Celebrity endorsements versus created spokespersons in advertising: A survey among students

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Abstract

In this study the use of endorsements in advertising was investigated. Endorsements can either be in the form of a celebrity acting as a spokesperson for an organisation or the organisation can create a spokesperson to act as an endorser. The problem that faces marketers is that little scientific proof exists if students perceive celebrity endorsements and creative spokespersons differently with regard to their expertise and trustworthiness. The aim of this study was to determine the attitudes of respondents with regard to expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of created spokesperson and celebrity endorsements in advertisements. This knowledge will provide marketing professionals with the strategic advantage of how and when to make use of an endorser.

Ohanian's (1990) measurement scale of perceived expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness was adopted in a self-administrative questionnaire for this article. Respondents (n=185) were exposed to six visual images of endorsers namely: three celebrities and three created spokespersons.

It was found that attractiveness should not be used as a factor when comparing created endorsers with celebrity endorsers. The respondents perceived both endorsement applications as highly credible and professionals need to consider each application's advantages and disadvantages when deciding which application will be more effective for their advertising strategy. In the long term the organisation might find it more cost effective to create its own spokesperson due to the risk of possible characteristics changes or negative associations of celebrity endorsers. Revoking advertisements after celebrity endorsers have received negative publicity or changed character can lead to great financial losses. Created endorsers, on the other hand, provide the organisation with greater control and the ability to change to adapt to the organisation's market and advertising needs.

Key words: Advertising, marketing, celebrity endorsement, created spokesperson, strategy, credibility, attractiveness, trustworthy.

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1
Introduction

The use of endorsements in marketing is not a new phenomenon and multiple studies have investigated the importance of endorsements in product advertising (Mehulkumar, 2005: 3). Erdogan (1999) has reviewed the most important measuring models that include the Source Credibility Model (Bearden, Netemeyer & Mobley, 1993: 719) and Ohanian's (1990) scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility. Tom, Clark, Elmer, Grech, Masetti and Sandhar, (1992) researched the use of celebrity endorsements and created spokespersons in advertisements and compared the advantages and characteristics of both created and celebrity endorsers to establish the characteristics which are the most effective. Seno and Lukas (2007: 121) explain that the use of endorsements do not occur by "accident" – it is a deliberate and strategic act. During 2003 they maintain *Nike*

spent more than $US 1.44 billion on only two celebrities, Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods to endorse their brand. After winning eight gold medals in swimming for the United States at the Beijing Olympic Games, Michael Phelps is currently the biggest celebrity in the world (Access Hollywood, 2 September 2008: 1). His endorsement fees will surpass that of many athletes, pop stars and film icons.

Endorsement applications have been re-searched, however, few sources have compared these applications to determine which is the most effective. This apparent gap will be addressed in this article. Three inconsistencies have been identified in existing literature. First, some authors still doubt whether endorsements are effective; either via created or celebrity endorsers (McEwen, 2003). Second, endorsements further focus on practice and academic fields because of the high fees associated with the endorsement process (Erdogan, 1999: 291; McEwen, 2003). These controversies are put to rest as long as the endorsers' attributes fit those of the product or service that they advertise and as long as the advertisement succeeds in its purpose (Till & Busler, 1998: 576). The third controversy is whether attractiveness is an appropriate criterion to evaluate endorsements' effectiveness. Some authors (Erdogan, 1999: 299) argue that attractiveness is a determining factor, but Silvera and Austad (2004: 1514) Byrne, Whitehead and Breen (2003: 292) argue differently.

Endorsers are presumably effective because they have the ability to transfer their personal attributes, expertise, class and style, directly to the product being advertised. Petty and Lindsey–Mullikin (2006: 28) contend that endorsers have been proven to be most effective when perceived to be similar to the targeted consumer. Tom *et al* (1992: 46) state that the two endorsement applications that advertisers and marketers use are either an existing celebrity or a created spokesperson to endorse the product. This study evaluates these two types of endorsements to establish the effectiveness thereof.

