inclined to modify their beliefs if they trust the source (McGinnies & Ward, 1980; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Ohanian claims that a consumer's purchasing choice does not rely on an advertisement's authenticity since viewers would not believe sponsored celebrities.

These results confirm Wiener and Mowen's (1986) notion that consumers are less inclined to trust providers with a hidden agenda. Recent studies show that competence and credibility improve performance (Priester & Petty, 2003; Siemens et al., 2008). Research reveals that these two notions may boost an endorser's efficacy in numerous ways, and that their target consumers may change their impact.

Source Attractiveness Model

People prefer chatty, attractive marketers over neutral or unattractive ones. These people are also more likely to be liked by consumers and associated with a brand, which benefits firms. If the endorser's credibility is important, so is their attractiveness in changing consumer attitudes. From the mid-1970s until the mid-1990s, relevant research was published. Marketers now understand how endorsers' looks affects advertising performance because to this extensive research. According to the SC model, marketers may maximize status and physical appeal by choosing attractive endorsers (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Singer, 1983).

Instead of only physical appearance, message senders' appeal includes familiarity, similarity, and resemblance (McGuire, 1985). Thus, the target audience prefers well-known, popular, and similar sources (McGuire, 1985). We know that an endorser's personality, lifestyle, and intelligence make them appealing (Erdogan, 1999). Superstars' popularity and familiarity make them appealing to customers regardless of their physical appearance (Choi & Rifon, 2007). Raven et al. (1998) say superstars mimic lesser-known celebrities because of their devotion and position, giving them unmatched power that may make or break an ad. Physically appealing celebrity endorsers may not influence behavioral intention in most research (Caballero et al., 1989).

The Product-Source Matchup Hypothesis

According to the match-up theory, the product and celebrity endorsement should have similar images. This idea relies on schema and social adaptation theories. Schemas are cognitive frameworks or knowledge structures that help humans comprehend and process environmental information. A good match between the endorser and the product makes this information more meaningful and may impact the product assessment. The social adaptation theory, developed by Kamins (1990) and Kahle and Homer (1985), states that individuals would use information sources that assist them adapt. If they believe celebrity endorsements would help them socialize or improve their self-image, individuals are more likely to notice and be influenced by them. The matching hypothesis, which combines social adaptation theory and schema theory, suggests comparing diagnostic data to the product, endorser, and advertisement knowledge structure or schema when a product-endorser match is significant (Lynch & Schuler, 1994). A constant and favorable match updates the consumer's schema with product and endorser information, changing their behaviour and attitude (Wright, 2016). The match-up theory suggests that celebrity endorsements are more likely to benefit consumers when the endorser and product match well. Successful celebrity endorsements connect with established schema, alter attitudes and purchasing intentions, and reinforce those changes.

The source models suggest that any well-known, handsome, and credible person may promote any brand. Several studies have disputed this notion since it fails to explain why certain celebrities—with equivalent attractiveness or credibility—are better brand endorsers than others (McCracken, 1989). The Matching hypothesis, which claims that linking a product with a celebrity may improve its legitimacy and attraction, has been extensively studied to explain the contradiction. Customers will learn about their favorite celebrities' talents, triumphs, jobs, physical traits, public personas, and more. They will next apply this information to a topic-specific schema and social adoption. Consumers are more likely to remember celebrity-endorsed items if they look same (Till & Busler, 2000). In response to this reasonable critique, match-up hypothesis studies have tried to describe the wide diversity in endorser efficacy across product types (Koernig & Boyd, 2009).

Celebrity endorsers may be more effective when the endorser, brand, and target demographic match (Mowen et al., 1979). This congruence relies on anticipation and relevance. The relevance of a celebrity endorsement is how well it supports the message. In other words, the celebrity's image and traits must convey the message clearly. Heckler and Childers (1992) define expectation as the extent to which stimuli fit audience expectations about the topic matter or object being advertised. Consumers are more likely to enjoy the endorser, product, and celebrity if they detect a consistent message from the celebrity's image and product message. Several studies support the matchup concept. Kamins (1990) and Koernig & Boyd (2009) found that buyers' favorable opinions were increased when the product's features matched the celebrity's attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Studies by Kamins & Gupta (1994) and McCormick (2016) found an association between celebrity endorsement memory and how well the new information (product features) matched the celebrity's known traits.

