Celebrity endorsement theories: Review perspective

Varsha Reddy Bogollu Veda | Sathish Arumbi Saravanan

Abstract: The goal of this study is to examine existing theories in the field of celebrity endorsement and show how these theories can be used as a foundation for future research in this area. This article's theoretical framework takes a broad approach, aiming to bridge the gap between the efficacy of celebrity-endorsed advertisements and endorsement theory. A holistic theoretical framework is necessary to encompass the diverse landscape of celebrity endorsements seen in actual advertising campaigns. In terms of methodology, this article employs a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis, which is deemed appropriate for investigating the nuances of celebrity endorsement theories. This review’s findings highlight the importance of five major celebrity endorsement theories, shedding light on their potential for shaping the future of research. This article adds value by synthesising existing knowledge and prior research, providing a concise overview of celebrity endorsement, and emphasising the critical role of the five major celebrity endorsement theories in paving the way for future research.

Keywords: celebrity endorsement, source attractiveness theory, source credibility theory, meaning transfer model, elaboration likelihood model, product match-up model

1. Introduction

Celebrity endorsement hereby referred to as CE promotes a product, brand, or service using a celebrity's fame or social capital, which existed since the late 19th century; it was not until the 1980s that they started to become ubiquitous in advertisements (Charbonneau & Garland, 2010; Jain & Roy, 2016; Yoo et al., 2018). Celebrities have been used by marketers as a marketing strategy for over a century to promote their brand. According to (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 2004), CEs account for over 10% of corporate investments. For example, Virat Kohli earnings estimated $31 million per year as endorsement payments from Blue Tribe, Puma, Vivo, Himalaya, Blue Star, and Wrogn; Michael Jordan earned $100 million during his NBA career; Reebok and Venus Williams signed a $40 million endorsement agreement; and TVS pays MS Dhoni Rs. Twenty-three crore per year to promote their product. A successful CE requires the endorser to be the best in his or her field and to inspire customers’ trust.

Currently, well-known individuals such as athletes, actors, and other professionals feature in advertising and deploy their profiles to endow the endorsed products with their symbolic and cultural values (Charbonneau & Garland, 2010), where this transformation has a larger impact on society and popular culture as a result of their growth seen in the media. While we are cognizant that CEs exert a significant impact on brands, the impact has grown even more with the advent of social media (Keel & Natarajaian, 2012; Kramer, 2010; Lu & Seah, 2018) for the purpose of increasing brand recognition, marketers allocate a significant portion of their promotional budget to celebrities. With the proliferation of CEs, which cost billions of dollars annually, it is undeniable that in-depth study is needed (Amos et al., 2008; Batra & Homer, 2004).

CEs are vividly used by marketers to advertise their brand and product to attract customers, paving the way to increased popularity among marketing scholars and academicians to conduct research. These articles about CEs are periodically published in journals of marketing and advertising. Over the past thirty years, research on CEs has examined a wider number of concepts and issues, including; endorser credibility(Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Goldsmith et al., 2000; Ohanian, 1990), endorser attractiveness;(Caballero et al., 1989; Kamins, 1990; Till & Busler, 2000), elaboration likelihood model (ELM);, and celebrity product “match-up”(Kamins, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Till & Busler, 1998). However, there are many contradictory findings in the literature on CEs, and academic researchers are continually striving for the optimal model to explain the various impacts of CE.

This review’s intent is to present a summary of the research on CEs with an emphasis on pinpointing notable findings that contradict one another. The fundamental agenda of this research is to illustrate how, when considered together, the five CE theories and their variables establish a thorough CE framework that enables marketers to have a clearer and better prescription regarding how to craft advertising messages that create a positive impact on attitudes and behaviors.

