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THE INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsements are a widely used marketing strategy, yet their effectiveness depends heavily on the characteristics of the endorser. Guided by the Source Attributes Model, this study examines the independent and interactive effects of celebrity credibility (expertise and trustworthiness) and attractiveness (likability, familiarity, and physical appeal) on consumer purchase intentions. A 2x2 between-subjects experimental design was conducted with 222 undergraduate participants randomly assigned to one of four advertisement conditions for a fictitious energy drink. Manipulation checks confirmed the successful isolation of credibility and attractiveness levels. ANOVA results revealed significant main effects for both credibility ($\eta^2 = .28$) and attractiveness ($\eta^2 = .15$), with credibility exerting a stronger influence on purchase intention. Critically, a significant interaction effect ($\eta^2 = .07$) indicated that attractiveness enhanced persuasion only when credibility was high; when credibility was low, attractiveness had no significant impact. These findings validate the interdependent nature of source attributes and underscore the primacy of credibility in endorsement effectiveness. For marketing practice, results highlight the strategic importance of selecting endorsers who combine high credibility with high attractiveness to maximize consumer persuasion.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Celebrity Credibility (Expertise and Trustworthiness) and Attractiveness (Likability, Familiarity, and Physical Appeal), Purchase Intentions.

INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsements represent a cornerstone of modern advertising, with brands investing billions annually to associate their products with famous personalities. This pervasive strategy is built on the assumption that a celebrity's public image can capture consumer attention, enhance brand recall, and ultimately drive sales. However, the effectiveness of such endorsements is not guaranteed and the return on this substantial investment is often uncertain. The success of this persuasive tool hinges critically on the specific characteristics of the celebrity endorser and how they are perceived by the target audience, making it a complex and vital area for empirical investigation.

The persuasive power of an endorser is often attributed to two primary dimensions: credibility and attractiveness^[8]. Credibility encompasses the celebrity's perceived expertise and trustworthiness, while attractiveness relates to their likability, familiarity, and physical appeal. A central debate in advertising research concerns the relative importance of these attributes. This study is anchored in the Source Attributes Model, which provides a theoretical lens to examine these factors. The model posits that these

characteristics do not operate in isolation but interact, suggesting that their combined effect may be more significant than their contributions to influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

This research employs a quantitative 2x2 between-subjects experimental design^[2] to systematically disentangle the main and interactive effects of celebrity credibility and attractiveness on consumer purchase intentions. By manipulating high and low levels of both attributes in a controlled setting, this study aims to provide clear causal evidence regarding their influence. The investigation specifically tests the hypothesis that a synergistic relationship exists, where the impact of one attribute is dependent on the level of the other. The findings are intended to offer robust, actionable insights for marketing strategy and contribute to a more nuanced theoretical understanding of source effects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is anchored in the Source Attributes Model, a framework integrating principles from source credibility and source attractiveness theories. The model posits that the persuasive impact of a message is heavily dependent on the characteristics of its source. For this study, the celebrity endorser represents the source. The model's core dimensions—credibility and attractiveness—provide a structured lens through which to analyze how an endorser's perceived qualities influence consumer attitudes and ultimately shape their purchasing decisions, making it highly relevant for this investigation.

The credibility component of the model is bifurcated into two key constructs: expertise and trustworthiness. Expertise refers to the extent to which the celebrity is perceived as a knowledgeable and valid source of information about the product. Trustworthiness relates to the consumer's confidence in the endorser's integrity and their intent to communicate honestly. A high degree of perceived expertise and trustworthiness in an endorser can significantly enhance the believability of the marketing message, fostering positive brand evaluations among the target audience.

The second major dimension, attractiveness, encompasses more than just physical appeal. It includes the audience's sense of familiarity with the celebrity, their likability, and the perceived similarity between the endorser and the consumer. According to the model, consumers are more receptive to messages from sources they find attractive or can identify with. This process of identification facilitates an affective transfer, where positive feelings toward the celebrity are projected onto the endorsed brand, thereby influencing consumer preference and potential purchase behavior.

