**How Do Chinese Consumers Perceive Celebrity Endorsers:**

**A Social Identity Perspective**

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# ABSTRACT

## How Do Chinese Consumers Perceive Celebrity Endorsers:

## A Social Identity Perspective

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Previous research of celebrity endorsement focused mainly on three aspects: source credibility, match-up theory, and meaning transfer model. Few studies have been done concerning social identity theory in Chinese market. This study shed new light on the current celebrity endorsement research. This study introduces the social identity theory to investigate celebrity endorsement and proposes a model on the basis of social identity theory, offering a new insight to understand the mechanism of celebrity endorsement. This study was conducted in China because it is full of potential opportunities for marketers. The results show that both ideal identity salience and endorser credibility exert positive impact on consumers' identification with endorser, while endorser distinctiveness does not have an effect on endorser identification. Moreover, endorser identification has a positive influence on both consumers' attitude toward the ad and the endorser, leading to a higher purchase intention. It is also found that endorser type has a significant effect on endorser credibility in terms of attractiveness and reputation, whereas product type does not affect consumers' evaluation of endorser credibility.

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## Introduction

It is acknowledged that celebrity endorsement has become one of the most important and efficient tools for companies to advertise their products and has a great impact on consumers' attitudes and purchase behavior. Celebrity endorser is defined as an individual who is well known to the public for his or her exceptional achievement in areas that are different from product class being endorsed (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). Cornwell, Roy, and Weeks (2005) estimated that sponsorship spending on celebrity endorsement was about $24 billion worldwide in 2004. In addition, the cost of athletic celebrity endorsement rose 2.5% in 2002. For example, Tiger Woods, Allen Iverson, Zidane were employed by Nike, Reebok, and Adidas to endorse their products.

Many studies have been done on celebrity endorsement from different perspectives. Marketing scholars have developed several theories in order to explain how celebrity endorsement works. The extant studies put forward that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement stems from source credibility. Ohanian (1990) claimed that source credibility consisted of three factors: trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. That is, the individual's acceptance of a message is based on endorsers' trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. The source credibility model suggests that an individual's perception of an endorser's expertise and trustworthiness plays an important role in consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. In addition, attractiveness has also been known as an important component of celebrity endorsement.

Based on a study carried out by Kamins (1990), it is found that the perceived fit between the product and endorser determined the effectiveness of a celebrity. A celebrity who is perceived to have a high product congruent image with the product leads to a

greater impact on consumers' attitude and purchase intention than those with a lower level of product fit. It has been proved that congruence between product and endorser is significantly more effective than incongruent image (Hong and Zinkhan, 1995).

Furthermore, the Meaning Transfer Model was put forward in the hope of explaining the process and was testified when an endorser is used to promote a product (McCracken, 1989). Based on the model, the effectiveness of the endorser depends on the cultural meaning he or she conveys to the endorsement process. What's important is that the celebrity carries the meaning that exists in the cultural world to consumers and ultimately become a part of consumers' life.

Although scholars have studied celebrity endorsement in many aspects, few have been done from a social identification perspective for celebrity endorsement in the context of the Chinese market. From the previous literature, we find that an individual's image, which includes social identity, dispositions, and physical characteristics, plays an important role in affecting his/her attitudes and behaviors (Rosenberg 1979). Kleine and Kernan (1993) found significant results of how identity salience influenced people's schemas and behavior. Some studies suggest that the effectiveness of endorsement is related to the type of endorsers (Kamins, 1990; Baker and Churchill, 1977). As China has become the second largest economy in the world, it is essential to find which endorsement strategy works better for Chinese consumers, therefore providing useful suggestions for marketers. Yin (1999) conducted a research that focused on foreign companies that advertised in China and found that the country of product origin and endorsers were rated as top important components in the study. Moreover, according to the study, firms that standardize their marketing strategy rate the attitudes toward country

of origin more important than firms using either a localized strategy or the combination. The choice of endorser's ethnicity is an important aspect of global marketing to take into account. Zhou and Belk (2004) suggested that, in China, western models were perceived to be more beautiful and modern, comparing to their Chinese counterparts. In addition, a key difference between domestic and foreign celebrities is that western models are viewed more as being status-laden, whereas the domestic celebrities are not. Based on a recent study, using western models in China, as opposed to domestic models could enhance the perceived quality, brand trust and globalness of the product (Chang, 2008).

In China, a celebrity endorser often represents a status symbol that consumers regard as an ideal identity (Chang, 2008; Zhou and Belk, 2004). Consumers' ideal identity plays an important role in advertising effectiveness and, also, depends on whether it is salient when he/she is exposed to an advertisement (Hong and Zinkhan, 1995). At issue, then from a social identity perspective, the question is whether there is a different effectiveness between using local/foreign celebrity endorsement in the Chinese market. Based on the extant literature, this study is going to adopt the social identity theory to investigate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in China.

The objective of our study is to apply social identity theory to celebrity product endorsement in the context of Chinese market. In this study, we adapt the social identity theory and propose a model that investigates the role of endorser identification in the endorsement process, as well as to find out how different factors affect consumers' perception of celebrity endorsement. More specifically, in our model, it is suggested that identification, which is determined by endorser credibility, endorser distinctiveness and Ideal identity salience, has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes toward ad and

purchase intentions. In addition, we also explore the role of product/ endorser type in Chinese consumers' endorser credibility perceptions in terms of attractiveness, reputation, and expertise, therefore offering empirical evidence to marketers in practice.

# 1. Theoretical Background

The marketing literature abundantly studied the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. The effectiveness of using celebrity/non-celebrity endorser was debated in many articles. In fact, compared with non-celebrity endorsers, celebrities have a greater impact on product image and consumers' decision (Atkin and Block, 1983). Celebrities are used in advertising to attract audiences' attention and increase message persuasiveness, thus enhancing advertising effectiveness (Erdogan, 1999). Moreover, as the study of celebrity endorsement goes further, several theories are proposed in the hope of better understanding the endorsement process.

## 1.1 Product Endorsement: Non-Celebrity Versus Celebrity

As the competition in the world become more intense than before, a variety of products coming from all different places are presented to consumers. We are living in a material world full of commercials. Wherever you go, you see advertisements for different products. But after seeing so many advertisements, how many of them can you really remember? Or does it have an impact on your shopping list? How to make the product salient and appealing to consumers becomes a big concern for many companies. Choosing an endorser to present and differentiate their products can be an efficient and straightforward strategy. We strongly believe that commercials that are able to capture consumers' attention will eventually bring profits to companies. However, it is never easy for marketers to find the right endorser. When selecting the endorser, there are two ways for companies to use: either a celebrity or a non-celebrity.

