



Ain Shams University

Faculty of Commerce

Business Administration Department

**Measuring the influence of the incongruence
between product and celebrity endorsement on
customer purchase intention: An Applied study on
Fast Moving Consumers' Goods**

**قياس تأثير عدم التوافق بين المنتج و المشاهير على النية الشرائية
للمستهلك: بالتطبيق على السلع سريعة الاستهلاك**

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Dedication

To my beloved Mother, who is always believing in me, encouraging me, and guiding me. I owe you everything.

To my Father and Sister, who shower me with their love.

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Abstract

The use of celebrity in advertising is one of many brands' communication channels. According to (McCracken 1989), using a well-known endorser in a commercial will increase the consumer's buying behavior, especially when he can be easily recognized by the audience (Erdogan et al., 2008). The good celebrity/product fit can do wonders for the company, and if not, the company may be in undesired conditions. The study illustrates whether the celebrity/product mismatch can affect the consumer purchase intent. To clarify the degree of incongruence between the celebrity and the product category, three levels of incongruence are used: extreme mismatch, neither match nor mismatch and extreme match. In this study we will discuss the influence of the celebrity/product mismatch on the customer buying intention.

This research is constructed on multitude of mechanisms and paradigms, which have been used to explain the empirical results of celebrity endorsement: attribution theory, source model (Erdogan, 1999), meaning transfer (McCracken 1989), and schema theory (Lee and Thorson 2008; Misra and Beatty 1990).

The previous literature on celebrity endorsements shows that if there is a congruence or match-up between the spokes model and the brand, advertising effectiveness are enhanced (Misra and Beatty 1990; Roy, S. 2016). On contrary, other studies illustrated that selecting a celebrity endorser with a less than extreme match with the brand might be more useful, especially for established brands (Lee and Thorson, 2008). Building on the concept of schema congruity, load of literature indicate that brand-incongruous celebrities support longer ad viewing times, greater brand attitudes, and greater buying intentions, and more favorable word-of-mouth.(Torn, 2012)

Accordingly, the impact of the three different incongruence levels were examined separately on the purchase intention. In this study, six types of fictional ads were randomly distributed to the participants, one for each participant. They were asked to view just one ad. in which an athlete endorses a product and then complete the questionnaire on hand. All the pairings were fictive, but real brands and real celebrities were used to increase the ecological validity of this study. To assess the overall fit between brand and celebrity, 2 x 3 (2 celebrities x 3 incongruence levels).

Results showed that the celebrity incongruence can show positive impact on purchase intention, in the three different incongruence degrees (extreme incongruence, moderate incongruence, extreme congruence). Although most studies have shown the negative impact of incongruence, in this study, the research had different impact with the well-established brand as both the celebrity and the brand are having brand salience. Not only, it is found that the three levels have shown positive relationships, but also, the moderate incongruence shown to produce favorable consumer response, buying intention, than either extreme incongruence or extreme congruence.

Research Key words: Celebrity, Attribute Theory, Source of attractiveness, Source of credibility, Incongruence, Match-up hypothesis, Perceived value, Schema Congruity, Purchase Intention.

Chapter one

Research Framework

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, an overview of the thesis is provided, by discussing the research background which led to defining the research problem and formulating the research questions, objectives and hypotheses. In addition to, highlighting the context of the research as well as the methodology utilized.

1.2. Research Background

The use of advertising has changed over the past 150 years. The modern strategy tends to include lots of appeals that differ in the way to customer's awareness and behavior towards the ads (Belch & Belch 2001). The main purpose of these appeals is to increase the brand awareness and product recognition among large number of audiences. According to (McCracken 1989), using a well-known person in the ads will increase the consumer's buying behavior, especially when he can be easily recognized by the audience (Malik A. and Sudhakar B, 2014).

Celebrity endorsement is recognized by marketers to have a great effect on the brand by increasing the customers' attention and recall ability. The company is trying to send the message to the customers by using someone that the consumer feels a sense of similarity with. Erdogan (2001) has clarified that customers evaluate the information from a celebrity who has similar goals, interests or lifestyle than anybody else. Furthermore, Wheeler (2003) added that celebrities can transfer their image and publicity to a specific product.

According to McCracken (1989), Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large portion of population for their attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills. Endorsement is defined as "a channel of communication where celebrities act as spokesperson of the brand and by extending their popularity and personality they certify the brand's claim and position" (Zipporah, 2014). The endorsement of celebrity can enhance customers' intention to buy the product as they are more likely to buy recognized products than unrecognized ones. The more the willingness to buy the product

enhances the probability of the purchase decision, but not actually buying it. Purchase intention is defined by (Spears and Singh, 2004) "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand".

Little is known about the criteria of choosing the celebrity that effectively fit with the product endorsed. In the early studies it was found that the right celebrity/ product match enhances the attitude towards the advertisement and the endorsed products, while the incorrect or mismatching endorser may be negatively evaluated by the audience. Accordingly, this celebrity and product fitting is illustrated in the "match-up hypotheses theory".(Choi and Rifon, 2012; Misra and Beatty,1990)

The match-up hypothesis theory suggests that endorsement is most effective when congruence exists between image, likability, credibility of the celebrity and the endorsed product personality and image (Kahle & Homer,1985; Kamins,1990; Ohanian,1991; Till & Busler,2000).

Celebrity endorsement is a two-edged sword and has numerous advantages, but if only it was properly matched. As finding the right celebrity and matching it with the right product, enhances the consumer attitude towards the endorsed advertising and can pay lots of dividends to the producer. While an incorrect celebrity may have negative impact, it may produce a bad publicity for the product and its brand. Despite little is known about what criteria needed while choosing the right celebrity. So, this research aims to investigate the influence of the incongruent product/celebrity endorsement in ads on the customers' purchase intention.

Scholars in their work suggested if there is a "fitting" or a match between the celebrity and the product in the commercial, the consumer will favorably evaluate the product and will be motivated to buy the product. Researchers also declared a fitting endorsement will enhance the credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity endorser and the attitude toward the advertisement (Kamins & Gupta, 1994), while a non-fitting unhealthy product such as cigarette or tobacco endorsement by a sport celebrity leads to negative evaluation of the celebrity. The incongruent product is not a negative product by itself and neither is it considered a "fitting"