The Impact of Spokesperson Types on Brand Image—Mesomeric Effect Model Based on the Credibility

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Abstract. With the development of technology, the speed of data reconnaissance has accelerated. It will cause greater losses if there are potential spokesperson issues. We use regression analysis to study the impact of spokesperson types on brand image and the role of spokesperson credibility. It is beneficial for promoting brands to present their desired brand image through spokesperson selection.

Keywords: spokesperson credibility · brand image · mesomeric effect

1 Introduction

The arrival of the digital era has made the role of spokesperson promotion in building brand image more evident. Biel [1] believed that brand image is an association about a set of brand attributes, while Luo Ziming [2] believed that brand image is a comprehensive expression of the value of goods or services. Friedman et al. [3] expanded the scope of spokespersons to three types: celebrities or celebrities, experts, and typical consumers. The choice of spokesperson is actually a bundled consumption of "celebrities + products" [4], which is also a feasible strategy to increase sales. Consumers process information more smoothly when information matches circumstance [5], and the appropriate type of spokesperson can improve processing fluency [6]. Previous studies have shown that the types of spokespersons [7] and the credibility of spokespersons can affect brand image [8], but there is little research analyzing the relationship between the two.

We study the role of spokesperson credibility in the process of influencing brand image by the type of spokesperson. It is beneficial for brands to improve or present their desired brand image through spokesperson selection.

2 Theoretical Assumptions and Models

Ohanian [9] proposed professionalism, reliability, and attractiveness as three dimensions of spokesperson credibility. When consumers face different types of beverages and their spokespeople, they will judge the credibility of the endorser based on the type of the advertising endorsers. The following assumptions are proposed:
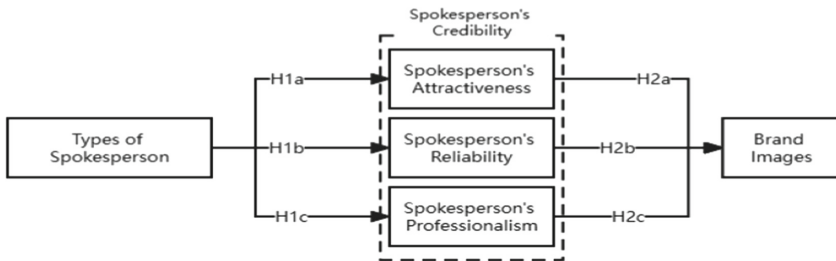
Fig. 1. Conceptual model

H1: The type of spokesperson affects the credibility of the spokesperson
H1a: Different types of spokespersons result in different levels of attractiveness
H1b: Different types of spokespersons result in different levels of reliability
H1c: Different types of spokespersons result in different levels of professionalism

Torelli et al. [8] pointed out that distinguishing brand image according to people's values can help reveal brand meanings. However, adding conflicting concepts to a brand can cause negative reactions which is not conducive to maintaining brand image. Based on the above analysis, the following assumptions are proposed:

H2: The credibility of the spokesperson will positively affect the brand image.
H2a: The attractiveness of the spokesperson will positively affect the brand image;
H2b: The reliability of the spokesperson will positively affect the brand image;
H2c: The professionalism of the spokesperson will positively affect the brand image.

Establish the model shown in the Fig. 1, which means that the type of spokesperson affects brand image by affecting the credibility of the spokesperson.

3   Research Design

3.1   Sample Selection

The survey's respondents are consumers and marketers in the beverage industry. The method is mainly questionnaire investigation, supplemented by in-depth interviews. The questionnaire survey includes online questionnaire, on-site distribution questionnaire, and email questionnaire. A total of 157 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.2   Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire includes three parts: the first one is the basic information of the respondents, including gender, age, education, monthly income and so on. The second one is the Spokesperson Credibility Measurement Scale [9], which includes three dimensions: spokesperson's attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism; The third is the Brand Image Measurement Scale [10], which includes three dimensions: brand trust, brand emotion, and brand symbol. The questionnaire uses the Likert 5-level scale with a value of 5 for complete agreement and 1 for complete disagreement.

