A Study of the Effect of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchase Intentions
- Evidence from China

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Abstract. As advertising grows pervasive in everyday life, it plays a significant role that brands recognize. Advertisements shape consumers' attitudes of brands and, to some extent, influence their purchasing behavior. This study focuses on endorsers' attributes and employs the source attractiveness model to determine which types of endorsers can most effectively influence consumers' purchase intentions, analyzing them independently for various product types. Using SPSS with more than 200 respondents, the results indicate that familiarity, likability and similarity all contribute to positive consumer attitudes towards advertising and thus towards brands, which further increases consumer purchase intentions. The paper concludes with suggestions for choosing endorsers for hedonistic and utilitarian items.

Keywords: Source Attractiveness Model · Purchase Intention · Product Type

1   Introduction

With the advent of the information age, advertising, an important form of promoting products, exists on electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, and televisions, and is also favored by various brands. Consequently, brands utilize the selection of endorsers to promote their brands and potential users. Numerous major companies use celebrity endorsement as a marketing communication tool [1]. Endorsers add value to products and deliver value to consumers, thereby increasing their willingness to buy. Nevertheless, selecting an endorsement for a company is rarely easy; negative celebrity information may be immensely destructive to an advertising campaign [2]. Brands such as Nivea and Christian Dior have chosen the wrong endorsers, resulting in significant losses.

However, current research has seldom explored the product type as a categorial variable when examining changes in consumer perceptions about businesses caused by various kinds of celebrities. In addition, since China is the most significant market in the Asia-Pacific region, it is especially vital to examine the variables that impact Chinese customers' purchasing decisions. Based on the source attractiveness model, this paper identifies the exact mechanisms of the type of celebrities in altering consumers' attitude towards the advertising attitudes, which in turn changes the brand attitudes and purchase intention.

The structure of the paper is as follows: First, the background and relevant analysis on collaboration on the source credibility model and source attractiveness model are presented. Next, the appropriate research methodologies for addressing the study objective are specified. In the next two parts, the study's results are given and analyzed in relation to the relevant literature. The following part concludes the study by summarizing major findings and discussing implications for future research and practice.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Influence Process of Celebrity Advertisement on the Audience

Celebrity endorsement can used by brand to raise awareness and elicit positive reactions, and his stage persona should be scrutinized [3]. This is because celebrity advertisement often generates a conformity or halo effect. Conformity can change consumers' product evaluations, purchase intentions and purchase behavior [4]. The large number and wide range of users of the products shown in celebrity advertisements can produce a conformity effect and encourage prospective customers to consume to some degree. The halo effect occurs when a person's strengths or weaknesses are exaggerated and his or her flaws or strengths are ignored. It involves a psychological feature bias that results in distorted assessments [5]. Since celebrities are immensely appealing to consumers, consumers are more likely to see the products they support favorably.

2.2 Summary of Research Model of Celebrity Advertising Effect

The majority of celebrity advertising research relies on two models: the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model. Recipients are more likely to be persuaded when the source of information is found to be credible [6]. Subsequent studies have commonly used expertise and trustworthiness to rate credibility in the source credibility model. Twenty research studies demonstrate that source expertise and credibility significantly impact perceived quality, purchase intention, and knowledge adoption [7]. According to the source attractiveness model, the familiarity, likability and similarity of information receivers to the source may, to some extent, determine the effectiveness of information transmission [8]. Endorser's attractiveness improves the effectiveness of an endorsement advertisement because consumers have a favorable opinion of celebrities, which they associate with the advertised product and brand [9]. In subsequent studies, some scholars also combined these two models to examine celebrity advertising.

2.3 Research Among Advertising Attitude, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

There is a relationship between advertising attitude, brand attitude and purchase intention. Brand image and AD have significant positive influence and relationship with consumer buying behavior [10]. Both advertising and customer perception have a considerable positive relationship with consumer buying behavior [11]. The advertising attitude influences brand attitude, which in turn influences purchase intention.

3   Methodology

3.1   Model

Based on previous theories and studies, the following research model has been established (Fig. 1).

3.2   Model

According to the research model, the research hypotheses are set as follows (Table 1).