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In some articles, it is suggested that there was no significant difference in consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention between celebrity and non-celebrity endorsements (Mehta, 1994). Moreover, Freiden (1984) conduct a study that aims to see different effects in four endorser categories: a celebrity, a CEO, an expert, and a typical consumer. The result shows that there are no significant differences in terms of believability or perceptions of product quality among those four types of endorsers. Despite that there are no significant results found between celebrity and non-celebrity in these papers, however, a majority of studies have found the higher effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. Atkin and Block (1983) suggest that celebrity endorsers, compared with non-celebrity endorsers, result in more positive attitudes towards advertising and higher purchase intentions.

Celebrity endorsers are shown to be more effective than non-celebrity endorsers in generating consumers' attitudes towards advertising, endorser brand, and purchase intentions (Erdogan, 1999). Compared with non-celebrity endorsers, celebrity endorsement strategy has several advantages for companies. There are several benefits of using celebrity endorsement in marketing practice, such as "increased attention, image polishing, brand introduction, brand repositioning and the potential to underpin global campaigns" (Erdogan, 1999). A successful celebrity and brand partnership could lead to a significant positive effect for brand owners in terms of economic return. Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) investigate the announcements of 100 celebrity endorsement contracts and claim that celebrity endorsement contracts are worthy investing in advertising and could lead to more profits for companies. They also find that product life cycle was related to endorsement as well. More specifically, when product endorsement is

employed at the early stages of life cycles, the value created by endorsers comes from the acceleration of establishing the products. As products move to the latter stages, celebrity endorsement aims to differentiate from other products and building competitive advantages over others. Meanwhile, by using an event study methodology, Mathur et al. (1997) substantiate that celebrity endorsement contracts are associated with the expected profitability of a firm, providing evidence that celebrity endorsers actually have a substantial impact on the profitability of endorsed product. For example, Nike has increased its sales by millions of dollars after employing Michael Jordan to endorser its products, showing the potential impact of celebrity endorsement on company's profit. In addition, advertisements endorsed by celebrities are perceived to be more believable, message recall is enhanced and salience of brand names is improved as well (Kamins et al., 1989; Till, Haas, and Priluck, 2006). Moreover, Heath et al. (1994) claim that celebrity endorsements could enhance likelihood of customers' choice of endorsed brand. The study of perception of advertising and celebrity endorsement (Rashid and Nallamuthu, 2002) shows that using a well-known celebrity as an endorser could help to improve the subjects' rating of the commercial.

Therefore, it is suggested that companies should choose a well-known celebrity as an endorser rather than a nameless spokesperson. Due to the importance of celebrity endorsement, in the literature, there is a need to investigate these different theories in the following section.

## 1.2     Theories of Celebrity Product Endorsement Effectiveness

There are many mix results found in the literature with regard to these different aspects, showing that celebrity endorsement is more complicated than we thought. The effectiveness of celebrity product endorsement is usually studied on the basis of source models, the match-up hypothesis and the meaning transfer model. Moreover, the endorser/ product type plays an important role in celebrity endorsement process as well. In this case, we go through literature with regard to these theories.

### 1.2.1   The Source Models

The source models originate from two models: source credibility model and source attractiveness model. These two models stem from the study of communications (Ohanian, 1990), and have been accepted as common models in the field of celebrity endorsement.

First, according to the literature, source credibility refers to "a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message" (Ohanian, 1990, p. 41) or can be illustrated as a message source's perceived ability to provide trustful information (Kelman and Hovland, 1953). Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953) propose that expertise and trustworthiness (also referred to as reputation) are the essential factors that would influence consumers' perceived credibility of a message.  McGuire (1968) views the source credibility model as the role of perceived expertise and trustworthiness on the effectiveness of the message. In this case, expertise refers to the extent to which an endorser is perceived to be an expert of the endorsed product field or as the ability of the source to make truthful statements. It consists of the possession of

knowledge, experience and skills (Erdogan, 1990). Endorsers who are alleged to be

experienced, knowledgeable, qualified and skilled are perceived to possess high expertise.

Trustworthiness (reputation) is referred as the degree of consumer's feeling that how

much reliable the message carried by endorsers is. More specifically, the perceived

honesty, integrity and believability of the endorser are considered as the major aspects of

trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990). While the source credibility model emphasizes the

importance of expertise and trustworthiness in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement,

the source attractiveness model indicates that the most important factor in celebrity

endorsement is the endorser's attractiveness.

Second, attractiveness is referred to how physically attractive or likeable the

source is to the audience (Ohanian, 1991). The source attractiveness model suggests that

consumers overall tend to have a more positive response to attractive people distinctively.

Moreover, it is suggested that the effectiveness of the message depends on the similarity,

familiarity and liking of the endorser (McGuire, 1985). Caballero and Pride (1984)

demonstrate that the use of a highly-attractive female sales representative result in a

significantly higher purchase rate than did those who are rated as low or medium in

attractiveness. Baker and Churchill (1977) conduct an experiment in which attractive and

unattractive endorsers were included to find consumers' different reactions. The results

showed that when the product was coffee, male consumers reacted negatively to

attractiveness, whereas with perfume and aftershave they reacted positively to

attractiveness. Both Kamins (1990) and Kahle (1985) suggest that the use of attractive

celebrity was only effective for attractiveness-related products on endorser credibility and

attitude toward the ad. However, Till and Bustler (2000) claim that whatever the product

type is, the attractiveness endorser has significantly higher influence on brand attitude and purchase intention than unattractive endorser. All these results suggest that attractiveness is an important factor in celebrity product endorsement process.

Based on the above statement, the Figure 1.1 illustrates the antecedents of endorser credibility:

Figure 1.1: Antecedents of Endorser Credibility (Ohanian, 1991)
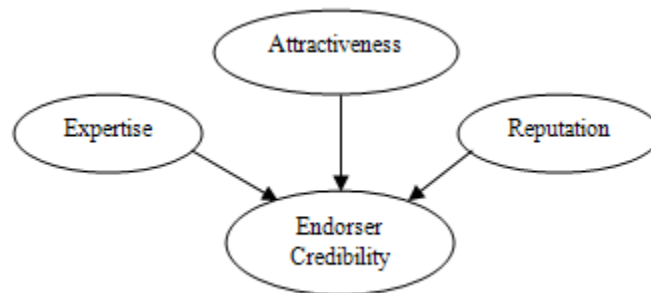


While the research on the various dimensions of source credibility has generated mixed results, the majority of those studies suggest that endorsers who are high along the reputation, expertise and attractiveness have a positive impact upon consumers' attitude and purchase intentions.

Although source credibility models have been emphasized in many studies, several studies suggest that the effectiveness of the endorser is related to the level of congruence between the celebrity endorsers and the endorsed products (Misra and Beatty, 1990). For example, many sports stars such as Kobe Bryant and C. Ronaldo have been chosen to endorse sportswear and proved to be a huge success. In this case, we look at the "match-up" hypothesis.

