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PERSUASIVENESS OF CELEBRITY ENDORSED ADVERTISING AND A NEW MODEL FOR CELEBRITY ENDORSER SELECTION

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Abstract

With the rapid paces of product diversification and competition intensification in most commodity markets, there have been more and more ways for sellers to introduce new products and promote existing products, and for buyers to get to know those products. Using celebrities as product endorsers has become one such important way. Therefore, the selection of the most suitable celebrity endorsers becomes an important issue that businesses and advertising agencies have to face. In this paper, based on our review of a handful of representative celebrity selection models, we analyze why and how celebrity endorsers would exert persuasion towards target consumers. We also identify key factors that would influence endorsers' persuasiveness in advertising. More importantly, we introduce our new "Ideal Match-Up Model" for celebrity endorser selection, and apply a suppositional example to illustrate how this model can work in various cases of practical use.

1. INTRODUCTION

Among all kinds of advertisements, ones which rest on celebrity endorsement have made their recognition and fame within diversified commodity markets. Celebrity endorsers have contributed a lot to enhancing the persuasiveness in advertising, which in some degree turns out to be the drive of a high sales pitch. Therefore, this paper will mainly focus on celebrity endorsers' persuasiveness in advertising towards influencing target consumers' consumption attitude. Many scholars have researched on factors that influence celebrity endorser's persuasiveness in advertising, and established some models for effective celebrity endorser selection based on different theories. As we know, persuasion is not a one-way working mechanism, so does persuasion in advertising. It needs the interaction, especially from psychological aspect, between persuasive message sources and audiences. Therefore in this paper, we try to illustrate celebrity endorsers' persuasiveness in advertising towards target consumers through persuasion psychological analysis.

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However, at present, not all the celebrity endorsed advertisements are the guarantee of success. Reasons come from three aspects: celebrity endorsers, products, and target consumers. There isn't a perfect match-up between each pair of these three factors. Thus in this paper, the author tries to establish a new model to quantify this three-factor match-up, based on previous studies from home and abroad and the above mentioned persuasion psychological analysis. Through questionnaire distribution, data regarding with target consumers' attitude towards products as well as celebrity endorsers will be achieved, which lays the foundation for statistical analysis. Additionally, for the sake of making this new established model practical and visible to all, a real case will be applied to explain and deduct how this model operates for actual celebrity endorser selection in advertising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of celebrity and celebrity endorsement

The study on celebrity endorsement dates back to long time ago. Many scholars (see some representative versions as follows) have given their definitions of celebrity and celebrity endorsement. [Friedman and Friedman \(1979\)](#) treat the term “Celebrity” as an individual who is known to the public for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed. And as to celebrity endorsement, it is a channel of communication where celebrities act as spokesperson of the brand and by extending their popularity and personality they certifies the brand's claim and position. To make the above definition easily understood, [McCracken \(1989\)](#) thinks a celebrity can be considered as “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement”. A more representative definition of celebrity comes from [Patra and Datta \(2012\)](#). They put it in an even more concise way: a celebrity is a person who is successful in his/her own profession, widely recognized in the society and have huge fans following and enjoy media attention. They have demographic and psychographic connection with the target audiences.

From the above typical definitions, we see that no matter how diversified they are, a sign of a celebrity is that his/her name is often worth more than his/her services (Daniel J Boorstin). And because of this, vast investment has been casted into finding an appropriate (effective in persuading target consumers to buy the endorsed product) celebrity to endorse some products or brands. It makes how to improve celebrity endorsers' effectiveness an imperative issue, which also lays the foundation of writing this paper.

2.2. Persuasiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising

2.2.1. Definition and essence of persuasion

Scholars have devoted themselves to persuasion studies since Aristotle's time, resulting in diversified definitions. [Benoit and Benoit \(2008\)](#) define persuasion as “a process in which a source (persuader) uses a message to achieve a goal by creating, changing, or reinforcing the attitudes of others (the audiences).”

Different from above, [Gass and Seiter \(2010\)](#) connected persuasion with influence. They said in their book Persuasion, Social Influence, and Compliance gaining that, “Persuasion is underneath the umbrella term of influence. In other words, persuasion is influence, but it requires communication, whereas influence does not necessarily. Persuasion can attempt to influence the beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations or behaviors.”

In comparison, the Benoits tried to define persuasion through its working process and mechanism, while the latter focused much on its relationship with influence. Similarly, from the aspect of persuasion impact, [Schacter et al. \(2011\)](#) shared the view that “Persuasion can also be interpreted as using one's personal or positional resources to change people's behaviors or attitudes”. However, in order to demonstrate persuasion more explicitly, they divided persuasion into two kinds: systematic persuasion and heuristic persuasion.

Systematic persuasion is the process through which attitudes or beliefs are changed by appeals to logic and reason. Heuristic persuasion on the other hand is the process through which attitudes or beliefs are changed because of appeals to habit or emotion. Obviously, the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising which this paper stresses on is mainly the consequence of heuristic persuasion.

2.2.2. Persuasiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising

Kumar and Patra (2011) think that advertising is a persuasion and persuasion is not a science, but an art, which in other words indicates that advertising is the art of persuasion. As we know, all persuasive appeals in advertising aim at promotion, which must result from consumers' buying behavior creation. And such behavior creation is the consequence of two aspects' interaction: advertising appeals and attitude change (creation, reinforcement). As mentioned above, persuasiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising is mainly attributed to the heuristic one (it doesn't mean there isn't any systematic persuasion appeals), which focuses on appeals that change consumers' habit and emotion.

For over 2000 years, we have recognized that the source of a message can affect persuasiveness. In the fourth century BC, Aristotle observed: "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others; this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely where exact certainty is impossible and options divided." In modern times, many would acknowledge that source credibility is an important factor in persuasion (Hass, 1981). In advertising, the main role of the celebrity is to serve as the source (communicator) of a message, which here means product (brand, idea or service) recommendation.

Marketing and advertising practitioners share the belief that a communicator's character has a significant impact on the persuasiveness of the message, and according to diversified views on what kind of endorsers' characteristics do have influences on advertising persuasiveness, several celebrity selection models are established. In the following sector, we will have a review on literature regarding with those models for proper celebrity endorsers' selection.

2.3. Theoretical research on celebrity endorsement

As per previous researches of many scholars (Friedman and Friedman, Erdogan, Atkin and Block, etc. See as below), studies and corresponding theories of celebrity endorsement mainly put emphasis on two aspects: the study on its effectiveness, and the establishment of celebrity selection models.

2.3.1. Effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising

To my knowledge, the literature on effectiveness of celebrity endorsement has examined (1) whether or not celebrity endorsers are more effective than non-celebrity endorsers and (2) how does celebrity endorsement take effect in enhancing advertising persuasiveness. Therefore, this article will concentrate on a brief review and summary on the salient points related to these two questions.

