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Consistency and Inconsistency in Celebrity Endorsements

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The Rochester Institute of Technology

School of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

Consistency and Inconsistency in Celebrity Endorsements

by

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A Thesis submitted

in partial fulfillment of the Master of Science degree

in Communication & Media Technologies

December 7, 2015

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School of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

Degree: Master of Science in Communication & Media Technologies

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate consumer attitudes towards brands when exposed to celebrity endorsements in cases where the personality of the celebrity does not match the personality of the brand (inconsistent). Theories used in this research included: Cognitive Dissonance Theory, how consumers are expected to react when receiving information that presents inconsistency; and Schema Theory, how information is stored in the form of schemas. A measure consisting of attractiveness, credibility, purchase intention and likeability was created based on studies by Spear and Singh (2004) and Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) in order to evaluate consumer attitudes. A survey was given to 200 respondents to evaluate their attitude toward ten advertisements with celebrity endorsements. Five of the ads were consistent between celebrity and personality of the brand and five were inconsistent. Results showed that people had a significantly more positive attitude toward consistent ads compared to inconsistent ads.

Keywords: celebrity, brands, identities, product endorsement, communication strategies, marketing, print ads

Consistency and Inconsistency in Celebrity Endorsements

We live in a world where consumers are constantly exposed to advertising campaigns and a wide variety of brand names. Places like Times Square in New York City and Piccadilly Circus in London have become famous for their prominent displays of ads all around the streets. To differentiate themselves from their competitors, brands rely on their communication strategies aimed at creating engaging content that can capture the attention of consumers and create a positive perception towards the brand.

Marketers have long recognized the value of using celebrities as part of their communication strategies. Hackley and Hackley (2015) comment on the importance of using celebrity endorsement for branding campaigns where two types of consumers can be reached, those who follow the celebrity and those who follow the brand: “celebrity is commercially indispensable for lending brands an emotional resonance and extending the potential market into two segments” (p. 2).

Many researchers highlight the concept of meaning-transfer when it comes to brand and celebrity collaborations and how the personality of a celebrity can affect the way a campaign is perceived (Miller & Allen, 2012). In recent years, celebrities have been able to connect with their fans via social media sites where followers feel closer to their idols. Social media has given regular individuals the chance to reach larger audiences and “grab a hold of the megaphone” (McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013, p. 136), gaining success and recognition by the constant use of different platforms.

With so many branding campaigns using celebrities as part of their communication strategies, a closer look into how these interactions work and produce positive or negative behaviors in consumers could be beneficial for future strategies, especially when using

celebrities with similar or not so similar personalities as the brands involved. This study will analyze the impact on consumer attitudes towards brands when exposed to celebrity endorsements with consistent or inconsistent messages. This study will refer to inconsistent messages when the celebrity and the brand depict different personalities; consistent messages, however, will depict celebrity and brand with similar personalities. A brand personality is defined by Aaker (1997) as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (p. 347).

Rationale

With the growing market of celebrities coming from reality TV shows, social media platforms, blogs, and so on, a closer look into the selection of celebrities for branding campaigns is needed in order for marketers and advertisers to reach a better understanding of how celebrities and brands are perceived by consumers and how the messaging from celebrities and brands may potentially collide.

It is also important to pay close attention to the changes in consumers’ perceptions toward celebrities, especially with the growing communities in social media sites that now identify new and attractive celebrities. These changes have opened the doors for new celebrities to step up and increase in numbers, coming from different types of media, “Through the participative consumer mechanisms of social media, consumers are able to elect celebrities more quickly and efficiently than ever before” (Hackley & Hackley, 2015, p. 2).

With these changes in consumer-celebrity interactions, past research and conventional theorists argue that in order for a campaign to be successful, celebrity and brand must be aligned in order for the message to be coherent; otherwise the message will produce negative responses (Hackley & Hackley, 2015).

But in recent brand campaign ads, the use of visual codes (e.g., celebrities) that have no similarities with the brand have proven to be successful, as evidenced by beer campaigns using elements that are not necessarily related to their products or identities. Examples of such campaigns include *Budweiser* using puppies and Clydesdale horses for their latest 2015 *Super Bowl* ads which, according to *USA Today* (2015), received an average vote of 8.10/10 on Ad Meter and won the first place for best ads during the 2015 Super Bowl. *Newcastle* has also won some recognition thanks to their commercials depicting Anna Kendrick in 2014's Super Bowl and Aubrey Plaza in 2015.

Kendrick's video (see Figure 1; all figures appear in Appendix A), is a parody where the actress rants about almost being in a *Super Bowl* ad and addresses the fact that she is not "beer hot," the sort of individual viewers would expect to see in this type of advertisement. In an article for *Ad Week*, Tim Nudd (January 30, 2014) referred to Anna Kendrick's performance for Newcastle as "Anna Kendrick isn't Beer Commercial Hot, but is Hilarious in Newcastle's Super Bowl Campaigns." In an article for *USA Today*, Allen Cooper (February 1, 2014) highlighted Kendrick's performance where she rants about what it is considered to be "beer commercial hot" and how she didn't expect such an offer, and her disappointment towards the brand for not being able to air the ad during the *Super Bowl*. According to the same article, Kendrick's video generated more than 3.2 million views on *Youtube* during its first week.

Literature Review

Past research regarding celebrity endorsement and meaning-transfer between brand and celebrity is necessary in order to understand the dynamics between brands and celebrities. The following literature review will discuss the roles of brand image and brand personality in order to understand the importance of forming alliances with celebrities.

The theories used to support the basis of this study are schema theory, which relates to information being stored in the form of a schema, and cognitive dissonance theory in order to build an idea of how consumers are expected to react when receiving information that presents compatible or incompatible variables.

Schema Theory

In their research, Phillips, McQuarrie, and Griffin (2014), identified the process in which consumers translate visual brand identities and stored information regarding the brand in schemas. These schemas are the brand knowledge that consumers have, “a relatively stable mental framework for organizing knowledge in complex structures” (Phillips, McQuarrie, & Griffin, 2014, p. 226). They also looked into how familiarity with the elements plays a crucial role when the consumer processes an ad, “prior research applying schema theory to marketing has found strong familiarity effect. Ease of processing familiar information already stored in a schema leads to a feeling of liking” (Phillips et al., 2014, p. 227).