### 1.2.2 The Match-up Hypothesis

Research on the match-up hypothesis suggests that the perceived fit between endorsed products and endorser is an important aspect for endorser credibility and consumers' attitudes (Kamis and Gupta, 1994). The idea of congruence between endorser and product was presented as "match-up hypothesis" (Kamins, 1990), suggesting that the perceived congruence between the endorser and the endorsed product would enhance the effectiveness of advertisement on the basis of consumers' attitude. In addition, the effectiveness of physical attractiveness and expertise has been shown to be an important match-up factors and the role of endorser/product fit has been identified in these effects. Besides, both attractiveness and expertise have been considered as appropriate match-up factors (Kahle and Homer 1985). Till and Busler (2000) carry out two studies to investigate the effectiveness of match-up hypothesis in terms of physical attractiveness and expertise. According to their study, a match-up effect is found that the athlete is most effective as an endorser for energy bar in increasing brand attitude. Moreover, Fink et al. (2004) conduct a study in campus to see how endorsers influence students' attendance for a sport event. They create two fictitious athletes based on attractiveness, expertise and overall fit with the event. The researchers find that for the endorser who is able to draw more people to the event turn out to possess a high level of expertise, whereas attractiveness of endorser has little to do with the event. Friedman and Friedman (1979) look at three types of endorsers that are evaluated on the basis of three products defined by risk and concluded that a celebrity endorser would be more effective for products having psychological significance or high social risk elements such as self-image or opinion of others.

Moreover, several studies show that match-up between endorser and product is positively related to consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Braunstein and Zhang, 2005; Kahle and Homer, 1985; Ohanian, 1991). By using a cognitive research approach, Choi and Nora (2005) find that the congruence level between product and celebrity would influence celebrity endorsement through the process of consumer attribution. That is, consumers tend to speculate the endorser's motivation of associating with that particular brand, therefore the subsequent effect will influence the consumers' evaluations over the endorser and advertising. While the match-up hypothesis has been widely accepted, some researchers found that mismatches between endorser and product were more persuasive. Debevec and Iyer (1986) examine the effect of a spokesperson's image on the images of different products. The researchers find that, in their study, for the feminine product, such as dishwashing liquid, respondents tend to have a more favorable attitude and likely usage intentions when a male rather than a female spokesperson promotes it. Furthermore, compared with a male spokesperson, a female spokesperson generates more favorable attitudes and greater usage intention for the masculine product, such as beer. Lee and Thorson (2008) state that compared with a complete match, a moderate match between a product and a celebrity elicit more favorable attitude and purchase intention, especially in a high product involvement. On the other hand, Liu et al. (2007) conduct a study to measure the influence of celebrities in relation to the match-up with product. From the results, only high match between a product and a celebrity has a positive influence of generating more purchase intentions compared with low celebrity product match, and the attractiveness level of celebrities is not statistically significant to influence subjects' purchase intention. The discrepancy

leads scholars to look at other alternative ways to investigate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement.

### 1.2.3 The Meaning Transfer Model

The communication effectiveness of celebrity endorsement activities to some extent relies on the credibility and attractiveness of the source. The source models and match-up hypothesis are tested and confirmed in many studies (Fink et al., 2004; Hunter, Burger, and Davidsson, 2008; Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Kahle and Homer, 1985). However, these models have been criticized for not portraying all the elements that determine communication effectiveness (McCracken, 1989; Hunter, 2009). McCracken (1989) conclude that source models do not serve as a practical explanation to understand the endorsement process from two aspects. First of all, the source models cannot be used to explain the effectiveness of a particular endorser for a particular product. It is therefore impossible to know why a celebrity only works out for certain products, and not for others. In addition, the source models do not provide a method to discriminate celebrities in a useful way. We can only get the degree of attractiveness and credibility of celebrities from source models instead of the kinds of attractiveness and credibility.

Therefore, the alternative meaning transfer model offers a compromise where concept of emotional involvement is introduced to complement both the source models and the match-up hypothesis. McCracken (1989) conduct a research and find that the effectiveness of the endorser relies on the meaning the person brings to the endorsement process. According to McCracken (1989), using a celebrity in an advertisement can produce a meaning transfer process (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989)

MEANING MOVEMENT AND THE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS
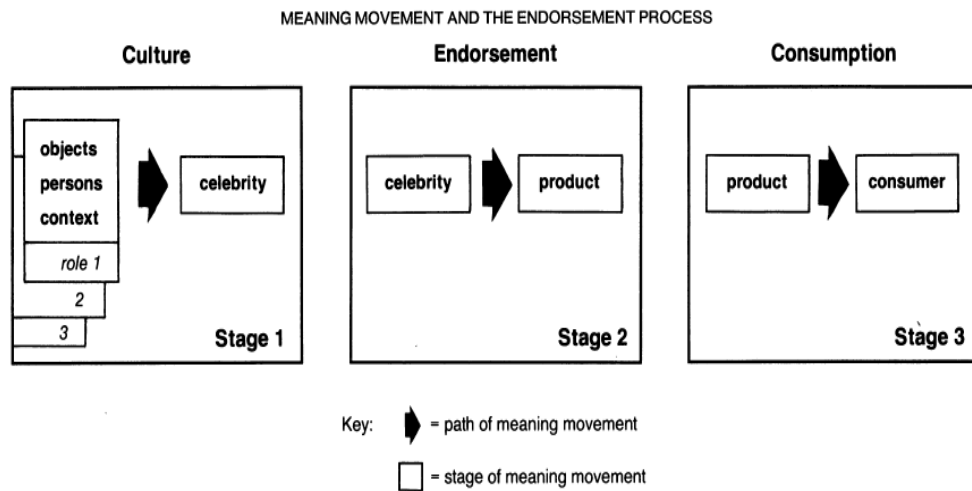
It is suggested that celebrities bear a variety of the existing cultural meanings in people's life, such as status, class, gender, age, personalities and lifestyles. More importantly, the cultural meanings brought by a celebrity can be transferred from the endorser to the endorsed products (McCracken, 1989; Brierley, 1995). First, a meaning resided in the physical world that is composed of different cultures, then moves from the cultural world to products through advertising and fashion systems and then from products to individual consumers' lives via consumers' purchase. Therefore, the endorser plays an important role in this transferring process since he or she bears the meaning that is attractive to consumers. Although meaning transfer model offers new insights in celebrity endorsement process, some scholars are interested in the role of product/endorser type.

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**1.2.4    The Role of Product/Endorser Type on the Effectiveness of Celebrity**

**Endorsement**

Product type can be categorized as utilitarian or hedonic based on consumers'

usage experience. Utilitarian products are those with cognitive drive and practical use for

consumers, such as a laptop, whereas hedonic products aim to provide an affective and

sensory experience of aesthetic pleasure to consumers, such as a luxury watch (Dhar and

Wertenbroch, 2000). Utilitarian products are evaluated on utilitarian values such as

savings, convenience, and product quality, while hedonic products are assessed based on

hedonic values, such as pleasure and entertainment (Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk, 2001).

It is found that the type of the product has a big impact on the effectiveness of

celebrity endorsement. Bower and Landreth (2002) examine the match between endorser

attractiveness and product type and its influence on advertising effectiveness. Results

show that a match-up between an endorser and a product improves advertising

effectiveness not only through the endorser appearance, but also based on the model's

expertise about the product. In addition, some of the researches concerning endorser-

product type match-up propose that the spokesperson credibility differs from the type of

endorsed products.