2. Literature Review
A review was carried out in accordance with the predefined reporting components for systematic reviews. Data were obtained in October 2022 using the Scopus database, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, with no chronological filter. To detect CEs, the terms 'CE,' 'celebrities,' 'endorsement,' or 'endorsements,' and 'celebrity consumer behavior' were employed in keyword searches on article titles. The purpose was to collect as many papers as possible on the topic and subtopics of management while ensuring that the articles selected addressed the paper’s objective. The outputs were successively filtered until only peer-reviewed papers remained. Books, conference proceedings, and no scholarly papers were excluded from the themes covered by the databases. The current study focuses on CE, and it gathered 150 data points from Scopus, 100 from Google Scholar, and 40 from Web of Science. After cross-referencing the three data base results, 80 duplicates were deleted, yielding 210 articles. Furthermore, 112 credible papers on CEs were chosen, while data articles were from social science, psychology, and arts and humanities.

2.1. Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity Endorser according to (McCracken, 1989) is a person who has recognition in public and leverages this reputation on consumer commodities by appearing alongside it in the advertisement. Utilizing celebrities to market products was hastened by the introduction of television in the late 1960s (Kaikati, 1987), and it suddenly increased in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Advertisers have always used famous people to promote their products, whether they are from the corporate world, sports, film, or politics. It was not until 1985 that a scholarly study was conducted with the express purpose of comparing the efficacy of various celebrity types (Kahle & Homer, 1985). The first comprehensive literature analysis on the phenomenon of CE was prompted by the explosion of academic interest in the field (Kaikati, 1987).

The benefits of CEs may include message reinforcement, image building, and benchmarking themselves against the competition. The drawbacks may include resistance from affluent consumers; the celebrity's personal issues harming the brand along with the brand image and reputation; overselling; shifting consumer preferences; and brand obscurity. (Wood & Burkhalter, 2014) alongside advertising, CEs are used in numerous other forms of communications including no profits and NGOs, such as Aamir Khan promoting Satyameva Jayate and Yuvraj Singh advocating for children's education, as well as B2B products and services, such as Mr. Tiger Woods' endorsement of Accenture and some of their personally invested brands, including One8 by Virat Kohli. Furthermore, it is essential to understand that CEs are based on agreements wherein celebrities grant and agree that the business, brand, or product to use their respective name and/or physical presence in specific ways.

3. Overview of the Celebrity Endorsement Literature

The term "celebrity endorser" was coined by (McCracken, 1989) to describe a person's personality with widespread fame who utilizes that fame to promote a specific brand of consumer goods. It is important to use celebrities to promote a product because, regardless of what the product is, when a celebrity endorses it, it makes consumers want to buy it right away. Therefore, the author has seen that in the study, celebrity does not have a large effect on the price of the product or on how likely it is that the claims are true, but it does have an effect on the characteristics of the product, which leads to a desire to buy it (Friedman et al., 1976).

There are hypotheses that have proven that the use of celebrities to endorse a product has been validated and put out to explain why some endorsements are successful while others are not. A plethora of studies have been conducted to discover the optimal endorser attributes for various contexts (e.g., product categories) and how those traits interact to maximize advertising success. However, the collected studies have not yielded universally applicable principles that would aid a marketer in choosing a communication choice. Surprisingly, no research has sought to synthesize the results of the plethora of publications on CEs into a unified model that resolves the seeming inconsistencies and gives marketers the best possible strategy for a given set of circumstances (Knoll & Matthes, 2017).

Despite dedicated efforts by researchers to establish a clear criterion for marketers and practitioners to guide their selection of celebrity endorsers, there remains a lack of consensus and disagreement regarding the valid dimensions to consider. This lack of agreement makes it challenging to determine the specific features that should be matched between a celebrity and a business during the endorsement process. Consequently, the ambiguity surrounding the selection criteria may lead to uncertainty and difficulty in executing successful celebrity endorsement campaigns. Contemplating to 50 years of research on CE, (Knoll & Matthes, 2017) proposed that further studies shall investigate essential psychological and behavioral underpinnings because it is still unknown under what conditions a specific factor is effective. Studies have focused on one of the five theories of endorsement, with the assumption being that this specific theoretical construct best explains the influence of endorsements. According to the theories of source credibility hereby referred to as (SC), attractiveness, brand fit, meaning transfer, and the SC, celebrities who are highly credible, attractive, or meaning loaded would be the best choice for selection criteria.

