

Celebrity endorser and respondents gender: Its impact on company, behavioral and attitudinal variables

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Abstract

The use of and literature on celebrity endorsers is extensive. Nevertheless there is limited study on the impact of such use to a company's image by respondent's gender and replication of past findings in a Malaysian context. This study utilizes a factorial design to measure the interaction of the use of celebrity endorser and target market reaction by gender and its impact on the company, behavioral and attitudinal variables. The findings show no significant difference for all variables between advertisements that have a celebrity endorser and those that don't, except for attitude towards the company for female respondents. There were weak overall interaction effects for the variables attitude towards the company and word of mouth. Behavioral responses were consistently lowest. Highest was attitudinal variables followed by attitude towards the company.

Keywords: Attitudinal, Behavioral, Celebrity Endorser, Company, Gender, Malaysia

Introduction

Many studies with regards to celebrity endorsers, researchers have included the issue of demographics (Atkins and Block, 1983; Kanungo and Pang, 1973). Nevertheless, many of these studies on celebrity endorser have looked at the issue of gender, but from the perspective of the celebrity themselves and not of the respondents gender specifically (Freiden, 1984; Sawatari, 2006). The increase of celebrity endorser based advertising over the recent years begs the question as to the impact on the different respondent gender towards the use of celebrity endorsers.

The use of celebrities in advertisements has been rapidly increasing, as it is believed to contribute substantial positive impact on financial returns for the companies that use them (Endorgan, 2001). In 1975, only 15% of prime time TV advertising featured celebrities (Forkan, 1975). In 1978, it went up to 20%, and approximately 10% of the dollars spent on TV advertising featured celebrities (Anonymous, 1978; Sherman, 1985). A recent estimates approximately 25 percent of American commercials in year 2000 use celebrity endorsers (Shimp, 2000), in other words, one out of four commercials features a celebrity.

Many businesses believe that an advertisement delivered by a celebrity provides a higher degree of appeal, attention, recall and possibly purchase compared to those without celebrities (Cooper, 1984; Dean and Biswas, 2001). Yet not many studies are conducted to test if the celebrity advertisement appeal carries on towards both male and female, or only towards a particular gender. Companies must understand that the fees for celebrity talent can be substantial, cost of national advertising, especially on television, is extremely high, and the type of spokesperson affects the levels of awareness and recall (Freiden, 1984; Friedman and Friedman, 1979).

The literature has shown a considerable interest regarding factors that could help to establish the positive relationship, between celebrity endorsers and the products. Research indicates that celebrity endorsements can result in more favorable advertisement ratings and product evaluations (Cooper, 1984; Dean and Biswas, 2001) and advertisement featuring celebrity figures consistently produce more