According to Till and Busler (1998: 576) the effectiveness of endorsers are of importance to both practitioners and academics. At the moment existing literature on this topic in a South African context is limited. If marketing professionals are more aware of the qualities of celebrity and created spokespersons qualities, more informed choices could be made to ensure maximum effectiveness of their advertising efforts. The question on the effectiveness of celebrity advertising is summarised by *rediff.com* (2003: 2-3) under a four Q (quick) structure: quick salience: this type of advertising impacts due to the celebrity adds value to the product or service, quick connect: there needs to be no insight as the communication impacts due to the impact of the celebrity, quick shorthand for brand values: the "right" celebrity and communicate the message without elaborate story telling and lastly, quick means of brand differentiation: the first brand that uses a celebrity impacts on product differentiation in a given target market. The problem that faces marketers is that little scientific proof exists if students perceive celebrity endorsements and creative spokespersons differently with regard to their expertise and trustworthiness.

2
Endorsements as part of the advertising strategy

To communicate the right message, a marketer can make use of advertising which can be defined as a message that is paid and controlled by the advertiser and directed to the masses in an impersonal manner (Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff & Terblanche, 2000: 332). Brand image according to Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006: 635) is communicated to consumers through advertising and creates a personality for the product being sold. Stressing certain product characteristics in the advertisement can also influence the consumers' preference for certain brands. Knowledge about how customers' perceptions can be influenced by certain stimuli has increased over time (Knox, 2004: 106), where a celebrity or created endorser in the organisations' advertising material can form part of the brand and can influence the perceptions of the target audience.

According to Du Plessis, Bothma, Jordaan and van Heerden (2003: 41) it is essential to plan the advertising strategy to provide a guide for the advertising activities. Advertising is used to

draw the attention to the products and services of the organisation and to provide a personality to the brand in order to make the product stand out amongst its competitors. One way to draw attention to the product is to make use of an endorser. The endorser transfers its characteristics onto the product and if the target consumers like or aspire to posses the endorser's characteristics it will intentionally call them to action to purchase the product or service (Byrne *et al*, 2003: 289).

Endorsements can be executed through use of celebrity or created endorsers. According to McCracken (1989: 311) celebrity endorsement can be defined 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." Schlecht (2003: 3) describes a celebrity as a person who enjoys public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people. A created spokesperson on the other hand is created by an organisation for its purposes and means, and by implication the organisation has greater control over the endorser than over a traditional celebrity (Tom *et al*, 1992: 47).

2.1 Celebrities as endorsers

All types of advertising are used with the aim of creating purchase aspiration that will ultimately lead to the purchases of products and services. Ohanian (1991: 46) claims that an endorser will be more effective in creating purchase aspirations when the endorser is perceived as a credible messages source. Choudhury and Iyer (2008: 1) see a celebrity as a name which once made by news, now makes news by itself. Eventually the celebrity's appearance becomes closely associated with the brand or the company. Anon (2008: 2) explains that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement will improve when their personalities remain closely aligned with the brand values.

Marketers use celebrity endorsers to build their brand image to ultimately influence the customers' purchase decisions. Celebrity endorsers are frequently used in all forms of advertising and indicate the perception of their effectiveness. Effectiveness being – how

successful the endorser is at making the target market believe that it is trustworthy and an expert on the advertised product. The endorser's perceived expertise and trustworthiness are a means to measure the credibility of the endorser and the latter is positively associated with purchase aspirations (Ohanian, 1991: 46). Purchase aspiration implicating the want and desire to purchase a product that will ultimately lead to product purchases. According to Tom *et al*, *(*1992: 45) target audiences generally have positive feelings towards celebrity endorsers.

