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THEREVIEWOFTHEEFFECTIVENESSOFCELEBRITYADVERTISINGTHATINFLUENCECONSUMERSPERCEPTIONANDBUYINGBEHAVIOR

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The Review of the Effectiveness of Celebrity Advertising that Influence Consumer's Perception and Buying Behavior

Ow Wen Han ^α & Dr. Rashad Yazdanifard ^σ

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I. INTRODUCTION

According to Merriam Webster, celebrity advertising is defined as "to use a famous person's image to sell products or services by focusing on the person's money, popularity, or fame to promote the products or services." While it may seem that the use of famous individuals to endorse and promote consumer products and brands is a modern day trend, it has actually been engrained in society since the late 19th century. The first recorded celebrity endorsement dates back to 1893 when British actress Lillie Langtry appeared on the back of a Pears Soap product nearly 100 years after the product was initially introduced (Skärfstad & Bergström, 2004). In today's rapidly growing media-obsessed culture, celebrity endorsements have skyrocketed. In the United States alone, nearly 20 percent of television advertisements include a celebrity endorser (Crutchfield, 2010). This number may seem large, but in other markets, the use of famous sources as endorsers is even greater. India and Taiwan are two examples that have seen a tremendous growth in the celebrity-focused media fad, with celebrities appearing in 24 percent and 45 percent of advertisements respectively (Crutchfield, 2010).

The question this reveals is: what defines the exclusive and unique celebrity status? Is it any attractive, well-spoken, and recognizable individual? A brief list of the specifications and classifications of a celebrity include athletes, entertainers, politicians, executives, and fictional characters – Ronald Mc Donald and Spongebob for example. However, this concise list does

not limit one from attaining "celebrity status." A prime example of an individual breaking the celebrity boundary lines is Samuel Joseph Wurzelbacher, known to many as "Joe the Plumber." The individual became a celebrity as he gained national attention during the 2008 Presidential Election when he was utilized as a prime "celebrity endorser" throughout the entirety of the McCain-Palin campaign (Kellner, 2009). When people think of "Joe the Plumber", they instantly affiliate him with this campaign, resulting in a successfully implemented case of classical conditioning.

At the same time, it is also essential to keep in mind that a celebrity is always in public view (Choi & Berger, 2010). Take Dwight Howard, for example, the all-star basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers. In order for him to do his job, he must endure many public appearances, both in person and via impersonal communication mediums. Regarding public appearances, Dwight Howard has to fulfill his profession; play basketball with millions of people watching and attend press conferences or team-related events. In addition, Dwight makes public appearances through his every day routines, such as shopping and spending time with family. Public appearances don't end here either. Newspapers and magazines are areas of publication where anything related to Dwight Howard and other celebrities' can be addressed and disseminated. Social media is the final public appearance in today's cyber-obsessed technological world that has repeatedly served as a questionable channel for celebrities to express themselves (Marshall, 2010).

The use of celebrities in advertising remains a major topic of dissension throughout the marketing and advertising world to this day. Numerous acclaimed sources have made valid arguments for both sides of the situation; some claiming celebrity advertising is an effective and financially stable investment while others firmly believe it is a risky and ineffective tactic used by companies whose product itself cannot capture the attention of the consumer (Choi & Rifon, 2007). By deeply examining and addressing the components of celebrity advertising, the advantages and disadvantages associated with it, and the elements of successful and unsuccessful implementations, it will be clear that with a compelling and logical celebrity-brand fit, the

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application of celebrities as brand advocates can be used to a company's competitive advantage.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study philosophically falls under interpretive class, undertaken research approach is explanatory and research strategy is literature survey. Primary and secondary data were used for this study. International journals as well as proceedings are searched through international well-recognized databases like Emerald, Proquest and Ebscohost. The arrangement of literature review was to begin with the origins of celebrity advertising and how it is used widely among organizations then elaborating the concepts of independent discipline and interdisciplinary of consumer behavior, it's purpose in psychological and marketing studies. It then leads to the discussion whether celebrity advertising is effective be and how it affects future research.

