



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***THE CELEBRITY ENDORSER EFFECTS : AN EXAMINATION OF
SOURCE CHARACTERISTICS ON BRAND IMAGE BUILDING FOR
CONSUMER GOODS PRODUCTS***

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GSM 2001 14

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The Celebrity endorser effects : an examination of source
characteristics on brand image building for consumer goods
products / Phang Ing.

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CHARACTERISTICS ON BRAND IMAGE BUILDING FOR CONSUMER
GOODS PRODUCTS**

BY


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**This Project Paper has been submitted to the Graduate School of Management,
Universiti Putra Malaysia as a partial fulfillment for the requirement of the Master
in Business Administration.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of foremost, I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to my supervisor,  for his valuable advice, guidance and encouragement throughout my thesis writing. He helped me greatly by giving suggestions for my survey and also offering provocative and insightful comments, which make this thesis a reality.

Thanks are also to my course mates for the May 2000 intakes for their support and advice. Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my dearest parents, brothers, sisters and the rest of the family members for their constant support, love and encouragement throughout my study period.

**CELEBRITY ENDORSER'S EFFECTS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM ON BRAND
IMAGE BUILDING**

**By
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September 2001

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When a consumer chooses a certain brand, many factors actually influence his or her purchase decision. Marketers would like very much to attribute this to the influence of promotion, but other Ps for instance distribution (place), product itself and price are also play their part in influencing a person purchase decision making.

Marketers now realize the importance of people influence in the success of their business. They found out endorsers could have a greater ability to change consumers' brand preferences than other advertisements. Endorsers can also catch their target markets' attention and stimulate purchase.

As such the purpose of the study is to determine if there is any significant relationship between celebrity endorser's characteristics and brand image building of

the consumer products. In addition, the study considers if personal influences like social-demographic factors have any bearing on the relationship mentioned.

For the study, 300 respondents from the three public universities in Klang Valley were surveyed using self-administered questionnaire. Respondents are divided into two categories: undergraduates and postgraduates students.

This study was conducted by using non-probability-sampling method. The hypotheses are tested using regression models and the correlation among the variables is examined. The reliability and validity of the factors are also examined to ensure the results of the study.

The study result showed that the celebrity characteristics such as credibility, attractiveness and meaningfulness had significant influence on the consumer product's brand image in consumers' perception.

Abstrak bagi thesis dipersembahkan kepada Undangan Universiti Putra Malaysia bagi memenuhi syarat ijazah Sarjana Pentadbiran Perniagaan.

Kesan *Celebrity Endorser*: Satu Penilaian Ke Atas Pengaruh *Celebrity Endorser* Terhadap Pembentukan Imej Jenama Pruduk Pengguna Melalui Persepsi Pengguna

Oleh,

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Pelbagai faktor akan mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian seseorang pengguna dalam memilih sesuatu jenama. Pemasar lebih minat untuk menyalurkan faktor ini kepada pengaruh promosi. Namun, Ps yang lain seperti tempat, produk dan harga juga memainkan peranan dalam mempengaruhi pembuatan keputusan pembelian seseorang pengguna.

Pemasar sekarang menyedari akan kepentingan 'pengaruh manusia' dalam kejayaan perniagaan mereka. Mereka mendapati *Celebrity Endorser* mempunyai keupayaan untuk menukar minat pengguna terhadap sesuatu jenama berbanding dengan iklan-iklan yang lain. *Celebrity Endorser* juga dapat menarik perhatian pasaran sasaran mereka dan seterusnya menstimulasikan pembelian.

Maka, kajian ini diadakan untuk menentukan sama ada terdapat hubungan yang bermakna antara ciri-ciri *Celebrity Endorser* dengan pembentukan imej jenama produk pengguna. Tambahan pulan, kajian ini menimbangkan pengaruh peribadi seperti faktor sosial-demografik terhadap hubungan yang diperkatakan tadi.

Untuk kajian ini, 300 orang responden dari tiga universiti awam tempatan di Lembah Klang telah dikaji dengan menggunakan soal selidik 'self-administrated'. Responden telah dibahagi kepada dua kumpulan utama: pra-siswazah dan siswazah.

Kajian ini dikendalikan dengan menggunakan kaedah pemsampelan tanpa kebarangkalian. Setiap hypothesis iskaji dengan menggunakan model regresi and korelasi turut dikaji. Kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan setiap pembolehubah dikaji bagi menjamin keputusan kajian.