The matching hypothesis states that aligning a celebrity endorser, brand, and message ensures a consistent and convincing message that appeals to the target demographic. Using celebrity endorsements successfully requires this alignment. However, Till & Busler (1998) recommended further research on visual cues as matching criterion. According to Erdogan et al. (2001), matchup hypothesis research would assess the celebrity's physical attractiveness and dependability as well as how well the target market and endorsed brand fit the celebrity's personality. Numerous studies have examined match-up from the viewpoints of attractiveness and credibility, but Koernig and Boyd (2009) stated that endorser brand congruence has not been studied in other match-up situations. Törn (2012) claims that visually consistent endorser and brand pictures determine compatibility. Credibility and authority depend on more than competence and experience.

The Meaning Transfer Model

McCracken (1989) recommended in-CEs due to SC inquiry flaws. Early meaning transfer study (Langmeyer & Walker, 1991; Walker et al., 1992) linked celebrity traits to product quality. MTM researchers have studied several topics. McCracken (1986) asserts that consumer items and brands convey cultural and societal values to consumers. McCracken (1986) criticized the early models for supporting the celebrity's good looks and dependability. McCracken (1989) proposed that meaning transfer is a three-step process in which celebrity symbols are transferred to consumer

items via advertising and subsequently to buyers' thoughts. In the first phase, celebrities become symbols via TV, movies, and other public events. These symbolic characteristics may represent famous traits, values, sentiments, or anything else related to their presence. The second phase begins when celebrity endorsements or product usage are publicized, giving products symbolic value. Celebrity status gives the things symbolic worth. Customers ultimately remember the symbols. This suggests that people associate the marketed products with the celebrity. Thus, customers might assume the things have all the celebrity's features. Celebrity endorsements use symbolic appeal to influence customer behavior and purchase decisions by transferring meaning, which shapes consumer perceptions and attitudes about items. Miller & Allen (2012) say propositional learning best resembles McCracken's initial transfer procedure.

Lynch and Schuler (1994) argue that marketers and consumers would find it simpler to blend celebrity traits with brand schemas if they match the celebrity schema since incoming information about celebrities and businesses is continually compared to previous schemas. According to Till (2001), a celebrity's endorsement of a bad product hurts its image. Byrne et al. (2003) used case studies to demonstrate meaning transfer by studying a UK grocery chain's advertising strategy and celebrity image transfer to endorsed products. In a nearly experimental study, Peetz et al. (2004) explain gender-based meaning transmission. The study found that consumers were more likely to correctly identify male celebrity endorsers than female ones, indicating a gender gap in endorser knowledge and purchase intentions.

Instead of studying meaning transmission mechanisms, Batra and Homer (2004) examined celebrity endorsement effects. They examined how nonverbalized personality links and brand image beliefs affect consumer brand views. Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) found that company-celebrity connotations may lead to brand partnerships. Negative celebrity associations were more likely to affect a brand than good ones. In contrast, Campbell & Warren (2012) found that brand image perceptions affected purchase intentions in certain situations but not attitudes. Roy and Moorthi (2012) discovered a reverse personality transfer from brand to celebrity when the brand was more famous. Propositional learning models base associative learning on the truth of two representation assertions. Being connected with a celebrity recognized for a characteristic makes consumers assume a brand possesses that attribute. Celebrities may influence consumer identification when a customer's ideal self-image matches the celebrity's persona or character attributes (Escalas & Bettman, 2015). The above study illuminated the complex links between corporations, consumers, and celebrities in advertising and consumer behavior by examining celebrity endorsement and meaning transmission.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Petty et al. (1983) elaboration likelihood model (ELM) describes consumer opinion evolution. According to this theory, ads may influence views peripherally and centrally. Reasoned consideration of adverts is key to persuasion. They analyze benefits and cons and decide. The peripheral persuasion method employs simple signals and requires minimal client cognitive effort. The individual is more concerned with good or negative signs about the attitude issue or product being offered than its coherence or logic. People may also infer the upgraded position's benefits from persuasive messages. Remember that peripheral attitude modification does not involve subject evaluation. Instead, it occurs from linking the attitude or product to good or negative signs or drawing inferences from easily processed persuasive messaging signals. The ELM predicts message persuasion timing and method. Understanding the two routes of persuasion helps marketers produce more effective advertising that targets consumers' cognitive processes, increasing attitude change and positive emotions.