III. COMPONENTS OF CELEBRITY ADVERTISING

When an individual see's a familiar figure on television promoting a product, there is an instinctive thought in the consumer's mind regarding the use of the product. This innate assumption is known as implication of use. The implication of use principle says that when someone watches an individual endorse a product, they assume that the individual promoting it is in fact a user of the product (Biswas, Hussain, & O'Donnell, 2009). This principle plays a major role in celebrity advertising. If a consumer see's a celebrity endorsing a product, it is essential that there is absolutely zero gap between the celebrity and the brand. Whether it is the celebrity's occupation, values, ethnicity, or another characteristic, the consumer should never wonder why this celebrity is endorsing the product (Fleck, N., Korchia, M., & Le Roy, 2012). In order for a company to effectively and profitably use a celebrity to endorse their brand and product, several imperative components must be taken into account.

The first component of celebrity advertising is celebrity knowledge and trustworthiness. When a company hires someone to recommend their brand and product, it is assumed that the individual promoting the product actually knows what they are talking about (Till & Shimp, 1998). If there seems to be some disconnect between the celebrity's knowledge of the product they are talking about, all credibility goes down the drain. When celebrity endorsers are seen as experts in a particular product category, they tend to be more liked by the consumer (Buhr, Simpson, & Pryor, 1987). Billy Mays, America's favorite infomercial star, clearly illustrates this principal. No matter what product he was endorsing, whether it be Oxi Clean or Kaboom!, the consumer was convinced that he knew exactly what he was talking about when endorsing the product because

he would effectively use it and explain the benefits in detail. This strategy served as a major enhancer of trust in the consumer solely due to the knowledge of the product displayed.

The next component of celebrity advertising that companies need to keep in mind is celebrity appearance. There have been a number of studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of the source attractiveness model. This model asserts that in order for the advertisement to send an effective message and to persuade the consumer, the source must be likeable, familiar, and similar to them (Till & Shimp, 1998). Physical appearance induces positive feelings from consumers. If the source matches these three traits, then the consumer will grasp the message and will be more likely to be cognitively engaged in the advertisement. Brad Pitt (Chanel) and Scarlett Johansson (Calvin Klein) are good examples of celebrities who successfully endorse brands with their good looks (Buhr, Simpson, & Pryor, 1987).

Another integral component to consider when potentially using a celebrity endorser is celebrity product fit and brand congruence. This is arguably the most important component when selectively choosing a celebrity to represent a brand (Fleck, Korchia, & Le Roy, 2012). Derek Jeter, the all-star shortstop for the New York Yankees, is one of the many celebrities who endorse multiple brands. Both Gatorade and Nike pay him millions of dollars every year to promote and use their products, which has proven to be an incredible fit for both the company and the individual (Lear, Runyan, & Whitaker, 2009). Both Nike and Gatorade are classified as sports-related brands that associate themselves only with the best of the best. Thus, given Derek Jeter's status as arguably the best shortstop in baseball, he is an impeccable fit for both the Nike and Gatorade brands.

The next component of celebrity advertising is celebrity popularity. This factor plays a chief role with products that possess a teenager-young adult target segment (Ogunsiji, 2012). The perfect example of this component is Justin Bieber endorsing Pro Active Skin Care. Justin Bieber is arguably the most famous pop singer in the world, and has an active following who simply can't get enough of him. Thus, when Pro Active decided it was a potential fit for their brand, and consumers all over the world saw Justin Bieber promoting their product, it immediately became "cool" and as trendy as anti-acne treatment can get. In teenage girls' minds across the world, if Justin was using it and it worked for him, then "I want it too and it will work for me" (Barnes, 2011; Keel & Natarajan, 2012). This brings us straight into the next component of celebrity advertising – celebrity performance.

A major factor companies need to take into account when choosing a source to promote their brand is performance. It is necessary for companies to

consider the implications of hiring a celebrity whose status is indefinite and has the ability to fluctuate (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008). Hiring a one-hit-wonder celebrity does not always work out for companies to promote their brand because it is opening up the door for negative affect transfer from the celebrity to the brand. Thus, immense research and care needs to be put into the process of selecting a celebrity endorser.