If we look at the ad from *Newcastle* featuring Anna Kendrick or the ad from *Supercell* featuring Liam Neeson (see Figure 2), neither depicted consistency between the brand’s personality and the celebrity’s personality. Nevertheless, consumers were able to show positive attitudes toward both ads because both celebrities are very popular and attractive, and most consumers are familiar with them. Liam Neeson’s ad with *Supercell* earned the ad an average vote of 6.08 on Ad Meter and the 17th ranking position, making it the second favorite ad depicting a celebrity during the 2015 Super Bowl. Therefore this familiarity should lead to feelings of liking.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory and the Advertising Context

Cognitive dissonance was carefully studied and formulated by Festinger (1962), who described it as a state that when an individual faces elements of knowledge inconsistent with each other, which can be psychologically disturbing for the individual. Oshikawa (1969) also adds, "If one cognitive element follows logically from another, they are said to be consonant to each other. They are dissonant to each other if one does not follow logically from the other" (p. 44). For the purposes of this study, we can address dissonance as inconsistency.

Cognitive dissonance theory also addresses ways for an individual to reduce this psychological tension and the dissonance. These strategies are clearly stated by Beasley and Joslyn (2001). They mention how individuals may even reduce the importance of the elements they are exposed to in order to find logic in their relationship, "an individual may attempt to reduce dissonance by adding consonant cognitions to the troubling inconsistency, decreasing the importance of the elements in the dissonant relationship, or simply changing one of the dissonant elements" (Beasley & Joslyn, 2001, p. 522). By changing one of the dissonant elements, the individual may change an attitude, opinion or behavior.

In the advertising context, when involved in celebrity endorsements where dissonance can occur due to the inconsistency between brand and celebrity, an evaluation of how this endorsement could affect consumer's attitude, opinion, and behavior is important since it can affect both brand and celebrity. Therefore, according to this theory, if consumers are not used to seeing actresses like Anna Kendrick portrayed in a beer ad, then they might not have positive attitudes towards the commercial, especially because they are used to seeing beer ads showing beautiful women with a higher sex appeal. Or consumers might even change their perceptions towards one of the elements while trying to make sense out of the ad.

Another example of inconsistency between brand and celebrity would be to show a celebrity like Justin Bieber, who is known for his rebellious ways and sex appeal to represent serious product categories like banks or health insurance companies. Traditionally, these product categories have stayed away from the reckless, young and rebellious image since it affects their credibility, endurance, and stability. Since it is not a conventional combination, the importance of one or both elements might decrease and consumer's attitude towards them could be affected.

Brand Image and Brand Personality

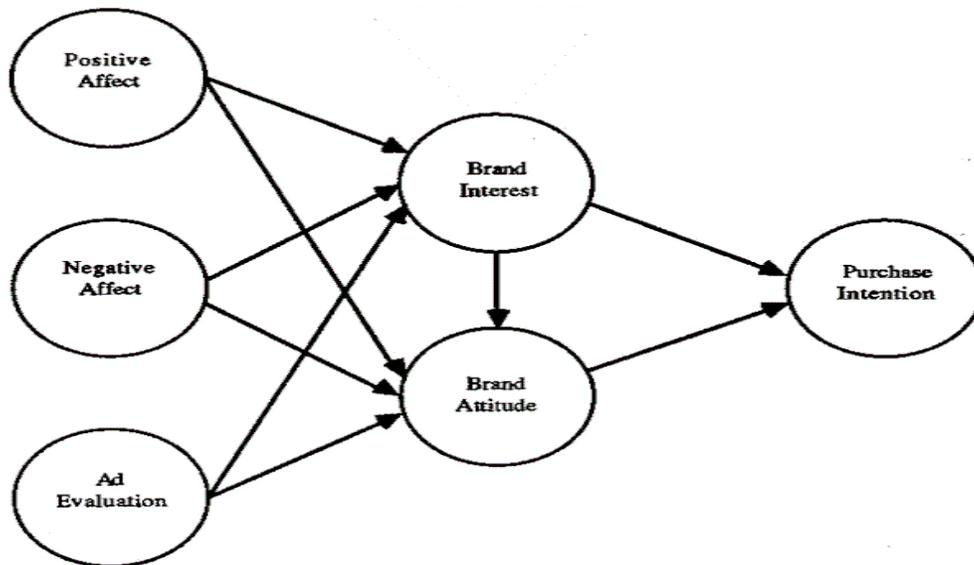
When analyzing the dynamics between celebrities and brands, it's important to pay close attention to each element separately. Over time, brands have been able to find ways to build their image and personality in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the eyes of the consumers. According to Aaker (1997), brand personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (p. 347). We can understand by this that brand personality refers to how the brand is seen and perceived by the consumer, e.g., Nike is considered by a wide variety of consumers to be a brand for young and active people interested in sports and staying healthy. Also, brands like Victoria's Secret are known for being sensual and passionate.

Aaker (1997) states that consumers sometimes perceive brands as celebrities, "As they relate to one's own self, which may be due in part to strategies used by advertisers to imbue a brand with personality traits" (p. 347). Spears and Singh (2004) cite Mitchell and Olson (1981, p. 318) when defining attitude towards a brand as "an individual's internal evaluation of the brand." They also highlight how when evaluating a brand, there are imputations of goodness and badness. A brand can be considered as attractive or unattractive, or as nice or awful. In the context of

celebrity endorsement, these imputations may affect the celebrity or the brand when both are depicted together.

Machleit, Madden, and Allen (1990) were also capable of developing the following framework used to “explore the relationships among affective responses to the ad (positive affect, negative affect, and ad evaluation), and brand interest, brand attitude, and purchase intentions.”

(n/p)



By analyzing this framework, researchers have come to understand how consumer perceptions affect their attitudes and interests towards a brand, therefore developing these attitudes into a purchase intention. And according to Gardner (1985), “Understanding the roles of brand-related beliefs and attitude towards the advertisement in the formation of brand attitudes has important implications for theoretical conceptualizations of the attitude formation process” (p. 192). If the consumer has a negative reaction towards an advertisement campaign, there is a possibility that the individual will not be interested in acquiring any of the brand’s products. How the consumer perceives the brand is highly important, therefore communication strategies must aim at creating content that can cause a positive impact and build a positive visual brand identity.

Every visual element within the ad counts, and using celebrities requires a careful thought into how their identities can collide. According to Phillips et al. (2014), every visual element within an ad works together in order to create meaning. When analyzing an advertising campaign featuring a celebrity and a brand, it is almost sure that we would already have pre-structured information of both elements separately. Therefore when a consumer processes an ad, there may be a conflict between the information the individual previously has of both elements and, as a result, the consumer will try to make a sense out of it. By forming brand alliances, brands are capable of reaching a larger audience and engaging with their consumers.

