

## DETERMINATION OF CHOICE OF CELEBRITIES FOR PRODUCT ENDORSEMENT

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### Abstract

A celebrity-product association can capture a viewer's attention, increase the public's awareness of the product, and cause consumers to purchase the product endorsed. Selecting a celebrity who has a high product congruent image leads to greater endorser believability. The three dimensions of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise can act separately or in tandem in their contribution to endorser/celebrity "fit", yet endorser expertise is the compelling dimension for consumers when it comes to purchase intention. The Madurai city is purposively selected for the present study since it is the predominating trade center for South Tamil Nadu. About 120 respondents were selected by adopting simple random techniques and were interviewed. Information/data was collected by interviewing the respondents by using a pre-tested, well-structured interview schedule. The data and information collected pertains to the year 2009-10.

**Keywords:** Celebrity, Source Credibility, Source Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness.

### I.INTRODUCTION

Businesses have long sought to distract and attract the attention of potential customers that live in a world of ever-increasing commercial bombardment. Everyday consumers are exposed to thousands of voices and images in magazines, newspapers, and on billboards, websites, radio and television. Advertisements of all varieties pop up everywhere on streets, in stores and restaurants, and on public transportation. Each of these advertisements attempts to steal at least a fraction of an unsuspecting person's time to inform him or her of the amazing and different attributes of the product at hand. Because of the constant media saturation that most people experience daily, they eventually become numb to standard advertising. The challenge of the advertiser is to find a hook that will hold the subject's attention and keep them from changing the channel or turning the page.

One well-used approach at differentiating advertisements is the use of celebrity endorsements. Celebrities are seen as dynamic individuals with likeable and attractive qualities. The words and sometimes just the image of a popular person will cause many people to stop and pay attention. For years, professional sportspersons, famous actors, and musicians have been the traditional favorites to feature in advertisements. Notable ex-politicians, successful mutual fund managers, and high-profile CEO's are now used with frequency to sell a variety of products. Celebrity endorsers also need not be human. A champion racehorse sells pet food in Great Britain. Cartoon characters like Bugs Bunny and Fred Flintstone sell network television and breakfast cereals in America. Puppets such as Big Bird sell children's vitamins. New categories for celebrity endorsers are opening every day as the reach of the media moves closer to home.

Using celebrity fame, bought or contrived, has certain advantages and risks. A celebrity-product association can capture a viewer's attention, increase the public's awareness of the product, and cause consumers to purchase the product endorsed. In contrast, celebrity-products associations can be very costly and risky based on the potentially volatile image, nature, and credibility of the personalities used.

Celebrities 'cut through' advertising clutter, hold viewer attention, contribute to brand name recognition and transfer positive qualities such as physical attractiveness and likeability to the brand (Dyson and Turco, 1998; Charbonneau and Garland, 2005). Celebrities endorsers have been found to be especially effective when matched with products or services that are used in particular advertisements. As endorsers function is the role of message sender, researcher have looked to communication theory to construct models(source credibility, source attractiveness and meaning transfer models) to aid practitioners in the process of selecting appropriate celebrity endorsement.

The source credibility model suggests message effectiveness depends on the endorser's perceived credibility. Celebrity combines both expertise and trustworthiness. Through the process of internalization, credible sources influence consumer beliefs, attitudes and or behaviour (Kamins, 1990; Ohanian, 1991; Shank, 2005). The source of attractiveness model proposes that message effectiveness depends on the similarity between source and receiver, source likeability and source familiarity through repeated media exposure (Shilbury et.al., 2003). Information from an attractive source is accepted because of the consumer's desire to identify with that source (Erdogan, 1999; Shank, 2005).