These source attributes do not function independently but rather interact to determine the overall persuasive efficacy of the endorsement. A celebrity who is perceived as an expert but lacks trustworthiness may fail to convince consumers. Similarly, an attractive but irrelevant endorser might not build sufficient brand credibility. The Source Attributes Model suggests that an optimal combination of these characteristics is necessary to cut through advertising clutter, establish a meaningful connection with the consumer, and positively influence their perception of the brand.

Applying this framework directly to consumer behavior, the model helps explain the mechanism driving purchase decisions. When a celebrity successfully projects credibility and attractiveness, they can reduce the consumer's perceived risk and cognitive dissonance associated with a purchase. This positive evaluation of the endorser translates into a stronger purchase intention, which is a critical antecedent to actual buying behavior. Therefore, the Source Attributes Model provides a robust theoretical foundation for empirically testing the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchasing patterns.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design and Approach

This study will employ a quantitative, between-subjects experimental design to systematically investigate the causal relationship between celebrity endorser attributes and consumer purchase intentions. Specifically, a 2x2 factorial design will be implemented, manipulating two core dimensions of the Source Attributes Model: Credibility (High vs. Low) and Attractiveness (High vs. Low). This approach is optimal as it allows for the controlled manipulation of independent variables—the perceived characteristics of the celebrity—while measuring their distinct and interactive effects on the dependent variable, which is the consumer's purchasing decision. This rigorous experimental framework enables the isolation of variables and provides robust empirical evidence.

The research will be conducted through a controlled online experiment, facilitating random assignment of participants to one of four distinct experimental groups. Each group will be exposed to a unique stimulus in the form of a mock print or digital advertisement for a neutral product category, such as a new beverage or electronic gadget. The key manipulation involves the celebrity endorser featured in the advertisement. These endorsers will be pre-selected and validated through a pilot study to ensure they accurately represent the four conditions of the factorial design: high credibility/high attractiveness, high credibility/low attractiveness, low credibility/high attractiveness, and low credibility/low attractiveness.

This experimental approach was deliberately chosen over correlational methods to establish clear causal inferences regarding the influence of endorser characteristics on consumer behavior. By actively manipulating the independent variables, the study can move beyond simple association to determine direct impact. To enhance the internal validity of the findings, several potential confounding variables will be measured and statistically controlled. These include participants' pre-existing attitudes toward the product category, their familiarity with the celebrity outside the experimental context, and demographic variables. This ensures that any observed effects on purchase intention can be more confidently attributed to the manipulated source attributes.

2. Participants and Sampling Strategy

The target population for this study will consist of undergraduate students from a large public university. This demographic was selected due to its high exposure to digital media and celebrity culture, as well as its active role as consumers, making it a highly relevant group for investigating advertising effectiveness. A total sample of 240 participants will be recruited to ensure sufficient statistical power for the 2x2 factorial design. This sample size was determined via an a priori power analysis, calculated to detect a medium effect size ($f = 0.25$) with 80% power at an alpha level of .05, allocating 60 participants per experimental condition.

Participants will be recruited using a non-probability, convenience sampling strategy through the university's online research participation portal. An invitation describing the study as an investigation into "Advertising Perceptions" will be posted, offering a small amount of course credit as compensation for participation. This method facilitates efficient recruitment from the target demographic. To be eligible, individuals must be at least 18 years of age and report fluency in English, ensuring they can provide valid informed consent and fully comprehend the experimental materials and subsequent survey questions. Interested students will follow a link to the online experiment platform.

Upon providing informed consent electronically, participants will be automatically and randomly assigned by the survey software to one of the four experimental conditions. This randomization process is critical for ensuring the internal validity of the study by distributing individual differences evenly across

the groups. The entire procedure is designed to be anonymous, with no personally identifiable information collected. Participants will be explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Data from participants who fail a concluding attention-check question will be excluded from the final analysis to ensure data quality.

3. Measures and Operationalization of Variables

The independent variables, celebrity credibility and attractiveness, will be operationalized using established multi-item semantic differential scales adapted from Ohanian (1990)^[9]. Following exposure to the advertisement, participants will rate the endorser on several dimensions. Credibility will be assessed through its sub-constructs: expertise (e.g., "Not an expert / Expert," "Unknowledgeable / Knowledgeable") and trustworthiness (e.g., "Undependable / Dependable," "Untrustworthy / Trustworthy"). Similarly, attractiveness will be measured using items such as "Unattractive / Attractive," "Not Classy / Classy," and "Unlikable / Likable." These measures will serve as manipulation checks to confirm the experimental conditions were perceived as intended.