Celebrities are often used by organisations, because they can easily enhance the brands of the organisation and save resources in creating credibility through transferring their values to the brand (Byrne *et al*, 2003: 289). This occurs through associative learning principles. Thus, the target audiences' positive feelings towards a chosen celebrity will transfer to the endorsed brand or organisation or products (Till & Shimp, 1998: 67). If consumers positively support the endorser, they might be more easily persuaded to buy and use the product. This implies that the endorser's qualities must match those that the advertiser tries to link with its brand (Byrne *et al*, 2003: 291). When using celebrity endorsers, marketers need to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages to make an informed strategic decision. The following authors highlight both advantages as well as disadvantages, that are summarised below: Erdogan (1999: 295); Silvera and Austad (2004: 1510); Till and Shimp (1998: 67); Tripp, Jensen and Carlson (1994: 543) and rediff.com (2003: 2-3)

The advantages include: increasing attention to the product and reaching the target market even with interfering advertising clutter; a celebrity with positive attributes could change negative perceptions of advertised products and services, even when knowing that the endorser is being paid to do so. The right celebrity can instantly establish a position for a newly launched product or change perceptions of a wrongly positioned product. Celebrities are known all over the world and can thus give the same status to a product that is being established in an international market.

Some of the disadvantages include: any negative information that is generated due to

the celebrity's private actions will negatively affect the organisation and could be a liability. Celebrities can decide not to endorse the organisation for the long term and it is thus not a longevity option. Celebrities can harm the endorsement negatively by stating they never use the product (vegetarian endorsing a meat product) or overusing the controversial products (alcohol & tobacco).

2.2 Created spokespersons as endorsers

When an organisation cannot find a celebrity that is in unison with the organisation's brand image, they can create their own "celebrity" endorser, i.e. a created spokesperson. There are two types of created spokespersons an organisation can create; either real people acting out a role or animated/imaginary roles. A created spokesperson has some of the following advantages (Erdogan, 1999: 293 and Tom *et al*, 1992: 47 – 49). Created spokespersons have a higher degree of control and are less costly than celebrities and marketers have the possibility to create a better fit between the product and the endorser. The endorser's longevity will be for as long as the method is successful for the organisation, whereas "real" celebrities have limited longevity. The same created spokesperson can be used indefinitely and adapted to changing circumstances. According to Tom, Clark, Elmer, Grech, Masetti and Sandhar (1992: 50) the created spokesperson's effectiveness is in establishing a lifelong link with the product.

The biggest disadvantage when using a created spokesperson is that the endorser will only be well known after the organisation has created awareness and a high advertising spend. Tom *et al* (1992: 51) suggest that marketing professionals should make use of created endorsers when the advertising objective is to create a long-term link between the endorser and the organisation. It should also be noted that celebrities would be the better choice when the organisation is interested only in establishing a short-term memorable link.

3
Endorsers and perceived credibility

Organisations make use of celebrities to pursue the intended target market to purchase their products or change their behaviour (Byrne *et al*, 2003: 291; Silvera & Austad, 2004: 1521). Purchase aspirations are created when endorsers can effectively create credibility about their association with the product and are perceived to really like and use the product (Erdogan, 1999: 297; Ohanian, 1991: 46). Petty and Lindsey–Mullikin (2006: 28) maintain that endorsers are effective because they connect with consumers by at least appearing to bring some independent credibility to the advertisement. It is important that the "right" celebrity is selected in order to ensure that it connects with the consumers and interests them in the brand: "Endorsers are effective because they connect with consumers by at least appearing to bring some independent credibility to the advertisement". However, two emerging disadvantages of celebrity usage are identified by *rediff.com* (2003: 3): the credibility of the celebrity is questionable and celebrity endorsement is no longer as credible as a few years ago. Martin, Wentzel, and Tomczak (2007: 1) also question the credibility of celebrities in advertisements as their research indicated an inclination towards endorsement by ordinary persons.

Ohanian (1990) created a scale to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers through establishing the endorser's credibility. This is achieved through measuring the expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness the endorser possesses in the advertisement. The Source Credibility Model (Bearden *et al*, 1993: 718) informs and reflects research of the Social Influence Theory/Source Effect Theory. This theory indicates that certain characteristics of perceived communication will increase the likelihood that the message will be received by the intended recipients (Erdogan, 1999: 297).

