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Do Ambassadors Need a Relationship with the Brand or Product?

The Study based on the Opinion of a Focus Group

Nyikos, Bendegúz Richárd¹

ABSTRACT: Celebrity endorsement has been commonly used by marketing professionals for a very long time. Well-known characters can efficiently increase the number and value of the sales and extend the company market share. Celebrities can also affect the decision making process of the customer, the buying behaviour and also the cognitive functions. Cognition and attitudes are significant in the marketing process: with the display of celebrities potential customers may realize that they want to be similar with the person they see in the commercial, therefore the products they purchase can help them in the pursuit of their goals and additionally, also increases their self-confidence.

There is no doubt that celebrities are powerful tools, the question is whether there must a sort of a relationship between the product and the endorser or it is only required to show a favourable image in order to create cognitive dissonance and eventually, to increase the sales. In the pursuit of answers, both secondary and primary researches had been concluded in order to find out how effective celebrity endorsement is when brands are aiming to psychologically influence consumer behaviour.

KEYWORDS: brand ambassadors, celebrity endorsement, cognitive dissonance, consumer behaviour

JEL Codes: D91, E71, M31

Introduction

Celebrity endorsement has a long history in the world of advertising. Today the celebrity endorsement strategies are frequently used by marketers in order to increase their sales and thereby extend the market share of the company. They also believe that using well-known characters in their campaigns can have a huge effect on the purchasing habits of their customers.

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According to Aristotle, “beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of introduction”. This sentence perfectly summarizes why products are endorsed by well-known characters, celebrities. They can have a huge effect on the purchasing decision making, on the buying behaviour and on the cognitive functions. By discovering the true power of celebrity endorsement marketers can achieve incredible results. The question is whether there must be some kind of a relationship between the product and the endorser or it is enough to show a beloved face to increase the sales.

Celebrities are extremely important and valuable to brands: there is no argument about it as they have considerable influence and can contribute to the making and breaking of brands. The table below shows that the number of ads involving celebrities is high in many regions worldwide. Due to the lack of information, data from different years is compared. Although the following data is not up-to-date, it highlights perfectly the effect of celebrities in marketing campaigns.

Table 1: Number of advertisements involving celebrities

Worldwide	United States	United Kingdom	South Korea	Japan
over 20%	25%	over 25%	57%	85%

Source: Choi, Lee and Kim (2005); Datamonitor (2006); License! (2007); McCaughan (2007)

In 2000, 25% of all US ads employed celebrity endorsers (Shimp, 2000:84). In 2005, more than 20% of all ads featured a well-known face, image or voice (Dahl, 2005:63). The percentage of all ads employing celebrity endorsers or including any aspect of celebrity endorsement is higher in other regions such as in the United Kingdom (over 25%), in South Korea (about 57%) and in Japan (85%) (Choi, L. and K., 2005; Datamonitor, 2006; License!, 2007; McCaughan, 2007).

There are several dimensions and factors involved in choosing the right celebrity. Erdogan reviewed the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, and both the advantages and disadvantages associated with celebrities. More recently, several researchers have produced different empirical studies addressing specific areas within the broader realm of the effective celebrity endorsement. However, advertising with a well-known character is not always enough: in some cases, the celebrity being endorsed must fit the product and/or the brand. The signification of cognition and attitudes

is crucial in the world of advertising: people realize that they want to look like, be like or act like a celebrity they see in the commercial. They want to pursue their dreams and become famous, good looking and successful: purchasing such products increases their self-confidence and makes them believe that they can achieve their goals (Erdogan, 1999).

The focus is on the relationships among cognitions: elements of knowledge that people have about their behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, feelings and environments. These elements can be highly affected by the advertisements: commercials tend to point out the differences between the current self-image of the customer and the image of the endorser. This is the point where dissonance rises. Consumers believe that they can decrease this dissonance by purchasing the products advertised by the celebrity and transform their self-image into the one they pursue: the image of the endorser (Telci–Maden–Kantur, 2011).

Although most studies using celebrity endorsement are focused on the credibility of the celebrity (viewed from the three dimensions: physical attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise), this paper is focused on the relationship and the “fit” between celebrity and product (Ohanian, 1990; Ohanian, 1991).

