

Traditional Celebrity versus Instafamous Endorsement: A Study of Skin Care Products on Advertising Effectiveness

Mr Kuo-hsuan Hung. I¹, Dr Kuan-nien Chen^{2*}

¹Graduated from Kaohsiung Medical University in 2018 as a master of science, Taiwan

²Holds a PhD in commerce and is currently a professor at the Dept of Fragrance and Cosmetic Science, Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan

***Corresponding Author:** Dr Kuan-nien Chen, Holds a PhD in commerce and is currently a professor at the Dept of Fragrance and Cosmetic Science, Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan

Abstract: Instagram, a popular photo-sharing social media, has rapidly expanded public influence through its users, scholars and practitioners mainly because of its characteristics of picture display. Drawing from construal level theory, the study examines how endorsers affect advertising effectiveness when the products' attributes (ie, utilitarian vs. hedonic) are perceived by consumers differently.

Based on a 2×2 factorial research design, the study is to discover which type of endorsements (traditional celebrity vs. Instafamous) with which type of skin care products (hedonic attribute vs. utilitarian attribute) has gained better advertising effectiveness, including attitude toward advertisement, purchase intention, willingness-to-pay and positive electronic word-of-mouth.

The results indicate a two-way interaction among endorsement type and product type on advertising effectiveness: when the product is perceived as hedonic, celebrity endorsement is more effective than Instafamous one; on the contrary, when product type is perceived as utilitarian, Instafamous endorsement is more effective. The suitability of endorser and product attributes is very important for cosmetic product promotion through social network.

The contribution of the study is especially for cosmetic marketers by reminding them that a favorable advertising endorsement means the suitability of an endorser and product attributes. The marketers need to pay good attention to the advertising performance of social media.

Keywords: Social media, Instafamous, celebrity endorsement, advertising effectiveness, construal level theory

1. INTRODUCTION

Cosmetic products have become a necessity in modern people's life. In the meantime, the advancement of information technology has caused the decline of traditional media because of the way that modern people generally receive information from mobile phones. In addition, people spend in browsing social media are more than half of the time using mobile phones (Bergstrom & Backman, 2013). For young people, social media has become an indispensable tool in many ways (Goodyear et al, 2019).

In the past decade, Facebook and Twitter were popular, followed by Instagram, a recent developed social media using pictures as the major media sharing with other users. Approximately 46470 photos posted on Instagram every minute in 2017 (Hutchinson, 2018). Facebook is used by many family members, relatives, friends and teachers. It's full of complicated information leading users to feel less privacy. However, Instagram has been favored by young users for years because it can make the account undisclosed (Ting et al., 2016). Many cosmetic brands (eg, Mac, Maybelline, L'Oréal) keep abreast of the developing trend and put more advertisements on Instagram. They have created tens of thousands of online followers (Statista, 2017) and amassed huge word of mouth (WOM). Although many studies have examined the users' intention behavior of Instagram, research on advertising

effectiveness is inadequate.

It is truly high competition among the brands in terms of social media market. As a result, it is very difficult to stand out from the competitors. Many brands invite movie or TV stars to promote the products. A suitable star for the representative of a brand indeed may attract potential buyers because the representative can enhance their trust toward the brands, and then increase the possibility of the purchase (McCracken, 1989; Stafford et al., 2002). In addition to traditional celebrities, there are more and more typical consumers to be the representatives. For those who become popular through Instagram, people call them “Instafamous”. They try achieving fame by posting their selfies to Instagram and are usually followed by over ten thousands users (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). For small businesses, the benefits created based on the Instafamous advertising may not be less than the TV star advertising. Generally, skin care products can be classified into two kinds: hedonic attribute and utilitarian attribute (Moon et al., 2017). This study therefore aims to explore better understanding of which mode can be more suitable while endorsement with different product type is. The results may help cosmetic marketers well position their brands and products through advertising involvement in social media.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Traditionally celebrity endorsement has great impact on product’s advertising effectiveness. Roy (2012) points out that abundant research on celebrity endorsements has focused on the communication source effects, for example, the celebrity being the source and the consumer being the receiver, of celebrity endorsements on the consumers. In the meantime, endorser types lead to a comparison study related to the products with different attributes. In the field of cosmetics, such comparison studies may explore values for both marketers and consumers because the marketers may gain insights into new strategies of product promotion and the consumers may receive more precise product information, including the feedbacks and the ideas from other consumers.

