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Article

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Review article

The effect of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior: Case of the Lebanese jewelry industry

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ABSTRACT

This paper tends to the effect of celebrity support to jewelry advertisements on the conduct of consumers, in particular on Lebanese females. The investigation is drawn closer from the point of view of the customer. It studies celebrity endorsement from pristine idea, speculations, efficiency, and presence in the jewelry industry. It additionally looks at customer perception, decision making process, and demeanor as all influenced by celebrity support. Underlying explicative models relating the latter factors are exhibited. Attractiveness of celebrity endorser infers advertisement recall and is sought to be associated to the consumer's intention to purchase. The relationship between the credibility of celebrity endorser and both consumer mark inclination and mentality is also examined. Impact on customer's behavior relevant to advertisement recall and intention to buy. Mark inclination and mentality of the consumer are found to be negatively influenced by celebrity endorsement.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, social media is spreading in an instantaneous way that reflects an image, an idea, a reason or a product. In general, consumers' perceptions and intentions to buy a product is related to its characteristics or to imitate a personal figure that is using it. However, the disseminated image will take time once relying on the traditional means of advertising. Referring to social media networks can enhance the desired intention for promoting the product on the one hand, and to attract a better share market on the other hand. In this regard, the main objective of companies is to spread fast their new products and to shape the social identity of consumers once the latter have proceeded with their intentions to buy.

Promoting and publicizing have progressed toward becoming the fundamentals of each business. In the twenty first century, most likely every individual is influenced by promotions, in particular when it involves its favorite celebrity. The latter is known as celebrity endorsement. Such commercials influence clients mentally and answer their needs. It also enhances their purchasing intention, behavior, and disposition (Rai & Sharma, 2013). Soliciting celebrities is an established tool in marketing and advertisement (Kaikati, 1987). It began in the eighteenth century and continued to present day while witnessing drastic changes. Nowadays, it is one of the key promoting tools in numerous business fields. It can influence the purchasing choice of an individual either positively or negatively depending on three factors: credibility, appeal, and power (Jatto, 2014). Celebrities endorsing marks in ads are considered marks' ambassadors. Their names wind up connected to the brand. They contribute in transmitting the message fluidly to the group of onlookers by conveying the expected picture. In this way, the promotion and the brand name will be imparted in individuals' psyches; so they turn out to be a part of the advertising correspondence process. Celebrities are icons perceived by others for their prosperity and acclaim in various fields. The latter might explain why individuals tend to impersonate them which gives them the compelling force in promoting and advertising world.

In Lebanon, celebrities show up in a wide range of commercials from essential merchandise to luxurious ones, and through all the accessible media. Lebanese have an inclination for life comfort items. They are influenced by western culture. Lebanese jewelry industry began utilizing celebrity endorsement in advertisements as a showcasing instrument to promote their items in numerous seasons and events. Subsequently, those advertisements succeeded in increasing sales and meeting the suppliers' objectives to achieve high income. Numerous vital variables may assume a noteworthy part in the effectiveness of that advertising strategy. Those can be summed by the right choice of the celebrity and the perception the Lebanese people. Customer conduct can vary between individuals, and it is affected by the item itself. The purchasing conduct and intention can be influenced by the image of endorsing celebrity. Those are also contingent upon intrinsic and extrinsic factors, e.g. culture, psychology, society, family, educational background, economy, etc. Several studies, as Erdogan (1999), Biswas, Biswas, and Das (2006), and Amos, Holmes, and Strutton (2008) have shown a progressive interest in the scope of this research field. However, few are the studies that were conducted on the case of the Lebanese female consumption of jewelry regarding celebrity endorsement.

The aim of this study is to attend the following research question: "How does celebrity endorsement influence the conduct of Lebanese female consumer of jewelry?"

The structure of this paper is described hereafter. Firstly, a literature review is reported along with hypotheses are proposed and a conceptual model is drawn. Secondly, the methodology used for data collection and measurement of variables is explained. The latter is followed by empirical results section where confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling are conveyed. Lastly, conclusion section contextually discusses the findings.