An examination of the relevant literature reveals that numerous celebrity endorsement effects have been investigated: it appears to be important to examine the role of the celebrities in the campaigns to ascertain whether the celebrities and their selling power represents an efficient marketing strategy and whether they necessarily have to fit the product being promoted.

Cognitive dissonance can occur when a person gets to know new information, which can cause a dissonance with the existing belief, or knowledge he/she currently has. Due to the fact that no one has full control over the information that can reach him/her, this inconsistency can easily happen (Festinger, 1970).

In order to discover real results, both a primary and secondary research have been conducted. The literature review is mainly based on books, articles, websites, case studies and theoretical literature concerning the subject. However, it also includes a focus group discussion.

The study will be based on the inductive approach: the principle of developing a certain theory after the relevant data has been collected. Although it contains uncertainty, examples will be sought to provide evidence or proof to support the conclusion that will be derived.

Celebrity appearance

Today celebrities can appear in ads for any type of product or services available in the market. According to McCracken, celebrity endorser is “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (McCracken, 1989; Lukas et al., 2005).

According to *BusinessDictionary.com*, “a well-known person using his or her fame to help promote a product or service” is the definition of celebrity endorsement. Promotion of the product through ads on TV, large events and in newspapers by utilizing celebrities in such campaigns is designed to increase both sales and profits. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/celebrity-endorsement.html>)

In the examination of the phenomenon of celebrity endorsement, it is important to understand how celebrities can offer a huge benefit in the advertising of a product.

There are several reasons why companies are keen to use celebrities in their marketing campaigns:

- To enhance brand equity (Till, 1998).
- To have a positive effect on the attitude of the costumers toward the brand (Till, 1998).
- To add a new dimension for the brand by the contribution of the endorser (Till, 1998).
- To gain worldwide reputation by advertising with a globally well-known character (Kaikati, 1987).
- To build independent brand credibility (Mullikin–Petty, 2006).
- According to Atkin and Block, “celebrities may help advertisements stand out from surrounding clutter, thus improving their communicative ability” (Atkin et al., 1983).
- Celebrities make advertisements believable (Kamins et al., 1989).
- Celebrities can help in the recognition of the brand (Petty et al., 1983).
- To enhance recall of product or message (Friedman et al., 1979).
- To influence the purchase intentions and habits of customers (Tripp et al., 1994).
- To create a distinct character to the brand being endorsed (McCracken, 1989).

According to Pringle, the role of celebrities is very effective in influencing the consumer: people empathize with some certain types of celebrities, therefore it is important for the companies to use celebrity endorsement effectively (Pringle, 2004).

It is clearly seen, that celebrities can help in the process of brand building and/or in the promotion of certain products. However, there are several problems relating to the use of celebrity endorsers that must be identified and examined in order to completely understand the phenomenon.

Celebrity endorsement may have negative results: overshadowing or overexposing can affect the perception of the consumer (Belch et al., 2001).

Due to the fact that sometimes the celebrity is overexposed by his/her constant appearance in the mass media and there may be no distinction between the fame of the endorser and the brand, celebrity endorsement can be very risky: the overshadowing the brand is a typical issue marketers can experience in a poorly designed campaign. In such case, the consumer gives attention to the celebrity but fails to recognize the brand. In addition, consumers might remember neither the celebrity nor the message given in the advertisement (Belch et al., 2001).

From 2005 to 2008 Angelina Jolie endorsed the brand St. John: at the beginning she was perceived as the ambassador for the luxury apparel brand. However, due to her romance with Brad Pitt, the 6 children they adopted and her charity work, she had become overexposed in the mass media and the effectiveness of the campaign diminished due to her image overshadowing the brand. Glenn McMahon chief executive of St. John said: “She overshadowed the brand. We wanted to make a clean break from actresses and steer away from blondes and cleanse the palette” (Messina, 2013).

In addition to this there are some other potential problems associated with using celebrities (Fill, 2005).

Since there is a relationship established between the celebrity and the brand, if the image of the celebrity changes, some problems can occur regarding the perception of consumers of the brand. The sales can decline because of the new, negative image of the endorser the brand (Shimp, 2003; Fill, 2005).