Created spokespersons are exclusively created by the organisation to promote its products and for this reason they might be perceived as less believable. The target audience is usually more familiar with celebrities because they are already well known. Created spokespersons

however, do not have this advantage. With Ohanian's (1990) scale to measure a celebrity endorser's perceived credibility one has to individually measure the endorser's expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. This scale will be used for both celebrity and created spokespersons. The created spokesperson's effectiveness is in establishing a lifelong link with the product (Tom, *et al,* 1992: 46).

3.1 Endorsers are perceived as experts

Expertise is the degree to which the endorser is perceived to have the adequate knowledge, experience or skills to promote the product. It is immaterial whether the endorser possesses the expertise to endorse the product as long as the intended target market perceives it to be so (Erdogan, 1999: 298). Daneshvary and Schwer (2000: 204) argue further that the perceived expertise of an endorser is seen as the most important component for endorsement to be effective. Celebrities are chosen as endorsers because of the perceived link that exists between them and the product. It appears that they might be perceived as having more expertise than created spokespersons.

3.2 Endorsers are perceived as trustworthy

Trustworthiness is the honesty, integrity and believability the endorser possesses. The most important attribute, by which trustworthiness is measured, is the likeability of the endorsee. This is further correlated to ethnic issues, where likeability is likely to increase when using endorsers that are similar to the intended target market (Erdogan, 1999: 297). It is more likely that the target audience would perceive the celebrity endorser as more likeable than the created spokesperson because of their familiarity with the target audience.

3.3 Endorsers are perceived as attractive

According to Erdogan (1999: 299), attractiveness is the stereotype of positive associations to a person. Endorsers who are perceived to be attractive are more likely to lead to purchase aspiration. It is anticipated that attractiveness is an important factor when evaluating the effectiveness of an endorser. Schlecht (2003: 5) indicates that the attractiveness of the spokesperson is important when creating effective messages.

4
Research problem and objectives

With regard to celebrity endorsement, the problem facing marketers and advertisers are twofold: they do not know if celebrity endorsers are more effective than created spokespersons and if attractiveness should be measured as a sub-dimension of credibility. The following research problem is identified: there is little research evidence on the perceptions of students with regard to celebrity endorsements and created spokespersons in advertising (See the following search engines on the World Wide Web: Emerald, EbscoHost, Sabinet and Science Direct [Accessed: 20 August 2008]). As a result marketers have little scientific proof of whether students perceive celebrity endorsements and creative spokespersons differently with regard to their expertise and trustworthiness.

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of the different endorsement applications available in advertisements namely celebrity endorsers and created spokespersons. The broad objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate product endorsements to assess if celebrity endorsers are more effective than created spokespersons in advertising. This will be done through the use of Ohanian's (1990) scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility. This scale measures credibility through the sub-dimensions expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness.

- Establish whether or not attractiveness should be measured as a sub-dimension of credibility when comparing celebrity endorsers and created spokespersons.

The following three hypotheses were formulated for this study:

H_1: Celebrities have more expertise than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes

H_2: Celebrities are more trustworthy than created spokespersons for endorsements purposes.

H_3: Celebrities are more attractive than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes.

5
Methodology

5.1 Sampling

The sample for this study was drawn from students from a tertiary institution in Pretoria. Random sampling was used and a total of 185 usable questionnaires were obtained.

The demographic profile of the respondents included ethical orientation (49 per cent White, 45 per cent Black, 4 per cent Coloured and 2 per cent Asian). The gender ratio was slightly slanted towards males (52 per cent).

5.2 Measurement instrument

Ohanian's (1990) scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility include three sub-dimensions, namely: trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. Each of these sub-dimensions has descriptive pairs to measure these variables. The descriptive pairs that measure trustworthiness are: dependable–undependable, dishonest–honest, unreliable–reliable, insincere–sincere, and trustworthy–untrustworthy. The descriptive pairs for measuring expertise include: an expert–not an expert, inexperienced–experienced, unknowledgeable–knowledgeable, qualified–unqualified and unskilled–skilled.