As regard with the first question, inconclusive findings in academic research flourish. On one hand, celebrities create attention and bring prestige to brands, and may encourage higher recall (Erdogan, 1999; Tom *et al.*, 1992). On the other hand, non-celebrity endorsers' images are created and fine-tuned by the brand's company, and therefore, their images, personalities and actions can be ensured to fit with the brand's image. Specifically, some researches find that celebrities are more effective than non-celebrities (Atkin & Block, 1983; Petty *et al.*, 1983), while other researches find that non-celebrity endorsers or "created" endorsers are more effective than celebrity endorsers (Tom *et al.*, 1992), and still others find that celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers' effect are not different (Mehta, 1994). It seems that no unified answer has been reached (reasons of each conclusion can be referred to in relevant articles and will not be listed here owing to paper space constraints).

However, from the financial angle, using event studies, the findings indicate that using celebrity endorsers generates abnormal positive stock returns (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Mathur *et al.*,

1997). With this, we at least don't need to suspect celebrity endorsers' effectiveness in advertising any more, regardless of its comparison with non-celebrity endorsers.

At present, celebrity endorsed advertisements aiming at giving a sale pitch has become a common phenomenon. Many products and relevant companies have already benefited much from them. As expected, positive (negative) news about the celebrity endorser results in higher (lower) cash flow expectations (Russell *et al.*, 2005); the greater (lower) the perceived culpability of the celebrity involved in an undesirable event, the lower (greater) the stock return (Louie *et al.*, 2001). Thus, the characteristics and corresponding images of celebrity endorsers in target consumers' mind undoubtedly will influence their attitudes towards the endorsed product (brand, or service).

As with the second question, all the researches regarding with this aspect are subject to a logical line: brand awareness-recall, brand attitudes change, brand preference and eventually purchase intentions and actions.

One of the major objectives of advertising is to create brand awareness so that consumers recall the brand name outside the store or recognize it inside the store at the time of purchase (Rossiter & Percy, 1997). It is evident from existing literature that a celebrity was better in enhancing brand name recall than a non-celebrity (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Petty *et al.*, 1983). Especially, a physically attractive celebrity paired with an attractiveness-related product could enhance even higher name recall than other endorser and product association (Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Researchers have also studied attitude towards the brand and brand preference from different perspectives as evident from review of existing literature (Kamen *et al.*, 1975; Ross *et al.*, 1984; Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999; Nam-Hyun Um, 2008). Models of how advertising works suggest that, attitude towards the brand has an important intermediate effect in advertising, leading to behavioral intention and choice (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). Celebrity endorsement is expected to create brand preference so that target consumers of the recommended product end up buying behavior.

So far, we have accessed a brief knowledge about the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement and the mechanism line of its impact on influencing target consumers. On the basis of this, selecting a celebrity endorser who is the most suitable among all potential candidates stands out as the next topic.

2.3.2. Models for celebrity endorser selection

As mentioned, persuasion is a kind of communication, focusing on a certain stuff's recommendation. Celebrity endorsers' persuasiveness in advertising should include three aspects: celebrity endorser (message source), the endorsed product (brand or service), and target consumers (message receiver). Based on the review of existing literature on celebrity endorsement, we came across the following prominent methods in the field of celebrity selection, namely the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1990); Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1985; Ohanian, 1990); Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989); Match Up Hypothesis (Kamins, 1990; Till & Busler, 1998); and performer's 'Q' rating technique, which is commercially available to select and evaluate entertainment and sports celebrities (Belch & Belch, 2001; Shimp, 2003). Each of them emphasizes differed aspects of how persuasion occurring and persuasiveness enhanced.

2.3.2.1. Source credibility model

In the early phase of celebrity endorsement study, researches and reflection on this topic rest on two general models: the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model.

"Source credibility" is a term commonly used to imply a communicator's positive credible characteristics that affect receiver's acceptance of a message. The source credibility model resulted from a landmark study by Hovland and his associates. They analyzed factors leading to the perceived credibility of the communicator and concluded that two factors, namely expertise and

trustworthiness, underscore the concept of source credibility. It also suggests that it is consumers' perception of a celebrity endorser's expertise and trustworthiness, not the actual level that influences the effectiveness of advertising messages (Hovland & Weiss, 1951).

In this model, expertise has been defined as "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions" (Hovland *et al.*, 1953). It refers to the knowledge, experience or skills possessed by an endorser. Trustworthiness has been defined as "the degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid" (Hovland *et al.*, 1953). Trustworthiness refers to the honesty, integrity and believability of an endorser.

After Hovland, in the process of developing scales to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers, a number of researchers (De Sarbo & Harshman, 1985; Simpson & Kahler, 1980-81; Wilding & Bauer, 1968; Wynn, 1987) in advertising and marketing have expanded the number of dimensions encompassing the source-credibility construct. Although all the studies were designed to measure the same construct, there is no consistency among the authors as to the number and types of dimensions that source credibility comprises. So based and built on those studies, Ohanian (1990) in his study firstly provided a theoretical basis for the selection of constructs to represent the hypothesized dimensions of source credibility (specifically trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness), and then advanced and assessed a tri-component construct using psychometrically accepted procedures (exploratory phase and factor analysis, confirmatory analysis) to produce a reliable and valid scale.

From the aspect of actual advertising practice, basketball player Michael Jordan and tennis athlete Nadal to endorse Nike, authoritative dentists to endorse Shushida (a kind of toothpaste) are all successful advertising examples in which credibility attribute is taken into first consideration.

However, there are limiting conditions to the source credibility model, as it has been suggested that if consumers have a positive predisposition toward an advertising message, a less credible source can be more persuasive than a more credible source (Erdogan, 1999; Harmon & Coney, 1982; Sternthal *et al.*, 1978). In other words, consumers' perceived credibility of an endorser may be easily influenced and then determined by their potential predisposition towards the endorsed product. Besides, from the aspect of actual practice, psychologists find that many of the advertising message receivers are emotional and habitual. They are not rational and patient enough to get to know in-depth about the credibility character of both celebrity endorser and its endorsed product. And this phenomenon makes the characteristic of attractiveness stand out. Thus, the concept of source credibility model in some degree needs to be supplemented, which provides the survival soil for source attractiveness model.

2.3.2.2. Source attractiveness model

As we mentioned above, Ohanian (1990) also treated attractiveness as a component of source credibility measuring scale dimensions. He thought the source attractiveness model is a component of the "Source Valence" model of McGuire (McGuire, 1985). In other words, attractiveness can also help to enhance the degree of endorsers' credibility attributes. The decision to use attractiveness and put much emphasis on it, which results in a separated source attractiveness model, was motivated by the fact that attractiveness has become an important factor through increased application of attractive celebrities as endorsers for products, brands, services or social causes (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Patzer, 1983; Caballero & Solomon, 1984; De Sarbo & Harshman, 1985; Caballero *et al.*, 1989). It argues that the physical appeal of a celebrity influences the effectiveness of the advertising message (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Debevec & Kernan, 1984) and relevant target consumers' intent to purchase (Friedman *et al.*, 1976).