The final component that companies need to consider in order to effectively and profitably utilize celebrity endorsements is celebrity credibility. This is an overarching component that answers whether or not the consumer is actively engaged in the product and brand being endorsed by the celebrity, or if they simply consider it to be an irrelevant marketing ploy (Seno & Lukas, 2007). Since high credibility is closely associated with positive attitudes and behavioral changes, marketers will meticulously sort through celebrities to select ones based on the notion that they have a high level of credibility with the brand (Craig & McCann 1978; Woodside & Davenport 1974).

IV. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CELEBRITY ADVERTISING

"The importance of celebrity endorsers...does not lie in the fact that they are used by firms who wish to increase revenue, but in how these celebrities add value to a company, brand or product" (Amos, Holmes, Strutton, 2008). Sadly, celebrity advertisers sometimes do not reach the company's expectations. Celebrity advertising has many advantages and disadvantages. With all the social media prevalent in modern society, celebrities can reach new heights of fame that were unthinkable in the past. With all of this fame, however, comes a lot of pressure and constant attention. These hardships increase when a celebrity endorses a brand and can cause negative sentiments towards that brand. With that said, if a celebrity is able to handle the spotlight with class, he or she can do great things for that brand. This portion of the paper will explain both the advantages and the disadvantages of celebrity advertising. It will also provide real life examples describing situations where celebrities were either detrimental to a brand's campaign and situations where celebrities helped brands flourish.

a) *Advantages*

When talking about the advantages of celebrity advertising, one advantage is more clear and obvious than the rest. In simple terms, celebrity advertising influences consumer purchases. Consumers see a celebrity on an advertisement and think, "If this product works for this celebrity, then it can work for me" (Barnes, 2011) The consumer then reacts and buys the product. An example of this is Sarah Jessica Parker in the Garnier Fructis advertisements. Sarah Jessica Parker is a beautiful actress who is most famous for her role in the

television show *Sex in the City*. Many women love this show, and in turn, love Sarah Jessica Parker. Thus, people see her in the Garnier Fructis advertisements and believe with the use Garnier Fructis products, they can have beautiful hair just like Sarah Jessica Parker.

Celebrities can also build a brand's equity. Before Michael Jordan was starring in Nike advertisements, Nike products were predominantly running or tennis shoes. Jordan began advertising for Nike as a rookie in the NBA in 1984. As he rose to stardom, Nike's basketball brand exploded. Instead of selling primarily running and tennis shoes, Nike began selling all basketball gear. To this day, Michael Jordan remains the most recognizable Nike athlete and the basketball sector of Nike is thriving more than ever (Kellner, 2001). Nike brought its brand equity to new heights by simply having Michael Jordan endorse their products.

Brand recall is another advantage of celebrity advertising. Many celebrities endorse a brand so frequently that they become forever connected with the brand. Ashton Kutcher has been in countless commercials for Nikon cameras. As a result, when people see Kutcher on television or anywhere, they immediately affiliate him with Nikon cameras. The more a product is on a person's mind, the more likely it will influence their purchasing behavior. Because people see Kutcher constantly on television, the Nikon brand is on people's minds much more.

Celebrities can also increase brand awareness. If a brand is struggling to get its name out or is not as powerful a name as the company would like, using a celebrity can be extremely resourceful. "Celebrities are eye-catching; there's a pure awareness factor that makes you stop and look at an advertisement because you recognize the spokesperson" (St. Martin, 2013). Because of this, a celebrity can make one brand stick out over a competitor. When a person goes food shopping, more often than not, they do not know much about many brands. However, when they see a celebrity they do know about and like on the front of the packaging, they are more likely to pick that brand.

No matter how successful, most businesses go through many triumphs and difficulties. When a business is in one of those difficult times, a celebrity can help rejuvenate life back into the business. A celebrity can compensate for a company's lack on innovation. For example, when Jenny Craig witnessed a financial struggle, a heavier Kristie Alley starred in their commercials explaining how happy she was to be using Jenny Craig to lose weight. People saw these commercials and could relate to them. This brought Jenny Craig back to its former glory (Bijlefeld & Zoumaris, 2014).