The following descriptive pairs measure attractiveness: unattractive–attractive, classy–not classy, ugly–beautiful, sexy–not sexy and plain elegant. Silvera and Austad (2004, 1522) emphasised the importance of cultural characteristics within a given context. The selection of South African respondents at a tertiary institution could have impacted on the outcome of the results, as well as the selected stimulus material. Initially the questionnaire was pre-tested using a convenience sample of 10 students. The study's data was collected over a two-month period, via a self-administrated questionnaire.

The endorsers were selected from print advertisements that appeared in magazines during August 2005 in Southern Africa. These endorsers can also be viewed on the following web sites: Michelle Mclean (http://www.MichelleMclean.com/ 30 August 2006, 14:50 pm); Ryk Neethling (http://www.rykneethling.com/images/ 30 August 2006, 13:55pm); Beyoncé Knowles (http://www.bwgreyscale.com/ads/loreal.html/ 20 August 2005 and http://www.beyonceonline.com/ 30 August 2006: 21:35pm), Bankole Omotoso (http://www.vodaworld.co.za/showarticle.asp?id=1061/ 30 August 2006, 20:05pm); Ronald McDonald (http://www.ronald.com/ 30 August 2006, 12:21 pm) and Simba the Lion (http://www.simba.co.za/new/default.asp/ 30 August 2006, 10:55 pm). The visual stimuli used in this questionnaire consisted of six endorsers of which three were celebrity endorsers and three created endorsers and Table 1 summarises the endorsers.

Table 1
Summary of endorsers and advertisements

Endorsers Name	Product / Service Advertised	Created / Celebrity Endorser	International / Local Endorser	Gender	Ethnic Orientation
Michelle Mclean	Lux Body Lotion	Celebrity Endorser (Former Miss Universe, model and TV presenter)	Local SA* Endorser	Female	White

Endorsers Name	Product / Service Advertised	Created / Celebrity Endorser	International / Local Endorser	Gender	Ethnic Orientation
Ryk Neethling	Tag Heuer sun glasses	Celebrity Endorser (Olympic Gold Medallist, world record holder in swimming and model)	Local SA Endorser	Male	White
Beyoncé Knowles	L'ÓREAL Hot Straight hair straightener	Celebrity Endorser (Actor and artist)	International Endorser	Female	Black
Bankole Omotoso	Vodacom	Created Endorser	Local SA Endorser	Male	Black
Ronald McDonald	McDonald's	Created Endorser	International Endorser	Animated (Male)	Undefined
Simba the Lion	Simba Chips	Created Endorser	Local SA Endorser	Animated (Male)	Undefined

* SA (South African)

Figure 1: Endorser one – Michelle Mclean (Model and television presenter)

Figure 2: Endorser two – Ryk Neethling (Olympic Gold Medallist and model)
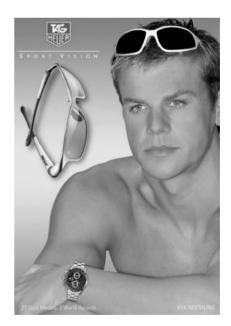
Figure 3: Endorser three – Beyoncé Knowles (Actor and artist)

Figure 4: Endorser four – Bankole Omotoso (Created endorser)

Figure 5: Endorser five – Ronald McDonald (Created endorser)

Figure 6: Endorser six – Simba the Lion (Created endorser)

The visual stimuli were presented to respondents one at a time giving each respondent adequate time in a class situation to complete each section for each endorser. The stimuli were either presented on an overhead projector or printed out flash cards according to the venue size and infrastructure. See Figures 1 to 6, which contain the advertisements as they were presented to the respondents.

Ohanian's Scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility (Ohanian, 1990) was used to measure different endorsers' credibility. According to Ohanian (1991: 46) the higher the perceived credibility of an endorser, the more effective the advertising tends to be. A seven point semantic differential scale was used to measure each of the sub-dimensions, with five pairs of descriptive words for each sub-dimension. The higher values indicate more positive options,

thus a high mean (M) indicates a high credibility rating. No reverse scoring was indicated for Ohanian's' scale and it was decided to reverse score the items to minimise response bias. The same scale was repeated for the six endorsers.

Reliability analysis was calculated for each endorser's overall credibility as well as within each sub-dimension. A low-item-to-total-correlation was calculated for the descriptive pair trustworthy–untrustworthy, under the sub-dimension trustworthiness.