The career of Kate Moss suffered several blows in 2005 mainly due to the picture of her taking cocaine that emerged on Internet and in newspapers. Burberry, Chanel Mademoiselle perfume and H&M dropped the

contracts due to the scandals: none of them wanted to risk the image of the company they had built (Messina, 2013).

Lily Allen, the face of Chanel Coco Cocoon handbag range also suffered back in 2010 because of her attitude: Karl Lagerfeld terminated her contract and replaced her with Vanessa Paradis following a party where Lily embarrassed herself as a result of heavy drinking (Messina, 2013).

There are two forms of celebrity appearance in advertising. Although they are very similar and are usually not recognized, it is important to understand the main differences between celebrity license and celebrity endorsement (Mistry, 2006).

Celebrity license is not used very often: it is a long-term commitment between celebrity and corporation where the celebrity lends his/her name directly to the product. This relationship can generate either strength or weakness: both the celebrity and the product are associated with each other. It can also depend on the status of the two partners (Mistry, 2006).

Initially, Nike was known as a primary sponsor of tennis and track athletes. When Nike decided to expand into new markets, they wanted to sign an electrifying, talented young athlete, so they established the Nike-Jordan partnership. Due to the success of this arrangement, it blossomed into its own subsidiary company, Air Jordan (Edler, 2013).

It is clearly seen, that it in case of a celebrity license is easier to succeed if there is a connection, a “fit” between the celebrity and the brand. However, a partnership can be established without any connection between the celebrity and the product. There are several examples where celebrities have absolutely nothing to do with the product or service marketed with their name on. Companies believe that there must be a relationship, some kind of a “fit” established between endorser and product to maximize the credibility of the celebrity (Agrawal et al., 1995).

According to Piyush Rawtani there does not necessarily have to be a strong relationship between the celebrity being endorsed and the product being promoted: by creating a unique situation or story that links the celebrity to the product, a marketing campaign including a celebrity can still be successful (Rawtani, 2011).

David Beckham, the famous football star had promoted several brands and products before he established his own eau de toilette fragrance called *Homme* by David Beckham. Although an athlete generally can promote a sports brand more successfully, Beckham chose to enter

the perfume market and create his own brand. Despite the lack of connection, the brand succeeded and has generated consistently high annual profits (Donnelly, 2011).

In addition to establishing his own brand, Beckham has been frequently seen in advertisements of different brands and products. In the case of such a charismatic sport star, it has been proven that there is no need for any speeches or acting performance: a charming smile can make it work perfectly (Papp-Váry, 2011).



Image 1: Beckham is a well-known endorser for both his own and other brands

Source: Lam (2019), Soccer Commercials (2018)

Celebrity license is frequently used by celebrities from Bollywood: lending their names to companies and brands has become commonplace in India. Hrithik Roshan is a great example: he lends his name to a casualwear line and created the brand Hrx. Myntra has obtained the manufacturing rights to the exclusive brand and will sell the products through its online webshop. “Initially the brand got a huge push due to Salman Khan endorsing it. But now we have been working on our product line and distribution network to increase sales”, says Mitesh Shah, the vice-president of Myntra (D’souza, 2013).

The example of Jamie Oliver shows that success does not depend on the “fit”: three of his four classic British-styled restaurants have closed down recently. However, Jamie has over 35 Italian restaurants in the UK and plans to establish a franchise overseas (Perry, 2014).

Celebrity endorsement is more widely used by marketers. Celebrities are “only” promotional tools in the campaigns: they give opinions and can be directly associated with a specific product (McCracken, 1989; Seno et al., 2007).

The attractive and likeable qualities of the endorsers are transferred to products. The image of the celebrity is matched together with the image and features of the product. Due to their fame, celebrities not only create awareness, but they also provide an instant recognition of the brand associated with the endorser (Agrawal et al., 1995; Armbruster, 2006).

Credibility of the endorsers can be categorized (Ohanian, 1990):

1. *Attractiveness*: this category focuses on the differentials of attractive or unattractive, handsome/beautiful or bad-looking, elegant or plain, etc.