4. The evolution of theories and models in endorsement
Early studies in psychology identified the characteristics of trustworthiness and attractiveness as crucial messenger traits, and studies on the efficacy of product endorsement began by considering these two aspects in celebrity endorsers. Extending the foundations laid by prior research on SC and attractiveness, the matchup hypothesis posits that an endorsement's effectiveness relies on the alignment between the endorser's image and the product being endorsed. According to this hypothesis, the product's evaluation is influenced not only by the endorser's attractiveness and credibility but also by various other factors that contribute to the perceived congruence between the two. In essence, the success of an endorsement campaign hinges on the harmony between the endorser's persona and the characteristics of the endorsed product, making it a pivotal factor in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. (Hsu & McDonald, 2002). Adding to the theories the meaning transfer model hereby referred to as (MTM) has an equal impact on endorsement which states that influential endorsements are those that successfully transmit the endorser's meaning to the product (McCracken, 1989). First, there is a plethora of research on source models since researchers have evaluated the efficacy of trustworthiness and attractiveness. Subsequently, the concept of endorsements having several dimensions, such as trustworthiness, likability, credibility, familiarity, congruence, attractiveness was proposed, leading to a plethora of studies investigating the match-up hypothesis. It is notable that majority of research has supplied sufficient data to prove that the endorsement model in question is a viable construct that helps explain endorsement theory and locate credible celebrities endorsing candidates (Seno & Lukas, 2007).

In this article, the authors discuss the significance of theories applied in CE study. The research findings clearly indicate the relevance of the credibility and attractiveness of source on consumers’ attitude transformation. Academic researchers have suggested that the majority of endorsement research has been undertaken within the theoretical framework of the credibility and attractiveness of the endorsing source. Whereas (Zwilling & Fruchter, 2013) found that it is the celebrity's attractiveness that helps in strengthening consumer intention to buy the advertised product, (Winterich et al., 2018) in their research findings, the authors have observed that both trustworthiness and expertise, which are the two components of credibility, hold equal importance as determinants of the impact of celebrity endorsers on attitudes and evaluations. While SC and source attractiveness hereby referred to as (SA) models, offer satisfactory explanations for certain endorsements, they often fail to explore and account for the full multidimensional nature of the endorser. As a result, some scholars have proposed the match-up hypothesis and the SC as more precise and suitable explanations. These alternative models take into consideration a broader range of factors and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in celebrity endorsement scenarios, allowing for a more accurate assessment of their effects on consumer perceptions and behaviors. (Fleck et al., 2012) have claimed that the match-up hypothesis is flawed due to a lack of proof that the dimensions being looked at are the correct ones; as a result, studies examining either trustworthiness or congruity are insufficient. (McCracken, 1989) noted that many endorsements used in practice are not adequately described by the source or matchup models, and suggested the SC to fill this gap. In reality, the SC has been accepted as the hypothesis that most closely captures the essence of the endorsement process and how it works (Carroll, 2009; Fleck et al., 2012). While the match-up hypothesis helps to fill in some of the blanks left by the SC model and credibility model, it is clear that the above three hypotheses fail to elucidate important concerns about the efficient use of CEs, as stated by (Erdogan, 1999).

The most persuasive argument for comparing companies and celebrities is that the former consumers can impart desirable qualities to the latter (Erdogan & Drollinger, 2008). Research conducted into the efficacy of these models typically downplays the significance of the source models. Due to the obvious gap between advertising practice and scientific study, the matchup hypothesis and the SC were proposed. Both received criticism of their source models for filling certain but not all gaps, which prompted the SC to be developed. In the succeeding sections, the models are described in depth.