The primary dependent variable, purchase intention, will be measured using a three-item, 7-point Likert-type scale, anchored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). This scale, adapted from established marketing literature such as Spears and Singh (2004)^[1], is designed to capture the likelihood of future purchasing behavior. Participants will respond to statements including: "It is very likely that I would purchase this product," "I would consider buying this product in the near future," and "I have a strong interest in purchasing this product." The final score will be an average of the responses, providing a reliable quantitative measure.

To account for potential confounds, several control variables will be measured. Participants' pre-existing attitude toward the product category will be assessed using a three-item semantic differential scale (e.g., Unfavorable/Favorable). Prior familiarity with the celebrity will be measured with a single-item question ("How familiar were you with this person before the study?") on a 7-point scale. Basic demographic information, including age and gender, will also be collected. Finally, to ensure data quality, a single attention-check question will be embedded within the survey to identify and exclude inattentive respondents from the final data analysis.

4. Experimental Stimuli Development and Procedure

The experimental stimuli were developed as four distinct, professionally designed digital advertisements for a fictitious brand of energy drink named "Volt." This product was chosen to minimize the influence of pre-existing brand attitudes. A preliminary pilot study with 50 participants from the target population was conducted to validate the selection of four public figures to represent the 2x2 design. Based on mean ratings, celebrities were confirmed for each condition: high credibility/high attractiveness, high credibility/low attractiveness, low credibility/high attractiveness, and low credibility/low attractiveness. The final advertisements were identical in all aspects, including layout, font, and copy, differing only by the celebrity image.

Upon accessing the experiment via a secure link, participants were first presented with an electronic informed consent form. After providing consent, they answered initial questions measuring their pre-existing attitudes toward energy drinks and provided basic demographic data. The survey software then automatically and randomly assigned each participant to one of the four experimental conditions, ensuring they were blind to the other groups. This randomization is crucial for distributing potential individual differences evenly across the conditions, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the experiment and allowing for causal claims regarding the manipulated variables' effects on consumer intentions.

After random assignment, each participant was shown their designated advertisement for a fixed duration of 30 seconds to ensure uniform exposure. Following this, they were directed to a questionnaire. The survey began with the manipulation check scales to assess their perceptions of the endorser's credibility and attractiveness. Participants then completed the three-item purchase intention scale, the primary dependent variable. Finally, they answered a question about their prior familiarity with the celebrity and a concluding attention-check question. A debriefing statement explaining the study's true purpose was provided to all participants upon completion.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

Prior to hypothesis testing, the collected data will undergo a rigorous screening and preparation process. Responses from participants who failed the embedded attention check or provided incomplete data will be excluded from the final dataset. The internal consistency and reliability of the multi-item scales for credibility, attractiveness, and purchase intention will be assessed using Cronbach's alpha^[10]. Composite scores for each construct will then be calculated by averaging the respective scale items. Subsequently, the data will be examined to ensure it meets the assumptions for parametric testing, including checking for normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test and homogeneity of variances via Levene's test.

To validate the experimental manipulations, a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)^[3] will be performed. The independent variables for this analysis will be the manipulated levels of celebrity credibility (high vs. low) and attractiveness (high vs. low). The dependent variables will be the composite scores from the manipulation check scales measuring perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. This procedure is essential to confirm that the different experimental groups perceived the celebrity endorsers in line with their intended conditions, ensuring the internal validity of the study's design before proceeding to the main hypothesis tests on purchase intention.