Most of the actors fall into this category. George Clooney, the attractive and elegant actor, has been the spokesperson and face of the vermouth company Martini since 2004. As well as being classy, some of the advertisements had funny components or even an amusing ending. According to Martini spokesperson Antonella Lanfranco, he was paid \$ 1.89 million for his most famous commercial “No Martini, no Party”. He also appeared as the face of Police sunglasses and in commercials for fashion brand Emidio Tucci and Lancelot Whisky. (DailyMail, 2009)



Image 2: George Clooney is the well-known ambassador for both Martini and Nespresso

Source: CelebrityAgent (2013), Hodal (2020)

There is also an on-going, long-term relationship between Clooney and Nespresso. He has been considered as the main ambassador of the well-known coffee brand and recently, in order to keep his reputation, he expressed his view on the alleged discovery of child labour on the farms used by the brand. (Hodal, 2020)

2. *Trustworthiness*: it is measured through honest or dishonest, reliable or unreliable, trustworthy or untrustworthy, etc.

In creating the list of the most trustworthy celebrities, Forbes uses E-Poll Market Research to rank more than 6,600 celebrities using their 46 different characteristics and attributes. Gary Philpott, president of E-Poll says that “trustworthy, like influential, can be very subjective description based on the nature of their celebrity. For the most part, it reflects how genuine people perceive that person to be. It positively impacts a celebrity’s ‘brand’ in getting top roles and endorsements if consumers see them as credible and believable” (Pomerantz, 2014).

Tom Hanks was named the Most Trustworthy Celebrity in the study done by Forbes in 2014. Carol Burnett landed the second place on the list while Morgan Freeman was ranked as the third most trustworthy person (Pomerantz, 2014).

FedEx has always been known as a reliable company: to highlight this to the audience its service was promoted by Tom Hanks. On returning from the island on which he had to live following his plane crashing, he finally delivered the package to the recipient (Pomerantz, 2014).

MasterCard and Visa, the credit card provider companies know that they have to convince the audience and make the customers believe that the companies are honest and trustworthy: that is why they contracted Carol Burnett and Morgan Freeman. When people hear a well-known voice and see a beloved face, they are more likely to choose the brand they promote (Pomerantz, 2014).

3. *Expertise*: the third category includes expert or not expert, skilled or unskilled, qualified or unqualified, etc.

The contribution of a superstar in a marketing campaign can make the audience believe that he/she actually uses the product. NASCAR superstar Tony Stewart endorses the oil producing company Mobile One: consumers may believe that oil produced by the company contributes to the performance and success of the star (Bruce, 2014).

It is clearly seen that credibility has a high importance: higher credibility always results in higher effectiveness (Sternthal et al., 1978).

Although credibility and believability are often created by the relationship mentioned above, a celebrity who simply likes and/or uses the

product can also influence the audience. In this case, marketers must make sure that the endorsers cannot “overshadow” the product: it is not sufficient to simply ensure that the people recall the advertisement and the celebrity; they must also remember the brand and the product (Belch et al., 2001).

It is clearly seen, that credibility is highly valued. In addition, in a research carried out by Miciak and Shanklin among 43 companies, most experts believed that credibility is the most important factor, especially the trustworthiness and expertise dimensions (Miciak et al., 1994).

Consumer Purchasing Behaviour and Cognitive Dissonance

It is crucial to define the model of consumer buying behaviour and the decision making process to understand how people choose from several alternatives. These facts are useful when marketers use celebrity endorsement in the campaigns. As well as this model and process, it is important to talk about the role of cognitive dissonance: although people possess certain knowledge or beliefs, it is possible to alter those by creating and showing them an entirely different aspects. Advertising is a good way to point out the differences between the current image and the one the consumer can obtain when he or she purchases the product. It can result in cognitive dissonance: a feeling of imperfection, incompleteness.

The signification of cognition and attitudes is crucial in the world of advertising. According to Festinger, knowledge, beliefs and opinion are derived by cognition: either about the individual himself, about his or her environment or about someone else’s behavior. According to Leon Festinger, one’s attitudes are consistent with each other, such as social or political opinions, since everyone wants to achieve a certain consistency within himself/herself (Festinger, 1970).

Cooper describes this phenomenon as the following: “If a person holds cognition A and B such that A follows for them opposite of B, then A and B are dissonant” (Cooper, 2007:8).