Daripada kajian yang dihasilkan, didapati ciri-ciri *Celebrity Endorser* seperti kredibiliti, tarikan dan kebermaknaan sememangnya mempunyai pengaruh ke atas pembentukan imej jenama produk pengguna dalam persepsi pengguna.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the background of the study and also the problems arise that require further attention from the researchers, marketers or even public. Objectives of the study are specified, hypotheses are generated for further testing and the significance of the study is defined. Brief introduction on the organization of the study is also included in this chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

" Celebrities", by the word itself, promise excitement, amusement and fun. They are always the attention and focus to thousands of people. People are curious about their lives, secrets, and personalities or even what are the products they consume everyday.

For marketers, it is a symbol for profit. In addition to severe competition, the constantly advancing technology has left little room for product differentiation, and as a result marketing communication tools have become the means to retain and increase market share.

Over the past decades, the use of "celebrities" advertising has been increasing in an amusing pace. In 1975, there was only 15% of prime time TV advertising featured celebrities (Forkan, 1975). For 1978, the number was 20% and approximately 10% of the dollars spent on television advertising are used in celebrity endorsement advertisements (Advertising Age, 1987; Sherman, 1985). The most widely used celebrity endorsers are sports figures, actors and other types of entertainers. (Arkin and Bock, 1983). It has been estimated that one out of three television commercials uses a famous person to endorse a consumer product or service (Freiden, 1984).

According to Freiden (1984), decisions regarding the type of endorser to use become more important for the three reasons. First, the fees for celebrity talent can be substantial. Pepsi-Cola had to pay \$10 million to Michael Jackson beginning 1984. Meanwhile in 1998, large fee structures for endorsements reach \$45 million for Michael Jordan, \$25 million for Tiger Woods, \$17 million for Grant Hill, and \$10 million for Shaquille O'Neal (Spiegel, 1998).

Secondly, the costs for national advertising, especially on television, are extremely high. And finally, the type of spoke-person can effect levels of awareness and recall (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). Overall, the use of celebrities as spokespersons in advertisements constitute a significant investment in intangible assets by the sponsoring firm- an investment that management hopes to offset with greater future sales revenues and profits.

The latest use of big celebrity is by Tom Hanks in his Oscar dominated movie "Cast Away". In this 143 minutes movie, Hanks not only promote the Fed-ex service, also its spirit to deliver and the most important thing is, it is free. However, according to the company's Managing Director for Pacific region, they have gone through thorough discussion and consideration. Some of the scenes are against the company's philosophy and might bring negative effect to the company's image (Sin Jew Jit Pow, 6/3/2001). In other words, marketers need to be real careful in deciding the exact timing, perfect situation and lastly suitable celebrities for their products in order to produce the desired outcome.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Due to the increase importance of celebrity endorsement programs, many studies examined the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers on the dependent measures such as believability and purchase intention. The results of the studies are two-sided, both positive and negative arguments.

The other facets of the studies are as follows:-

- (1) the effect of sponsorship on consumer behavior (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999; Ohanian, 1991; Tripp et al., 1994),
- (2) reasons for corporate sponsorship (Mashall and Cook, 1992),

- (3) the influence of experienced and similar endorsers on attitudes and behavior (Feick and Higie, 1992), and
- (4) the perceived congruency between the product and the endorser (Stout and Monn, 1990; Till and Busler, 1998).

Friedman and Friedman (1979) hypothesized that a celebrity endorser could lead to higher believability, a more favourable evaluation of the product advantage and a significant higher intention to purchase.

Despite the popularity of celebrity pitchmen, many commercials using endorsers do not live up to advertisers' expectations (Miciak and Shanklin, 1994). Celebrities involved in civil cases are not rare nowadays. The occurrence of the negative information about the celebrity will also activate in memory, to some degree, the endorsed brand. Miscues such as O.J. Simpson's arraignment on murder charges, Mike Tyson's rape conviction, Michael Jordan's gambling debt and Madonna's offensive music video " Like a Prayer". Then there was that " little faux past of Cybil Shepherd, who announced that she did not eat meat, yet she was a pitchwoman for the beef industry" (Miller, 1991)

Some argue that celebrity endorsement must not be an excuse to save the trouble of thinking up a theme for the advertisement or creating " great advertising". They also cannot be seen as " simply the use of a clever executional device designed to attract consumer attention" (Brian, 1998).