The primary hypotheses will be tested using a 2 (Credibility: High vs. Low) x 2 (Attractiveness: High vs. Low) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA)^[7], with the composite purchase intention score serving as the dependent variable. This analysis will determine the main effects of both celebrity credibility and attractiveness, as well as the crucial interaction effect between these two factors on consumer purchase intention. To account for potential confounds, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)^[5] may be employed, using pre-existing product attitude and celebrity familiarity as covariates. Significant interaction effects will be further explored using simple effects analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Preliminary Analyses and Manipulation Checks

From the initial 240 participants recruited through the university portal, data from 18 individuals were excluded from the final analysis. Twelve participants failed the embedded attention-check question, and an additional six provided incomplete data on the primary dependent measures. This resulted in a final viable sample of 222 participants ($M_{age} = 20.4$, $SD = 1.8$; 62% female). The data from this sample were screened for statistical assumptions, with Levene's test confirming homogeneity of variances across all four experimental groups ($p > .05$), satisfying a key prerequisite for ANOVA.

The internal consistency of the multi-item scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to ensure reliability. The three-item purchase intention scale demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .91$). The composite credibility scale, which combined items for expertise and trustworthiness, also showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$). Similarly, the attractiveness scale yielded a strong reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .88$). These high alpha values confirm that the items within each scale consistently measured their intended underlying construct, justifying the creation of composite scores for subsequent hypothesis testing.

To verify the effectiveness of the experimental manipulations, a 2 (Credibility: High vs. Low) x 2 (Attractiveness: High vs. Low) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The dependent variables for this test were the composite scores for perceived credibility and perceived attractiveness. The analysis revealed a significant multivariate main effect for the manipulated credibility variable, Wilks' $\Lambda = .45$, $F(2, 217) = 132.11$, $p < .001$, and a significant multivariate main effect for the manipulated attractiveness variable, Wilks' $\Lambda = .51$, $F(2, 217) = 104.58$, $p < .001$.

Follow-up univariate ANOVAs confirmed the specific impact of the manipulations. As intended, participants exposed to a high-credibility endorser rated the celebrity as significantly more credible ($M = 5.8$, $SD = 0.9$) than those in the low-credibility conditions ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.1$), $F(1, 218) = 251.34$, $p < .001$. Importantly, the credibility manipulation did not have an unintended significant effect on perceived attractiveness, $F(1, 218) = 1.76$, $p = .186$, confirming the successful and specific isolation of the intended construct.

Likewise, the attractiveness manipulation proved successful. Participants in the high-attractiveness conditions perceived the endorser as significantly more attractive ($M = 6.1$, $SD = 0.8$) compared to those in the low-attractiveness conditions ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.2$), $F(1, 218) = 198.77$, $p < .001$. This manipulation did not significantly influence perceptions of endorser credibility, $F(1, 218) = 2.03$, $p = .156$. These results collectively validate the experimental design, confirming that the celebrity endorsers effectively represented the four distinct conditions as intended.

2. Main Effect of Celebrity Credibility on Purchase Intention

The 2x2 between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant and substantial main effect of celebrity credibility on purchase intention, $F(1, 218) = 85.43$, $p < .001$, with a large associated effect size ($\eta^2 = .28$). This result indicates that the perceived credibility of the celebrity endorser was a powerful determinant of participants' willingness to purchase the advertised product, irrespective of the endorser's level of attractiveness. The strength of this finding highlights credibility as a primary driver in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements.

Specifically, participants who were exposed to an advertisement featuring a high-credibility endorser reported significantly higher purchase intentions ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 1.05$) than those in the low-credibility conditions ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.19$). This considerable difference in mean scores demonstrates the practical impact of an endorser's perceived expertise and trustworthiness. The data clearly suggest that when a celebrity is viewed as a knowledgeable and believable source, consumers are substantially more likely to form a positive intention to buy the endorsed product.

This finding provides strong empirical support for the credibility component of the Source Attributes Model. The results suggest that when consumers perceive an endorser as both an expert and a trustworthy source, the persuasive power of the marketing message is significantly amplified. This heightened believability appears to reduce consumer skepticism and lower the perceived risk associated with the purchase decision. The endorser's perceived integrity and knowledge directly translate into a more favorable evaluation of the brand and a greater willingness to buy.

From a practical standpoint, this result underscores the strategic importance for marketers to prioritize an endorser's perceived expertise and trustworthiness over other attributes. The data imply that selecting a celebrity with a genuine and believable connection to the product category is a more effective strategy than simply choosing a famous face. This finding suggests that investments in celebrities who are seen as authentic authorities are more likely to yield a positive return by directly and powerfully influencing consumer purchase intentions and brand perception.