Celebrity Endorsement

Ever since advertising agencies discovered the value of using celebrities as part of their branding campaigns, a wide variety of different product categories and their brands have been represented by several celebrities. McCracken (1989) defines celebrity endorsement 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” (p. 310). For the purpose of this study, Hackley and Hackley’s (2015) definition of celebrity is the most accurate, as individuals who have achieved public recognition among consumers, leading them to develop a large fan base and a large community of followers.

The range of product categories goes from perfumes, clothing, banking, cellphones, watches, food, and other consumer products. By using celebrities as part of their communication strategies, brands capture the attention of consumers who desire to look, smell or feel like their favorite celebrities and idols. As the years go by, we have seen celebrities like David Beckham for *H&M*, collaborations between Britney Spears, Beyoncé, and Pink for *Pepsi*, Jennifer Aniston for *SmartWater*, and the numerous celebrities involved with the iconic ads of *Got Milk?*.

Recently, the 2014 Super Bowl commercials showed a wide variety of celebrities and brands collaborations such as *Snickers* mixing The Brady Bunch with Danny Trego and Steve Buscemi for their “You’re not you when you’re Hungry,” an unusual combo but one that earned more than 14 million views on *Youtube*.

According to Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010), traditional perspectives on celebrity endorsement are based on communication theories and cultural meaning transfer. They mention celebrity endorsement described by communication theories as “A one-way communication and persuasion process where factors residing within the endorser are deemed important” (p. 453). The factors mentioned were: source, credibility, and attractiveness. Consumers develop a relationship with each celebrity and brand, having different possible perceptions towards one and another. Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) argue that,

Consumers’ attitudes towards a particular brand alliance are likely to be influenced by the pre-existing attitudes toward the brands in the partnership and the perceived fit of the products and brands, forming a potentially virtuous circle where the alliance influences consumers’ perceptions of the partners and, subsequently, leads to positive evaluation of the relationship. (p. 453)

Schema theory proves to be influential when processing ads, since according to Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) a consumer’s attitude towards a brand or even a celebrity will be determined by the pre-existing attitudes towards both, even past experiences with the brand or celebrity will be able to influence these attitudes. Thompson et al. (2015) cite Brownlie and Hewer (2011) regarding contemporary celebrity relations with consumers, “contemporary consumer culture is replete with manufactured celebrity product, serving as packaged resources for consumers to draw from in their identity projects” (n/p).

Meaning-Transfer

According to McCracken (1989), past research has been based mainly on the McGuire model, which stated that effective messages were dependent on their levels of familiarity, likeability, and similarity, “The McGuire model holds that sources who are known to, liked by, and/or similar to the consumer are attractive and, to this extent, persuasive” (p. 311). McCracken (1989) also suggests that if the celebrity represents his stage persona instead of himself, the levels of expertness and trustworthiness might not be the same. But as seen in the *Supercell* advertising campaign, depicting Liam Neeson was using his action movie character in order to create some sense into his role and interaction with the Clash of Clans game. Therefore, and as stated by McCracken (1989), “the celebrity is a composite of his fictional roles” (p. 312). McCracken’s views regarding the McGuire source model indicate that it only limits itself to describe the degrees of attractiveness and credibility regarding celebrities, but fails to identify the types of each one.

Recent research on celebrity endorsement has always paid close attention to meaning transfer when celebrity and brand form alliances. Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) argue “The existence of reciprocal meanings transfer would also suggest that celebrity endorsement should be considered as a brand alliance where meanings and values can be transfer from either partner to the other” (p. 452). When brand and celebrities collide, their meanings also collide with each other in the eyes of consumers. We can understand by these that their meanings and values transfer from celebrities to brands and vice versa when both are depicted together in an advertising campaign.

Celebrities bring different meaning to each endorsement; these meanings can vary from status, class, gender, age, personality traits, and lifestyle types (McCracken, 1989). A closer look

at the *Got Milk?* campaign shows us different celebrities portraying one of their different personas: their true-self, their stage persona, or their persona in a role. Harrison Ford (see Figure 3) does not make any allusion to any of his most famous roles, deciding to go for the “regular guy” image and to be more relatable to consumers.

Heidi Klum is a famous runway model and also hostess of the television show *America's Next Top Model*. For the *Got Milk?* campaign (see Figure 4), she is portraying her stage persona as a model who is in the process of getting ready for the runway while taking time to consume the product. Another ad for the same campaign portrays Hugh Jackman as Wolverine (see Figure 5), one of the roles performed throughout his career. In this picture, he is clearly addressing his persona in a role. Even though not every individual who is familiar with the character would consider him as a regular guy who has time to drink milk (given his nature and aggression), the attractiveness and familiarity that the character represents for the consumer results in the individuals responding positively towards the ad, regardless of the inconsistency between both celebrity and brand personality.

Miller and Allen (2012) also describe McCracken's proposal, which argues that cultural meaning and consumer interpretation of this meaning will immediately dictate the results from the ad:

In the first of a three-stage process, the celebrity acquires meaning from his or her public role. McCracken describes a wide array of celebrity meanings, which can include allusions to status, class, gender, age, personality and lifestyle. In the second stage, the celebrity's meaning can be instilled in a given product through the advertising system with advertising carefully crafted to ‘enable this metamorphic transference’. In the final stage,

the consumer appropriates the new meaning into her life through an advocacy or adversarial relationship with the brand. (p. 444)

As Thompson et al. (2015) argue, “Consumers are seen as facilitators in the meaning transfer process through their consumption and enactment of different identity forms around brand meaning” (n/p).

The study will evaluate celebrities and their dynamics with consumers, as well as an evaluation of past campaigns depicting celebrities and brands. It will also evaluate whether or not there is a difference between consistent and inconsistent ads regarding consumer’s attitudes towards them.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study will analyze the dynamics between celebrity and brand in order to understand how the consumer perceives the message when both elements depict different personalities.

The information should be relevant for marketers and advertisers to implement these perceptions in future celebrity endorsements.

H1: When there is consistency between brands and celebrities during celebrity endorsements, the consumers will have a positive attitude towards the campaign.

H2: When there is inconsistency between brands and celebrities during celebrity endorsements, the consumers will have a negative attitude towards the campaign.

Methods

In order to evaluate consumer perception towards an ad, ten print and online media advertisements were selected and used to measure positive or negative attitudes towards celebrity endorsements, as well as purchase intentions given specific factors within the ad.