In the product match-up model, effective advertisement results when the messages conveyed by celebrity image are compatible with product image (Pornpitakpan, 2003). Selecting a celebrity who has a high product congruent image leads to greater endorser believability (Baker and Tagg, 2001). Ohanian (1991) notes that the three dimensions of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise can act separately or in tandem in their contribution to endorser/celebrity “fit”, yet endorser expertise is the compelling dimension for consumers when it comes to purchase intention. With this background, the present study was undertaken to identify the factors determining the choice of celebrities for product endorsement (what are the “drivers” of “fit” between a product and its potential endorser) as perceived by consumers and examine the “expertise” dimension in the most compelling in endorser choice in Madurai city of Tamil Nadu.

**II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

The Madurai city is purposively selected for the present study since it is the predominating trade center for South Tamil Nadu. About 120 respondents were selected by adopting simple random techniques and were interviewed. Information/data was collected by interviewing the respondents by using a pre-tested, well-structured interview schedule. The data and information collected pertains to the year 2009-10. Both, average and percentage analysis were carried out to draw meaningful interpretations. Besides, the mean ranking and factor analysis were also computed.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The general and socio-economic characteristics of consumers were analyzed and the results are presented in Table-1. The results indicated that the majority of the consumers (64.16 per cent) were the age group of 21-30 years followed by less than 20 years and 31-40 Years. About 45.80 per cent of were married while 79 per cent were males. The majority of consumers (49.17 per cent) were postgraduates and about 30 per cent of consumers were under-graduates. The monthly income of consumers were ranging from Rs. 0-5000(85 per cent) followed by Rs.5000- 10000(8.34 per cent). About 70.83 per cent of the consumers have a family size of 4-6 members followed by less than 3 members (25.00 per cent).

**Table 1. Socio-Economic Demographic Characteristics of Consumers**

Variables with Category	Respondents(N=120)		Variables with Category	Respondents(N=120)	
	Number	Per Cent		Number	Per Cent
<b>Age</b>			<b>Monthly Income(Rs)</b>		
20 Years	16	13.33	0-5000	102	85.00
1-30 Years	77	64.16	5001-10000	10	8.34
1-40 Years	14	11.67	10001-15000	4	3.33
1-50 Years	8	6.67	>15000	4	3.33
51 Years	5	4.17			
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Marital Status</b>		
Male	79	65.80	Married	55	45.80
Female	41	34.20	Unmarried	65	54.20
<b>Educational Qualifications</b>			<b>Family Size</b>		
Secondary	8	6.66	<3	30	25.00
Higher Secondary	12	10.00	4-6	85	70.83
UG	36	30.00	>6	5	4.17
PG	59	49.17			
Others	5	4.17			

The frequency of market visit by consumers was analyzed and the results are presented in Table-2. The results indicated that about 35.84 per cent of consumers occasionally visited the market followed by fortnightly (30 per cent) and about 28.33 per cent of the consumers visited the market at least monthly once.

**Table 2. Frequency of Visiting the Market**

Frequency	Number of Consumers	%
Weekly	6	5.00
Fortnightly	36	30.00
Monthly	34	28.33
Occasionally	43	35.84
Others	1	0.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The sources of the advertisement for the consumers were analyzed and the results are presented in Table-3. It is evident that Newspaper was the main source for seeing the advertisement for majority of the consumers (45.83) followed by Television (33.33 per cent) and 2.5 per cent consumers were using the internet as source of advertisement for products.

**Table 3. Sources of Advertisement**

Sources	Number of Consumers	%
Newspaper	55	45.83
Radio	9	7.50
Television	40	33.33
Magazines	11	9.17
Internet	3	2.50
Others	2	1.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The matching qualities of the celebrity with advertisement were analyzed and the perceptions of the consumers are presented in Table-4. The confident of the celebrity in the advertisement, easy identity of celebrity, worthiness and similarity were the main qualitative attributes that match the celebrity with advertisement.

Besides, advertisement, product-match, positive image and celebrities' behaviour were also the important factors that influence the matching qualities of the celebrity with advertisement.