However, it is important to recognize that this main effect does not tell the complete story. The Source Attributes Model posits that source characteristics are interactive, not independent. While credibility is clearly a dominant factor, its overall influence on consumer behavior may be qualified or enhanced by the celebrity's level of attractiveness. Therefore, a full understanding requires examining the potential interaction between these two variables, which will reveal the more nuanced conditions under which celebrity endorsements are most persuasive and effective.

3. Main Effect of Celebrity Attractiveness on Purchase Intention

The analysis also yielded a significant main effect for celebrity attractiveness on purchase intention, $F(1, 218) = 38.19$, $p < .001$, with a medium-to-large effect size ($\eta^2 = .15$). Specifically, participants in the high-attractiveness conditions reported significantly greater purchase intentions ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.28$) compared to those in the low-attractiveness conditions ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.35$). This finding demonstrates that an endorser's perceived attractiveness is a key factor that independently influences consumer purchase decisions, supporting its inclusion as a core dimension in the theoretical framework.

This result aligns with the attractiveness component of the Source Attributes Model, which posits that consumers are more receptive to messages from sources they find appealing. The data suggest that characteristics such as likability, familiarity, and physical appeal create a positive predisposition toward the endorsed product. This effect occurs regardless of the endorser's perceived expertise, indicating that a celebrity's charm and public appeal can serve as a powerful persuasive heuristic for consumers when evaluating a product for potential purchase.

The underlying mechanism for this effect can be explained by the process of affective transfer. Consumers who hold positive feelings for a likable or attractive celebrity tend to project those feelings onto the associated brand. This process is facilitated by identification, where consumers feel a sense of connection or similarity with the endorser. This emotional bridge enhances brand preference and strengthens the intention to purchase, making the endorsement feel more personally relevant and persuasive, thereby driving positive consumer behavioral intentions.

While the main effect of attractiveness was statistically significant, its effect size ($\eta^2 = .15$) was notably smaller than that observed for credibility ($\eta^2 = .28$). This suggests that in the context of this study, an endorser's perceived expertise and trustworthiness were a more powerful predictor of purchase intention than their general appeal. Although a likable celebrity can boost purchase intent, the impact is less pronounced than that of a believable, authoritative figure, highlighting a hierarchy of influence among source attributes.

However, evaluating attractiveness as an isolated factor provides an incomplete picture of its role in advertising effectiveness. The Source Attributes Model suggests that these source characteristics do not operate in a vacuum but rather interact with one another. The true persuasive power of an endorsement often lies in the interplay between different attributes. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the interaction effect to understand how attractiveness and credibility combine to influence consumer behavior and purchase decisions in a more nuanced way.

4. Interaction Effect of Credibility and Attractiveness on Purchase Intention

Most critically, the 2x2 ANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect between celebrity credibility and attractiveness on purchase intention, $F(1, 218) = 15.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$. This result indicates that the influence of an endorser's credibility is not uniform but rather depends on their level of perceived attractiveness. Similarly, the impact of attractiveness is qualified by the endorser's credibility. This interaction provides a more nuanced understanding than the main effects alone, highlighting the

synergistic relationship between these two source attributes.

Simple effects analysis confirmed that when credibility was high, a highly attractive endorser ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 0.85$) generated significantly greater purchase intentions than a less attractive one ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 0.98$), $F(1, 218) = 18.92$, $p < .001$. This shows that while high credibility is powerful on its own, combining it with high attractiveness creates a superior persuasive outcome. The appeal of the celebrity provides an additional, potent boost to an already believable message, maximizing consumer interest.

Conversely, when credibility was low, the endorser's attractiveness had a negligible impact on purchase intention. The difference between the high-attractiveness ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.15$) and low-attractiveness ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.21$) conditions was not statistically significant, $F(1, 218) = 2.45$, $p = .119$. This crucial finding suggests that high attractiveness cannot compensate for a lack of perceived expertise or trustworthiness. A likable face is insufficient to persuade consumers when the source is not seen as believable.