Celebrities are great for attracting new users. The best brands are multidimensional. They offer many great qualities instead of just one or two. Sometimes,

these qualities go unnoticed if the brand does not advertise correctly. For example, people know Subway as being a restaurant where overweight people go to eat healthy and lose weight. However, Subway realized they could extend these qualities further. Athletes are also people who look to eat healthy. Why was Subway not a restaurant for athletes? To change this, Michael Phelps, an Olympic gold medalist swimmer, began to endorse their brand. This changed the way people thought about Subway and brought in a completely new segment of customers (Hein, 2009).

b) *Disadvantages*

Although positive and valuable in many respects, celebrity advertising is a risky venture and can have negative effects. One disadvantage of celebrity advertising is consumer skepticism. Many times, the celebrity endorsing a product will not relate to the product well (Erdogan, 1999). Consumers see this and may not believe the celebrity actually uses to product. This can hurt sales. For example, Rafael Palmeiro was a great baseball player in 1990s. He was on a commercial endorsing Viagra. Professional baseball players are some of the healthiest and most sexually active people in America. When people saw Palmeiro talking about erectile dysfunction, many did not believe he actually used the product (Newman, 2006). This hurt the Viagra brand more than it helped. Another instance where consumer wereskeptical is when Jessica Simpson attempted to endorse a pocketknife. Campbell and Warren (2012)explains in an article why Jessica Simpson was not effective for this brand: "The celebrity's positive associations of sexy and fun did not transfer to the brand, while her negative associations did."

Another common issue in celebrity advertising is multiple endorsements. Multiple endorsements can cause problems in two ways. First, a celebrity can endorse multiple brands. A situation where this was problematic involved famous tennis player Roger Federer. Federer represented both Gillette and Rolex at the same time (Rosca, 2010). The issue was that Gillette is a lower quality product and Rolex is the highest of quality. When people saw Federer on a Rolex commercial after seeing him on a Gillette commercial, they did not think as highly of Rolex. The second way multiple endorsements can be an issue is when a brand uses multiple celebrities. Britney Spears, Jeff Gordon, Michael Jackson and Nicki Minaj have all endorsed Pepsi in the past (Patel, 2009). An audience who loved Pepsi because they loved Britney Spears may not be happy when they see Jeff Gordon in a Pepsi advertisement. The Vampire effect is also present in celebrity advertising. This occurs when people only notice the celebrity and do not take into account all the other positives of the product. A person can see a celebrity they dislike and completely disregard the

product. The product could be exactly what they need but because they dislike the celebrity endorsing it, they will never buy it.

As most people know, celebrities are not always on their best behavior. Every day stories on television, the Internet and in newspapers talk about the newest celebrity scandals. This is why it is important when choosing a celebrity to endorse a brand to choose wisely. Early in his career, Kobe Bryant was convicted of sexually assaulting a woman. At the time, he was endorsing both McDonalds and Nutella. After the scandal, when people saw Bryant on commercials or posters for those brands, they thought less of the brand because Bryant now represented a rapist instead of a lovable basketball player (White, Goddard, & Wilbur, 2009). Another issue with celebrities not protecting their image is implication of use. If a celebrity is endorsing one brand but is seen using a competitors, this is obviously bad for the brand he or she in endorsing. As mentioned earlier, Britney Spears endorsed Pepsi products in the past. She has been seen numerous times drinking Coca Cola products. If a brand cannot get its celebrity advertiser to use its products, why would a consumer use them?

What happens to celebrities when they fall from the spotlight? People reach superstardom and quickly fall for one reason or another in many situations today. This can kill a brand. Greg Oden was a very successful basketball player at Ohio State University. Many people believed him to be the next big star in the NBA. The Portland Trail Blazers drafted him first overall in the 2007 NBA Draft. Soon after, Nike signed him to a contract to endorse them for twenty five million dollars. In Oden's first season, he injured himself and never became a great player. He is no longer in the NBA. The twenty five million dollars that Nike paid him turned out to be a complete waste (Kurzman et al., 2007).

V. SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATIONS

Celebrity advertising has been utilized in many successful and unsuccessful campaigns. Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods, and Oprah are just a few celebrities that use their fame to promote brands for a cost. There is not much that separates a successful celebrity advertisement campaign from an unsuccessful one. There are four key elements to constructing a valuable celebrity advertising campaign: the message, the celebrity, making it stick and choosing the correct media channel. All of these pieces must be synchronized in order to leverage the celebrities' influence on consumer buying habits. If there is a mismatch between any of these elements, a void is created between the celebrity, product and consumer that cannot be made up for anywhere else.

A strong and consistent message is crucial to building the foundation of a celebrity advertising campaign. One cannot throw an A-list celebrity face onto a brand and expect to see positive results in sales (Eisend & Langner, 2010). A company must reflect on what it wants the brand to stand for, and then develop a message that reflects the brand's position. The message must also be explicit in order to truly set apart the brand from other brands. An ambiguous or unclear message will erode the celebrity promotion efforts independent of whichever celebrity is chosen.

After the message is completely developed, a celebrity must be carefully selected to deliver this message to consumers. The celebrity must not only be willing, but also want to deliver the message because he or she believes in the brand (Erdogan, 1999). Obviously, it would not make sense to have a male celebrity promoting a female brand. When the celebrity's persona naturally aligns with the brand, it is easy for consumers to make the link between the celebrity and the brand. Moreover, recalling the brand becomes second nature whenever the celebrity is seen or discussed – a relationship most companies want the consumer to have between the celebrity and the brand. Another important fact to consider is that when celebrities endorse a product, the meaning developed around a particular celebrity will – or at least it is hoped for by advertisers – transfer to a company, brand, or product (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton 2008). This is immensely important because this also means that the public's view of a celebrity, whether it be positive or negative, will also impact the view the public has on the brand being promoted. Finding a celebrity that generally creates a buzz or a sense of excitement is also helpful because this means that consumers are focusing on the celebrity over most other celebrities. Just as a company would want to find a unique position for its brand, the celebrity promoting the brand should also be unique. If one celebrity is used to promote many brands, the celebrity's influence is greatly diluted because of the many different links between the celebrity and the products he or she is promoting (Rosca, 2010).

Once the message is created and matched with a relevant celebrity, the delivery of the message has to resonate and stick with the consumers. The focus at this stage of delivering the celebrity promotion is on finding a way to make the message stick in the consumer's head and through which channel. An effective celebrity promotion needs to offer a memorable takeaway to consumers. A distinct takeaway further reduces the effort needed to recall a brand when thinking about a specific celebrity. This result is achieved by putting equal emphasis on maintaining the message and making a lasting impression on the consumer's mind (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton 2008). The channel choice becomes important as well as this point. Some messages will stick easier on the minds of consumers

with visuals on a television advertisement, while others may make more on an impact via a public relations stunt. For example, Michael Jordan promoted his own brand of basketball shoes by wearing a new pair for each game. His message and delivery fit perfectly by putting many potential buyers of basketball shoes on the lookout for what shoe Jordan would wear next while they were watching their favorite sporting event.

There are many examples out there of successful and unsuccessful celebrity advertising campaigns including Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods with Nike. Examining these celebrity promotions offers insight into the fine line between adding value or taking value away from a brand using a celebrity endorsement (Kim & Na, 2007; Lear, Runyan, & Whitaker, 2009). Michael Jordan has done an astounding job marketing Nike's line of Air Jordan basketball shoes by leveraging his own celebrity status. The message here was that Nike created a line of basketball shoes that blended high performance and with trendiness (Porretto, 2012). Michael Jordan was the perfect fit for this promotion because not only the line was named after him, but also because Jordan was considered to be the best upcoming basketball player out of college when he signed with Nike. Moreover, in a time when all basketball shoes were required to be one color, Jordan wore multi-colored shoes to games and had the \$5,000 fine that came with that paid for by Nike (Porretto, 2012). Jordan was an elite basketball player with style, which is exactly the image that Nike wanted associated with its new Air Jordan brand. Jordan then delivered this message by wearing a different pair of Air Jordan shoes on the court for each game. While his target market was already voluntarily watching him play, they were forced to also notice his new pair of shoes. It soon became fun to see which pair he would wear next, so Nike effectively had its target market seeking out the Air Jordan brand. Today the Air Jordan brand has grossed over \$1 billion and has 10.8% of the United States shoe market as well as 75% of all basketball shoes (Porretto, 2012).