4.1. The Source Credibility Model

In line with the research of (Hovland et al., 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951) the trustworthiness of the communication's source significantly affects the communication's persuasiveness. When the information supplied by a trustworthy source seems relevant to the consumer's situation internalization occurs (Biswas et al., 2006; Kelman, 2017). The SC is composed of two dimensions, i.e., expertise and trustworthiness. Expertise indicates the sender's level of education, experience, and/or ability; therefore, an endorser's knowledge derives from his or her experience, training, and aptitude to impart information to others (Horai et al., 1974). Along with the above characteristics integrity, objectivity, and honesty are also major qualities indicative of trustworthiness in an endorsement, which leads to the purchase behavior of consumers (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991). The celebrity's perceived competence creates more trustworthiness than the celebrity in person making it a primary SC factor in consumer purchase decisions (Erdogan, 1999; Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1991).

SC is essential while conducting research on CEs (Choi & Rifon, 2007). The value of expertise and trustworthiness is still uncertain and contradictory based on the research that has been conducted. This has sparked debate among academics (Stafford et al., 2002). Studies have shown that people are more likely to change their minds on an issue if they believe the person or organization presenting the information is credible and trustworthy, as found by (McGinnies & Ward, 1980; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). According to Ohanian, the credibility of an advertisement's sources is not crucial to a consumer's decision to make a purchase because viewers would not put much stock in celebrities who were paid to promote a product.
In line with these findings, (Wiener & Mowen, 1986) show that consumers are less likely to trust sources they believe have ulterior motives for making an argument. Recently, (Priester & Petty, 2003; Siemens et al., 2008) emphasized the favorable effects of competence and credibility on performance. However, studies suggest that these two ideas may contribute to an endorser's effectiveness in their own ways, and that their impact is likely to vary depending on which customers are being targeted.

4.2. Source Attractiveness Model

In regards to marketing, individuals have a tendency to respond more positively toward attractive people who communicate than they do to individuals who are either neutral or less appealing and are regarded more favorably and have a positive impact on consumers’ perceptions of the brands with which they are linked, both of which are beneficial to companies (Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990). Similarly, if the significance of an endorser’s credibility is recognized, the influence of attractiveness (endorser) on the shift in customer attitudes is also significant. Specifically, pertinent work was published between the middle of the 1970s and the middle of the 1990s. Because of this significant amount of study, marketers now have a better understanding of how the physical attractiveness of endorsers influences the success of advertising. According to the SC model, when advertisers use endorsers who are exceptionally attractive, marketers can make the most from the double effects of both the endorser’s status and physical attractiveness (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Singer, 1983).

Conversely, to the research that has been conducted, the attractiveness component of a message sender is not restricted to a person's physical appeal; rather, it also includes other characteristics, such as resemblance, familiarity, and liking (McGuire, 1985). Therefore, sources that are known, liked, and perceived to be comparable to the target group are thought to be the most attractive to the target group (McGuire, 1985). It is commonly held that an endorser’s academic capabilities, personality, and way of life all contribute to the individual's overall attractiveness (Erdogan, 1999). Widespread recognition and popularity are the major reasons for consumers to find superstars beautiful regardless of their real physical attractiveness (Choi & Rifon, 2007). According to (Raven et al., 1998), superstars use their widespread adoration and status to imitate lesser-known celebrities to wield an extraordinary level of influence that can make or break an advertisement. The vast majority of studies have come to the conclusion that attractive (physically) celebrity endorsers may not be the catalyst for a change in behavioral intention (Caballero et al., 1989).