Motivation and cognitive ability influence core vs. peripheral persuasion (Peter et al., 1999). How someone interprets information determines how much and how differently they react. Uninvested people are more likely to let endorser traits affect them, according to the ELM. Highly engaged people have focused opinions. People carefully analyze the message's merits and downsides. ELM has been used to study how endorser-product matches effect endorsement message belief.

Celebrities have employed powerful signals with low-involvement messaging (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Callcott & Phillips, 1996; Choi et al., 2005). If the product and celebrity match, upper and central cognition may get CE signals (Kahle & Homer, 1985). The SC (Amos et al., 2008) found that source knowledge or beauty may convince buyers who don't grasp the message. Thus, a celebrity endorsement is more credible when their skills match the product. Congruence may help consumers make choices with plain information.

Managerial implications

Social media and television have changed celebrity endorsements. Marketing practitioners and academicians are interested in celebrities, whether they are cultural icons or not. With so many famous role models competing for attention, popularity, and endorsement agreements, choosing celebrities for product marketing has grown more complicated and data-driven. Marketing executives must understand consumer-celebrity interactions and the celebrity brand, including personality traits, to improve results and save costs. This study reviewed other CE studies and gathered the most important hypotheses. Most CE research shows that competent and attractive celebrities boost sales. Celebrities may also transmit nonevaluative features to companies, and their misdeeds can hurt brand ratings.

Five prominent CE theories have different contributions to CE and advertising effectiveness. The SC model emphasizes on trustworthy celebrities to market things. According to the SC model, an endorser's physical appeal also attracts consumers. The product match-up theory adds that a successful endorsement requires the right celebrity-product match. SC offers another layer by showing that celebrity significance may be transferred to the endorsed product, making it a crucial aspect. Finally, the SC presents peripheral and core channels that affect consumer behavior differentially.

Blending source models with psychological views may help marketers identify celebrity personality qualities that match consumer traits, improving consumer-celebrity relations. Avoiding national and international marketing endorsement failures requires minimizing psychological distance. As online social media endorsements become more prevalent, marketers should use regular customers and renowned celebrities as promotional agents and learn how they create connections with their audiences.

Academic Implications

Consumer behavior research should examine how celebrities influence consumers' ideas and behaviors. Empirical study should measure celebrity qualities' impact on marketing efficacy using statistics, taking moderating and mediating factors into account. Marketers may use academic decision models to choose product celebrities. Models may include cultural fit, plausibility, and risk. Psychologists and marketers should study celebrity-consumer mental and emotional processes. Cross-cultural study is required to understand how cultural values affect endorsements. This helps marketers adapt to different situations. The changing influencer landscape in social media marketing necessitates study on engagement tactics and how they affect people's decisions. Consider how buyers see celebrity endorsement ethics and how breaking the rules affects a brand's image. An integrated system should guide marketers on celebrity endorsements. Brand performance after endorsements may reflect how long the effect lasts. Finally, marketing training should include celebrity endorsement research to prepare marketers for an ever-changing sector. The following study directions can help marketers and scholars comprehend celebrity endorsements.

II. CONCLUSION

The traditional emphasis on source credibility is undergoing a transformation, with a greater focus on authenticity and reliability in the contemporary consumer landscape. The advent of digital platforms has redefined the dynamics of celebrity endorsements, necessitating a fresh examination of theoretical frameworks to encompass the digital age's nuances. Moreover, theories that emphasize consumer co-creation and cultural sensitivity are gaining prominence, reflecting the need for inclusive and globally relevant endorsement strategies. As the industry continues to evolve, there is a discernible shift towards prioritizing long-term relationships over transactional associations, underscoring the importance of sustained connections between celebrities and brands for enduring impact. This review underscores the imperative for marketers and researchers alike to adapt and refine their understanding of celebrity endorsements, embracing a multifaceted approach that reflects the intricacies of the contemporary marketing landscape.

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