Reliability assessments were conducted to determine the Cronbach alphas for all the celebrities. A combined credibility was calculated as well as individually for each sub-dimension. This process was repeated for the created endorsers. In Table 2 below the reliability assessments for the celebrity and created endorsers are depicted.

Table 2
Cronbach alphas for created and celebrity endorsers

Celebrity endorser total scores alpha's		Created endorser total scores alpha's	
Sub-dimension	Alpha value	Sub-dimension	Alpha value
Trustworthiness	0.85	Trustworthiness	0.80
Expertise	0.85	Expertise	0.88
Attractiveness	0.80	Attractiveness	0.85
Credibility	0.93	Credibility	0.91

All Cronbach alphas reported are above 0.7 and indicate acceptable internal consistency. The only reported measure that was marginally below 0.7 was attractiveness for Celebrity Endorser 2 (Ryk Neethling, α=0.6966).

6
Results

The results for the three sub-dimensions for each endorser suggest that both celebrities and created endorsers can be equally credible, if attractiveness is removed from the scale (M=5.24, SD=0.97 for celebrity endorsers and M=3.72, SD=1.062 for created endorsers). This

is because both endorsement groups have very similar trustworthiness (M=4.89, SD=1.022 for celebrities and M=5.06, SD=0.98 for created) and expertise (M=5.15, SD=0.932 for celebrities and M=5.04, SD=1.079 for created) but not attractiveness. Attractiveness can be rated low due to the fact that a created endorser can be in animated form or a created character. These characters or actors might be less attractive than celebrity endorsers and yet be just as credible as celebrity endorsers due to their perceived expertise and trustworthiness. The total scores of the descriptive statistics for interval data for celebrity and created endorsers that include attractiveness are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics with attractiveness

Sub-dimension	Total score for celebrity endorser			Total score for created endorser		
	N	**M**	**SD**	**N**	**M**	**SD**
Attractiveness	185	5.24	0.97	185	3.72	1.06
Trustworthiness	185	4.89	1.02	185	5.06	0.98
Expertise	185	5.15	0.93	185	5.04	1.08
Credibility	185	5.07	0.86	185	4.58	0.84

Total credibility calculated without attractiveness is presented in Table 4 below. The credibility of both endorsement methods' mean are very close to one another, with created endorsers' credibility mean ($M=5.05$) higher than celebrity endorsers' mean ($M=5.03$)

Table 4
Descriptive statistics without attractiveness

Sub-dimension	Total score for celebrity endorser			Total score for created endorser		
	N	**M**	**SD**	**N**	**M**	**SD**
Trustworthiness	185	4.89	1.02	185	5.06	0.98
Expertise	185	5.15	0.93	185	5.04	1.08
Credibility	185	5.03	0.88	185	5.05	0.94

The hypotheses were tested at a 95 per cent level of significance ($p=0.05$). The hypotheses were measured at an interval level and the Friedman's two way *ANOVA* was used as a non-parametric alternative because the assumptions of normality were not satisfied to an ANOVA test.

6.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis focused on the expertise of created versus celebrity endorsers, and the hypothesis was as follows:

H_1: Celebrities have more expertise than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes.

When analysing the first hypothesis there was only a small difference between the mean of celebrity expertise ($M = 5.15$) and created spokesperson's expertise ($M = 5.04$) Normality was tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. This test indicated that there is a slight departure from normality for the expertise of celebrity endorsers but the expertise for created spokespersons was normally distributed. To enable data comparison it was decided to conduct the non-parametric Friedman's two way ANOVA test. Table 5 below indicates the results.

Table 5
Friedman's two way *ANOVA* for expertise

	Mean Rank	**N**	**185**
Celebrity expertise	1.55	Chi-Square X^2	2.04
Created spokesperson expertise	1.45	*df*	1
		p-value	0.15

As indicated in column 4 of Table 5, the value of 0.15, which indicates that there is no significant difference in the expertise of created versus celebrity spokespersons. The descriptive statistics indicate that the survey findings are at odds with the expectation from H_1. The one-tailed p-value was calculated as follows:

One tailed p-value	$= 1 - \text{(two tailed } p\text{-value/2)}$
	$= 1 - (0.15/2)$
	$= 0.92$

The results indicate that celebrities do not have more expertise than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes. There is thus no support for H_1.