4.3. The Product-Source Matchup Hypothesis

According to the match-up theory, there should be a strong similarity between the image of the celebrity endorser and the image of the product being promoted (Kamins, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Lynch & Schuler, 1994). This theory is built upon two foundational concepts: schema theory and social adaptation theory. Schema theory suggests that individuals possess cognitive frameworks or knowledge structures (schemas) that help them interpret and process information about the world around them. When a proper match between the endorser and the product is perceived, this information becomes more significant and may influence how the product is judged. Social adaptation theory, as proposed by (Kahle & Homer, 1985) and further developed by (Kamins, 1990), posits that individuals will use sources of information as long as they assist them in adapting to their environment. In the context of celebrity endorsements, consumers are more likely to pay attention to and be influenced by the endorsement if they believe it helps them adapt to their social or self-image needs. Combining schema theory and social adaptation theory, the matching hypothesis suggests that when a match between the endorser and the product is perceived as important, this diagnostic information is compared to the existing schema or knowledge structure about the product, the endorser, and the advertisement (Lynch & Schuler, 1994). If the match is consistent and favorable, the information about the endorser and the product is integrated into the consumer’s schema, leading to attitude and behavior changes (Wright, 2016). In essence, the match-up hypothesis asserts that consumers are more likely to be positively influenced by celebrity endorsements when they perceive a strong match between the endorser and the product. This alignment reinforces existing schema and contributes to changes in attitudes and purchase intentions, making celebrity endorsement an effective advertising strategy when properly executed.

Based on the findings of the source models, it has been hypothesized that any famous person who is credible; and attractive can successfully endorse any brand. Several studies have questioned this idea, because it does not clarify why certain celebrities with similar levels of credibility or attractiveness are more successful brand endorsers than others (McCacken, 1989). Clarifying the contradiction, much work has gone into testing the matchup hypothesis, which proposes that the theory can increase the legitimacy and appeal of a product by pairing it with a celebrity (Kamins, 1990; Lynch & Schuler, 1994; Solomon et al., 1992; Till & Busler, 1998). Over time, consumers will learn specifics about their favorite celebrities, such as their talents, accomplishments, occupation, physical appearance, public image, etc., and incorporate this information into a schema and social adoption dedicated to the subject. Consumers are more likely to remember a celebrity and their associated goods if there is a strong similarity between the two (Till & Busler, 2000). In response to this valid
critique, studies testing the match-up hypothesis have sought to develop a model for describing the wide range in endorser efficacy shown across different product types (Koernig & Boyd, 2009).

The match-up hypothesis can be traced back to (Mowen et al., 1979), who proposed that celebrity endorsers could be more effective when there is congruence between the endorser, the brand, and the target audience. This congruence is based on two components, relevance, and expectation. Relevance refers to the degree to which the information conveyed by the celebrity endorser is directly related to and supports the message being promoted. In other words, the celebrity's image and characteristics should provide a clear and straightforward illustration of the advertised message. Expectation, as discussed by (Heckler & Childers, 1992), refers to the extent to which the conveyed stimuli align with the expectations of the audience regarding the topic or the endorsed product. Consumers are more likely to form a favorable impression of the endorser, the product, and the celebrity when they perceive a consistent meaning conveyed through the celebrity's image and the product message. Several studies have supported the match-up hypothesis. For example, (Kamins, 1990; Koernig & Boyd, 2009) found that consumers' favorable impressions were enhanced when they perceived consistency between the celebrity's attributes (such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness) and the product features. Furthermore, research by (Kamins & Gupta, 1994; McCormick, 2016) demonstrated that the level of recall of a celebrity endorsement was correlated with how well the new information (product features) matched or fit with the existing information related to the celebrity's attributes.

Overall, the match-up hypothesis suggests that the effective use of celebrity endorsements depends on the alignment between the celebrity endorser, the brand, and the message, ensuring a coherent and compelling message that resonates with the target audience. Nevertheless, research into the significance of visual cues as matching factors was called for by (Till & Busler, 1998). In a similar vein, (Erdogan et al., 2001) anticipated that research into the match-up hypothesis would expand beyond measuring the celebrity's attractiveness and credibility to measuring the extent to which the endorsed brand and the target market were compatible with the celebrity's overall image. A number of studies have examined into the match-up impact from the narrow angle of attractiveness and credibility, but (Koernig & Boyd, 2009) pointed out that the effect of endorser brand congruence has received insufficient empirical attention for additional match-up conditions. According to (Törn, 2012) an endorser and a brand are matched based on whether the endorser's image and the brand's image are visually consistent. There are other aspects of credibility and authority that are just as important as competence and experience.