Another theory by Telci, Maden and Kantur argues, that “the theory of cognitive dissonance focuses on the relationships among cognitions that consist of elements of knowledge that people have about their behaviours, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, feelings or environments”. Therefore, cognitive dissonance is usually used by marketers to understand and analyse consumer behaviour (Telci et al., 2011:378–386).

How can it affect the world of advertising? Advertising through mass media channels – radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, Internet, etc. – can point out the differences between the image a person could have after purchasing a certain product and his/her current self-image. Marketers can make customers believe that they are not satisfied with their current image: they believe that by owning or using the product promoted by a celebrity they can also have the image they pursue (Telci et al., 2011).

This is how it could result in the customers having cognitive dissonance: they feel incomplete and when they evaluate the available alternatives identified in the decision making process, they might give higher priority to such products. According to McKay, this is how cognitive dissonance works: “Most advertising delivers images of what people say they want. Most advertising emotionally connects with the images of things the advertisers sell. Cognitive dissonance adds the elements of guilt, regret, anxiety, or dereliction” Although this tool might not work on every customer, it need only work on a few to generate sales (McKay, 2008).

Advertisements do not necessarily have to aim at the people who use the product: it is more important to influence the purchasers of a certain product and create a sense of incompleteness. The case of Old Spice is a very special one: although it produces products for men, it realized that women buy 60% of the products (Edwards, 2010).

That is why women must be the main targets and in order to make them feel that their men are “incomplete”. The successful commercial called “The Man your Man Could Smell Like” uses self-deprecation by creating an overly masculine character and starts with the following quote spoken by the famous, good-looking actor Isaiah Mustafa:

“Hello, ladies. Look at your man, now back to me, now back at your man, now back to me. Sadly, he isn’t me. But if he stopped using ladies’ scented body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he’s me.”

The commercial was enjoyable on several levels and made positive statements regarding the portrayal of masculinity and how it relates to women’s preferences. It highlighted what makes a man manly and identified the differences between the manly character and the men associated with the female viewers: this is how it created dissonance, incompleteness (Fernandez, 2011).

Festinger (1970) states two hypotheses:

1. When inconsistency – i.e. dissonance – exists, it can cause psychological discomfort. The person tries to reduce it and reach consistency – consonance.
2. Therefore, when inconsistency exists, the person does not simply try to reduce it: avoiding information and situations which could possibly increase the dissonance is also key in such situations.

It can be clearly seen that the “existence of non-fitting relations among cognitions” is a key motivating factor due to the fact that people wants to reduce it. In other words, when inconsistency between a piece of knowledge or a belief and a behaviour occurs, “cognitive dissonance can be seen as an antecedent condition which leads to an activity oriented toward dissonance reduction” and makes a person take actions in order to reduce the inconsistency, therefore it can be classed as a kind of motivation (Festinger, 1970:16–54).

Dissonance can occur when a person gets to know new information, which can cause a dissonance with the existing belief, or knowledge he/she currently has. Due to the fact that no one has full control over the information that can reach him/her, this inconsistency can easily happen (Cooper, 2007).

Methodology

Deductive reasoning is called the “top-down” approach: it usually begins on the top with the description or theory of the more general, broad spectrum of information working downwards ultimately to the more specific. After that the work is narrowed down to a specific topic, conclusion. In this case, the literature review had begun with the theory of celebrity appearance in advertisement. From there, it had been narrowed down into more specific hypotheses that could be tested: celebrity endorsement and the “fit” being established between the endorser and the product being endorsed. The hypothesis had been narrowed down even further with observations collected in order to test the hypothesis: it ultimately enabled the hypothesis to be tested with specific data in order to confirm the hypothesis and answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2009).

To give a detailed background, description of the topic and basic definition, secondary research had been used. The authors of the books, journal articles and studies examined in the previous chapter are experts in

their fields and/or are affiliated with a reputable organization and/or institution: this ensures that the sources are of high credibility.