3.3   Research Method

Based on the above model and hypotheses, this study developed and disseminated an online questionnaire. Six selected celebrity advertisements were shown to respondents. Respondents were asked to select the one product they were most familiar with, rate the familiarity, likability and similarity indicators conveyed by the endorser in the advertisement. Then, they assessed their post-viewing attitudes regarding the advertisement.

Each variable in the questionnaire was assigned three questions for precise measurement, and each test item was rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 points. For the selection of product types, three hedonic products (chocolate, milk and yogurt) and three utilitarian products (refrigerator, shower gel and pressure cooker) were selected in the face-to-face interview with five people before setting up the questionnaire.
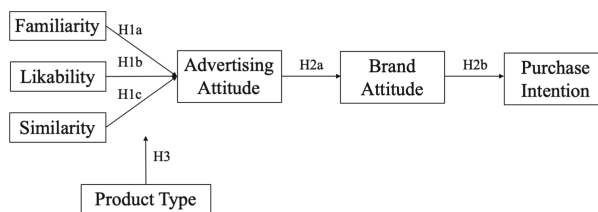

Fig. 1.   Research Model

Table 1.   Research Hypotheses

H1a	Familiarity has a positive effect on consumers' advertising attitudes.
H1b	Likability has a positive effect on consumers' advertising attitudes.
H1c	Similarity has a positive effect on consumers' advertising attitudes.
H2a	Advertising attitude has a positive effect on brand attitude.
H2b	Brand attitude has a positive effect on purchase intention.
H3a	For hedonic products, similarity has the strongest effect on advertising attitude.
H3b	For utilitarian products, familiarity has the strongest effect on advertising attitude.

Before the main experiment, the questions that were not clearly formulated were clarified via a pilot study, and respondents were asked to react as honestly as possible based on their own situation.

4 Data Analysis

In this study, 214 questionnaires were collected, and after removing invalid questionnaires, 201 questionnaires with a validity of 93.9 percent remained.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

In this survey, the proportion of men and women is balanced, and 58.7 percent of respondents in the age range of 13 to 27 years old are members of Generation Z. The proportion of responders selecting the product type is balanced. The ratio of hedonistic product to utilitarian product is close to 1:1 (Table 2).

4.2 Factor Analysis

Since three indicators were employed to assess each variable, factor analysis was required to analyze the validity of each latent variable and to validate the questionnaire's reasonableness.

There is an analysis of the familiarity, likeability, and similarity of celebrity advertising characteristics. The KMO = 0.960 with a significance of 0.000 indicates that the data are very suitable for factor analysis. Consistent with the design of the questionnaire, three factors were extracted from 9 indicators. The KMO for the dependent variable is 0.962, and the sig. is below 1 percent. Three factors were extracted from 9 indicators, which were consistent with the questionnaire design.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

To ensure the stability and consistency of the measured data, we used Cronbach's alpha for reliability measurement and the combined results are as follows.

According to the results of the reliability analysis, the internal consistency coefficient of each variable exceeds 0.90, indicating high reliability (Table 3).

The following is the descriptive statistical result of each variable factor (Table 4)

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis

	Type	Frequency	Percent
Age	Generation Z	118	58.7
	Generation X&Y	83	41.3
Sex	Male	81	40.3
	Female	120	59.7
Product Type	Hedonic	118	58.7
	Utilitarian	83	41.3

Table 3. Reliability Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N
Familiarity	0.933	3
Likability	0.928	3
Similarity	0.916	3
Advertising Attitude	0.932	3
Brand Attitude	0.932	3
Purchase Intention	0.940	3

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis for Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Familiarity	201	5.16	1.62
Likability	201	5.26	1.60
Similarity	201	5.18	1.60
Advertising Attitude	201	5.17	1.61
Brand Attitude	201	5.27	1.59
Purchase Intention	201	5.23	1.60

Table 5. Descriptive Analysis for Variables

		FAM	LIK	SIM
AD Attitude	Pearson Correlation	0.914**	0.925**	0.932**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	201	201	201

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.4 Correlations Between Endorser Attractiveness and Advertising Attitude

Correlation analysis is conducted between endorser attractiveness and advertising attitude. It is found that familiarity, likability and similarity are all significantly and positively correlated with advertising attitude at the 0.01 level, thus confirming hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c. We fail to reject H1a, H1b and H1c (Table 5).