Source attractiveness has also been studied from different perspectives by researchers (Kahle & Homer, 1985; McGuire, 1985; Kamins, 1989; Kamins, 1990; Till & Busler, 2000). To be concrete, according to this model, the effectiveness of a message depends on the source's "similarity", "familiarity", "likability", and "attractiveness" to the respondent.

Similarity is defined as a supposed resemblance between the source and the receiver of the message. Familiarity is defined as knowledge of the source through exposure, and likability as the affection towards the source as a result of the source's physical appearance and behavior. Attractiveness does not indicate merely physical attractiveness, but includes any number of virtuous characteristics that consumers might perceive in a celebrity endorser for example, intellectual skills, personality properties, lifestyles etc.

Under the assumption that "what is beautiful is good", advertisers have often chosen celebrities on the basis of their physical attractiveness, intending to gain from the dual effects of celebrity status and physical appeal ([Friedman & Friedman, 1979](#)), such as Fan Bingbing to endorse L'Oreal, Natalie Portman to endorse Dior perfume.

However, for the above two models, both of them explain why and how celebrity endorsement taking effect from the source's aspect, but lack its interaction with target consumers of the endorsed product. They argue that it's the celebrity's personal characteristics that could influence consumers' attitude and result in their behavior change. Therefore afterwards, some scholars (see as follows) tried to establish models from a more comprehensive aspect, taking target consumers' perception into consideration.

2.3.2.3. Meaning transfer model

Indeed, a considerable amount of researches exist both in social science and marketing, showing that mere credibility and attractiveness attributes of celebrity endorsers cannot result in effective persuasion. Therefore, McCracken presented the meaning transfer model as an alternative. He thought celebrity endorsements are special examples of a more general process of meaning transfer ([McCracken, 1989](#)). The cultural meanings residing in a celebrity go beyond the person and are passed on to the products ([McCracken, 1989; Brierley, 1995](#)). There are three stages involved in the meaning transfer model, namely the formation of celebrity image, transfer of meaning from celebrity to product and finally from product to consumers.

According to [McCracken's \(1989\)](#) theory of meaning movement, symbolic properties of the celebrity first become associated with the brands which the celebrity endorses. Next, these symbolic meanings are transferred from the celebrity to consumers as they select brands with meanings congruent with their self-concept. When the symbolic properties associated with brands via celebrities are used to construct the self or to communicate the self-concept to others, a self-brand connection is formed.

[McCracken \(1989\)](#) believes that some celebrity/product endorsements work better than others due to an inherent match or congruency between the celebrity and the product. He cites Bill Cosby for E.F.Hutton, George C. Scott for Renault, and John Houseman for McDonald's as examples of well-liked celebrities who were, nonetheless, mismatched with their endorsed product. This idea laid the foundation for the "match-up hypothesis" ([Kamins, 1990](#)).

[McCracken's \(1989\)](#) model of meaning transfer may at first seem a merely theoretical concept but its replicability to real life was demonstrated by two studies of [Langmeyer and Walker \(1991a, 1991b\)](#). Empirical test of Meaning Transfer Model was also carried out by [Escalas and Bettman \(2009\)](#). Those studies that provided empirical support for the notion that brand endorsement by celebrities with an image that consumers aspire to obtain enhances consumers' self-brand connections, which from another angle increases the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsed advertisements.

2.3.2.4. Product match-up hypothesis

Early research found that the effectiveness of endorsers varies by product ([Friedman & Friedman, 1979](#)). In a study using male and female models paired with different types of products, [Kanungo and Pang \(1973\)](#) noted that the effect of the models varied with the product the models were paired with, and explained their effects in terms of the "fittingness" of the model for the product. The idea of a fit between the celebrity and the product became formalized under the rubric "match-up hypothesis", examining how the fit between the celebrity's image and endorsed brand affects advertising attitudes,

brand attitudes and purchase intent (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Misra & Beatty, 1990; Lynch & Schuler, 1994).

Kahle and Homer (1985) argue for a match-up explanation of their findings, showing increased brand attitude when the product (razor blades) was paired with an attractive (rather than an unattractive) endorser. But their test of the match-up hypothesis was incomplete as they did not also demonstrate that an attractive celebrity is less effective when endorsing a product not used to enhance one's attractiveness.

Although not a test of the match-up hypothesis, Ohanian (1991) found that of endorser source characteristics physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, expertise was most closely associated with intent to purchase the endorsed product. Based on this finding, Till and Busler (1998) led a research on considering the role of physical attractiveness versus expertise as match-up factors in the endorsement process and it suggested that the expertise dimension is more important than physical attractiveness for matching a brand with an appropriate endorser.

The above three are representative researches on match-up hypothesis study and give us a clear clue of its development history.

Theoretically, the match-up hypothesis is based on social adaptation theory. According to social adaptation theory, the adaptive significance of information will determine its impact. Thus, an attractive female or male model may serve as an effective source of information for a product which is attractiveness related (i.e., facial cream). The model's inclusion in an advertisement may inherently suggest to some consumers the idea that use of the product will also enhance their physical attractiveness just as it did for the model, thus providing adaptive information.

Compared with the Source Credibility Model and Source Attractiveness Model, this model mainly stresses on two aspects' match-up: celebrity endorsers and their endorsed products. It is more comprehensive than the previous two. However, this model doesn't take the consumers into consideration. As the final target of celebrity endorsement, consumers' attitude towards the advertisement, product, brand, matters the most.

In fact, people don't care about whether in reality the endorser matches the product. They only care about whether their perceived celebrity's characteristics fit with perceived product or brand image. Therefore, during the model designation period, we try to add consumers' thoughts into the match-up envisage, establishing a model which can reflect target consumers' real attitude and preference.

2.3.2.5. 'Q' rating technique

The above four models only give people guidelines for choosing celebrity endorsers, but not a concrete method to determine and pick one among all. Given the high costs associated with using celebrity endorsements, marketers have relied on rating systems to evaluate the potential value added of celebrity endorsers (Costanzo & Goodnight, 2005). Evidence of rating and then selecting celebrities based on their familiarity and popularity among the target audience is found in the existing literature.

The 'Q' score answers the question "how appealing is the person among those who do know him or her?" The respondents are asked to indicate two things. Firstly, whether they have seen/heard about the selected celebrities? Secondly, if yes, then the respondents will be asked to rate the celebrities on a scale that includes "One of my favorite, Very Good, Fair, or Poor" (Belch & Belch, 2001).

'Q' score is calculated by taking the percentage of respondents who indicate that a celebrity is "one of my favorite" and dividing that number by the percentage of respondents who indicate that they heard of that celebrity (Belch & Belch, 2001). The familiarity score indicates the percentage of people who have heard of the celebrity. "One of my favorite" score is an absolute measure of the appeal or popularity of a celebrity.

However, the above ‘Q’ rating technique only considers celebrity’s familiarity and popularity. As with our previous typical models introduction, ‘Q’ rating technique is easy to perform and do statistical analysis, but not enough to decide which celebrity to be selected.