Stimuli / Ads

Ads that represented familiar brands were used since it is important for the study that subjects have already a pre-conceived notion of them, therefore they would have a perception of their personalities. The ads selected in the study were from the following product categories: soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, fast food, electronics, and dairy products. Each featured the celebrity holding or using the product. It was important for the ad to imply that the celebrity uses the product in order to test how credible the relation was for the consumer.

Participants

Two hundred subjects from the US participated in the study from October 12th through October 23rd, 2015. Subjects were informed about the general purpose of the study (to analyze the perception towards celebrity endorsements), but were not made aware of the consistency and inconsistency between brand and celebrity in hopes of avoiding influence from the researcher's expectations. The participant contributions were voluntary and anonymous.

The survey for this study was registered on *Google Forms* and the link shared on social media and *Reddit*, an online platform for discussions among community members. Described more fully below, the survey consisted of a set of images that constituted printed images with celebrities endorsing brands. Each image had a set of statements with a scale and open-ended questions. The subjects were asked to look at the images and respond to each question.

Survey

The approach by Spears and Singh (2004) was used as a basis for this study. In one of their studies, a large pool of items measuring attitudes was selected in order to evaluate six brands depicted in print ads. In their study, Spears and Singh evaluated this set of images by their attitudes and purchase intention of the individuals.

A pool of printed ads depicting celebrities next to the products was selected for this study. Those brands that were associated specifically to one gender (e.g., perfumes, make-up, clothing) were eliminated from the selection.

Next, a group of subjects were randomly selected and presented with the remaining print images. Each image consisted of a celebrity endorsing a brand; each subject was to select those images they considered to be consistent under the criteria used in this study (i.e., brand and celebrity sharing a similar personality), and those images they considered to be inconsistent under the criteria used in this study (i.e., brand and celebrity with different personalities).

Of the ten printed ads appearing on the survey, five followed the consistency criteria and five followed the inconsistency criteria.

For the survey, media consumption was gathered and evaluated in order to measure which medium has more exposure.

Factors and ads evaluation. For reasons of time limit and survey length, only those elements related to the theories mentioned in the literature review and relevant factors for brands evaluation were selected as part of the study.

Considering Halonen-Kinght and Hurmerinta's study (2010), this research followed their steps into considering the source depicted in the ad (how familiar individuals were to both celebrity and brand), and credibility and attractiveness as important factors in the process of evaluation of attitudes.

The study also followed the McGuire model stated in McCracken's study (1989) which stated that familiarity, likeability, and similarity are also highly effective when evaluating brand attitudes. For this study, similarity between brand and celebrity, as well as likeability towards both, were considered as factors when evaluating the ads.

These are evaluated in five statements, which represented each one of the factors.

It is important to highlight that these are not in-depth scale for each factor; the study will not be evaluating each factor in the conventional way, since this is merely a pilot test to confirm whether or not there is in fact a difference between consistent and inconsistent images.

Purchase Intention is also considered by Machleit et al. (1990) as related to brand attitude while consumers develop positive affects or negative affects towards an ad.

Source. In order to test celebrity and brand separately, the following statements were created: *I have positive feelings towards this celebrity / I have positive feelings towards the brand.*

Both factors were evaluated on a Linkert scale from 1 – 5 where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 represents *strongly agree*. Also, individuals were able to state they did not know the celebrity or brand with the option “I do not know the Celebrity/Brand.” These familiarity questions should lead to a correlation with purchase intention in order to evaluate and determine whether the familiarity factor when used in ads with inconsistency will lead to purchase intention and positive attitudes towards the ad.

Likeability. This study will test how levels of likeability when an ad presents inconsistency between brand and celebrity may lead to positive attitude towards the ad.

The celebrity makes me like the product even more.

This factor will be evaluated on a Linkert scale from 1 – 5 where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 represents *strongly agree*.

Attractiveness. For the purpose of this study, attractiveness represents how attractive the celebrity and brand endorsement look together. The following statement was structured for attractiveness: *Both celebrity and brand look attractive together.*

This factor will be evaluated on a Linkert scale from 1 – 5 where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 represents *strongly agree*.

Credibility. Credibility is not measured under the conventional scales, since in this study it is strictly related to whether the consumer believes the celebrity uses the product and is merely a test pilot. The following statement was structured for this factor: *I believe the celebrity in the ad actually uses the product.*

This factor will be evaluated on a Linkert scale from 1 – 5 where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 represents *strongly agree*.

Similarity. This factor refers mainly to whether the celebrity and brand depicted in the same ad are similar to each other. The following statement was structured for this factor: *My perceptions of this celebrity are consistent with previous impressions I had of the brand.*

This factor will be evaluated on a Linkert scale from 1 – 5 where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 represents *strongly agree*.

Purchase Intention. Since marketers can use celebrity endorsements in order to induce purchase intentions in consumers, this study will also evaluate if consistent and inconsistent ads can also lead to purchase intentions. Also, the study evaluated whether there is a correlation between the credibility, attractiveness, similarity, and likeness factors that can lead to purchase intentions in inconsistent ads.

A single statement representing purchase intention after exposed to the brand was also structured as follows: *The celebrity makes me want to purchase the product.*

This factor was evaluated on a Linkert scale from 1 – 5 where 1 is *strongly disagree* and 5 represents *strongly agree*.

Open-ended questions, such as the following, should also shed some light into what other elements can lead to positive attitudes towards the brand and eventually a purchase.

What aspects did or did you not like about the ad?

Demographic Questions. This section asked subjects information regarding their age, gender, and student status.

The survey instrument obtained a total of 200 responses, where 55% of respondents were males, while 45% of respondents were females; the ages were among the following ranges: 18-20 (13%), 21-25 (36.5%), 26-30 (23.5%), 31-35 (11%), 36-40 (8.5%), 41-45 (1%), 46-50 (3%), 51+ (3.5%). Furthermore, 7% of respondents had completed high school, while 42% were still undergraduate, 34% had already completed their bachelor's degree, 15.5% of respondents had a master's degree, and 1.5% had a doctorate degree. At the beginning of the survey, a disclaimer stated that all participants needed to be U.S. citizens/residents and be over eighteen years.

Regarding the images presented, 94% of individuals were able to recognize the brands in the consistent ads and 79.1% were able to recognize the celebrities. For the inconsistent images, 96.8% recognized the brands and 77.1% recognized the celebrities.