Endorser credibility consists of two components: source attractiveness and

trustworthiness. The selection of spokesperson may depend on what kind of products

they will endorse. For hedonic products, consumers tend to care more about getting

pleasure and entertaining feelings through purchase. Based on this, a physically attractive

endorser attracts more attention than others. However, that will be a different story for

utilitarian products. Consumers with the intention of buying utilitarian products are

concerned more about the practical use instead of hedonic values. In this situation, endorsers' reputation plays a more important role in influencing consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions than attractiveness. Moreover, the "match-up" hypothesis suggests that congruence between a spokesperson and the product type is related to endorser credibility and consumers' attitudes (Kamins and Gupta, 1994).

Biswas et al. (2006) conduct a study about product types and celebrities influence on consumers. The authors conclude that when an expert is used to endorse high technology oriented products, high-priced products and high involvement products, the effect of using the expert to reduce the perceived risks for purchasing such products was higher than an endorsement by a celebrity. Moreover, it is found that the effect of using an expert or a celebrity doesn't reflect any differences in low technology oriented products. Mehulkumar (2005) shows that the celebrity who endorses products featured with high psychological and social risk leads to higher consumer believability toward the advertisement and a significantly greater purchase intention. A similar result can be found in using celebrities to endorse products that are characterized by high financial/physical risk is weak (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). In addition, the ethnicity of endorsers is believed to be an important factor predicting the endorsement effectiveness.

Advertising models' ethnic background has a significant impact on consumer evaluations of products (Whittler and DiMeo, 1991). From a social identity theory perspective, an "in-group" bias is likely to occur when endorsers and consumers have the same ethnic background. The perceived similarity between endorsers and consumers is enhanced when the endorsers share the same ethnicity as consumers (Whittler and DiMeo,

1991). Schleifer and Dunn (1968) find that American consumers show more favorable attitudes toward advertising featuring American consumers than foreign consumers. Besides, Martin et al (2004) demonstrate that consumers are likely to generate favorable attitudes toward models that have the same ethnicity with audiences. Ethnic minority individuals who strongly identified with their own ethnic groups had a stronger preference for an advertising spokesperson of their own ethnicity (Williams and Quall, 1989). Moreover, in fact, the usage of foreign models is prevalent in Japanese advertisements (Cutler, 1995; Moeran, 2002). Most of foreign endorsers relates to the beauty product category since they are considered as a symbol of idea beauty (Barnes and Yamamoto, 2008). So it is essential to look through the role of product and endorser type from a new perspective as we study the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement.

We are living in a world where all of us are featured in different identities. There are always some identities we admire in our lives, such as a sports star, scientists. For celebrities, they have some sort of particular attraction to the public, which in turn become an important aspect to be chosen as product endorsers. An individual's knowledge about his/her social identity mostly originates from a specific part of his/her self-concept (Tajfel, 1981). In the next section, we introduce social identity theory to celebrity product endorsement in the hope of better understanding the effectiveness of the endorsement process.

## 1.3    Social Identity Theory and Celebrity Endorsement

Social identity theory assumes a process that defines oneself in terms of specific groups, and under different situations, different identities will be activated. The social

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identity theory posits that people are willing to look for positive distinctiveness and ideal identity salience through the identification with others (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). The process of identification between consumers and celebrities is most likely to affect identity salience and distinctiveness. Kelman (1961) claims that the identification occurs when individuals accept the attitude or behavior advocated by celebrities and therefore, they tend to behave like them. That is, consumers tend to believe that they are associated with that celebrity in some aspects and therefore have the motivation to confirm this idea by purchasing the endorsed product. Consumers' ownership and consumption of certain products often are believed to exhibit their individuality and help enhance their identity. Celebrities usually represent cultural meanings that most consumers are familiar with. Celebrities serve as referents for consumers and have been evaluated as role models because they possess distinctive qualities that most people admire (Cooper, 1984). Social identity theory indicates that identification and consumers' self image play an enormous role in consumers' attitude and purchase intention.

## 1.3.1    Endorser Distinctiveness

Most people want to be somebody instead of nobody by seeking the distinctiveness they could achieve. For example, users of Harley Davidson motorcycles are considered as distinctive because of the tough image brought to consumers. It seems to indicate that the need to be different tends to enhance consumers' perceived distinctiveness from groups they are being contrasted with (Pickett, Silver, and Brewer, 2002). Therefore, an individual's knowledge about his/her social identity mostly originates from a specific part of his/her self-concept (Tajfel, 1981). In fact,

distinctiveness refers to how the entity has its own specialties. Social identity theory proposes that when a person perceives a complex stimulus, he or she notice the distinctive value and characteristics that discriminate them from others. Consumers create a salient identity by categorizing themselves with a group that is unique compared with others, thus offering a comparison to those viewed as different (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). They may satisfy their needs to be unique by identifying with other entities that have distinctive identities (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). They transfer positive traits from celebrities to themselves and the consumer is perceived as distinctive through this association (Mael and Ashforth, 1992).

An indistinctive relationship between celebrity and products ends up in poor identity with endorsed products for consumers (Mowen and Brown, 1981; Erdogan, 1999). Not only do consumers look for distinctiveness in endorsement, but also try to enhance their ideal identity salience. Furthermore, the role of distinctiveness in endorsement has been proved to be critical. For example, some celebrities who endorse more than one product tend to decrease the impact and distinctiveness of each product relationship, diminishing consumer perception of celebrity (Garland and Ferkins, 2003). McCracken (1989) suggests that in the cultural world, although celebrities perform differently in their fields, each celebrity is distinctive in the meaning he/she brings to the audiences. The fact that each celebrity is distinctive in a specific culture context requires further attention on ideal identity salience.

### 1.3.2 Ideal Identity Salience

Since celebrity endorsement has become a popular tool for companies to advertise their brands and enhance the brand image, the relationship between celebrity and brand image is much stronger than before. Based on the meaning transfer model, this relationship could be transferred from brand to consumers, thus improving consumers' ideal identity salience. An individual's ideal identity stems from the social identity and consists of the ideal images she/he would like to possess (Rorty and Wong, 1993). In other words, when a person admires some qualities or characteristics that she/he doesn't have, she/he tends to identify with the ideal image and takes it as the ideal who she/he would like to be, eventually becoming part of her/his identity (Gewirth, 1998). This social desirability motivates consumers to purchase products endorsed by celebrities.

Whether a specific identity plays an important role in advertising effectiveness relies on whether it is salient when consumers are exposed to an advertisement. When an individual thinks about defining his/her identity under a certain context, identity salience acts a relatively important role (Hoelter, 1985). It is found that there are two determinants of identity salience: accessibility and contextual fit (Oaks, 1987). Accessibility refers to the importance of a specific group membership to an individual's self-concept (Turner, 1987). It is influenced by strength of identification that is related to past experiences and current situation. In the context of advertising, consumers accept the influence of celebrity endorser and want to be identified with celebrity image. Contextual fit emphasizes the role of context to activate a particular identity. In other words, once consumers feel more attached to one celebrity or product, they are more likely to become different from other celebrities or products. As a result, ideal identity salience is a key

point of celebrity endorsement as it relates to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement identification.