In my perspective, the right way to finally select a celebrity to be a product’s endorser in advertising consists of two steps. The first step is to narrow down the selection scope. For this purpose, we need to find some standards. In my designed model, we think the best criterion is whether the celebrity’s perceived image in target consumers’ mind matches up with characteristics of the product’s perceived ideal endorser. As we know, characteristics of the product’s perceived ideal endorser somehow stand for the product or brand’s image in target consumers’ mind.

Thus, we design to modify this ‘Q’ rating technique, making it suitable with the theoretical model we propose to establish.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS TO CELEBRITY ENDORSER’S PERSUASIVENESS

When discussing the definition of persuasion, we mentioned that persuasion is about creating, changing, or reinforcing audiences’ attitudes by altering their beliefs and values ([Benoit & Benoit, 2008](#)). This suggests that cognitions, or thoughts and feelings like beliefs and values, are quite important to persuasion. Persuasion is successful when the source changes the attitude, then behavior, of the audiences.

With respect to the study of celebrity endorsement, as advertising message sources, celebrity endorsers take the responsibility to persuade target consumers to create (new consumers’), change (competitive product or brand’s consumers’), or reinforce (original consumers’) attitudes towards buying a certain kind of product, service or brand, thus leading to a sales pitch. Therefore in this paper, the author tries to apply the Cognitive Response Model (a typical persuasion theory) to analyze why and how celebrity endorsers taking effect in enhancing the persuasiveness of advertisements.

3.1. Cognitive response model

3.1.1. Introduction of cognitive response model

As traditional approaches to persuasion suggest, people put “persuasion stuff” (ideas, evidence etc.) into a message which would be conveyed to the audiences. The audiences listened and hopefully, learned what was in the message. Then, persuasion occurs when they understand the ideas of this message. However, learning a message actually does not necessarily result in persuasion. Sometimes, for example, the advertisement is so annoying that we just cannot forget it (we have learned it very well), but we hate the product or company which sponsored it.

All Chinese must have seen the advertisement of Melatonin. There are four possibilities after watching this piece of advertisement. 1) impressed by it and think favorably of the product; 2) annoyed by it and cannot forget it, but think unfavorably of the product; 3) having no impression of it and no thought about this product; 4) having no impression of it, but it reminds you of your parents’ health condition, thus a favorable thought of this product evokes.

Table 1: The cognitive response model: learning, thoughts, and persuasion

Case	Learn message?	Thoughts	Outcome
1	Yes	favorable thoughts	persuasion
2	Yes	Unfavorable thoughts	no persuasion
3	No	None	no persuasion
4	No	favorable thoughts	persuasion

Source: William L. Benoit and Benoit (2008)

From the above example, we at least know that persuasion is related to what we think. Psychologists recognized the general principle that attitude change occurs when we think favorably of the message and/or its topic, just as they recognized the related principle, that attitude change will not occur when we think unfavorable thoughts about the message and/or its topic. This idea is called the Cognitive Response Model (Greenwald, 1968; Perloff & Brock, 1980) and it is called that because this model holds that persuasion occurs when audience has favorable (the valence) thoughts or cognitions in response to a persuasive message. And of course, the more (the number) favorable thoughts there are, the better chance for persuasion to occur.

As per the study of celebrity endorsement, the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsers in advertising can also be analyzed through Cognitive Response Model. For the sake of persuading target consumers to buy certain products, celebrity endorsers should spare no effort evoking their favorable (the valence) thoughts or cognitions towards these products, and the more (the number) the better.

However, varied cognitive response models may explain the mechanism of how favorable thoughts evoke differently. Among all, Petty and Cacioppo's Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (1981; 1986a; 1986b) is the most influential one. They explain that there are two "routes" to persuasion: central and peripheral. The central route to persuasion consists of thoughtful consideration of the arguments (ideas, content) in the message, and occurs when the audiences have both the motivation and the ability to think about the message and its topic. Many thoughts (cognitive responses) are produced during central processing. The key to persuasion in central processing is the strength or quality of the arguments in the message. The peripheral route to persuasion, on the other hand, takes place when the audiences do not expand the effort to think carefully about the ideas in the message. Instead, in peripheral processing, the audiences decide whether to agree with the message on the basis of other cues, such as the number (not the quality) of arguments in the message, its lengths, or whether the source is credible or attractive.

3.1.2. The role of celebrity endorsers in advertising

Taking a further step at understanding the role of celebrity endorsers, it can help us better comprehend how they (celebrity endorsers) take effect in enhancing the persuasiveness in advertising when analyzed through Elaboration Likelihood Model.

Petty and Cacioppo argue that sources (here stand for celebrity endorsers) can influence persuasion in three ways:

- 1) They can serve as arguments (central cues). For instance, if Nicole Kidman endorses a beauty product, her personal beauty might be seen as evidence that the cosmetic works effectively.
- 2) They can serve as peripheral cues, as when an audience thinks something like: "I'm not excited enough about the product, but the celebrity endorser seems to know what she is talking about, so I agree with her." In this example, the celebrity endorser's apparent expertise is a short-cut for deciding whether to agree to the message.

These above two ways increase the total number of thoughts when we get exposed to the ads, especially the favorable ones.

- 3) They can affect argument processing. Recalling from the above ELM, there are two important aspects of cognitive responses: their valence (favorable or unfavorable) and their number. The audience's beliefs about the nature of the source of a persuasive message can cause what is referred to as "biased scanning".

Taking celebrity endorsers' credibility trait as an example, credibility can alter the proportion or ratio of favorable to unfavorable thoughts without changing the total number of thoughts. Objective testimony has no self-interest in product recommendation. These are sources that consumers can trust. Biased testimony comes from a person who has a reason to take the position he or she does.

These sources are less trustworthy. Reluctant testimony occurs when a source advocates a position against his or her own self-interest. These are also trustworthy sources. But as we know, in commercial advertisements, almost all the celebrity endorsers get payments from appearing with the products. This may decrease their credibility in a certain degree.

As previous studies ([Mowen & Brown, 1981](#); [Kaikati, 1987](#); [Tripp et al., 1994](#); [Chan et al., 2008](#)) show, there are two problems occurring in celebrity endorsement: over-shadowing the product and over-endorsement. Celebrities with over-endorsement situation (interest pursuer) can be treated as biased testimony, decreasing their persuasiveness in advertising instead of enhancing the credibility of their specific recommendation.

3.2. Robert cialdini's weapons of influence

[Cialdini \(2007\)](#) in his book Influence: Psychology of Persuasion defined six influence cues or weapons of influence. He thought influence is the process of changing target audiences' attitude and behavior through six influence cues, namely reciprocity, commitment and consistency, social proof, liking, authority, and scarcity. With these six weapons, persuasion can occur and meet its expected result.