6.2 Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis compared the trustworthiness of created and celebrity spokespersons:

H_2: Celebrities are more trustworthy than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes.

The analysis of H_2 indicated again that there was only a small difference between the mean value of celebrity trustworthiness ($M = 4.89$) and created spokespersons' trustworthiness ($M = 5.06$). The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to establish normality and both the p-values and histograms were inspected, which indicated a slight departure from normality. Table 6 below indicates the results.

Table 6
Friedman's two way *ANOVA* for trustworthiness

	Mean Rank	N	185
Celebrity trustworthiness	1.44	Chi-Square	2.81
Created spokesperson trustworthiness	1.56	*df*	1
		p-value	0.09

Column 4 of Table 6 indicates that the p-value is 0.09, which concludes that there is no significant difference between the trustworthiness of celebrities compared to the trustworthiness of created spokespersons for endorsement purposes. As with hypothesis one the descriptive statistics are not aligned with the expectations of the hypothesis and the one tailed p-value was calculated on the previously used principle.

One tailed p-value	$= 1 - \text{(two tailed } p\text{-value/2)}$
	$= 1 - (0.09/2)$
	$= 0.95$

When the results are interpreted they indicate that celebrities are not more trustworthy than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes.

6.3 Hypothesis 3

The third and final hypothesis focused on the attractiveness of the celebrities compared to the created spokespersons:

H_3: Celebrities are more attractive than created spokespersons for endorsement purposes.

When investigating the mean values for attractiveness, there were significantly larger differences between the values than with the first two hypotheses' mean values. The mean value of attractiveness of celebrities was $M = 5.24$ and the attractiveness of the created spokespersons was $M = 3.72$.

Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and both the *p*-values and histograms were assessed which indicated that the attractiveness of celebrities was normally distributed but that of the created spokespersons was not. The Friedman's two way *ANOVA*, which is the non-parametric alternative was conducted to ensure comparability. Table 7 gives the complete results.

Table 7
Friedman's two way *ANOVA* for attractiveness

	Mean Rank	*N*	**185**
Celebrity attractiveness	1.89	Chi-Square	113.93
Created spokesperson attractiveness	1.11	*df*	1
		p-value	0.00

As indicated in column 4 of Table 7 the p-value is 0.00, which indicates that a significant level of difference exists between the attractiveness of celebrities and created spokespersons for endorsement purposes. The null hypothesis can thus be rejected. The results indicate that in this particular study the celebrities were rated more attractive than created spokespersons.

7
Conclusion and recommendations

It was found that neither celebrities nor created endorsers are perceived to be more trustworthy or to possess more expertise than the other (the first two hypotheses). Celebrity endorsers were however, perceived to be more attractive (the third hypothesis). All of these combined (expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness) measure the perceived credibility of an endorser. It would appear that celebrity endorsers possess more credibility compared to created spokespersons. This is due to the fact that the results for trustworthiness and expertise are very similar in these two endorsement applications.

There are few known previous research findings in South Africa that compare created spokespersons to celebrity endorsers on credibility. Results in this study are in line with previous findings where expertise and trustworthiness were found more important than attractiveness when evaluating credibility of an endorser (Ohanian, 1991: 51; Till & Busler, 1998: 581). Previous studies that measured the credibility of celebrities debated if attractiveness should be included as a sub-dimension for credibility (Erdogan, 1999: 299; Silvera & Austad, 2004: 1514; Byrne *et al*, 2003: 292)

7.1 Managerial implications

To reach their target markets, marketing professionals make use of endorsement as part of their advertising strategy. Anon (2008: 2), Choudhury and Iyer (2008: 1-2), Van der Waldt, Schleritzko and van Zyl (2007: 190) and Hsu and McDonald (2002: 7) question the *ad hoc* applications of celebrities in advertising campaigns. They argue that strategic decisions need to be taken with regard to the usage of celebrities in advertising campaigns.