Even though secondary sources are acceptable and helpful, there are times when primary sources must also be used in order to obtain answers. It is undertaken after some insight into the issue had been gained by reviewing the secondary sources and analysing previously collected data. The great control exercised over the research design, enables the focus on specific subjects and greater control over how the information is collected. In this case, primary research consists of a collection of original and primary data collected through focus group discussion. However, there are problems associated with primary research: it requires an accurate development of the research plan and low response rate is expected, which is why this method is highly time-consuming (Crouch, 2003).

Sampling was used to generate findings at a lower cost. Individuals from appropriate Internet, secondary school and university communities were asked to participate. For the focus group presentation, 8 people randomly selected for participation: 2 from each groups (-18, 18-25, 25-45, 45+), 4 males and 4 females.

Focus Group Discussion

The objective of the focus group discussion is to find out what the participants think about celebrities and the effect of their endorsement. The goal is to collect information and to use it to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, therefore the reactions and opinions had been examined. The focus group discussion was concluded in Sopron and in person. Originally an additional discussion was planned, however, due to the increasing number of cases affected by COVID-19, it was not able to be scheduled, therefore the research will be substituted by a questionnaire in order to gather quantitative data for statistical analysis.

Eight people participated in the discussion:

- under 18: 1 male and 1 female,
- 18-25: 1 male and 1 female,
- 25-35: 1 male and 1 female,
- above 35: 1 male and 1 female.

The discussion started with some basic questions about celebrities and endorsements to established the opinions of the participants. After these general questions, commercially-oriented questions were asked to

discover what factors can have an effect on their buying behaviour and decision. Last but not least, the well-known Old Spice commercial “The Man Your Man Could Spell Like” was watched.

When the group was asked about their opinion on celebrity advertisements in general, the answer was really interesting: there was only 1 person who truly liked this type of ad. The opinion of 4 members depended on the product and the celebrity, 1 was completely neutral and 1 did not like this type of advertisements at all.

The 4 people were asked to give an example: they said that if there is a good “fit” between celebrity and product, the commercial can make more sense than one in which no “fit” is established: for example the case of Jamie Oliver and Tefal products.

In the 3rd question, the participants were asked for their opinion about the power of celebrities. Only 2 of them said that celebrities can easily influence the consumers. The opinion of other 2 participants was as follows: there must be a strong relationship between celebrity and product in order to influence the decisions of the customers. Three people said that the commercial must catch the attention. There was only 1 person who said that he chooses the same product he always buys. However, their opinions changed at the end of the conversation

In the next point, the previous example of Tefal was analysed: when there is a strong “fit” between endorser and product, they are more likely to choose the special product over the regular one. They were aware of the fact that endorsed products are usually more expensive, but the expert in the commercial can have an effect on their decision: expertise matters!

In Question 5, they were asked to recall the Spar commercial with Pierce Brosnan. It was clearly seen, that the attractiveness of the actor was the key in the recall: there was no relationship established between the celebrity and the luxury products of Spar, but 6 of the participants said that there was no need for such thing, in this case, attractiveness is the only thing that matters.

It was clearly seen, that “fit” is not always a key indicator: based on their opinion, they were asked about the 3 dimension of celebrities: 3 participants said that attractiveness is the most important dimension, the 2nd is credibility and the 3rd is expertise. 3 other participants said that the three dimensions are equally important. There was only 1 person who said that it depends on the good image of the endorser: in general, trustworthiness

and expertise are important, but in the case of clothing and cosmetics, attractiveness was chosen by that person. The last participant, the one who said that celebrity endorsement never played any role in his life, made an interesting confession: one of the products he always buys was recommended by a celebrity.

The next question was about the products where celebrity endorsement and licensing is the most popular: cosmetics and perfumes. Two of the participants said that celebrities have a strong influence on their decision: when they see the famous person in the commercial, they want to be the same: perfect, beautiful. This is the instance when dissonance rises: they feel bad, awful and using the product endorsed by a famous person can increase their self-confidence. The other 6 participants are either loyal to their favourite brands or do not care for the effect of celebrities. After this question the Old Spice commercial “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like” was watched. The last question was related to the advertisement. Only one person said that he did not like the commercial. Two participants were physically attracted to the masculine character and that is the reason why they choose the product. Three of them realized that the commercial is funny, pointless and makes no sense. However, they also buy the product. A person said that it is a great example of what matters in advertising: humour and a unique situation – it makes them want to buy the product. A person realized that the commercial is an interesting case: it is about a product for men but is aimed at their female partners. Seven out of the eight participants liked the commercial; there was only one person who did not like it.