3.2.1. Reciprocity

Reciprocity indicates that people tend to return a favor when they've been done one. It states that when people provide us with something, we attempt to repay him or her in kind. Reciprocal produces a sense of obligation, which can be a powerful tool in persuasion. Generally, we have a dislike for individuals who neglect to return a favor or provide payment when offered a free service or gift. As a result, reciprocity is a widely held principle.

3.2.2. Commitment and consistency

The concept of commitment states that if a person commits, either orally or in written, he or she is more likely to honor that particular commitment. Once a person commits to a stance, he or she has a tendency to behave accordingly (behavior in consistency with commitment). Those persons who engage in self-persuasion provide themselves and others with reasons and justification to support his or her commitment in order to avoid dissonance and reach consistency.

The above consistency has an extended connotation, which shares the meaning with consistency in Meaning Transfer Model and Match-Up Hypothesis as introduced in the literature review part. In most cases, people only commit something when a congruence, or match, or fit between every two of message sources, message itself, and message audiences (people themselves) evokes.

3.2.3. Social proof

People often base their actions and beliefs on what others around them are doing, how they act or what they believe. Other persons are just their like reference groups. Since people want to identify with their reference group, it influences their action through a group affiliation process. Reference group's attitude towards something works as a social proof.

Social proof is most effective when people are uncertain or when similarities abound in the environment. In uncertain or ambiguous situations or situations with similarities, people are more likely to be influenced by reference groups and prone to conform to those groups' attitudes and behaviors.

3.2.4. Liking

This principle is direct and simple. People say "yes" to persons whom they like. Two major factors contribute to overall liking degree. The first one is the well-known physical attractiveness. People who are more physically attractive seem to be more persuasive; they get what they want and change others' attitude more easily. This kind of attractiveness is proven to send favorable messages or impression of other traits that sources may have, such as talent, kindness and intelligence. The second

factor is similarity. The idea of similarity states that if people are like you, they are more likely to agree with you. When people do this, they don't think about it, it just comes naturally.

This principle shares the same connotation with Source Attractiveness Model, but also stresses the mental attractiveness besides the physical one.

3.2.5. Authority

People have the tendency to believe what an expert says. They prone to listen to those whom are knowledgeable and trustworthy. If you have those two things, you are already on your way to getting people to believe you. In fact, the most important source of one message's persuasiveness is its credibility. Knowledge and trustworthiness helps to increase source credibility, which is just the idea Source Credibility Model stresses on.

3.2.6. Scarcity

When something is of limited availability, people assign more value to it. According to Cialdini, "people want more of what they cannot have". When scarcity is an issue, the context matters. To get people to believe that something is scarce, you need to explain what that certain stuff will give them and what other things will not. The whole principle indicates that people all want things which are out of their reach. Rare things seem to demonstrate their extraordinary ability to get that stuff, and to things themselves, scarcity in a certain degree indicates distinguished quality.

All of the above six weapons of influence could enhance the persuasion effect. However, when applied to the study on persuasiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising, only several of them can be taken into consideration, which will be discussed in the following section.

3.3. Celebrity endorser's persuasiveness in advertising

In the above section, Elaboration Likelihood Model and Robert Cialdini's Weapons of Influence have already been introduced. Both of them will be used to analyze celebrity endorser's persuasiveness in advertising.

Among the total six weapons of influence, only four of them are appropriate when applied to celebrity endorser's analysis, namely consistency, social proof, liking and authority.

As per the Meaning Transfer Model and Match-Up Hypothesis, there should be congruence between each two of the celebrity endorser, the product or brand, and the target consumers. Thus, the perceived image of an ideal celebrity endorser in target consumers' mind towards a certain product, service or brand should be consistent with the actual image of the exact selected celebrity in target consumers' mind. In other words, "should be" and "actually being" of a specific product, service or brand's celebrity endorser should fit each other. It is the extensive interpretation of the main idea of Meaning Transfer Model and Match-Up Hypothesis, as well as that of Cialdini's "consistency" principle. More importantly, it also lays the foundation of the model in the following section, which the author wants to establish for celebrity endorser comparison and selection.

As with the character of authority, it is evident that if the celebrity endorser is knowledgeable (at least perceived by target consumers to be knowledgeable) in product related aspects, acting as an expert, he/she is more trustworthy than others in persuading target consumers to take actions to buy this product. Knowledge and credibility equips this endorser with authority, which in accordance with its natural tendency increases his/her persuasiveness in product recommendation.

Recalling from the Elaboration Likelihood Model, endorsers (sources) can influence advertising persuasiveness through three ways: serving as arguments (central cues), serving as peripheral cues, and affecting argument processing.

Regarding with the above mentioned characters of "consistency" and "authority", both of them provide target consumers with strong arguments that the selected celebrity endorser is authoritative in

relevant territory with much corresponding knowledge and experience. His/her image perfectly matches that of the product or brand. They can reach high consistency and fit each other well. Their appearance with the product/brand or recommendation of it can strengthen the advertisement's credibility and trustworthiness. In these situations, "consistency" and "authority" serves as central routes, not only increasing the total number of favorable thoughts, but also improving the quality of those evoked favorable thoughts, eventually resulting in persuasion.

For the rest two weapons (liking and authority principles), they share the core concept with Source Attractiveness Model and Source Credibility Model, which have already been discussed in the literature review part.

As we know, in situations imbued of uncertainties and similarities, people tend to refer to their reference group for decision making. It's just the current condition that commodity market faces. And in most cases, people show much more liking towards those whom they regard as their reference groups. Most of the products or brands which need to be promoted through advertising are those that are confronted with fierce competition and want to stand out among similarities. Reference group's attitude towards certain products works as social proof. When people buy a product that is associated with their reference group, they are expressing a connection with that group, which functions together with consistency principle (consumers are in consistent with endorsers). For sure, it only works with people who have reference group, or at least not so stubborn that their attitudes and behaviors can't be changed by anyone else. At present, lots of people regard celebrity endorsers as their reference group and treat their choice or decision as social proof. The main reason comes as celebrities have a mass-based recognition and population, enjoying their fame in society. Similarly, the deeper people like the celebrity endorser, the more chances they would believe and follow what the celebrity endorser does. Both the weapons of "social proof" and "liking" serve as peripheral cues, enhancing the advertising persuasiveness by increasing the total number of favorable thoughts.

Obviously, by augmenting the total number of favorable thoughts and improving its quality, the proportion or ratio of favorable to unfavorable thoughts must as a consequence be altered. There are more testimonies demonstrating that celebrities are objective when they endorse something in advertisements.

Therefore, in conclusion, celebrities with the above four principles/weapons (consistency, social proof, liking, authority) can serve as arguments (central cues) and peripheral cues to increase the total number of favorable (valence) thoughts evoked in target consumers' cognitive response towards the products or brands they endorsed and improve the quality of those evoked favorable thoughts, as well as affecting argument processing to alter the proportion or ratio of favorable to unfavorable thoughts. As the idea emphasized in Cognitive Response Model, the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsers in advertising can only occur and be consolidated when favorable thoughts (taking the valence, number and ratio into consideration) evoke in target consumers' mind, thus leading to their attitude and behavior change.