McCracken (1989) proposes a meaning transfer model of celebrity endorsements. The model can be regarded as a distinct case of congruence hypothesis. He first considers a celebrity endorser 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) and postulates that a celebrity personifies a set of meanings toward consumers, which get transferred to the targeted products from the celebrity through an endorsement. McCracken suggests that consumers expect for the set of meanings linked with such products rather than actual products. The objective of celebrity endorsement therefore should be able to transfer the meanings and encourage the consumers to perceive and consume (McCracken, 1989). Silvera and Austad (2003) think that the concept of advertising effectiveness “can be strongly influenced by consumers’ inferences concerning whether the endorser truly likes the product” (Silvera & Austad, 2003:1524). Mehta (1994) did not find significant effect differences between celebrity endorsers and non-celebrity endorsers in terms of consumers’ attitude and purchase intention toward the brand endorsement. However, Doss (2011) points out that unpopular celebrities should try more about self-promotion when attempting to increase the overall brand image because it does not necessarily upsurge the same attributes of attractiveness and trustworthiness as popular celebrities do.

As we may know that endorser type is a momentous source of variation which let advertising endorsement produce differential effects on consumer responses. In Freiden’s view (1984), a non-celebrity endorser who seems no different with ordinary people can truly explain how and why he or she use the product and then probably win some consumers’ trust. An important factor for consumers to trust advertisements is called “source credibility”. Wang et al (2017) indicate that “information from a credible source (eg, celebrity) can influence beliefs, opinions, attitudes and/or behavior through a process called internalization, which occurs when receivers accept a source influence in terms of their personal attitude and value structures” (Wang et al., 2017:11). That is why a celebrity endorsement normally attracts more consumers than a non-celebrity one does. On contrast, people may trust a non-celebrity rather than a celebrity because the latter is born to have a better skin and facial features which are not benefited from cosmetics. Hence, a celebrity is weak for endorsing cosmetic products. A non-celebrity has rich experiences in dealing with the skin problems and wins more trustworthiness of the consumers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). According to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017), celebrities on Instagram, on the one hand, are influential in the purchase behavior of young female

users. On the other hand, non-traditional celebrities such as bloggers, YouTubers and ‘Instafamous’ profiles are more dominant as participants regard them as more credible than traditional. In addition, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) find that “female users are perceptively aware and prefer to follow Instagram profiles that intentionally portray positive images and provide encouraging reviews” (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017:1). No matter celebrity or non-celebrity, to be an endorser is to optimise advertising effectiveness though “influencer marketing on Instagram can be understood as micro-celebrities placing products in their storylines, influencing their followers with their opinions on products or brands” (Althoff, 2017:8).

2.1. Product Type

A product research by Erdogan and others validates that advertising managers usually consider a range of criteria when choosing a celebrity endorser and finds that the importance of such criteria actually relies on product type (Erdogan et al, 2001). It is believed that the same endorser for the different type products would lead to dissimilar endorsement effects. Some products can be categorized into two kinds: hedonic products and utilitarian products (Jones et al., 2006; To et al., 2007; Moon et al., 2017). Hedonic products inspire consumers’ pleasure and relate them to their own past experiences and then generate feelings. Furthermore. The consumers expect to devote to the joys of sense by using such products, for example, chocolates, movies, luxury bags. Those products have some characteristics in common, that is, attractive, pleasant, joyful, desirable (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Utilitarian products are obviously problem-solving orientated. They are associated to the functions of products which can satisfy consumers’ needs and help complete work. Computers, medicine and slimming capsule are good examples (Anderson et al., 2014). Skin care products can be considered as the one which has no doubt the both kinds in nature. That is, such products can be attributed to either hedonic or utilitarian or both. The consumers expect to improve their self-confidence and appearance attractiveness by using the products regularly. For example, the consumers are satisfied with the effects and safety of the products, such as anti-wrinkle cosmetics and keep young.

2.2. Construal Level Theory

The Construal Level Theory (CLT) sees that personal thoughts and behaviors are both affected by psychological distance apparently (Liberman & Trope, 2003) and explains the relation between such distance and the extent to which people's thinking about the things is concrete or not (Trope and Liberman, 2010). When people are explaining those things of long psychological distance, they may use a higher level explanation, including abstract, primary, structured and decontextualized traits, rather than concrete, secondary and contextualized ones (Trope and Liberman, 2010). In business, based on CLT, different marketing strategies are designed to inspire and manage consumers’ behavior (Prasad, 2016). Consumers always pay attention to basic nature of benefits through informational media (textual vs. pictorial) with significant influences regarding the impact of psychological distance on the information consumers prefer to know (Kim et al, 2016).