4.5 Correlations Among Advertising Attitude, Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

Significant at the 0.01 level, the correlation between advertising attitude and brand attitude and purchase intention reaches 0.922 and 0.912. Meanwhile, the significance is

Table 6. Correlations Between AD Attitude and Brand Attitude(BA) and Purchase Intention(PI)

		BA	PI
AD Attitude	Pearson Correlation	0.922**	0.912**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	201	201

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7. Correlations Between Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

		Purchase Intention
Brand Attitude	Pearson Correlation	0.925**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	201

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

0.000 for both correlation analysis. The hypothesis H2a can be supported in this regard (Table 6).

The brand attitude and purchase intention are significantly positively correlated at the 0.01 level, indicating that brand attitude has a positive influence on purchase intention (H2b) (Table 7).

4.6 Regression Results of Celebrity Characteristics on Consumer Advertising Characteristics Under Different Product Types

To further test the previous hypothesis, we regress the model comparing the two circumstances by using product type as a categorical variable. Here, we take advertising attitude as the dependent variable and investigate the degree of influence of different endorser attractiveness.

For hedonic products, the similarity, consumers' likability and the familiarity of the endorser with the product are included into the regression equation in that order.

This testing of H3a leads to the conclusion that similarity has the highest impact on consumers' attitudes toward advertising, followed by likability, and familiarity has the least impact (Table 8).

For utilitarian products, the familiarity of the endorser with the product and the likability of the endorser are put sequentially into the regression equation while the similarity between the endorser and the product becomes insignificant and is excluded from the regression equation.

This leads to the conclusion that, for utilitarian products, familiarity contributes the most to consumers' views toward advertising, followed by likability, while similarity has no significant effect, supporting H3b (Table 9).

Table 8. Regression under Hedonic Products

Model	Unstandardized B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	0.025		0.861
Similarity	0.413	0.410	0.000
Likability	0.339	0.344	0.000
Familiarity	0.226	0.225	0.003

Table 9. Regression under Utilitarian Products

Model	Unstandardized B	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	1.116		0.000
Familarity	0.439	0.500	0.000
Likability	0.377	0.408	0.000

5   Conclusion

Based on the source attractiveness model and previous studies, the paper analyzes the influence of endorser attributes on consumers' attitudes toward advertising, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions. This chapter will summarize the study's results, discuss their practical consequences, and explain the study's limitations.

This study provides empirical support for the aforementioned hypotheses. First, the familiarity, popularity and similarity of the endorser to the product conveyed in the advertisement promote favorable consumer attitudes about the advertisement. Second, positive consumer attitudes toward the advertisement are conducive to positive attitudes toward the brand and thus increase purchase intentions. Third, familiarity, likability and similarity all have positive effects on the advertising effect of hedonic products, while familiarity and likability can have positive effects on the advertising effect of utilitarian products, but similarity has no significant effect. Similarity is the most significant element on the advertising efficacy for hedonic items, and this indicator is the familiarity for utilitarian items.

The aforementioned results may also serve as a guide for companies when selecting endorsers to improve the marketing impacts of various sorts of brand items. The selection of an endorser cannot be generalized since the functions and usage scenarios of pleasure goods and utility products vary. For hedonistic products, a endorser should be chosen who is more consistent with the tone of their light-hearted and lively products, so that the advertisement can convey a sense of pleasure and humor. Utilitarian products should show that the endorser has a wealth of expertise and knowledge in using the product, and choose an endorser who is popular, has good appearance and exudes elegance.

However, this research is not without its limitations. First, the sample size is limited due to the limited budget of the study and the restricted channel of questionnaire delivery, and the sample size needs to be further expanded to other groups (including regions,

countries) in the follow-up study to enhance the generalizability of the study. Second, due to the different understanding of consumers about the role of products and usage scenarios, there may be discrepancies or bias between the definition of the types of products listed in the questionnaire and the understanding of respondents. Instead of online questionnaire distribution, follow-up telephone and face-to-face interviews can be undertaken in the future studies.

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