Contrasting the success of Nike with Michael Jordan, there is the Nike and Tiger Woods campaign. The Tiger Woods scandal created a prime example of how the volatile nature of celebrities can hurt a company's brand image rather than help. Upon signing Tiger Woods to Nike in 2000, Nike's golf ball sales increased by about \$60 million while acquiring 4.5 million new customers (Chung, Derdenger, & Srinivasan, 2013). With Tiger being the most successful golfer in the world, the fit between Nike's golfing equipment and Tiger is an obvious fit. Nike's message was one of high performance golf equipment for the serious golfer, and there is nobody that embodies that message more than one of the fiercest competitors in the world, that is, Tiger Woods. However, after the scandal, many companies dropped Tiger Woods as an endorser, including: AT&T, Gillette, Gatorade and Accenture, among others. These

companies feared that the negative public backlash on Tiger Woods would carry the same negative backlash on their brands (Chung, Derdenger, & Srinivasan, 2013). Nike, however, stuck with Tiger Woods as an endorser and literally paid the price. Tiger's actions resonated so poorly among Nike consumers that Nike lost \$7.5 million in net profits and 105,000 customers.

A key factor that ties together all of the steps needed to successfully implement a celebrity advertising campaign is determining the long-term equity a celebrity can provide for your brand. Given celebrities volatility and the exponential growth of social media making public awareness the highest it has ever been, the reliability of a celebrity with a brand is just as important as his or her relevance to the brand.

VI. DISCUSSION

Celebrity advertising campaigns, whether modern or traditional, have the ability to draw attention to consumers. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, consumers view products/services with low or high thought. This model sets limits on when to rely on celebrity advertising. If used right, celebrity advertising forces the consumer to elaborate and draws them to a product that may not even apply to them. Due to the peripheral path, celebrity advertisements have been primarily used in low involvement decision making. Celebrities have an increased ability to impact low involvement and high arousal products because it enhances the consumers' ability to process the content. With the right components in mind, celebrity advertising can positively influence brand image and brand equity.

A well-crafted celebrity advertising campaign under the right circumstances can justify the high costs associated with this type of advertising. These campaigns have the ability to change consumer-purchasing behavior in both positive and negative ways. They may educate, inspire, entertain, and even provoke the consumer through celebrity credibility, appearance, popularity, performance, and brand congruence. Research shows the importance of credibility towards building trust and expertise. Next, psychology suggests physical attractiveness positively influences brand image when appearance is part of the industry. Advertisements using popular and well performing celebrities are widely recognized and perceived as more credible. Thus creating a greater influence on the consumer and their purchasing behavior. Lastly, if a proper celebrity/product fit and celebrity/brand congruence is present loyalty, consistency, and credibility increase. However, these components are irrelevant if the product/service lacks reliability, validity, and ease of use from the start. It is important for products as well as their celebrity advertisements to adapt to the market trends and adjust their goals to create a successful celebrity advertising campaign.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, for a successful celebrity endorsement, it is critical to follow the four elements of a celebrity advertising campaign; 1) choose the right message; 2) pick the right celebrity; 3) select the right channel choice; and most importantly, 4) create a lasting impression that will stick to the consumers mind. However, as many unsuccessful campaigns show, it is vital for advertisers to beware of the risks associated with celebrity advertising campaigns. The risks stem from the unpredictable nature of celebrities lifestyles. Because celebrities are constantly in the spotlight, they are susceptible to conflict and scandal which can quickly deteriorate or diminish the value of an advertising campaign. Companies must choose celebrities with values that align with those of the company. Celebrity advertising campaigns must effectively use all components and elements externally across all markets and internally across all levels within the company to be successful. Celebrity advertising is a risky venture but with risk comes reward.

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