2. Literature review and related studies

Celebrity endorsement is an efficient strategy used by marketers. It addresses the consumer need from a psychological angle. Consequently, it influences his conduct and decision-making toward the promoted product or brand (Khatri, 2006). Marketers consider the featuring of celebrities in ads a magnet that attracts consumers to the brand through glamor. It holds a considerable

share of the marketing budget. Celebrities are famous people, distinguished from others by unique qualities, namely attractiveness and credibility (Erdogan, 1999). Celebrities are people who achieved their fame in different fields, e.g. sports, acting, singing, politics, etc. (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Celebrities can also be characters from animated series (McCracken, 1989). Marketers use the fame of celebrities to promote goods in advertisements. The appearance of a celebrity in an ad is sought to entrust brands to the consumer. Hereafter, the interplay between attractiveness and credibility of celebrity endorser on one hand and consumer's ad recall and purchase intention on the other hand will be introduced with underlying theories.

2.1. Celebrity endorsement and marketing

Marketing makes a priority out of the consumer (Reynolds & Lancaster, 2001). It focuses on its needs. It uses persuasion as a tool to compel consumer to a promoted brand or product. It thrives to inject the ad in consumer's mind in a creative and repetitive manner. Celebrity based ads communicate their contents and aim for ad recall and brand appeal. Endorser holds a central role in the latter scheme by capturing the consumer's attention toward himself and the ad. Then, advertisement becomes for both endorser's image and brand. Soliciting celebrities for commercials became a known practice for leading companies and luxury brands (Rai & Sharma, 2013). The presence of celebrities might incur consequences on consumers relevant to their perception to the brand, their brand preferences, and their willingness to buy (Kumar, 2010).

Marketers refer to analytical studies prior to the selection of the celebrity endorser. An inappropriate choice of celebrity will cause the failure of communicating the intended message from the ad, hence the consumer's passive purchase intention (Farrell, Karels, Montfort, & McClatchey, 2000). Area of recognition, level of fame, promoted brand, and targeted consumers are all weighed while choosing the celebrity. Theories were presented to help marketers choose celebrities for their ads. Those are reported hereafter.

2.2. Celebrity endorsement theories

Those theories are constructed about the effectiveness of a celebrity in promoting a product. Source based theories such as source credibility theory and source attractiveness theory can be considered. Those stipulate that celebrity controls his characteristics while advertising agency and brand manager have no significant control. There are also management based theory such as the match-up theory and the meaning transfer theory. Those tackle celebrity-product congruency and celebrity activation while discarding his qualities and given managers control over decisions (Seno & Lukas, 2007).

Attractiveness is based on familiarity, likeability, and closeness of celebrity to consumer. That is, consumer imitates his favorite celebrity (Till & Busler, 1998). Physical attractiveness, intelligence, and charisma are considered. It is believed well known and beautiful faces transforms the ad to a memorable experience to the consumer. The latter considers the appearance of celebrity in the commercial as a testimonial of personal consumption of the product. This leads to the following hypothesis (Fig. 1):

Hypothesis 1. Celebrity endorser's attractiveness has a positive impact on ad recall.

Credibility covariates with consumer conduct (Bhatt, Jayswal, & Patel, 2013). The communicated message is related to the character of celebrity endorser. The latter relies on expertise and trustworthiness (Choi & Rifon, 2012). This leads to present the hypothesis below:

Hypothesis 2. Celebrity endorser's credibility has a positive impact on ad recall.

2.3. Celebrity endorsement effectiveness

Match-up theory indicates the fit between celebrity endorser and consumer (Patra & Datta, 2012). Also, there should be a fit between celebrity and product. That is, there is a complementarity between celebrity, product, and ad. Consequently, celebrity based ads are sought to affect consumer's willingness to buy. This suggests the following hypothesis:

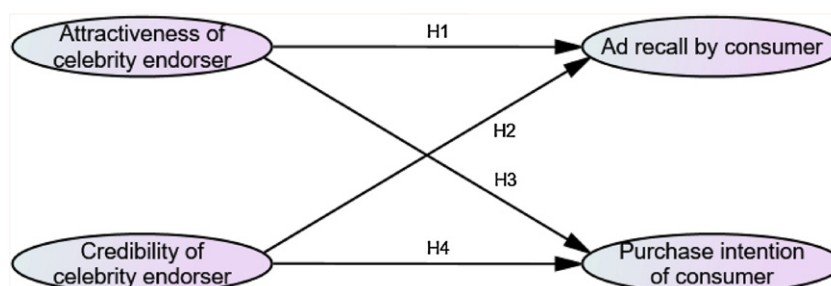


Fig. 1 – Conceptual model of our study.