In addition, ideal identity salience shows a close bond with consumers' self-concept. Individuals show more similarity of self-concept to the most preferred brand images than to the least preferred brand images (Dolich, 1969). Preferred brands are consistent with one's self image and thus reinforce it. Belch and Landon (1977) confirmed that self-image and ideal self-image appeared to be influenced equally by social desirability. They found that in addition to the influence of social desirability and attitudes toward the measurement task, the ownership of the product also would facilitate consumers' ideal-self image and purchase intention. According to these studies, one might interpret that the celebrity image follows two steps to become part of an individual's ideal identity: First, celebrities must share the idea of ideal image; second, consumers much appreciate it and regard it as an identity for themselves.

### 1.3.3    Endorser Identification

Social identity theory provides the theoretical foundation to explain identification. Individual's social identity originates from the social categories to which he or she belongs, such as membership, ethnic background (Tajfel and Turner, 1985). Consumers are drawn through the identification process to form a group with a strong similarity that is perceived to be real or inspirational.

In the process of celebrity endorsement, endorser identification is a cognitive state in which consumers evaluate the degree of overlap between endorser and their self-schema. A high level of identification indicates a strong sense of similarity for consumers.

Emotional identification occurs everywhere at most all times. Hackley and Tiwsakul (2006) examine the entertainment marketing and find that consumer' self-concepts and identity formation could be influenced by brand exposures. It is also found that identification is a way for consumers to compare their personal image or persona with the idealized images brought by endorsers mostly (Hirschman and Thompson 1997). In fact, the effectiveness of identification is associated with the endorser's physical attractiveness (Cohen and Golden, 1972). Individuals are more willing to identify with an attractive source due to the desire to identify with such endorsers. Nonetheless, Carlson et al. (2009) suggest that identification, which is an overlap between the consumer's schema and the entities schema, has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase behavior. In addition, the identification process has to be adapted to the culture context specification.

### 1.3.4   Celebrity Endorsement in China

China is a market that no one can ignore and it represents a massive playground for companies to compete.  How organizations can make their products stand out from the rest has always been the top priority for marketers. In China, celebrity endorsement is a tool with which marketers build product image in a fast and effective way. Statistics show that 27.1% of marketers are willing to use celebrity-endorsed commercials to promote their products or brands in market, especially for new brands (Wang, 2006). At the earlier stage of celebrity endorsement in China, only few US companies employ celebrity endorsers to promote product in china. For example, P&G used Chinese-American tennis player Michael Chang in advertising in 20th centuries. Furthermore, P&G continues to find other celebrity endorsers to endorse its products, such as Rejoice,

in the Chinese market. Afterwards, some Chinese local companies realized the benefits of celebrity endorsement strategy and started to adopt famous entertainers and models as product endorser in commercials (Liu, 2005). For example, Lenovo signed endorsement contract with soccer player Ronaldinho to endorse its new laptop in 2008, which in turn helped Lenovo build the first step of international strategy and a rising profit in the market. Additionally, the strategy of celebrity endorsement has been utilized intensively in China and celebrity types range from entertainers, singers, and athletes to CEOs, and experts. According to a report, the proportion of Chinese companies that employ celebrity endorsement strategy is the third in the world, which is only lower than Japan and Korea (New Marketing, 2006). The following chart illustrates the growth of endorsement advertising in China.

Figure 1.3: Ad Use of Celebrity Spokespeople



**Ad Use of Celebrity Spokespeople**

(Source: http://www.brandchannel.com)
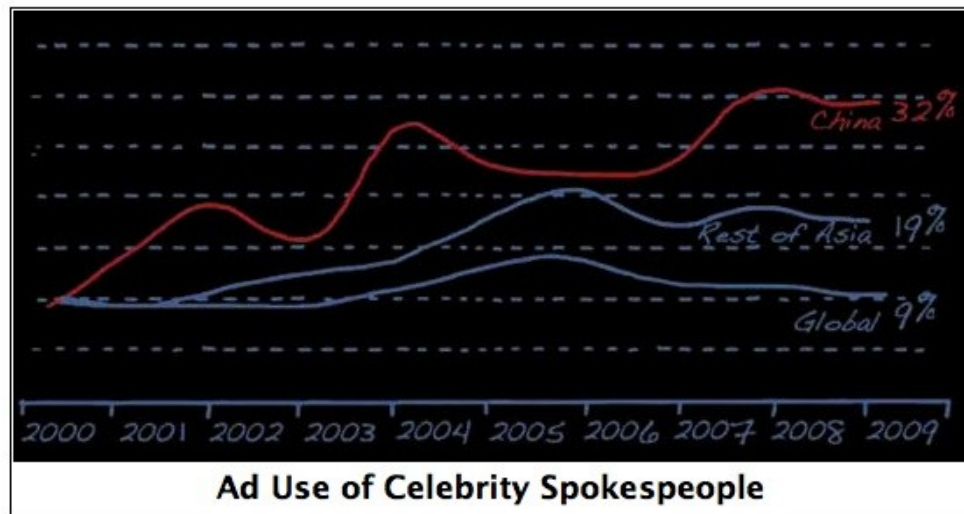
Although the number of celebrity endorsements is increasing, consumers' preference for endorser type is not clear. In 2005, according to a survey that aimed to find out who were the most favorite celebrities in China, the result showed that the top ten

celebrities came from the movie industry and had been famous in entertainment at least five years (New Marketing, 2006). In addition, results showed that the influence strength of celebrities varies for stars from Mainland China to Hong Kong and Tai Wan areas. Consumers appreciate celebrities coming from Hong Kong and Tai Wan much more than their counterparts from Mainland China (New Marketing, 2006).

Therefore, in this study, I am going to investigate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement from a social identity perspective. More specifically, I propose a new model that emphasizes the role of endorser identification in consumers' attitude and purchase intention, the role of product/endorser type will be examined as well.

## 2.    Conceptual Development

Although in the literature, many studies find that attractiveness, reputation and expertise are the three components of endorser credibility, and the relationship between endorser credibility and purchase intention has been confirmed (Ohanian, 1991; Till and Busler, 2000), some scholars suggest that the effects of these source characteristics on purchase intentions might be influenced by endorser identification.

The purpose of our study is to propose a model to see how Chinese consumers perceive celebrity endorsement and examines the role of endorser/product role. Specifically, as shown in the Figure 2.1, (1) endorser credibility, salience and distinctiveness will have a positive influence on endorser identification, and (2) endorser identification will positively impact on consumers' attitude toward advertisement and endorsers. The rationale for each of the paths in our model is discussed next.