**Table 4. Matching Qualities of the Celebrity with Advertisement**

Attributes	Mean Ranking	Order of Importance
Similarity	0.93	5
Identity	1.21	2
Confident	1.34	1
Worthy	1.09	3
Brand	0.98	4
Scandal	0.90	6
Positive Image	0.87	7
Attractiveness	0.86	8
Product match	0.84	9
Advertising	0.82	10

The factors which determines the choice of celebrities for product endorsement, in order of importance was analyzed by using factor analysis on Ohanina's Scale and the results are presented in Table-5. The results indicated that Not Classy-Classy, Plain-Elegant, Unskilled-Skilled, Unknowledgeable-Knowledgeable, Inexperienced- Experienced were the attributes constituted factor-1. The factor-2 was comprised with Ugly-Beautiful, Dishonest-Honest, Insincere-Sincere and Untrustworthy-Trustworthy attributes of celebrities for product endorsement.

**Table 5. Factors Determining the Choice of Celebrities for Product Endorsement- Factor Analysis on Ohanina's Scale**

Ohanina's Factors and Attributes	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
<b>Attractiveness</b>				
Unattractive-Attractive	0.23	0.21	0.60	-0.13
Not Classy-Classy	0.87	0.05	0.06	-0.08
Ugly-Beautiful	-0.07	0.62	0.35	-0.03
Plain-Elegant	0.52	0.09	0.50	-0.16
Not Sexy-Sexy	-0.02	0.07	0.17	0.82
<b>Trustworthiness</b>				
Undependable-Dependable	0.39	0.36	0.34	0.44
Dishonest-Honest	0.47	0.66	-0.02	0.19
Unreliable-Reliable	-0.02	0.79	0.15	0.09
Insincere-Sincere	0.46	0.54	0.09	0.13
Untrustworthy-Trustworthy	0.31	0.68	-0.02	-0.31
<b>Expertise</b>				
Not an expert-Expert	0.09	0.07	0.87	0.08
Inexperienced-Experienced	0.66	0.13	0.32	0.09
Unknowledgeable-Knowledgeable	0.77	0.09	0.08	-0.01
Unqualified-Qualified	0.23	0.21	0.60	-0.13
Unskilled-Skilled	0.87	0.05	0.06	-0.08
Variance Explained Overall (%)	61.26			

The factor-3 was comprised with Unattractive-Attractive, Not an expert-Expert and Unqualified-Qualified attributes while the Not Sexy-Sexy was the only attribute contributed the factor-4.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

The forgoing analysis indicated that the majority of the consumers (64.16 per cent) were the age group of 21-30 years. About 45.80 per cent of the consumers were married while 79 per cent were males. The majority of consumers were postgraduates and about 30 per cent of consumers were under-graduates. The monthly income of consumers were ranging from Rs. 0-5000(85 per cent) followed by Rs.5000- 10000(8.34 per cent). The results indicated that about 35.84 per cent of consumers occasionally visited the market followed by fortnightly (30 per cent) and about 28.33 per cent of the consumers visited the market at least monthly once.

It is evident that Newspaper was the main source for seeing the advertisement for majority of the consumers (45.83) followed by Television (33.33 per cent) and 2.5 per cent consumers were using the internet as source of

advertisement for products. The confident of the celebrity in the advertisement, easy identity of celebrity, worthiness and similarity were the main qualitative attributes that match the celebrity with advertisement.

The results indicated that Not Classy-Classy, Plain-Elegant, Unskilled-Skilled, Unknowledgeable-Knowledgeable, Inexperienced- Experienced were the attributes constituted factor-1. The factor-2 was comprised with Ugly-Beautiful, Dishonest-Honest, Insincere-Sincere and Untrustworthy-Trustworthy attributes of celebrities for product endorsement. The factor-3 was comprised with Unattractive-Attractive, Not an expert-Expert and Unqualified-Qualified attributes while the Not Sexy-Sexy was the only attribute contributed the factor-4. The results further indicated that the first factor is completely dominated by trustworthiness and expertise factors while the second factor is contributing by trustworthy attributes. It is also evident that besides the attractiveness and trustworthiness of celebrities, expertise of the celebrities in the advertisement is also critical attribute for successfulness of celebrity endorsement of products.

#### V. REFERENCES

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