A Cronbach's Alpha test was used in order to measure the reliability in the questions measuring attitude in both consistent images and inconsistent images. For the consistent images measuring attitude, Cronbach's Alpha reached 0.948. For the inconsistent images measuring attitude, Cronbach's Alpha reached 0.927. These results confirm that the scale used was in fact reliable.

Results

H1: When there is consistency between brands and celebrities during celebrity endorsements, the consumers will have a positive attitude towards the campaign.

In order to test the first hypothesis, a paired samples *t*-test was run between the questions measuring attitude (which counts as dependent variable), using only the images that were considered consistent for the study. Table 1 shows the mean for consistent images was 2.85, with a standard deviation of 0.72 and a standard error mean of 0.05.

Table 1

Attitude Towards Consistent and Inconsistent Images

Images	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Consistent Attitudes	2.8508	200	0.72136	0.05101
Inconsistent Attitudes	2.4694	200	0.63244	0.04472

Table 2 shows the significance (2-tailed). There is a statistically significant difference between inconsistent and inconsistent images and the attitudes towards them, ($t(199) = 12.598, p < 0.000$). Because the mean for the consistent images is greater than the mean for inconsistent images, we can conclude that subjects were able to show more positive attitude towards the consistent images.

Table 2

Paired Sample t-Test, Attitude Towards Consistent and Inconsistent Images

Paired Groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>	95% <i>CID / Lower</i>	95% <i>CID / Upper</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Consistent Attitudes and Inconsistent Attitudes	0.38140	0.42815	0.03027	0.32170	0.44110	12.598	199	0.000

H2: When there is inconsistency between brands and celebrities during celebrity endorsements, the consumers will have a negative attitude towards the campaign.

As shown in the previous hypothesis, a paired samples *t*-test was run between the questions measuring attitude (which counts as dependent variable), using only the images that were considered consistent for the study. Table 1 shows the mean for inconsistent images was 2.46, with a standard deviation of 0.63 and a standard error mean of 0.04.

Table 2 shows the results for the significance of both groups, enabling us to conclude that subjects had a less positive attitude towards the consistent images.

Furthermore, celebrity endorsements where there is inconsistency between brand and celebrity are more likely to receive less positive attitudes from consumers. Among the factors evaluated, there seems to be a significant difference between consistent and inconsistent images when pairing each factor (see Table 3).

Table 3

Paired Sample t-Test, Paired Factors for Consistent and Inconsistent Images

Paired Groups	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>	95% <i>CID / Lower</i>	95% <i>CID / Upper</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Attractiveness Consistent and Inconsistent	0.47100	0.60779	0.04298	0.38625	0.55575	10.959	199	0.000
Source Consistency and Inconsistency	0.55500	0.66179	0.04680	0.46272	0.64728	11.860	199	0.000
Credibility Consistency and Inconsistency	0.54900	0.57099	0.04038	0.46938	0.62862	4.229	199	0.000
Purchase Intention Consistency and Inconsistency	0.15500	0.51838	0.03666	0.08272	0.22728	4.229	199	0.000
Likeability Consistency and Inconsistency	0.17700	0.53130	0.03757	0.10292	0.25108	4.711	199	0.000
Familiarity Consistency and Inconsistency	0.33800	0.62491	0.04419	0.25086	0.42514	7.649	199	0.000

Participants evaluated each factor (attractiveness, consistent perceptions, credibility, purchase intention and likeability) higher for consistent images (means were higher) than inconsistent images (see Table 4). This suggests that individuals were more likely to perceive consistent images as more attractive (3.41), as well as believe the authenticity of the relationship between the brand and celebrity depicted in them (3.06). Contrary to consistent images, inconsistent images showed lower means where attractiveness reached a mean of 2.93; consistent

perception of 2.64 and credibility had a mean of 2.51. Purchase intention had a mean slightly higher for consistent (2.26) than for inconsistent (2.10).

Table 4

Means of Paired Factors for Each Group

Paired Groups	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Attractiveness				
Consistent	3.4100	200	0.75068	0.05308
Inconsistent	2.9390	200	0.77530	0.05482
Source				
Consistency	3.1960	200	0.69974	0.04948
Inconsistency	2.6410	200	0.65072	0.04601
Credibility				
Consistency	3.0640	200	0.77050	0.05448
Inconsistency	2.5150	200	0.69872	0.04941
Purchase Intention				
Consistency	2.2600	200	0.94236	0.06663
Inconsistency	2.1050	200	0.84376	0.05966
Likeability				
Consistency	2.3240	200	0.98971	0.06998
Inconsistency	2.1470	200	0.85030	0.06013
Familiarity				
Consistency	3.5600	200	0.75342	0.05327
Inconsistency	3.2220	200	0.77597	0.05487

Some factors did turn out to be higher in the inconsistent images. Table 3 shows the factors with the highest means for inconsistent images to be attractiveness and credibility. These findings suggest that despite the inconsistency between brand and celebrity, some individuals still found both celebrity and brand to look attractive together and they also believed that the celebrity uses the product or service depicted. Attractiveness for inconsistent images had a mean of 2.96, above average, which suggests that this is a strong factor when evaluating attitudes.

A correlation was also run in order to evaluate whether there was a relation between the factors: attractiveness, consistent perceptions, likeability, and credibility, with purchase intention toward each group (consistent and inconsistent). Findings suggest the factors mentioned previously have a strong relationship with purchase intention for consistent images (see Table 5).

Table 5

Correlation of Factors with Purchase Intention for Consistent Images

		Purchase Intention Consistency	Consistent Factors
Purchase Intention Consistency	Pearson Correlation	1	0.885
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000
	<i>N</i>	200	200
Consistent Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.885	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	200	200

Findings also suggest there is a weaker relationship between the factors attractiveness, familiarity, likeability and credibility with purchase intention for inconsistent images (see Table 6).

Table 6

Correlation of Factors with Purchase Intention for Inconsistent Images

		Purchase Intention Inconsistency	Inconsistent Factors
Purchase Intention Inconsistency	Pearson Correlation	1	0.832
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000
	<i>N</i>	200	200
Inconsistent Factors	Pearson Correlation	0.832	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	200	200

An independent sample *t*-test was run to determine if there was a relationship between genders and consistent and inconsistent images. Findings suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between males and consistent images, and females and consistent images. Inconsistent images did not show a statistically significant relationship with either gender (see Table 7).

Table 7

Independent Sample t-Test for Images and Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Consistent Attitudes	Equal variances assumed	3.835	0.052	-2.324	198	0.021
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.259	161.384	0.025
Inconsistent Attitudes	Equal variances assumed	0.844	0.359	-1.314	198	0.191
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.288	171.655	0.199

The means for females and consistent images was higher than the mean for consistent images and males, which suggests that females were more likely to show a more positive attitude towards the ads (see Table 8).