Figure 2.1: Celebrity Product Endorsement Model
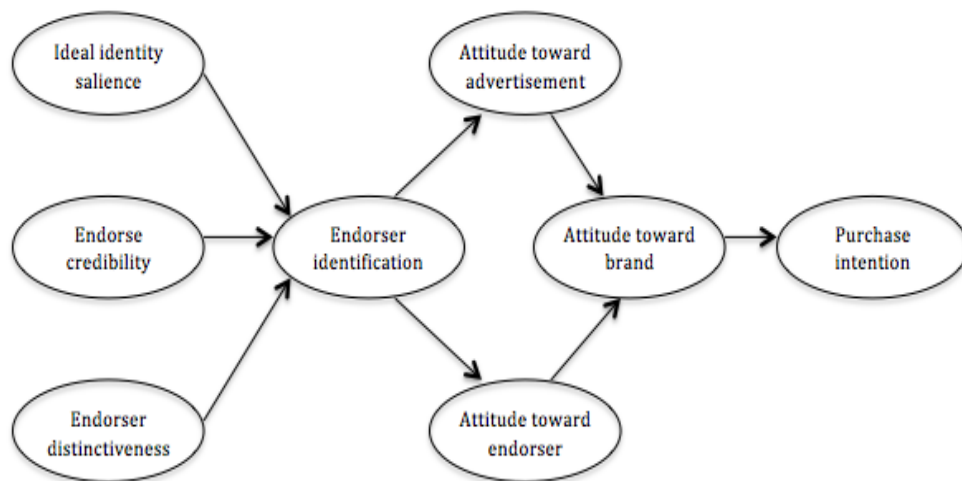


## 2.1    Antecedents of Endorser Identification

Ohanian (1990) synthesizes the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model to posit an endorser credibility model and find that there were three dimensions of endorser credibility: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. In the study, consumers' brand attitude, attitude toward ad and purchase intention are influenced by endorsers' credibility from these three aspects. Attractiveness is associated with the endorser's perceived image; reputation refers to the extent of the audiences' confidence and acceptance level; expertise is considered to be the endorser's perceived skills of the endorsed product category. The higher the level of endorsers' attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise are the higher possibility that consumers would choose the endorsed products. Furthermore, both attractiveness and reputation are identified as important antecedents to organizational identification. Based on this, La Ferle and Choi (2005) complete a research in Korea and found that celebrity endorsers are more effective in creating favorable attitudes towards ads and the brands, and higher purchase intention in Korean advertisements. Perceived credibility of celebrities played a significant role in determining the effectiveness. In many studies, it showed that Ohanian's (1990) three dimensions of endorser credibility are applicable in Korean, Malaysians, Thais and Chinese cultures (Pornpitakpan, 2002). However, few studies investigate the relationship between endorser credibility and identification within the Chinese market. Therefore, we hypothesize that there is a positive relationship between endorser credibility and endorser identification.

H1: Endorser credibility has a positive effect on endorser identification.

Within the identification literature, individuals not only appreciate the similarity with others, but also look for distinctiveness (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Distinctiveness is defined as how the entity is different from other competitors (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). In the process of celebrity endorsement, consumers try to identify the distinctiveness between themselves and endorsers in order to enhance their self-image and distinguish themselves from others in the social context. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) conclude that consumers sometimes can't be satisfied only with general needs and the unique identity is the purpose of purchase behavior. Besides, in line with meaning transfer model, products endorsed by a distinctive celebrity inherit the uniqueness from the endorser, and consumers identify themselves with distinctive characteristic carried by celebrities. Celebrity is distinctive in the cultural meaning he/she brings to the audience. Ultimately, we hypothesize that endorser distinctiveness generates a positive impact on endorser identification:

H2: Endorser distinctiveness has a positive effect on endorser identification.

In addition to endorser credibility and distinctiveness, ideal identity salience is considered as the endorser image that consumers wish to be and share and is assumed to act as an important antecedent of endorser identification. Individuals tend to identify with others who have the same attributes as them and engage as a group. Tajfel and Turner (1986) find that the perception of belonging to a group result in activating the salience of a social identity, therefore generating the identification with a particular group and influencing consumers' perceptions and behavior (Cheryan and Bodenhausen, 2000). There are a couple of factors that influence identity salience, such us stimulus cues, social

context, and individual differences (Forehand, Deshpande, and Reed II, 2002). Celebrity endorsement could activate ideal identity salience and inspire consumers to share attributes with endorsers, enhancing endorser identification, thus leading to the following hypothesis:

H3: Ideal identity salience has a positive effect on endorser identification.

## 2.2    Endorser Identification, Consumers' Attitudes and Purchase Intentions

Based on the social identity theory, consumers identify with celebrities because they are perceived to be symbolic of desirable reference groups. Certain characteristics carried by celebrities become the motivation for consumers to absorb and compare with others. A positive level of endorser identification means that consumers appreciate the image of endorsers and want to be linked to them. Meanwhile, positive endorser identification goes from consumers' mind to facilitate consumers' attitudes toward advertisement and endorser (Carlson and Donavan, 2008). More specifically, when consumers perceive a celebrity endorser to be attractive, they identify with the endorser and are likely to adopt the endorser's attitudes, behaviors, interests, or preferences. Different perceptions of endorser identification will differently influence impact attitude and behavioral intentions. When endorser identification is low, consumers tend to discount the argument presented in the advertisement. On the contrary, when endorser identification is perceived high, consumers are more likely to be convinced by the message, thus support a positive relationship between endorser identification and

attitudes toward the endorser and advertisement. Based on this, we posit the following hypothesis:

H4a: Endorser identification has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes toward ad.

H4b: Endorser identification has a positive effect on consumers' attitudes toward endorser.


In addition, based on the literature, consumers' attitudes toward advertisement and endorsers will turn into consumers' attitude toward the brand, finally influencing purchase intentions (MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch, 1986). The relationship between attitudes toward the ads, attitudes toward the brand and purchase intentions has been confirmed in prior studies (Brown and Stayman, 1992). Therefore, in order to see how Chinese consumers react to this, we posit the following hypotheses:

H5a: Consumers attitude toward ad has a positive effect on attitude toward brand.

H5b: Consumers' attitude toward endorser has a positive effect on attitude toward brand.

H6: Consumers' attitude toward brand has a positive effect on consumers' purchase intention.

Although studies have been done on the effectiveness of product/ endorser type in the literature, few investigate it in the context of Chinese market. It is essential to look at how the role of product and endorser type influences Chinese consumers.

## 2.3    The Role of Product and Endorser Type

Product type is perceived by consumers to be utilitarian or hedonic based on what kind of usage experience they look for. Usually utilitarian products provide practical and functional feeling to consumers, whereas hedonic products offer an affective or pleasure experience to consumers (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000). For example, a laptop is a utilitarian product while a perfume is considered as a hedonic product. The distinctions between utilitarian and hedonic products lead to a different psychological process when consumers evaluate a product (Ryu, Park, and Feick, 2006). On the one hand, consumers pay more attention on a product's tangible or functional attributes although it provides sensory satisfactions. On the other hand, consumers purchase hedonic products with an expectation of getting entertaining pleasure rather than utilitarian function. Friedman and Friedman (1979) suggest that product type plays an important role in celebrity endorsement. A physically attractive celebrity generates a more positive impact on consumers' attitudes for hedonic product than utilitarian products.