4.4. The Meaning Transfer Model

McCracken (1989) proposed the in-CEs, citing SC studies' inadequacies. Early studies of meaning transfer (Langmeyer & Walker, 1991; Walker et al., 1992) found that celebrity qualities transferred to product quality. MTM researchers have explored various topics and questions. According to (McCracken, 1986), meanings from culture and society are transferred to consumer goods or brands, and buyers consume the same meanings through consumption or purchase. (McCracken, 1986) criticized the source models for only confirming the celebrity's credibility and attractiveness. Indeed, meaning transfer, as proposed by (McCracken, 1989), is a three-stage process that involves the symbolic properties of a celebrity being transferred to consumer goods through advertising and subsequently to consumers' minds. The first stage involves the celebrity gaining symbolic properties from their appearances in various media such as TV shows, movies, or other forms of public exposure. These symbolic properties may include traits, values, emotions, or any other characteristics associated with the celebrity's persona and image. The second stage occurs when these symbolic properties are transferred to consumer goods through advertisements that depict the celebrity endorsing or using the products. The celebrity's association with the goods serves as a conduit for transferring the symbolic meaning they embody to the products. In the final stage, the symbolic properties are then transferred to consumers' minds. This means that consumers start associating the endorsed products with the symbolic attributes of the celebrity. As a result, consumers may perceive the products as possessing the same qualities and characteristics that the celebrity represents. Overall, meaning transfer through celebrity endorsements plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes toward products, leveraging the symbolic appeal of well-known personalities to influence consumer behavior and purchase decisions. (Miller & Allen, 2012) suggest that propositional learning best matches McCracken's original transfer process.

According to (Lynch & Schuler, 1994), celebrity attributes can be more easily integrated with brand schemas if marketers and consumers match with the celebrity schema as incoming information such as celebrity and brand is always compared to existing schemas. (Till, 2001) found that a celebrity's image becomes negative if he/she endorses a negatively perceived product. (Byrne et al., 2003) used case studies to explain meaning transfer where a UK grocery chain's promotional strategy was examined to determine the transfer of celebrity images to endorsed products. Gender-based meaning transfer is explained by (Peetz et al., 2004) in a almost experimental study. The researchers found that respondents correctly identified male celebrity endorsers more often than female endorsers; as a result, consumer perceptions of endorser expertise and purchase intentions differed by gender.

The research conducted by (Batra & Homer, 2004) focused on examining the after-effects of celebrity endorsements rather than delving into the specific mechanisms and processes of how meaning was transferred. They explored the impact of brand image beliefs and nonverbalized personality associations on consumer beliefs about a brand's benefits and overall
image. In a study by (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010), it was discovered that meanings flow both ways between celebrities and brands to form a brand alliance. Negative celebrity associations were more likely to transfer to a brand compared to positive associations. On the other hand, (Campbell & Warren, 2012) found that under certain conditions, brand image beliefs influenced purchase intentions but did not significantly impact attitudes. In a study conducted by (Roy & Moorthi, 2012), a reverse transfer of personality from brand to celebrity was observed when the brand was more prominent than the celebrity. The propositional learning models suggest that associative learning is based on the truth value of propositions between two representations. Meaning transfer in celebrity endorsements occurs when consumers believe that a brand possesses a certain attribute due to the association with a celebrity known for that specific attribute. (Escalas & Bettman, 2015) found that celebrities can influence consumer identity when a consumer’s ideal self-image aligns with the character or persona attributes of the celebrity. In conclusion, the studies mentioned highlight different aspects of celebrity endorsement and meaning transfer, shedding light on the complex interactions between celebrities, brands, and consumers in the realm of advertising and consumer behavior.