Endorsement is one of the tools used by marketing professionals to increase brand awareness and the result has been that consumers are bombarded with advertisements filled with endorsers (Erdogan, 1999: 15). The endorsement process generally tends to be an expensive process and unfortunately it does not always yield the desired results (Tripp *et al*, 1994: 535). The relatively high fees associated with the endorsement process have attracted a great deal of criticism and many authors have attempted to find ways to evaluate whether endorsers are effective, or when they will be effective.

Ohanian (1990) believes credibility is a determining factor of endorsers' effectiveness. Through applying this scale neither celebrity nor created endorsers were found to be more

credible than the other when the sub-dimension attractiveness was ignored. The results of this study suggest that marketing professionals can make use of either endorsement applications, as long as trustworthiness and expertise of the endorsers are perceived to be high. Marketers will also have to focus more on other factors that might have a bigger influence on the credibility of the endorser, for example product fit and overall brand image as explained by Silvera & Austad (2004: 1509)

Marketing professionals need to use the scales available to clearly identify whether a chosen endorser is credible. If no available source can indicate this, marketing professionals might consider developing additional scales. This is important because endorsements are perceived to be an easy way to reach the target market and if it is done correctly these professionals might be able to maximise their return on investment.

This study was done with the specific aim to determine if one endorsement application is perceived to be more effective than the other. Either celebrity or created spokesperson endorsement application can be used to attract attention to the organisations' advertising depending on the advertising strategy. The endorser must however move the consumer from a state of awareness to a state of action i.e. purchase in order for the advertising to be effective (Du Plessis *et al*, 2006: 49)

In the long term the organisation might find it more cost-effective to create its own spokesperson because of the risk of possible characteristics changes or negative associations of celebrity endorsers. Revoking advertisements after celebrity endorsers have received negative publicity or changed character can lead to great financial losses. Created endorsers, on the other hand, provide the organisation with greater control and the ability to change to adapt to the organisations' market and advertising needs.

7.2 Limitations

There are four limitations to this study. First, during the data gathering process the stimuli materials were kept in the same order to assist the fieldworkers with the data-gathering

process. The fieldworkers might have become confused if the material were to be rotated for different respondent groups and this could have influenced some level of response bias. Second, an external factor, namely perceived brand image, was not taken into consideration. Third, Ohanian's (1990) scale was developed to measure the credibility of celebrity endorsers and not created endorsers. The final limitation that has to be mentioned is the fact that local endorsers were compared to international endorsers. This could result in response bias, as the international endorser might be better known to the local public or *vice versa*. The international endorser could also be perceived as being more credible because they are internationally known compared to local endorsers who are only well known locally. The primary limitation to this study relates to the generalisation of the results. Silvera and Austad (2004, 1523) explain that there is substantial evidence that student samples can limit the external validity and thereby limit the generalisability of the findings. Another possible generalisability issue stems from the stimuli used in this study.

7.3 Recommendations for future research

Future research can develop a scale that will be able to measure whether endorsement applications are more effective or further adjust the scale used to find a more sound result. This scale should ideally include factors such as product fit and perceived brand image. Future research might also consider evaluating endorsers on the financial effect on the organisation. As Silvera and Austad (2004, 1524) contend advertisers often appear to be satisfied with merely creating an association between a popular endorser and their product with the hope that the endorser's positive image will somehow "rub off" on the product. They suggest that advertisers should put more effort not only into the selection of the endorsers and also ensuring that the endorsers match their products, but also into making strong arguments and believable explanations for why endorsers truly do like the products they endorse.

According to Seno and Lukas (2007: 121) the use of celebrities as a promotional tool

should also recognise the potential of those individuals to have their own brand properties. The endorsing party emerges co-brand-like as an exchange partner with another brand. It is evident that the triadic relationship between celebrity endorser or the created spokesperson, product and the brand name needs to be researched in future. The brand properties of celebrities and created spokespersons need to be addressed.

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