People, especially marketers are looking for research that can promise the positive relationship between celebrity endorsers and the products. Several factors have derived by researchers to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers. Dholakia and Sternthal (1997), in their study towards highly credible sources stated three dimensions of source credibility - trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. Meanwhile, Maddux and Rogers (1980) used source characteristics such as familiarity, similarity, liking and physical attractiveness. The results of the studies also show various arguments. Some support that highly credible sources are more persuasive than ones of low credibility (Dholakia and Sternthal, 1977). While some stated that sidedness (either two-sided or single sided) appeal used in ad was found to positively affect purchase intention. However, there has been erosion in consumer confidence in the trustworthiness of celebrity endorsements. For example, 64% of younger consumers believe that celebrity endorsers appear in ads mainly for the money (King, 1989).

There is little research on celebrity endorsement focus on the issue of the celebrity endorsers' effects on the consumer products' brand image. As mentioned earlier, the studies did focus on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and intention to purchase. Customers' intention to buy a product do no necessary promise a favourable brand image for the product as it may cause by other mediating factors such as stated needs or situational factors. Study needs to be done in focusing the impact of celebrity endorsers on the products' brand image.

Another issue that needs to be paid attention is that the previous researches are mostly based in the US or European countries. Few studies are done to look into question of celebrity endorsers used and the brand image. Thus, this study will attempt to fill in the lackness of the previous studies by looking into the effects of the endorser's characteristics toward the brand image building by consumer products.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine the consumers' perception on celebrity endorsement effects on brand image building for general consumer products in Malaysia. The study will look more detail into the questions of culture and demographic factors (such as age, education background and etc) of the respondents.

The specific objectives of the study are as follow:-

1. To determine how the consumers' perceptions of the four dimensions of celebrity endorsers' characteristics (credibility, attractiveness, likability and meaningfulness) can affect the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement programs.
2. To determine the important factors that constitutes the consumers' perceptions of the celebrity endorsers' meaningfulness.

3. To determine the relationship between the celebrity characteristics and brand image building in consumers' minds.
4. To examine the Malaysian consumers' awareness of the utilization of famous endorsers.

The above objectives are developed into hypotheses to be further tested to prove the relationship between the celebrity endorsers' characteristics and brand image building in consumers' mind.

1.4 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Several hypotheses have been identified for further testing as follows:

H1: There is positive relationship between expertise possessed by celebrity endorser and the perceived brand image.

H2 : There is positive relationship between trustworthiness possessed by celebrity endorser and the perceived brand image

H3: There is positive relationship between attractiveness of the celebrity endorser and the perceived brand image.

H4: There is positive relationship between likability of celebrity endorser and the perceived brand image.

H5: There is positive relationship between celebrity endorser's meaningfulness and the perceived brand image.

H6: Whether the four independent variables (credibility, attractiveness, likability and meaningfulness) are interrelatedly influence the brand image of consumer products.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Marketing is typically seem as a task of creating, promoting, and delivering goods and services to consumers and business (Kotler, 2000). The study of marketing related topics is importance in terms of its impact on the consumers' life as basically all the people are consumers.

The study of celebrity endorser's impact on the consumer product's brand image building will benefit all those involved in the endorsement industry in Malaysia, including consumers, marketers/ advertisers, for educational purposes and even for the celebrities themselves.

1) Consumers

- To have better understanding of their own behaviors and perceptions.
- To help them in making rational purchase decisions.

2) Marketers and Advertisers

- To have better understanding of their target market.
- To help them in identifying the correct approach in marketing their products.

Thus, save costs and time.

- To help them in collaborating with advertising agencies to come out with successful endorsement programs.
- To help them to identify the fail points in their endorsement programs.
- To help them to identify the suitable endorsers for their products.

3) Celebrity endorsers

- To help them aware of their responsibility in conveying the correct message to the public.
- To help them identify the importance of congruency between their image and the product image.

4) Educational purposes

- To be use as class discussion materials.
- To provide better understanding of the topic discussed.

- To explain the theories underlying the consumers' behaviors and perceptions.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

1.6.1 Chapter 1

- The over all view of the celebrity endorsers' effects toward the brand image building of the consumer products in Malaysia.

1.6.2 Chapter 2

- The past research of the related topics on the celebrity endorsement effects and also the brand image building process. Chapter also includes the Marketing concepts and theories under lying the study.

1.6.3 Chapter 3

- The methods used in the study include the sampling procedures, data collection methods, data analysis and also the statistical techniques used.

1.6.4 Chapter 4

- The analysis of the result collected and the comparison of the study's results with the Literature Review.

1.6.5 Chapter 5

- The conclusions drew from the study and also the recommendation for the future study. The limitation and also the managerial implication are also suggested for the benefits of different readers.



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