Hypothesis 3. Celebrity endorser's attractiveness has a positive impact on consumer's purchase intention.

The meaning transfer theory explains the transmission of the meaning from celebrity to product, then to consumer. This is a three stage process. Firstly, the performance, notoriety, and career achievement of the celebrity reflect his culture. Secondly, the celebrity transmit those to the product through endorsement. Lastly, the product convey them to the consumer through the ad. The properties and values of the celebrity as revealed in the product endorsement process might impact the consumer's purchase decision. The following hypothesis is accordingly proposed:

Hypothesis 4. Celebrity endorser's credibility has a positive impact on consumer's purchase intention.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection

A conclusive descriptive design is adopted in this study to reach targeted outcomes (Aken, 2004). Literature review and aforementioned theories constitute the main tools for empirical investigation.

A pre-test was initially conducted with ten notorious researchers in the fields of marketing, luxury brands, jewelry, and social media. The latter helped assessing the feasibility of the content of the survey sought to collect data. Then, the survey was administered to 40 elements having similar characteristics to target population; women aged between 20 and 64 years, and who consume jewelry. The choice of the size is concomitant with the literature guidelines (Johanson & Brooks, 2010). The final version of the survey was released after this pilot study, which justified its content.

Data collection is performed through descriptive, cross-sectional research design. Probabilistic random sampling technique was used over a sample of 584 women aged between 20 and 44 years old using Monkey Survey. The sample selection is related to two criteria's: the first one is related to the defined age that has a purchasing power and an intention for consuming, the most, jewelry. The second concomitates with the first one since that range of women's age are attracted by fashionable jewelry trends. A detailed consent form was offered at the beginning of the survey. Participants were given a three-week period to complete the online questionnaire during the month of January 2018. Out of the 584 elements who received the invitation to participate in data collection, 522 duly completed the survey, which yields an effective final response rate of about 89%.

3.2. Measurement of variables

A five-point Likert scale was sought to measure variables relevant to "Attractiveness of celebrity endorser", "Credibility of celebrity endorser", "Ad recall by consumer", and "Purchase intention of consumer". Following sub-sections provide explicit detail of the measurement model.

3.2.1. Attractiveness of celebrity endorser

One of the major factors that influence consumer's conduct toward celebrity endorsement. Attractiveness of celebrity endorser (Attr) is measure using six items: (1) Celebrities in jewelry ads are usually well known faces; (2) Beautiful celebrities appear in jewelry ads; (3) Attractive celebrities endorse beautiful jewelry designs; (4) Sexy celebrities are endorsed in jewelry ads; (5) Elegant celebrities appear in jewelry commercials; and (6) Celebrities that are endorsed in jewelry ads are classy.

3.2.2. Credibility of celebrity endorser

Another main factor that impacts consumer's conduct as reaction to celebrity based advertisements. Credibility of celebrity endorser (Cred) is measured using five items: (1) I believe that jewelries endorsed by celebrities are their favorite brands; (2) I trust celebrities endorsed in jewelry ads; (3) Celebrities are expert in jewelry; (4) I trust jewelry brands that are endorsed by celebrities; and (5) Celebrities are experienced in jewelry.

3.2.3. Ad recall by the consumer

It shows the extent to which the ad is captured and memorized by consumer's mind. Ad recall by the consumer (Ad) is measured using five items: (1) I saw a celebrity jewelry ad on traditional media channels; (2) I saw the celebrity jewelry ad on social media; (3) My favorite celebrity appeared in a jewelry ad; (4) I remember at least one jewelry commercial; and (5) I remember a particular slogan of a jewelry celebrity ad.