In addition to the product type, the endorser type has also been investigated in the literature. Endorsers' ethnic backgrounds are considered to influence the effectiveness of the advertisement. The congruence theory posits that in order to keep culturally consistent, individuals tend to be more responsive to people who share the similar beliefs and attitudes. It is also found that Chinese consumers have different perceptions about local/foreign celebrities (Zhou and Belk 2004); a key different factor in the reception of foreign models seems to be whether or not the product is seen as more attractive and hedonic, because a foreign endorser is seen to bring more status and beauty to products. Comparing with local celebrities, foreign celebrities provide Chinese consumers more

"face value" and usually are used for luxury goods where superficial image is important for show off the money and status. Consumption for luxury goods is important in China for the sake of face.

Some studies examined the role of similarity between the model and the defined audience in marketing communication. Moreover, it is found than such similarity will result in positive perceptions of the advertisement and the product. Cui and Yang (2009) indicate that compared with the advertisements featuring Caucasian models, Chinese consumers generate more positive responses to advertisements containing Chinese models. In addition, from a social identity perspective, consumers may tend to show an "in-group" by favoring advertisement featuring local celebrities. In-group identities are part of the self-concept of individuals and individuals are motivated to maintain a positive self-image (Verlegh, 2007). Therefore, individuals tend to show an in-group bias toward advertisements endorsed by celebrities from the same country rather than foreign ones. The image of foreign celebrities is perceived to emphasize hedonic features, whereas a Chinese celebrity who is perceived similar to the local consumers is perceived to offer utilitarian features. Advertising research suggests that only the endorser image is the same as the product image, the congruence between endorser type and product type would be higher and lead to greater believability of the endorser (Hawkins, Best and Coney, 1983). In this study, we focus on how the product/ endorser type influences endorser credibility and postulate the following hypotheses:

H7: An ad for a hedonic product that uses a foreign celebrity likely elicits higher level of endorser credibility than would an ad for a hedonic product that uses a Chinese celebrity in terms of attractiveness, reputation, and expertise.

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H8: An ad for a utilitarian product uses a Chinese celebrity likely elicits higher level of endorser credibility than would an ad for a utilitarian product that uses a foreign celebrity in terms of attractiveness, reputation, and expertise.

# 3.    Methodology

In order to test the proposed model, experimental design was the selected methodology in this research. A 2x2 matrix containing two celebrities (Chinese and Foreign) and two categories of products (Hedonic and Utilitarian) were considered for study. Based on Stelmaszewska et al (2004) and Loveland (2010), the digital camera was perceived to have a relative high level of hedonic user experience, whereas the laptop provided more utilitarian features. So in current study, a digital camera and a laptop were chosen to present hedonic and utilitarian product respectively in this study. There were four treatments: Foreign and local celebrity in hedonic product (2); Foreign and local celebrity in utilitarian product (2). The study was conducted in China. The population was Chinese consumers and a student sample from a university in southern China was used.

## 3.1    Pretest

Prior to the experiment, a pretest was conducted to select Chinese and foreign celebrity endorsers on the basis of the perceived fit between the product and endorser. Forty university students from southern China were divided evenly in four conditions to participate in the pretest. All participants were asked to provide their true opinions about whether the endorser's image matches the product. A fictitious brand name, "Jupiter", was developed and used for both products to prevent possible confounding effects of existing well-known brands. Based on the popularity for Chinese consumers, 5 Chinese and 5 foreign celebrities were chosen as candidates in the pretest. All questions come from the study conducted by Till and Busler, (2000). All the answers were based on 7-

point likert scale, with "1= strongly disagree, and 7= strongly agree". Participants were asked, "As an endorser for Jupiter, I think (endorser name) is:" (1) "Inappropriate/Appropriate", and (2) "Ineffective/Effective". Moreover, they were also asked to respond to the question "I think the combination of (product name) and (Endorser name):" with three 7-point likert scale, "does not belong with/ belongs with," "does not go together/goes together," and "does not fit together/fits together." (See Appendix A)

Table 3.1: The Perceived Fit between Camera and Endorser

| Camera | N | Mean of Perceived Fit |
|---|---|---|
| Andy Lau | 10 | 4.74 |
| Leonardo Dicaprio | 10 | 4.46 |

Table 3.2: The Perceived Fit between Laptop and Endorser

| Laptop | N | Mean of Perceived Fit |
|---|---|---|
| Andy Lau | 10 | 4.52 |
| Leonardo Dicaprio | 10 | 4.60 |

The results in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 showed that subjects perceived Chinese actor Andy Lau and American actor Leonardo Dicaprio to have about the same congruence level with endorsed products in the camera and the laptop, respectively. Based on these results, Andy Lau and Leonardo Dicaprio were chosen as product endorsers in our survey.

## 3.2    Questionnaire and Measures

### 3.2.1    Questionnaire Design

In the experiment, four full-page, four type advertisements were created as the stimulus in the experiment, including a: Chinese/foreign celebrity endorsing a camera and Chinese/foreign celebrity endorsing a laptop (see Appendix B). There are four conditions for the study: a) one printed advertisement featuring a foreign celebrity and a camera; b) one printed advertisement featuring a foreign celebrity and a laptop; c) one printed advertisement featuring a local celebrity and a camera; d) one printed advertisement featuring a local celebrity and a laptop.

It is suggested that the use of professional developed advertisement is encouraged in the experiment in order to receive a true response from the subjects (Mitchell, 1986). A professional graphic designer was employed to create and design the ads (See Appendix B) for our study. To exclude any confounding effects, the experiment was manipulated in the same way across all four conditions.

The questionnaire is composed of two parts. The first part includes questions with regard to all the variables we are going to study, such as ideal identity salience, attractiveness. In part I, there are 10 questions in total, measuring all constructs we need. The second part of the survey includes three questions with regard to respondents' gender, age and hometown. Since the experiment was conducted in China, all the surveys were translated into Chinese. The English-Chinese translation was based on the English original and then a back-translation was made from Chinese to English. Two independent

reviewers fluent in English and Chinese checked the questionnaire a third time in order to be more accurate.