Bornemann and Homburg (2011) argue that “people form more abstract representations (high-level construals) of psychologically distant actions and more concrete representations (low-level construals) of psychologically near actions” (Bornemann & Homburg, 2011:492). For instance, when hedonic products are in a promotion, the advertisements show sensitive wordings to express the image of luxury and pleasant experience. In other words, consumers will use higher level explanation when meeting hedonic products (Beek et al., 2017). When utilitarian products are in a promotion, the advertisements show rational wordings to express the image of practical and safe experience. Consumers will use lower level explanation when meeting utilitarian products (Kim et al., 2017). In other words, utilitarian products cause low-level construal to better match with rational appeals while hedonic products cause high-level construal to better match with emotional appeals (Kim et al., 2017).

The study considers that TV celebrities have higher social status and own personal reputation and renown image which may be built by their public relation agents. This results in a fairly unreal and untouchable impression. Based on CLT, they can be seen those who are in a long psychological distance. For the reason, consumers should be inspired to a higher level explanation. Instafamous maintain the social media platform daily and manage messages themselves which present actual face and give people sincerity. Moreover, Instafamous are typical consumers who are completely

consumers like other consumers. They have something in common. When asking consumers how much they can describe Instafamous, they tell plenty of details about Instafamous, such as their professional background and titles (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

2.3. Research Hypothesis

Based on the discussions above, the study proposes two hypothesis:

H1: When product type is hedonic, consumers will perceive celebrity endorsement more than Instafamous endorsement.

H2: When product type is utilitarian, consumers will perceive Instafamous endorsement more than celebrity endorsement.

3. METHOD

A questionnaire experiment was conducted to examine how the different endorser influence the advertising effectiveness. The study is a 2 (traditional celebrity vs. Instafamous) X 2 (hedonic attribute vs. utilitarian attribute) factorial experiment. A famous TV star celebrity (hedonic attribute) and an Instagram celebrity (utilitarian attribute), both have more than 200 thousands are followers/trackers, were selected as the images in the study. For the purposes of simplicity, these celebrities and product types were denoted henceforth as more celebrity, less celebrity, more emotional type, and less emotional type. The advertising copies of hedonic attribute used are “enjoy pleasant experience and make you feel more comfortable in your skin.” And “one bottle lets you enjoy luxury life.” The advertising copies of utilitarian attribute used are “moisture holding for your skin” and “one bottle for longer water retention”. The skin care product selected in the study was moisturizer essence and a fictitious brand named “Bio-Aurora” was presented on the right of the display advertising. The study adopts “between-subjects design” method for the experiment. That is, each participant randomly received one of the two display advertings and would not have any chance to look at the other one.

All the participants were recruited through the online questionnaire survey. At the beginning of the experiment, the participants were ensured they were Instagram users by asking them a question. Next, they had to look at the display adverting they received carefully and answer which kind of adverting is, hedonic or utilitarian? Moreover, which kind of the representative they saw in the display adverting is, hedonic or utilitarian? Then they were asked by some questions related to attitude toward advertisement, purchase intention, willingness-to-pay and whether they create positive electronic word-of-mouth to measure the advertising effectiveness. The study used 7-point Likert Scale for the preference measurement and a statistical software, SPSS, for the analysis. The study avoided three interfering variables: preference of adverting representative, adverting quality and demographic factors such as age, income, marital status, and educational achievement.

3.1. Participant

A total of 343 respondents participated in this study. There were 23 invalid respondents who were excluded from the analysis. The final sample consisted of 320 participants (59.1% female, 40.9% male; mean age: 24.18, SD: 4.72; Taiwanese, 100%).

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The questionnaire consists of four major dimensions: (1) advertisement attitude (4 questions), (2) purchase intention (3 questions), (3) online word of mouth (4 questions) and (4) advertisement quality (3 questions).

The questionnaire survey results show advertisement attitude gains $\alpha = .90$, purchase intention $\alpha = .92$, online word of mouth $\alpha = .93$ and advertisement quality $\alpha = .87$. All of the above values of Cronbach's value are higher than 0.7. This means that the reliability of the questionnaire is satisfied. In addition, two manipulation checks are implemented: people images (ie, celebrity and Instafamous) and product images (ie, hedonic and utilitarian). The pictures of a TV star and an Instafamous figure were used to be people images and printed advertisements (hedonic vs. utilitarian) were used to be product images. Participants (n=160) were asked to identify the above images. The results show that 99.4% of them

indicated the TV star as a celebrity ($\chi^2=156.03, p < .001$) and 96.3% indicated the social media figure as an Instafamous ($\chi^2=136.90, p < .001$). This means that the two people images are very suitable for the questionnaire survey. On the other hand, participants were showed one of the two kinds of advertisements randomly and asked to point out the degree (from 1 to 7) that represents how strong they thought the advertisement is suitable for hedonic or utilitarian messages. The results were highly matched. That is, hedonic advertisement exposes hedonic messages ($M=3.92, SD=2.14$) and utilitarian advertisement exposes utilization messages ($M=2.03, SD=1.17$). Both achieved significance level.