This interaction strongly supports the theoretical premise of the Source Attributes Model, which posits that source characteristics function interdependently. The optimal persuasive effect was achieved only when high credibility was paired with high attractiveness, creating a synergistic impact greater than the sum of the individual main effects. This demonstrates that for an endorsement to be truly effective, consumers must both trust the messenger and feel an affective connection, validating the model's integrated approach to source persuasion and consumer response.

From a practical marketing perspective, these results highlight the risk of selecting an endorser based on attractiveness alone. The data imply that such a strategy is likely to fail if the celebrity lacks a credible connection to the product. The most effective endorsement strategy involves a careful "match-up," where the chosen celebrity is not only likable and familiar to the target audience but is also perceived as a genuinely knowledgeable and trustworthy source, thereby maximizing the return on a significant marketing investment.

5. Influence of Control Variables and Discussion of Findings

An Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to assess the influence of potential confounds. Both pre-existing attitude toward the product category and prior familiarity with the celebrity emerged as significant covariates, influencing purchase intention. However, after statistically controlling for these variables, the main effects of credibility and attractiveness, as well as their significant interaction, remained robust. This confirms that the observed effects are attributable to the experimental manipulations rather than pre-existing biases, thereby strengthening the internal validity of the findings.

The findings provide strong validation for the Source Attributes Model, particularly emphasizing the primacy of the credibility dimension. The large effect size associated with credibility suggests that consumers' cognitive assessments of an endorser's expertise and trustworthiness are paramount. This aligns with prior research indicating that for products where performance or quality is a concern, a believable source is more persuasive than a merely likable one. The results underscore that credibility is not just a component but a foundational pillar of endorsement effectiveness.

The significant interaction effect offers a critical refinement to the theoretical framework. It demonstrates that attractiveness does not operate in a vacuum; its persuasive power is conditional upon a baseline of credibility. The finding that high attractiveness fails to compensate for low credibility suggests a hierarchical process. Consumers must first perceive the endorser as a legitimate source before their affective feelings toward the celebrity can positively transfer to the brand. This highlights the interdependent nature of the model's core source attributes.

From a managerial standpoint, these results offer clear strategic guidance. Marketers should prioritize an endorser's perceived credibility and fit with the product over sheer popularity or attractiveness. The data strongly caution against using a highly attractive but non-credible celebrity, as this strategy is unlikely to influence purchase intentions. The most effective and least risky approach involves selecting an endorser who is perceived as both a trustworthy expert and an attractive figure, as this combination creates a powerful synergistic effect on consumer persuasion.

This study's conclusions should be considered in light of its limitations, including the use of a student sample and a single, low-involvement product category. Future research should test the generalizability of these findings across different populations and product types, such as high-risk or technical goods. Further investigation could also explore the "match-up hypothesis"^[4] more explicitly or examine how negative celebrity information moderates these effects, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the endorsement process in a dynamic media environment.

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that both celebrity credibility and attractiveness are significant predictors of consumer purchase intention, providing empirical support for the Source Attributes Model. However, the findings revealed a clear hierarchy of influence, with credibility exerting a substantially stronger impact than attractiveness. The most critical discovery was the significant interaction effect, which demonstrated that the persuasive power of an endorser's attractiveness is conditional upon a foundation of high credibility. This suggests that while both attributes are relevant, consumers must first perceive an endorser as a believable source before their appeal can effectively enhance brand evaluation and purchase intentions.

The interaction effect provides a crucial insight for marketing practice: high attractiveness cannot salvage a non-credible endorsement. The data showed that when an endorser lacked perceived expertise or trustworthiness, their physical appeal or likability had no significant effect on consumer purchase intentions. This strongly cautions against the common strategy of selecting celebrities based on popularity or charm alone, especially if they lack a logical connection to the product. For an endorsement to be effective, marketers must prioritize the selection of a celebrity who is perceived as a knowledgeable and authentic source, as this credibility is the essential prerequisite for persuasion.

While these findings are robust, they should be interpreted within the context of the study's limitations, namely the use of a university student sample and a single, low-involvement product. The generalizability of these results to older demographics or high-risk product categories remains to be tested. Future research should therefore aim to replicate this experiment with more diverse populations and across various product types, such as luxury goods or technical services. Further investigation could also explore how the "match-up hypothesis" or the emergence of negative celebrity information moderates the interactive effects of credibility and attractiveness.

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