### 4.5. The Elaboration Likelihood Model

The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) proposed by (Petty et al., 1983) offers insights into how customers’ attitudes are formed and change over time. According to this model, there are two channels, namely, the peripheral route and the central route, through which advertisements can effectively influence attitudes. The central route to persuasion occurs when individuals engage in logical and rational thinking about the information presented in the advertisements. They carefully consider the arguments and benefits presented and make a decision based on these thoughtful considerations. In contrast, the peripheral route to persuasion relies on simple cues and requires less cognitive effort from the consumer. In this case, the individual is less concerned with the coherence or logical aspects of the stimulus but is influenced by positive or negative cues associated with the attitude issue or product being advertised. Alternatively, they may form basic inferences about the benefits of the advocated viewpoint based on straightforward cues in the persuasion context. It is important to note that attitude change via the peripheral route does not involve the individual weighing the pros and cons of the issue extensively. Instead, it results from the connection of the attitude or product with positive or negative cues or from the formation of basic inferences based on easily processed cues in the persuasive message. The ELM is considered a persuasion theory because it aims to predict when and how individuals will be convinced by a message. By understanding the two routes of persuasion, marketers can design more effective advertising strategies tailored to the cognitive processes of consumers, thereby increasing the likelihood of attitude change and positive responses to the advertisement.

The degree of motivation and cognitive capacity, according to (Peter et al., 1999) are the decisive elements in whether or not persuasion occurs via the central or peripheral routes. How much and how deeply someone processes information influences, how much and how differently they react to it. The ELM suggests that when people are not truly invested, they are more likely to let incidental inputs such as endorser qualities shape their opinions. In contrast, when people are highly engaged, their opinions are shaped in a centralized fashion. In such instances, individuals carefully analyze the merits and downsides of the message. ELM has been applied to the study of the circumstances under which an endorser-product match may influence the recipient’s perception of the credibility of an endorsement message.

In the past, famous people have relied upon powerful cues on the periphery of low-involvement messaging (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Callcott & Phillips, 1996; Choi et al., 2005). However, if there is an appropriate match between both the product and celebrity features, CE messages can also be absorbed through the higher and central levels of cognition (Kahle & Homer, 1985). Expertise or attractiveness of the source may serve as a simple heuristic assistance to persuasion when consumers are unable or unwilling to comprehend the message, as proposed by the SC by (Amos et al., 2008). In other words, an endorsement is more credible when the celebrity's skills or characteristics match those of the product being sold. When the degree of specificity in the underlying facts is strong, congruence can be viewed as a powerful argument that can help the customer make a decision.

### 5. Managerial implications

The advent of social media and television has brought about significant changes in the dynamics of celebrity endorsements (CEs). Celebrities, whether they are major cultural phenomena or not, have become a focal point of interest for marketing practitioners and scholars alike. With a plethora of well-known role models vying for public attention, popularity, and endorsement deals, the process of selecting celebrities for product promotion has become more complex and data-driven. To achieve better outcomes while optimizing costs, marketing executives must gain a deeper understanding of consumer-celebrity interactions and the overall celebrity brand, including personality attributes. This study analyzed prior research in various areas and compiled the most significant hypotheses used in CE research to date. Overall, the research on CEs has revealed their positive influence on sales, indicating that persuasion is heightened when celebrities possess high levels of competence and attractiveness. Additionally, nonevaluative traits can be transferred from celebrities to brands, and any transgressions by celebrities can negatively impact the evaluations of endorsed brands.

https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/mr
The five major CE theories have made diverse contributions to proving CE and advertising effectiveness. The SC model highlights the importance of choosing credible and trustworthy celebrities to promote products. The SC model emphasizes that an endorser's physical attractiveness also plays a crucial role in capturing consumer attention. The product match-up hypothesis further expands on this concept, asserting that the proper alignment between the celebrity and the product is vital for a successful endorsement. The SC adds another dimension, demonstrating that the meaning associated with the celebrity can be transferred to the endorsed product, making it a critical factor to consider. Finally, the SC introduces two channels, peripheral and central routes, each influencing consumer behavior differently. For marketing practitioners, blending existing source models with psychological perspectives can help determine celebrity personality traits that align well with consumer attributes, leading to stronger consumer-celebrity interactions. Minimizing psychological distance is essential to avoid failures in both national and international marketing endorsements. As online social media endorsements gain popularity, marketers should consider leveraging both ordinary consumers and famous celebrities as promotional agents, while also understanding how these individuals build relationships with their specific audiences or consumers.