Table 8

Independent Sample t-Test. Means for Images and Gender

Images	I am:	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Consistent Attitudes	Male	110	2.7447	0.61282	0.05843
	Female	90	2.9804	0.82016	0.08645
Inconsistent Attitudes	Male	110	2.4164	0.57227	0.05456
	Female	90	2.5342	0.69679	0.07345

An independent sample t-test was also run between purchase intention and gender. There was a significant relationship for males and purchase intention. (see Table 9.1 – 9.2)

Table 9.1

Independent Sample t-Test for Purchase Intention and Gender

Images	I am:	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Purchase Intention Consistency	Male	110	2.1400	0.77934	0.07431
	Female	90	2.4067	1.09645	0.11558
Purchase Intention Inconsistency	Male	110	2.0473	0.76046	0.07251
	Female	90	2.1756	0.93512	0.09857

Table 9.2

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
Purchase Intention Consistency	Equal variances assumed	7.765	0.006	-2.006	198	0.046
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.941	156.019	0.054
Purchase Intention Inconsistency	Equal variances assumed	1.367	0.244	-1.070	198	0.286
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.048	170.590	0.296

Findings also suggest there is a strong relationship between positive feelings towards the celebrity and individuals' attitudes towards the ad when exposed to consistent images. Positive feelings towards brands showed a lower relationship with attitude when exposed to consistent images (see Table 10.1 – 10.2).

Table 10.1

*Correlation Test Between Consistent Attitudes with Positive Feelings Towards Celebrities:
Consistent Images*

		Positive Feelings	
		Consistency	Consistent Attitude
Positive Feelings Consistency	Pearson Correlation	1	0.833
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000
	<i>N</i>	72	72
Consistent Attitude	Pearson Correlation	0.833	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	72	200

Table 10.2

Correlation Test Between Consistent Attitudes with Positive Feelings towards Brands: Consistent Images

		Consistent Attitude	Positive Feelings Consistency
Consistent Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	0.798
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000
	<i>N</i>	200	150
Positive Feelings Consistency	Pearson Correlation	0.798	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	150	150

Findings also suggests there is a lower relationship between positive feelings towards the celebrity and individual’s attitudes towards the ad when exposed to inconsistent images. Positive feelings towards brands showed an even lower relationship with attitude when exposed to inconsistent images (see Table 11).

Table 11

Correlation Between Attitude and Positive Feelings Towards Brands and Celebrities: Inconsistent Images

		Consistent Attitude	Positive Feelings Celebrity	Positive Feelings Brand
Consistent Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	0.785	0.728
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000	0.000
	<i>N</i>	200	83	172
Positive Feelings Celebrity	Pearson Correlation	0.785	1	0.755
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000		0.000
	<i>N</i>	83	83	82
Positive Feelings Brand	Pearson Correlation	0.728	0.755	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	172	82	72

A correlation was run to evaluate if there was a relation between purchase intention and positive feelings towards celebrities and brands for both groups of images.

Findings suggest that for consistent images, positive feelings towards a celebrity have a stronger relationship with purchase intention than positive feelings towards a brand (see Table 12).

Table 12

Correlation Between Positive Feelings Towards Celebrities and Brands for Consistent Images

		Purchase Intention	Positive Feelings Celebrity	Positive Feelings Brand
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	0.764	0.704
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000	0.000
	<i>N</i>	200	72	150
Positive Feelings Celebrity	Pearson Correlation	0.764	1	0.804
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000		0.000
	<i>N</i>	72	72	66
Positive Feelings Brand	Pearson Correlation	0.704	0.804	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	150	66	150

For inconsistent images, findings showed there was a stronger relationship between celebrity and purchase intention than with brand and purchase intention (see Table 13).

Table 13

Correlation Between Positive Feelings Towards Celebrities and Brands for Inconsistent Images

		Positive Feelings Celebrity	Positive Feelings Brand	Purchase Intention
Positive Feelings Celebrity	Pearson Correlation	1	0.755	0.713
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		0.000	0.000
	<i>N</i>	83	82	83
Positive Feelings Brand	Pearson Correlation	0.755	1	0.654
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000		0.000
	<i>N</i>	82	172	172
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	0.713	0.654	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.000	0.000	
	<i>N</i>	83	172	200

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate attitudes toward celebrity endorsements where the personality of the celebrity did not match the personality of the brand, making the image inconsistent. Also, this study evaluated attitudes when the celebrity endorsement did show a consistency between brand and celebrity.

It is also important to point out that most of the individuals who participated in this survey do seem to be very active on Internet, since 91% of respondents use Internet more than once a day. It was also interesting to find that most of the participants are also active on their smartphones which they use more than once a day (95%).

Findings suggest that consumers are more likely to react positively to ads when there is consistency between brand and celebrity. This supports Hackley and Hackley's (2015) proposal, which suggests that both celebrity and brand must be aligned for the message to be coherent, which is more likely to lead to a successful campaign. Results show that there is a significant

difference between attitudes toward consistent and inconsistent images where consistent images received more positive attitudes than inconsistent images.

It is also important to highlight that consumers considered celebrity endorsements to be attractive consistent images showed a higher mean than inconsistent images. However, for inconsistent images individuals still found celebrity endorsements to be highly attractive over the rest of the factors evaluated. The respondents may have found a variety of factors in the ad appealing, including colors, poses, and closeness to the products of each celebrity endorsement. Some individuals commented on the aesthetics of the ads mentioning how colors were pleasing in the examples with Beyoncé, Jennifer Aniston, and Katy Perry:

- “I liked the use of the brand's color to theme the advertisement. The marketing language is coherent and successfully differentiates itself from the brand's competition.” (Beyoncé-Pepsi ad)
- “Very visually appealing.” (Jennifer Aniston – SmartWater ad)
- “Seems most true to life. The ad is clean and glamorous.” (Jennifer Aniston – SmartWater ad)
- “The ad is super cute and a bit tongue in cheek. It definitely gets my attention and brings awareness to a product that is likely trying to reach my demo.” (Katy Perry – Pop Chips ad)

For the consistent images, individuals indicated they were more likely to purchase the product depicted with the celebrity. An explanation for this could be that individuals were already familiar with the brand and had previous positive experience with it. Even celebrities may have had an impact on these results since some comments from the individuals stated that celebrities like Taylor Swift and Jennifer Aniston seemed trustworthy celebrities.