3.2.4. Purchase intention of the consumer

This variable indicates the willingness of an individual to buy promptly or in the near future the advertised product. Purchase intention of the consumer (Pur) is measured by five items: (1) I follow on social media a jewelry brand that is endorsed by a celebrity; (2) I am willing to buy a jewelry brand that is endorsed by celebrity; (3) Celebrity endorsers encourage my purchase decision; (4)

Celebrity jewelry brands are a must have; and (5) I am always aware of new collections of the jewelry brands that were endorsed previously by celebrities.

3.3. Results from quantitative analysis

Quantitative analysis is performed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) under Amos™ 23. The latter has a double folded objective: (1) to test the reliability and validity of the constructs, and (2) to gauge hypothetical relationships between the constructs using structural equation modeling (SEM). Maximum likelihood scheme is used to estimate the parameters. The statistical investigation has shown that three out of four hypotheses have been supported once comparing Cronbach's α to AVE.

3.4. Reliability and validity of the constructs

CFA is conducted on the 21 items stated in the methodology section. The reliability of the measurement model is assessed through Cronbach's α coefficient. Table 1 reports loadings λ , Cronbach's α coefficient, and average variance extracted (AVE) for each of the four constructs. "Attractiveness", "Credibility", and "Purchase intention" have good reliability owing it to Cronbach's α values greater than 0.7. "Ad recall" exhibits satisfactory reliability with a Cronbach's α coefficient slightly less than 0.7 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Convergent validity is examined by comparing Cronbach's α to AVE. All Cronbach's α have greater values than AVE whence the good convergent validity for the constructs.

3.5. Hypothesis testing via structural equation modeling

The goodness of fit of the structural model is excellent with a Chi-square over degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF=1.374), a goodness of fit index (GFI=0.922), and a comparative fit index (CFI=0.963). The standardized path coefficients are reported in Table 2.

Table 1 – The items loadings (λ) and the constructs Cronbach's α coefficients and average variance extracted AVE.

Factor	Item	Λ	Cronbach's α	AVE
Attractiveness	Attr1	0.341	0.788	0.414
	Attr2	0.616		
	Attr3	0.507		
	Attr4	0.701		
	Attr5	0.801		
	Attr6	0.772		
Credibility	Cred1	0.619	0.828	0.495
	Cred2	0.790		
	Cred3	0.573		
	Cred4	0.839		
	Cred5	0.659		
Ad recall	Ad1	0.554	0.669	0.302
	Ad2	0.446		
	Ad3	0.465		
	Ad4	0.562		
	Ad5	0.688		
Purchase intention	Pur1	0.413	0.807	0.491
	Pur2	0.669		
	Pur3	0.826		
	Pur4	0.867		
	Pur5	0.633		

Table 2 – Hypothesis testing and results from SEM.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized path coefficients
H1	Attractiveness → Ad recall	0.362*
H2	Attractiveness → Purchase intention	0.044 ($p=0.215$)
H3	Credibility → Ad recall	0.554*
H4	Factors → Consumers' Trust	0.940*

* Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

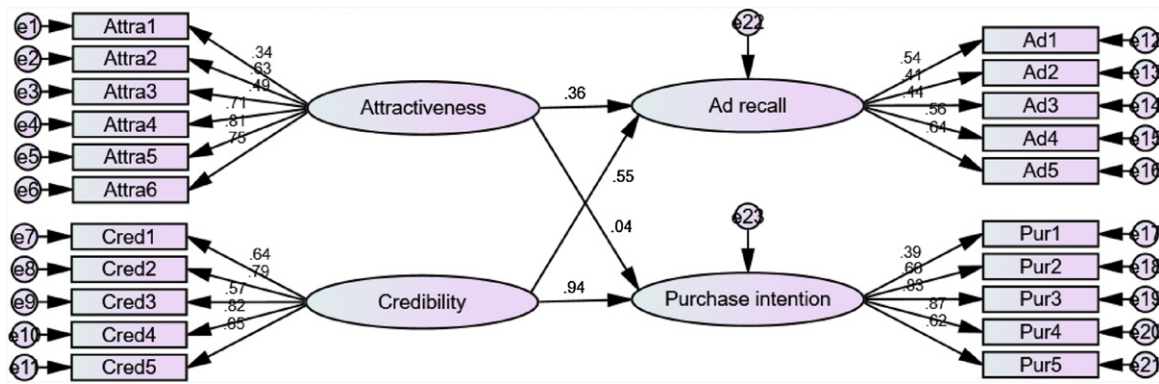


Fig. 2 – Structural model and final outcomes of the study.