However, since most of the celebrities are paid to endorse the product/brand in advertising, it may bring forth biased testimony that their behavior and comments are the result of self-interest, which decreases the credibility and persuasiveness of advertisements.

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF "IDEAL MATCH-UP" MODEL

In the literature review part, four celebrity selection models and one quantitative technique have been introduced. And in the psychological analysis part, elaboration likelihood model were explained and four principles of appropriate celebrity endorser standards were applied. All of these researches and findings have laid the foundation of below newly established model for celebrity selection, which will be fully illustrated in the following section.

4.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1.1. Research design

4.1.1.1. Development of items for the “ideal match-up” scale

In the initial phase of this research, literatures on four celebrity selection models and one quantitative technique, namely Source Credibility Model, Source Attractiveness Model, Meaning Transfer Model, Match-Up Hypothesis and ‘Q’ Rating Technique, together with Robert Cialdini’s weapons of influence were reviewed and introduced to identify traits that an appropriate and successful celebrity endorser should have. Eventually, among all mentioned characters, consistency, social proof, liking and authority are defined as criteria of below newly designed “Ideal Match-Up” model for endorser selection.

Among the above four criteria, two types can be divided into: qualitative and quantitative.

“Social proof” is a typical qualitative criterion. It helps to classify received data sets into two kinds: 1) data from respondents who will refer to their reference group for social proof in case of uncertainty; 2) data from respondents who have no reference group or won’t change their purchasing attitude and behavior due to any other group’s suggestion or recommendation.

“Consistency” can be applied both to qualify and quantify celebrities’ appropriateness for a certain product or brand’s endorsement. On one hand, the qualitative consistency can be used to narrow the scope for celebrity selection. For instance, if the celebrity endorser is one of the product’s target consumers, he or she may have the chance to be the proper one to endorse it. On the other hand, the quantitative consistency shows its way to find the most suitable one among all the potential candidates by ranking, which is one of components that constitute the “Ideal Match-Up” Model. If the perceived image of an appropriate celebrity endorser in target consumers’ mind towards the endorsed product or brand is consistent with the actual image of the specific selected celebrity, this celebrity can be defined as a suitable one. The more consistency they have reached, the more suitable this celebrity endorser could be. In other words, “should be” and “actual being” of a certain product or brand’s celebrity endorser should ideally match up.

Besides, the rest criteria “liking” and “authority” can be treated as quantitative criteria to help measure the extent to how the specific celebrity endorser is attractive and authoritative towards the respondents.

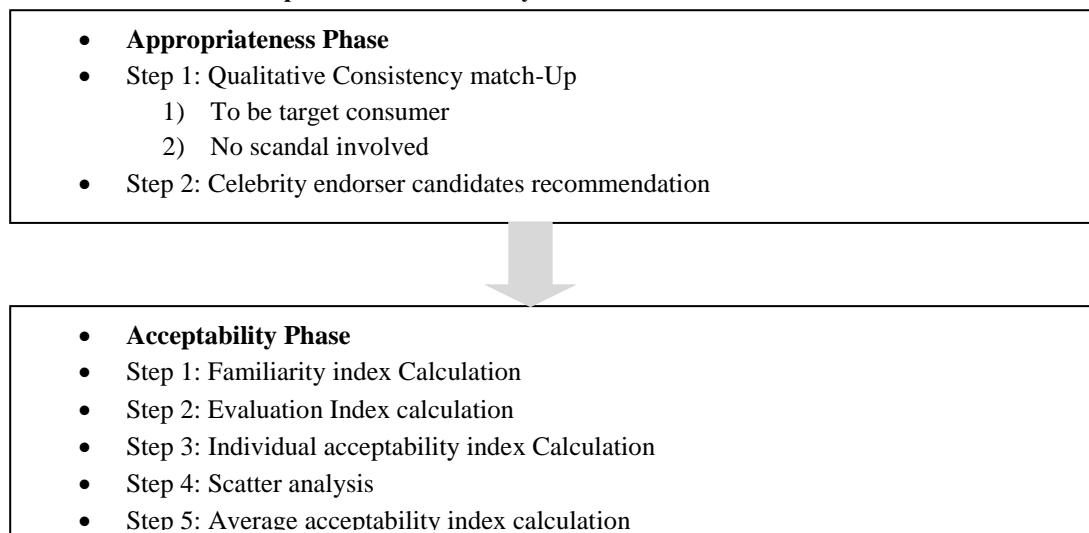
All the mentioned four criteria construct the “Evaluation Index”. This index evaluates respondents’ attitude towards endorser candidates. In addition, drawing lessons from the performer’s “Q” technique, familiarity is also an important element that measures celebrity candidates’ public recognition among target consumers, as is distinguished to celebrities’ social impact. Thus, the “Familiarity Index” is created to judge each celebrity candidate’s public recognition and social influence.

So far, we have formed the “Ideal Match-Up” Scale with two indexes: Familiarity Index and Evaluation Index. Basing on the multiplying score of these two indexes’ for each celebrity candidate, ranking is possible for selecting the most suitable one among all celebrity endorser candidates.

4.1.1.2. Celebrity selection procedure

There are two phases for “Ideal Match-Up” Model to select the most suitable celebrity for endorsement among all candidates in total: phase for appropriateness and phase for acceptability. In the first phase, the company or advertising agency itself would use qualitative consistency weapon to narrow the scope within the classified data sources for celebrity selection. In the second phase, social proof weapon is going to be used for data classification; familiarity index will be achieved through questionnaire answers; weapons of liking and authority will be applied to measure the quantitative consistency degree and calculate the result of evaluation index.

Table 2: “Ideal match-up” model for celebrity endorser selection



Source: Originally designed

Appropriateness Phase the target of appropriateness phase is to determine some celebrity candidates who are appropriate to be the endorser, thus narrowing or restricting the ranking and selection scope in acceptability phase.

In this phase, when narrowing or restricting the ranking and selection scope, companies or advertising agencies should firstly hold the principle that “only the one who has used the product personally gets the right to evaluate it”. Thus their recommended celebrity endorser candidates must be one of the product’s target consumers. As regard with the problem to determine the target consumer group, the method for market segmentation can be applied. Commonly, variables for market segmentation come from four aspects: geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral. They can be used to identify a certain product’s target market and relevant consumers.

However, as the study in literature review part mentioned, the greater (lower) the perceived culpability of the celebrity involved in an undesirable event, the lower (greater) the stock return ([Louie et al., 2001](#)). Thus, the pre-selected celebrity candidates must not be involved in any scandals. So far, we have finished the first step in appropriate phase and achieved a qualitative consistency match-up among the endorser, product and consumers.

The second step is to recommend some celebrity candidates under requirements posted in the qualitative consistency match-up step. Besides, since every company has its own budget plan, the pre-selection (recommendation) step should be within the budget and avoid being exceeded.