6. Academic Implications

Consumer behavior research should examine the psychological complexities of how consumers and celebrities interact, paying special attention to how the personality traits of celebrities affect how consumers think and act. Empirical studies should use numbers to measure the effects of different celebrity traits on the effectiveness of advertising, taking into account moderating and mediating factors. Academics can make decision models to help marketers choose the right celebrities for their products. These models can include aspects such as cultural fit, credibility, and risk assessment. Psychologists and marketing experts should work together to study the emotional and mental processes that make up consumer-celebrity relationships. Cross-cultural studies are necessary to understand how cultural values affect how people respond to endorsements. This helps marketers determine how to change their strategies for different situations. With the changing landscape of influencers in the world of social media marketing, it is important to study engagement strategies and how they affect how people think and make decisions. There are ethical aspects of celebrity endorsements that should be considered, such as how consumers see endorsement ethics and what happens to a brand’s image when a celebrity breaks the rules. An integrative framework should bring together different theories about celebrity endorsement, giving marketing professionals useful advice. Longitudinal studies that look at how a brand does after an endorsement can show how long the effect lasts. Last, educational programmes need to include research findings on celebrity endorsements to give marketers the skills they need to be successful in this ever-changing market. These directions for research will help scholars and marketing professionals learn more about how celebrity endorsements work.

7. Final Considerations

The prevailing consensus among researchers identifies the SC theory, SC model, match-up hypothesis, SC, and SC as the main theories to explain effective celebrity endorsements (CEs). However, it is evident that each of these theories can only account for certain aspects of such endorsements, leaving a considerable portion unexplained. The discussions and examples presented in the literature illustrate the diversity and variability of celebrity endorsement categories, highlighting that none of the five grand theories can provide a holistic explanation for all types of endorsements. While attractiveness, congruence, and credibility have been acknowledged as important factors in research, in practice, the value proposition of the brand also plays a vital role. The value proposition can explain why a celebrity may be effective in endorsing some products or services but not in others. Despite the progress made in studying celebrity endorsements, our understanding of their effectiveness remains relatively limited. This complexity stems from the multitude of factors that can either boost or hinder the success of such advertising techniques. Various personal traits of endorsers, including expertise, trustworthiness and resemblance, have been found to influence consumer perceptions, brand awareness, recognition, image, and purchase intention. However, these correlations are contingent upon brand/product categories, consumer involvement, and the level of risk associated with the endorsement. The academic community has dedicated significant efforts to comprehending the fundamental aspects of CE strategy. Nevertheless, there is a need for much more research to comprehensively explore all potential combinations of endorser and brand/product characteristics. Only with further investigation can we gain a more complete understanding of the mechanisms that drive successful celebrity endorsements in diverse advertising contexts.

8. Limitations and Future Scope

This study contains limitations, some of which might present opportunities for further investigation. First, this is a qualitative study; therefore, the generalizability and validity of the results could be improved by performing an empirical investigation utilizing quantitative methods. The second limitation of the study is that it only looked at five major theories, whereas looking at a wider range of theoretical factors and variables would produce a different outcome. Third, a
quantitative investigation of CE theories that are applied to a variety of product categories, geographical locations, and demographical features can generate a broad range of outcomes.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This research did not receive any financial support.

References


https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/mr


Kramer, L. (2010). C-scape: conquer the forces changing business today. *(No Title)*