On one hand, it is clearly seen that in some special cases the strong “fit” established between endorser and product can have a stronger effect on consumers: the professional or the endorser who has expertise is more likely to influence the consumers.

On the other hand, in general cases, there is no need for the “fit”: the three dimensions of the celebrities (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) are more important: the companies must choose the right celebrity with the right attributes to influence the consumers. The role of cognitive dissonance is important in such cases: the customer compares his or her current self-image with the image of the endorser, begins to feel uncomfortable, imperfect and incomplete – this is when dissonance rises. To reduce this dissonance and to become similar to the character in the advertisement he/she purchases and uses the product which makes him/her feel better.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the secondary research was reaffirmed by the results of the findings of the focus group discussion. The main conclusion is the secondary research is that there is no need for a “fit” between endorser and product when the endorser matches either one or more elements of credibility and is able to create cognitive dissonance, thereby making the customers want to purchase a product which they currently do not own or do not need.

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological state of mind: it rises when a person has conflicting ideas or opinions. Celebrities can easily create cognitive dissonance even if the celebrity does not “fit” the brand or product: being attractive, trustworthy or having expertise is more highly valued in such cases. The results from both the focus group discussion show that a celebrity who matches either one or more dimensions can have a stronger effect on the purchasing decision, especially when a unique concept or situation is created. In the case of fashion, clothing or perfumes attractiveness is highly influential. However, expertise and trustworthiness are the most important factors people weigh up when making decision (Festinger, 1970).

These advertisements do not deliver the images that people want and do not create any emotional connection: “cognitive dissonance adds the elements of guilt, regret, anxiety, or dereliction” (McKay, 2008).

This is how it could result in the customers having cognitive dissonance: they feel incomplete and when they evaluate the available alternatives identified in the decision making process, they might give higher priority to such products. When cognitive dissonance reaches a certain level, customers want to decrease this feeling and confliction: consumers believe that purchasing a certain product can help them, make them feel better and increase their self-confidence. It has already been stated, that in the case of fashion or perfumes attractiveness is highly influential. The results of the focus group discussion can perfectly prove it: products licensed or endorsed by celebrities can successfully create dissonance and the need for the product.

Advertisements do not necessarily have to be aimed at the people who use the product: it is more important to influence the purchasers of the products and create incompleteness: Old Spice is a great example where the commercial raises cognitive dissonance in the mind of the women who

buy the products for their partners. Although the advertisement is funny and entertaining, it is not credible at all and presents an unbelievably, overly masculine character, and successfully creates a need for the product in the women: the majority of participants of the focus group said that they always buy this product.

It is clearly seen that celebrities have a compelling power and are able to easily influence the consumers even if they do not “fit” a certain product and/or brand. Due to the fact that no one has full control over the information that reaches him or her, the dissonance, inconsistency can easily occur (Festinger, 1970).

As well as establishing a great relationship, a “fit” between endorser and product is an excellent way to influence the decision making process of the customers (a well-known professional such as Jamie Oliver fits with the Tefal products); it is possible to succeed with an advertisement presented by a celebrity who has absolutely nothing in common with the good he or she endorses.

The 3 dimensions of credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) are highly valued where there is no “fit” between product and endorser: higher credibility always results in higher effectiveness, especially when the celebrity matches the dimensions of trustworthiness and expertise (Sternthal et al., 1978; Miciak et al., 1994).

The conclusion of the paper is the following: when cognitive dissonance rises, the celebrity endorsing the product does not need to “fit” in order to influence consumer behaviour effectively: it is more important to match either one or more dimensions of credibility.

Future Outlook

Even though a focus group discussion gives the opportunity to the researcher to gather information on the feelings of the participants and gain additional insights, only one focus groups discussion was concluded, therefore a quantitative primary research in the form of a questionnaire would be even more ideal to follow-up in order to have essential statistical data on the topic. In addition to the relevance of celebrity endorsement, the opinion of different generations and demographic groups could also be compared to expend the research to further dimensions.

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