Acceptability Phase in this process, designed questionnaires will be randomly distributed to target consumers. The designation of this questionnaire is the crux of collecting data to measure each candidate’s acceptability index. By introducing and explaining how questions of this questionnaire work for data collection, five steps will be illustrated as follows (detailed calculation process and relevant formulas will be illustrated in data analysis part).

Step 1: The respondents will be asked “whether they have seen/heard about the pre-selected candidates” (drawing lessons from performer’s “Q” technique). Answers can be chose on a scale that includes “A: No; B: Yes, but seldom/occasionally see his/her works; C: Yes, familiar with his/her works”. Basing on the respondent’s answer towards this question, individual *familiarity index* can be calculated (method refers to the data analysis part).

Step 2: The *evaluation index* calculation process consists of measurement on three weapons, namely liking, authority, and quantitative consistency. The *liking index* can be calculated through questions like “if yes (for the question above), please rate your liking degree towards him/her”. Answers can be chose on a scale that includes “A: Poor; B: Fair; C: Good; D: One of my favorite”. *Authority index* can be achieved through a similar method. Besides, the *quantitative consistency index* can be calculated as the weighted sum product of respondents' actual attitude/judgment towards listed characters of pre-selected candidates; weights can be achieved by their ideal image of the most suitable celebrity endorser against the same characters listed as above. So far, the final *evaluation index* can be calculated by multiplying the *liking, authority, and quantitative consistency indexes* (exact calculation formula refers to the data analysis part).

Step 3: since the familiarity index and evaluation index have been achieved in step 1 and 2 respectively, *individual acceptability index* can be calculated as the product of those two indexes. It is achieved through a similar way as performer's “Q” rating technique, where “Q” score equals the product of familiarity and popularity indexes.

Step 4: before getting the result of average acceptability index, the step for *scatter analysis* cannot be omitted. For every social investigation, there must be respondents who have answers that differ from the majority. The population of those distinguished respondents and the influence of their answers towards final data analysis needs to be analyzed. In addition, if possible, the reasons undercover for their exceptional choices should be investigated. Very often, it is a channel for us to have a deep insight into consumers' attitude and behavior research.

Step 5: after finishing the scatter analysis (the exceptional answers may be eliminated or taken into special consideration, depending on specific cases and analysis), the final *average acceptability index* can be computed as the average of all respondents' individual acceptability indexes.

4.1.2. Samples and data collection procedure

As shown in the above research designation part, target consumers are the judges who can decide the expected and actual level of influence cues of the ideal celebrity endorser and pre-selected celebrity candidates respectively. Therefore, questionnaires should be distributed among target consumers (the distribution method is not the point which this paper stresses on; thus, it is regarded as a not-necessarily-discussed issue here). Each of the respondents should then fill in the questionnaire which consists of questions that are designed to evaluate target consumers' attitude and appraisal towards several pre-selected celebrity endorser candidates.

Regarding the data collection, our basic units of data are individuals. After respondents completing filling out the questionnaire, samples will be retrieved and relevant information will then be collected through answers to questions and be transferred into statistical data for the following data analysis and candidates suitability comparison part.

4.1.3. Data analysis and “ideal match-up” comparison

As far as tools of data analysis are concerned, phases and specific steps have been developed and introduced in the previous part. For this part, the descriptive statistical method will be used for demonstrating how information collected above being transferred into statistical data in details.

Previously, two phases (appropriateness phase and acceptability phase) and a series of steps have been briefly illustrated. The table below presents detailed description for questionnaire analysis and corresponding data processing.

Table 3: Questionnaire data analysis procedure

<p>Q1: Will you be influenced by the issue of “who is the endorser” when you choose to buy some products?</p> <p>A1: A. Yes B. No C. It depends on the specific product D. It depends on the specific endorser</p> <p>Purpose: Use “Social Proof” weapon to classify data sources.</p> <p>Classification: Target consumers who choose A or C or D are ones who can be influenced by the endorser (reference group); target consumers who choose B are ones who have no reference group for social proof in buying products.</p>
<p>Q2: Please allocate total 10 scores to below characters for a person who you think is the most suitable endorser for XXX product. (the score allocated to items below can range from 0-10; but the total sum of them must be 10)</p> <p>A2: A. Excellent appearance ____a____ B. Good credibility ____b____ C. Owing specific personal traits that appeal me ____c____ D. Expert and authoritative in product related area ____d____ E. Others (Please specify) _____e_____</p> <p>Purpose: Determine the weights for “Quantitative Consistency Index” calculation.</p> <p>Explanation: the weight of each character above can be calculated as the result of relevant score that respondents allocate divided by the total score 10.</p> <p>Calculation: Each character’s weight = a (or b, c, d, e)/10*100% (s.t. a+b+c+d+e=10)</p>
<p>Q3: Have you ever seen or heard of XXX (one specific celebrity)?</p> <p>A3: A. No B. Yes, but seldom/occasionally see his/her works C. Yes, familiar with his/her works</p> <p>Purpose: Calculate the “Familiarity Index”</p> <p>Calculation: A (0%) B (50%) C (100%)</p>
<p>Q4: If you have ever seen or heard of XXX (the above mentioned celebrity), please rate your liking degree towards him/her.</p> <p>A4: A. Poor B. Fair C. Good D. One of my favorite</p> <p>Purpose: Calculate the “Liking Index”</p> <p>Calculation: Ones who choose A/B/C/D will get the score of 0/1/2/3 respectively. The corresponding liking index of each can be calculated as “the specific score/3*100%”.</p>
<p>Q5: If you have ever seen or heard of XXX (the above mentioned celebrity), what do you think of his/her appearance_____, his/her credibility_____, his/her attractiveness to you_____, his/her expert and authority in product related area_____?</p> <p>A5: A. Poor B. Fair C. Good D. Distinguished</p> <p>Purpose: 1) Determine target consumers’ appraisal (Authority Index included) towards pre-selected celebrity endorser candidates; 2) Calculate the Quantitative Consistency Index as well as Authority Index.</p> <p>Calculation: Ones who choose A/B/C/D will get the score of 0/1/2/3 respectively. The corresponding Authority Index of each can be achieved through a similar method as Liking Index, equaling “the specific score/3*100%”. Quantitative Consistency Index can be calculated as the weighted sum product of the above appraisals and their corresponding weights achieved from Q2.</p>

Source: Original designed

According to the above data analysis procedure, we get a new method for ranking all pre-selected celebrity candidates. A set of formulas in calculating the Acceptability Index (the purpose of acceptability phase) will be listed as follows:

- *Average Acceptability Index* = Sum of all Individual Acceptability Indexes/ Valid Respondent Population
- *Individual Acceptability Index* = Familiarity Index* Evaluation Index
- *Evaluation Index* = (Liking Index + Authority Index)* Quantitative Consistency Index*50%
- *Quantitative Consistency Index* = the Weighted Sum Product of Respondents’ Actual Attitude/Judgment towards Pre-selected Celebrity Candidates (weights are determined by attitude/judgment towards their ideal celebrity endorsers) = Judgment on Appearance * Weight

of Appearance + Judgment on Credibility * Weight of Credibility + Judgment on Attractiveness
 * Weight of Attractiveness + Judgment on Authority * Weight of Authority

However, as mentioned in step 4/ phase 2, before getting the figure of Average Acceptability Index, the dispersion ratio of all individual acceptability indexes has to be inevitably dealt with. The hinge is not merely to strike out all the unusual answers from the overall database, but to analyze reasons or intensions which lead to respondents' exceptional choices. In some cases, the fact that a celebrity has discrepant appraisals from respondents itself is a typical characteristic of this specific celebrity. For instance, there always exist celebrities who have much dissension in the society. Some audiences show much appreciation to him/her; others may have controversial attitudes of judgment towards him/her. In other words, the investigation into the reason or motivation analysis is the crux for deciding whether to wipe out such exceptional data or taking into consideration while preceding the database analysis procedure.