Table 1. Single factor ANOVA analysis of the influence of spokesperson types on credibility

Dimension	Pop Star (M ± SD)	Expert (M ± SD)	Athlete (M ± SD)	F	p
Attractiveness	3.60 ± 0.68	3.65 ± 0.81	4.17 ± 0.72	8.136	0.000
Reliability	3.19 ± 0.99	4.01 ± 0.83	4.08 ± 0.86	14.269	0.000
Professionalism	3.30 ± 0.95	3.95 ± 0.84	3.84 ± 0.97	7.170	0.001

3.3 Data Analysis

The ANOVA test was conducted on the dimensions of spokesperson type and credibility, and the results are shown in Table 1: the significance of attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism are all lower than 0.05, indicating that different spokesperson types can affect spokesperson credibility.

Post hoc comparisons was shown in the Table 1. In terms of attractiveness dimension, champion athletes have significantly higher attractiveness scores than pop stars and experts. In terms of reliability dimension, pop stars have significantly lower reliability scores than experts and champion athletes. In terms of professionalism dimension, pop stars have significantly lower professionalism scores than experts and champion athletes. Therefore, the assumptions H1, H1a, H1b and H1c are validated.

We use the three dimensions of credibility: attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism as independent variables, and brand image as dependent variable for regression analysis. According to the model summary which shown in Table 2, the R-squared is 0.468, which means that the selected independent variables can explain the 46.8% change in the dependent variable. According to the ANOVA test results which shown in Table 3, the F-value is 44.797, with infinite significance close to 0, indicating that the fitted regression equation is significant. According to the regression coefficient in Table 4, the regression significance of attractiveness is 0.198, indicating that attractiveness has no significant impact on brand image. The regression significance of reliability and professionalism is infinitely close to 0, and the regression coefficient of reliability and professionalism is respectively 0.323 and 0.308, indicating that the reliability and professionalism of spokespersons have a significant positive impact on brand image. The collinearity VIF values are less than 5, so there is no serious collinearity problem. In summary, the reliability and professionalism of the spokesperson will positively affect the brand image, while the attractiveness of the spokesperson has no significant effect on the brand image. The assumptions H2b and H2c are proven.

Table 2. Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin Watson
1	.684[a]	.468	.457	.63337	2.104

Predictors: (Constant), Professionalism, Attractiveness, Reliability
a. Dependent Variable: Brand image

Table 3. ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.912	3	17.971	44.797	.000[b]
	Residual	61.376	153	.401		
	Total	115.288	156			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand image
b. Predictors: (Constant), Professionalism, Attractiveness, Reliability

Table 4. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.787	.282		2.787	.006		
Attractiveness	.092	.071	.085	1.293	.198	.813	1.230
Reliability	.323	.078	.361	4.157	.000	.461	2.171
Professionalism	.308	.075	.339	4.107	.000	.512	1.954

a. Dependent Variable: Brand image

4 Conclusions

4.1 Results

1. Different spokesperson have a significant different impact on their credibility.
   The personal charm, professional expertise, and humanistic qualities of the spokesperson are the commitment to the quality of consumers, and are externalized in the brand image of the products. The different types of spokespersons have a significant impact on their credibility, reflecting that the appropriate choice of spokespersons is a key in whether the beverage company can showcase and promote its corporate values, establish brand associations, and form a brand image in the consumers' minds.
2. The spokesperson credibility's mediating effect positively impact on brand image.

The higher the credibility of the spokesperson, the more it helps consumers increase their opinions on the brand. In the construction of corporate brand image, the credibility of the spokesperson can serve as an information transmission mechanism, conveying the brand image and brand concept of the endorser, and providing an invisible quality guarantee. At the same time, the credibility of spokespersons is also another measure of whether the integration of spokesperson types and brand image is perfect.

4.2 Suggestions

1. Fully develop the positioning of the brand image and the choice of spokesperson.

   The beverage industry market is developing rapidly, and brands should accurately decide their own brand image. When choosing a spokesperson, brands should not only choose celebrities with high popularity, but also consider the brand's actual situation. At the same time, the target consumer group characteristics faced by different series of products often vary. Brands can choose different spokesperson combinations based on different consumer groups to create a diverse brand image.

2. Completely evaluate the spokesperson credibility and enhance their binding force.

   In recent years, news media such as the Internet and television have continuously exposed malicious incidents related to spokesperson scandals, resulting in economic losses for the enterprise. Therefore, in the process of selecting spokespersons, brands should strictly and completely evaluate their character, establish relevant constraint mechanisms, and restrict spokespersons through legal means.

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