It was interesting to see for the inconsistent images how many individuals commented on the hilariousness of the ads containing Woody Allen, Hugh Jackman, and Ozzy Osbourne, where humor seems to be a key factor for the ad to receive positive attitude. It is possible that by using humor as an excuse for the choice of celebrity, the inconsistency between brand and celebrity is perceived as a parody and therefore it lowers feelings of dissonance and discomfort:

- “I think it's awesomely hilarious” (Hugh Jackman – *Got Milk* ad)
- “Humorous and unexpected.” (Ozzy Osbourne – I can't believe it's not Butter! ad)
- “My favorite one so far. Ozzy is like a train wreck and so are fake butters. Ozzy is funny and appealing in his own clumsy way. ALMOST makes me want to eat this fake butter crap.” (Ozzy Osbourne – I can't believe it's not Butter! ad)
- “This endorsement was hilarious hahaha” (Ozzy Osbourne – I can't believe it's not Butter! ad)

There is however a very interesting and important detail with the Woody Allen ad. Due to his love life scandal and divorcing his wife to marry his wife's adopted daughter, many people called Woody Allen a pedophile in the comments section. This means that brands should not choose celebrities just on the fact that they are famous. Existing public perceptions of the celebrity need to be evaluated, otherwise poor decisions could bring negative attitudes towards the brand. Some of the qualitative data shows the following;

- “Now I know Woody Allen is a creep who had an affair with his step-daughter, but when the ad came out I think it would have been effective. It's actually a pretty good ad, but I can't help but judge it based on what I know about him now.”
- “Woody Allen is a pedophile and doesn't deserve my money.”

- “Ever since I learned the thing about him and his step-daughter, Woody Allen has creeped me out. Poor Mia Farrow.”

Results also suggest that using celebrities that represent an opposite personality to the brands do not appear to be credible. This can be seen in the Cristiano Ronaldo – KFC and Heidi Klum – Carl’s Jr. ads. Qualitative data shows how individuals were actually upset by these pairings since do not make sense; moreover, it was not credible that the celebrity would, in fact, consume the product. Examples are as follow:

- “The best soccer player in the world doesn't eat KFC. I know how this works, but still.” (Cristiano Ronaldo – KFC ad)
- “This is a professional athlete. He doesn't eat KFC. It's insulting to suggest he enjoys eating fried food. KFC is also disgusting.” (Cristiano Ronaldo – KFC ad)
- “Again, professional athletes don't eat unhealthy food. So it's a strange ad choice, though I understand that fast food restaurants want to make themselves appear healthier than they really are.” (Cristiano Ronaldo – KFC ad)
- “I love Heidi Klum but there is no way she is eating a Carls Jr. Cheeseburger.” (Heidi Klum – Carl’s Jr. ad)
- “THERES NO WAY SHE LOOKS LIKE THAT AND EATS BURGERS. NO WAY. THIS GENUINELY MAKES ME MAD” (Heidi Klum – Carl’s Jr. ad)

These findings suggest that credibility does play a crucial role when structuring celebrity endorsements and advertisings. Even if there is inconsistency between brand and celebrity, the relationship needs to be credible.

Past research has shown that celebrity endorsements allow both sides (celebrity and brand) to reach two types of consumers (Hackley & Hackely, 2015). Therefore, by using different celebrities, brands are able to reach the many fans of each celebrity in particular.

If brands were interested in using celebrity endorsements that suggested inconsistency, it is important for the brand to have a clear notion of the type of target they wish to reach. For example, banks using Justin Bieber as part of their image in order to promote a very targeted product or service could be aimed at a specific crowd that follows the celebrity. It would be also advisable to focus the attention more on the product more than the name of the bank in order to associate the product to the celebrity more than the bank as a whole. This is in order to have a lower impact of meaning transfer, which according to Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010), brand alliances can lead to transfer of meanings and values between both brand and celebrity. Banks would not want to be highly associated with Justin Beiber's personality, but developing a highly targeted product associated to the celebrity might lower the effects of meaning transfer and values on the bank.

Limitations and Future Research

Due to available time and resources, the sample for the study was limited to only 200 respondents, all of whom came from the same platform. A majority of the participants were among the age range of 20-25 and most were undergraduates (42%) or had completed their bachelor's degree (34%). Since the majority of the individuals were young, they might not have been very familiar with some of the celebrities portrayed in the ads; this can influence their perceptions and attitudes differently than someone who was very familiar with most of the celebrities portrayed in the ads.

Furthermore, even though the survey requested that only U.S. citizens and residents over 18 years old complete the survey, since the survey was submitted through *Reddit*, there is no guarantee that all individuals respected the rule and it is possible that some individuals were in below 18 years or were not U.S. citizens or residents.

Advertisements used for the study were also limited to still images in order to avoid a long length to the survey (as opposed to videos). This medium was also chosen since it would be easier to implement in platforms like *Google Forms*.

Future research should look into the effects of video advertisements when there is consistency and inconsistency between brand and celebrity using a more in-depth scale where each of the factors studied here are analyzed in more questions in order to reach a better understanding of how each of them work on developing attitudes toward ads.

It would also be interesting to look into how effective inconsistent ads can be when featuring female celebrities versus male celebrities and how this may impact male or female participants.

The implications in this study provide initial data toward a better understanding of how celebrity endorsements develop consumer attitudes and how they can be beneficial for both brand and celebrity.

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Appendix A

Figures



Figure 1. Anna Kendrick in Newcastle Beer Ad featured in Super Bowl 20145. Retrieved from: <http://o.aolcdn.com/hss/storage/adam/e079818c4d45db2e1156dc0fd07ebdc2/anna-kendrick.jpg>



Figure 2. Liam Neeson for Supercell during Superbowl 2015. Retrieved from: <http://d.ibtimes.co.uk/en/full/1422032/clash-clans-liam-neeson-super-bowl.png?w=736>