As each pre-selected celebrity candidate's Average Acceptability Index being calculated, the ranking and selection method is established. That's the model which this paper spares no effort to set up. The author calls it the "Ideal Match-Up" Model, since it's a model to compare all the pre-selected celebrity candidates and decide among them who is the most suitable one to be the exact endorser. Obviously, the one who gets the highest score for Average Acceptability Index distinguishes himself/herself among all candidates.

4.2. Case deduction

For the sake of vividly demonstrating how this new established model works for celebrity endorser selection, the following case will be deducted. Here we choose the toothpaste as the endorsed product, and two celebrities (Lin Yichen and Xu Xidi) as the pre-selected celebrity candidates, since both them are the target consumers for the toothpaste and not involved in any scandals, reaching the Qualitative Consistency standard (in accordance with requirements posted in appropriateness phase).

To ensure the data quality, the author pre-tested the questionnaire with 30 respondents and made minor changes before conducting the survey proper. And due to target consumers' varied segmentation, in order to narrow this case deduction's research scope and make the data collection process of this investigation more easily to conduct, the respondents will be limited within the group of university students, since it's a group which is celebrity-sensitive.

In the following analysis of respondents, the author examined the mean (average) level and the standard deviation of each index and determined that Xu Xidi enjoys a higher and less deviated familiarity degree than Lin Yichen, but a much lower and more deviated evaluation index. Those figures indicate that although Xu Xidi is a celebrity who has a high exposure rate as well as high dissension from audiences. While turning to the Individual Acceptability Index, the average level of Lin Yichen is 20.40% with a less deviated appraisal, much higher than Xu Xidi's 13.38% with a bigger deviated judgment.

Table 4: Basic descriptive statistics (overall sample)

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Figure of Lin Yichen		
1. Familiarity Index	76.42%	0.287
2. <i>Liking Index</i>	59.00%	0.324
3. <i>Authority Index</i>	33.33%	0.206
4. <i>Quantitative Consistency</i>	48.90%	0.207
5. Evaluation Index	23.80%	0.175
6. Individual Acceptability Index	20.40%	0.187
Figure of Xu Xidi		
1. Familiarity Index	77.36%	0.251
2. <i>Liking Index</i>	35.00%	0.376
3. <i>Authority Index</i>	24.53%	0.246

4. Quantitative Consistency	37.21%	0.231
5. Evaluation Index	16.35%	0.213
6. Individual Acceptability Index	13.38%	0.225

4.3. Discussion

Basing on researchers' previous studies (see the literature review part), the Elaboration Likelihood Model and Robert Cialdini's weapons of influence, we induced and then established the "Ideal Match-Up" Model to help select the specific product/ service/ brand's celebrity endorser. For the model itself, there are some aspects which may need to explain.

Firstly, in the Individual Acceptability Index calculation formula, the authority index figure has been taken into account twice (one for the Authority Index itself, one included in Quantitative Consistency Index calculation). It is because that currently, as the average educational level of the society being improved, consumers (especially but not limited to persons who get higher university degree) tend to be more rational while purchasing, which in other words means the central route to persuasion stands out in evoking persuasion.

*Individual Acceptability Index = Familiarity Index * (Liking Index+ Authority Index) * Quantitative Consistency Index*50%*

*Quantitative Consistency Index = Judgment on Appearance * Weight of Appearance + Judgment on Credibility * Weight of Credibility + Judgment on Attractiveness * Weight of Attractiveness + Judgment on Authority * Weight of Authority*

Secondly, the weights calculated from respondents' image of an ideal product (service, or brand) endorser are not merely multipliers to determine the Quantitative Consistency Index, but also indicators to show target consumers' expectation on the future appropriate endorser. Thus, those weights figures can also be used for reference by similar products' endorser selection.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Currently, celebrity endorsed advertisements have been a common way to introduce new products and promote existed products. This paper put much emphasis on analyzing how celebrity endorsers work for persuading target consumers to create, change, or reinforce attitudes in buying some products through the cognitive response model (specifically the Elaboration Likelihood Model). And then, some key indicators that could influence celebrity endorsers' persuasiveness in advertising have been identified through the introduction of Robert Cialdini's weapons of influence. On the basis of the above analysis, the "Ideal Match-Up" model has been established for celebrity endorser selection. However, the finally selected celebrity is a comparatively most suitable one among all pre-selected celebrity endorser candidates. In order to ensure and improve his/her persuasiveness, there are two pieces of suggestion for companies and advertising agencies.

Firstly, the original celebrity candidates' recommendation procedure in appropriateness phase can be postponed until the weights of target consumers' image towards their ideal endorser being calculated. If so, the recommended candidates can be much more characteristic-oriented, getting closer and fitting the ideal image much better.

Secondly, since in many situations one celebrity's characters cannot fully match up the ideal endorser image, a combination of several celebrities with differentiated characters can help to improve the consistency degree, thus persuasiveness of celebrity endorsers in advertising.

However, as many studies, there are also a number of limitations in this study that provide future research opportunities:

As a tentative and exploratory study in establishing a brand-new model for celebrity endorser selection, this research gives tacit consent to that an appropriate celebrity endorser is needed in

advertising while promoting the product, but hasn't taken the situations of no-endorser-needed and self-made non-celebrity endorser into consideration.

While investigating whether the target consumers would be influenced by the celebrity endorser, this paper has not put much word in analyzing the compact from differed product or service types. In the appropriateness phase, the ranking, comparison and selection procedures are based on the pre-selected celebrity endorser candidates in acceptability phase. But as a common sense, the company can't exhaust all their perceived suitable candidates. Therefore, the so called final option can only be a comparatively most suitable one among all pre-selected celebrity endorser candidates. After achieving the final ranking result, the explanation of reasons behind the discrepancy of all respondents' answers hasn't been extended. Actually, this part can help to analyze target customers' consuming psychology and is a rich area that needs further work. As mentioned in the literature review part, many celebrity endorsers are interest-oriented. The issues of over-endorsement and overshadowing the product are topics worthy of further investigation in emerging markets such as China.

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