Some factors may affect advertiment benefits. They must be checked through “Multivariate Analysis of Covariance” (MANCOVA). After the analysis, the researchers found that “advertiment quality” indeed influences the three dependent variables - advertisement attitude, purchase intention, and online word of mouth.

When place “advertiment quality” and “endorser” to be analyzed, the results (see Table 1) indicate that celebrity are more powerful than Instafamous to stand for a hedonic product. The three dependable variables are all signifiantlt influenced by “advertiment quality”. Nevertheless, for utilitarian products, there is no significant difference between celebrity and Instafamous as the endorser.

Table1. *F-test Result of Advertisement Quality Statistics*

Type	Endorser	Sample size	Average	SD	F value	p value
Hedonic attribute	Celebrity	80	4.53	1.16	15.49	.00***
	Instafamous	80	3.74	1.37		
Utilitarian attribute	Celebrity	80	4.69	1.19	0.26	.61
	Instafamous	80	4.57	1.68		

***p < .001

To examine the differences in the mean values of the dependent variable (ie, advertisement quality) related to the effect of the controlled independent variable while taking into account the influence of the uncontrolled independent variables, the researchers used “Analysis of Covariance” (ANCOVA) technique to do the job. The results showed that both the major effect of endorser and advertisement type are ($F(1,315) = 9.57, p < .01$; ($F(1,315) = 6.60, p < .05$). In the meantime, endorser type and product type versus willing to purchase has a “two-dimensional function” ($F(1,315) = 11.60, p < .001$). The results show on Table 2.

Table2. *Endorser Type and Product Type on Willing to Purchase (ANCOVA test)*

	source	df	Sum of Square	F value	p value
Covariance	Pattern after Correction	4	84.98	59.60	.00***
	Intercept	1	2.79	1.96	.16
	Advertisement Quality	1	300.17	210.53	.00***
Independent variable	Endorser type	1	13.65	9.57	.002**
	Product type	1	9.41	6.60	.011*
Interaction effect	Endorser vs product type	1	16.53	11.60	.00***
	Tolerance	315	1.43		
	Sum	320			
	Sum after correction	319			

Note: *p < .05 · **p < .01 · ***p < .001

Based on above results, when checking on hedonic product type, celebrity earns more positive online WOM than Instafamous. This supports the first hypothesis. On the other hand, when checking on utilitarian product type, Instafamous gains more positive online WOM than celebrity and this support the second hypothesis. Table 3 shows the results. Generally speaking, the summary shows below (Table 4).

Table3. *Descriptive Statistics of Endorser Type and Product Type Versus Online WOM*

Product type	Endorser type	Sample size	Average	SD	F value	p value
Hedonic	Celebrity	80	3.74	1.28	8.56	.004**
	Instafamous	80	3.13	1.32		
Utilitarian	Celebrity	80	3.04	1.58	8.28	.005**

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	Instafamous	80	3.83	1.90		
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Note: ** $p < .01$

Table 4. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Description	Attitude to advertisement	Willing to purchase	Willing to pay	Online WOM
1	When consumers regard product as hedonic one, celebrity gains more advertising effectiveness than Instafamous	approval	approval	approval	approval
2	When consumers regard product as utilitarian one, Instafamous gains more advertising effectiveness than celebrity	approval	approval	approval	approval

Note: $p < .05$

5. CONCLUSION

The study has found that consumers will perceive celebrity endorsement more than Instafamous endorsement when product type is hedonic; consumers will perceive Instafamous endorsement more than celebrity endorsement when product type is utilitarian. As a result, the high construal level is more suitable for the “celebrity-hedonic” endorsement pattern and the low construal level is more suitable for “non-celebrity-utilitarian” endorsement pattern. In addition, when the both construal levels are perceived as described above, the consumers’ familiarity with the endorsers doesn’t affect the advertising effectiveness. By contrast, when the both construal levels don’t match with the status as described above, the advertising effectiveness are weaker. Hence, for cosmetic marketers, especially those who try hard to promote the products online, a nice advertising endorsement means that the suitability of endorser and product attributes is extremely important.

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Citation: Mr Kuo- huan Hung, I, Dr Kuan-nien Chen. " Traditional Celebrity versus Instafamous Endorsement: A Study of Skin Care Products on Advertising Effectiveness" *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, vol 8, no. 2, 2021, pp. 182-188. doi: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0802018>.

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