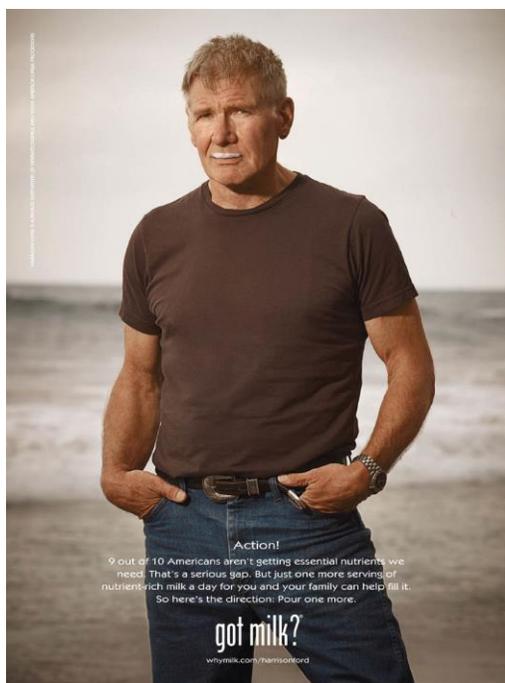


Figure 3. Harrison Ford endorsing Got Milk? advertising campaign, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.foodista.com/blog/2011/07/21/the-harrison-ford-got-milk-ad-is-the-latest-celebrity-dairy-endorsement>



Figure 4. Heidi Klum endorsing Got Milk? Advertising campaign, 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.justjared.com/2011/06/02/heidi-klum-milk-mustache-ad/>

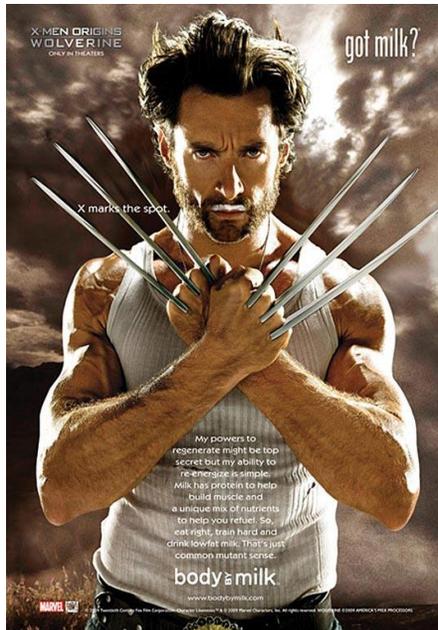


Figure 5. Hugh Jackman endorsing Got Milk? Campaign, 2009. Retrieved from: <http://www.comicvine.com/articles/wolverines-got-milk/1100-138318/>

Appendix B

Survey

Celebrity and Product Personality Test

Please take a moment to fill out the following survey regarding celebrities and brands personalities. This survey is anonymous. The test should take between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

1. Mark with an X: How often do you use or read the following media?

Medium	More than Once a Day	Once a Day	A few times a week	Once a Week	A few times a Month	Once a Month	Never
Internet (Social Media, blogs, etc.)							
Smartphones							
Computer/Laptop							
Television							
Radio							
Newspaper (online/offline)							
Magazines (online/offline)							
Billboards							

2. Please take a moment to analyze each of the following ads, you will be asked to answer a few questions regarding the relationship between brand and celebrity:

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	I do not know the Celebrity/Brand
I have positive feelings towards the Celebrity	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have positive feelings towards the Brand	1	2	3	4	5	6

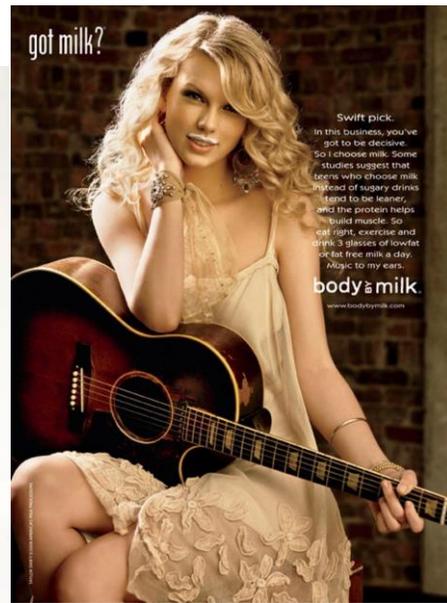
Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Both Celebrity and Brand look attractive together.	1	2	3	4	5
My perceptions of this celebrity are consistent with previous impressions I had of the brand.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe the Celebrity in the ad actually uses the product	1	2	3	4	5

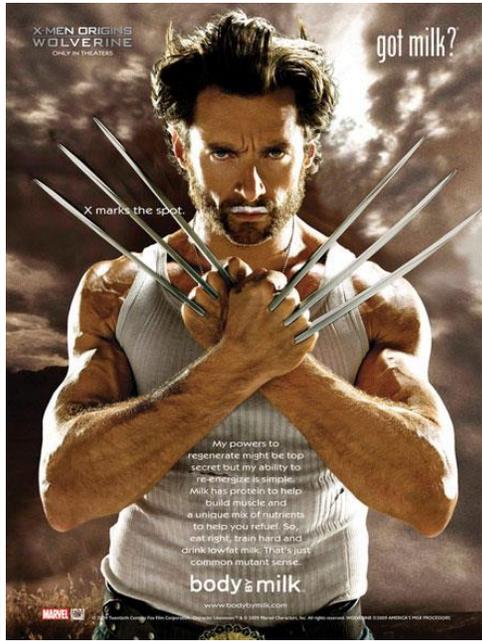
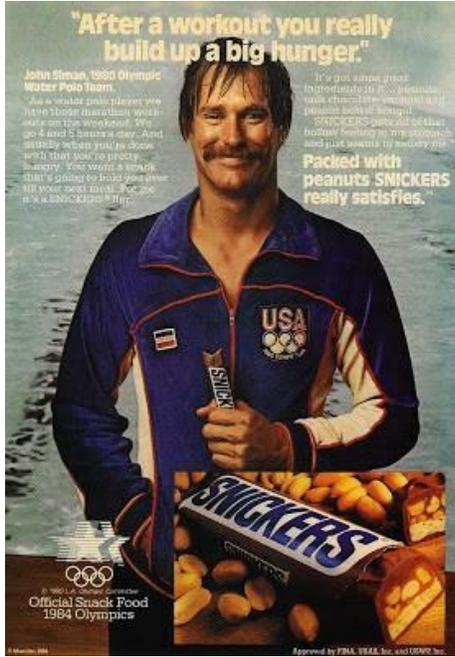
The Celebrity makes me want to purchase the product	1	2	3	4	5
The Celebrity makes me like the product	1	2	3	4	5

1. What aspects did or didn't you like about the ad?
2. Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding the ads or the questions provided?

IMAGES:

Celebrity-Brand 1.









Demographic Questions

Fill out the following statement: I am ____ years old.

Circle one of the following choices:

I am: Male / Female

I have completed: High School / Some College / Bachelor's Degree / Master's Degree /
Doctorate Degree