“Attractiveness” has a significant positive effect on “Ad recall”, $p < 0.05$. That is, when “Attractiveness” goes up by one standard deviation, “Ad recall” goes up by 0.362 standard deviation. This finding is concomitant with H1. There is no clear evidence that “Attractiveness” has a significant effect on “Purchase intention”, $p = 0.215$. Then there is no proof of H2. “Credibility” has a significant positive effect on “Ad recall”, $p < 0.05$. That is, when “Credibility” goes up by one standard deviation, “Ad recall” goes up by 0.554 standard deviation. This finding is concomitant with H3. “Credibility” has a significant positive effect on “Purchase intention”, $p < 0.05$. That is, when “Credibility” goes up by one standard deviation, “Purchase intention” goes up by 0.940 standard deviation. This finding is in concomitance with H4 (Fig. 2).

4. Conclusions and implications

This study provides many interesting results to be discussed. Three out of four hypothesis were accepted. Celebrity endorser attractiveness has a positive effect on consumer’s ad recall in line with H1. People tend to recall jewelry advertisements with celebrities due to their elegance, classiness, notoriety, and beauty. Marketers usually choose beautiful celebrities to appear in jewelry ads. The celebrity endorser being attractive and beautiful will provide a perfect match-up with the promoted product. The latter can induce the moving of meanings from celebrity to product to consumer. Women feel confident, beautiful, and satisfied when wearing celebrity endorsed jewelries.

Celebrity endorser attractiveness has no significant effect on consumer’s purchase intention in contradiction with H2. The latter might be due to the fact that element of the Lebanese society tend to trust a jewelry brand and not its celebrity endorser. People followed the ad to gaze at the celebrity and not at the promoted brand. Then one might consider other factors to mediate that relationship, such as brand preference and brand recall.

Celebrity endorser credibility has a positive effect on consumer’s ad recall (in line with H3) and purchase intention (in line with H4). Elements of the Lebanese society might consider celebrity endorser as an honest, trustworthy, and experienced individual in jewelry. The celebrity endorser fame and esteem incites the consumers’ willingness to buy the promoted jewelry brand.

Lebanese jewelry industry are widely adopting celebrity endorsement in their marketing strategies. The success of such strategy is mostly owed to the celebrity herself. Her attractiveness and credibility positively influence ad recall. Purchasing intention is motivated mainly by the credibility of the celebrity endorser. The consumer is appealed to the celebrity through her attractiveness. Nevertheless, the consumer remains passive toward buying promoted jewelry under the influence of celebrity endorser attractiveness.

The Lebanese context exhibits that although consumers are influenced by celebrity endorser, they are price sensitive. The expensive pricing of jewelries in Lebanon might be inter alia the reason behind the passive willingness to purchase. Jewelry companies might benefit from adjusting to market prices. Also, the brand itself is more important than the endorser. An endorser can only bring additional value to a well appreciated brand. The majority of the sample recorded women aged between 20 and 50. This demographic group is influenced by digital markets and jewelry companies should consider enhancing their activities there.

The present study is limited to a quantitative approach. Since the literature review deals with Anglo-Saxon scientific studies, it was judicious to approach the field by relying on a semi-directive interviews in order to apprehend the perceptions that celebrity endorsement can occur on Lebanese women behavior. That perspective can, therefore, highlight the cultural effect of Lebanese woman and led to reshape the questionnaire, accordingly in order to be tested on a largest sample. By adopting a mix approach, the study can, therefore, ensure its internal and external validity for a better generalization of the results.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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