### 3.2.2   Measures

All scales come from the previous literature and are based on 7-point likert type statements, with value of Cronbach's alpha more than 0.7. More specifically, Callero's (1985) scale was used to measure ideal identity salience. Five items anchoring 1 "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree" to indicate statements such as "This is an important aspect of who I am" and "I would feel at a loss if I were forced to give this up". Endorser credibility is measured from three: attractiveness, reputation and expertise. More specifically, all the scales stem from the prior literature: the celebrity's Attractiveness (5 items, Ohanian, 1990), Reputation (6 items, adapted from Ohanian, 1990 and Mael and Ashforth, 1992), Expertise (5 items, Ohanian, 1990), Distinctiveness (3 items, Donavan, Handa, and Maxham, 2005), Endorser identification (6 items, Mael 1988; Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000), Attitude toward ad (5 items, Klaus and Bailey, 2008), Attitude toward celebrity (4 items, Klaus and Bailey, 2008), Attitude toward brand (3 items, La Ferle and Choi, 2005), and Purchase intention (2 items, La Ferle and Choi, 2005). All ten scales are formed by 7-point likert, featuring 1 "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree".

The following Figure illustrates the relationships explored in this study:

Figure 3.1: Celebrity Product Endorsement Model
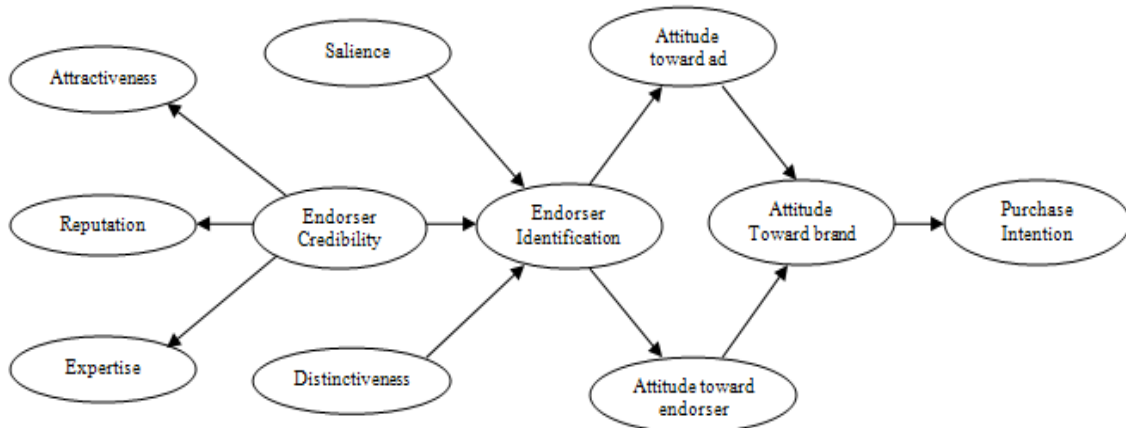


## 3.3    Sample and Procedure

This study was done in a southern China University using a convenience sample was employed in the study. All participants were undergraduate students. In addition, all participants were assured that the survey is anonymous and their responses are confidential.

In total, a sample of 238 students participated in the study and the number of students for each group was between 58 and 60. There were 43% male and 57% female participants; 92% respondents are between the age of 18 and 22 years old. Respondents were randomly divided into four groups and received a booklet containing instructions, a stimulus advertisement and the questionnaire. Participants would orally be informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Then they answered the questionnaire. The front cover of the survey explained that the purpose of the experiment was to evaluate a new product that would be introduced to the market and how they

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perceive the endorser. After a few minutes of reviewing the ad, participants started to complete the questionnaire. At the beginning, respondents were asked to answer items referring to all the measured variables in the model. More specifically, questions in the study were mainly about subjects' preferences and attitudes concerning purchase issues. When they finished, all subjects received $ **5** dollars in the end. For those who wanted to quit from the study, already-completed questionnaires would be returned to the respondent if requested. Upon completing the survey, the participants were debriefed and dismissed.

# 4.    Results

## 4.1    Measurement Model

The analysis was conducted using Amos 20.0. The aim of Structural equation modeling is to exploring the relationships among variables within the conceptual model, rather than differences among groups of respondents. Moreover, structural equation modeling offers a method to estimate a set of regression equations simultaneously and is able to analyze models with complex relationships. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on attractiveness, reputation, expertise, salience, endorser identification, distinctiveness, consumers' attitude toward ad/endorser/brand, and purchase intention. In contrast to exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis is appropriate to use when the researcher knows the field under study and potential links among underlying variables. The purpose is to test relations between observed measures and underlying factors. The model fit was determined by examining the value of RMSEA, GFI, CFI, and IFI.  These indices indicate the uni-dimensionality of the measures. It is suggested that Chi-square per degree of freedom values should range from 2.0 to 3.0. According to the literature, RMSEA is the least influenced by the sample size and the number of parameters included in the model (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest the RMSEA criteria to determine the fit of the model (Table 4.1):

Table 4.1: RMSEA Criteria

| RMSEA Value | Model Fit |
|---|---|
| Less than 0.060 | Good fit |

| | |
|---|---|
| 0.061-0.080 | Reasonable fit |
| 0.081-0.100 | Mediocre fit |
| More than 1.00 | Unacceptable |

In the present case, the CFA provided poor model fit indices: $\chi 2$ (620) = 1327.78, p = 0.000, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.81; Bollen' Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.81; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.08. The statistics showed that the model needed to be modified. From the result, we found that two items measuring "Ideal identity salience", "This is something I barely even think about" and "I really have any clear feelings about this", didn't have significant effect on salience. In addition, "To what extent you think the endorser is attractive?", "To what extent you think the endorser is knowledgeable?", "To what degree your self-image overlaps with the image of endorser?", and "I am very interested in what others think about (endorser's name)", these four items, compared with other items, didn't have sufficient scores on their factors We eliminated these items and found that removing these items significantly improved the fit of the model: $\chi 2$ (598) = 1149.13, p=0.000, CFI=0.90, IFI=0.90, RMSEA=0.06 (See appendix C). Through confirmatory factor analysis, we were able to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs.

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which a scale is similar to other scales that they are supposed to be related to. Items designed to measure a common underlying factor should have a relatively high loading on that factor. The critical ratio in the appendix and loading on each indicators of above 0.5 are proof of convergent validity (See appendix C).

In contrast, discriminant validity refers to the distinctiveness of the factors measured by different indicators and is used to test whether relations among factors are

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not supposed to be related. That is, the estimated correlations in appendix between the factors are not excessively high (See Appendix C). We also calculated the average variance extracted (AVE) and found that it was higher than shared variance between all possible pairs of constructs.

In addition, the values of Cronbach's alpha were strong for all the measures, ranging from 0.67 to 0.94 (See Table 4.2). The measurement model provided evidence of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

| Reliability Statistics | | |
|---|---|---|
| Factor | Cronbach's alpha | Number of Items |
| Attractiveness | 0.81 | 4 |
| Reputation | 0.94 | 5 |
| Expertise | 0.82 | 4 |
| Distinctiveness | 0.67 | 3 |
| Ideal Identity Salience | 0.69 | 3 |
| Endorser Identification | 0.76 | 4 |
| Attitude toward ad | 0.89 | 5 |
| Attitude toward brand | 0.88 | 3 |
| Attitude toward endorser | 0.89 | 4 |
| Purchase Intention | 0.88 | 2 |

## 4.2 Path Analysis

The path analysis was estimated based on the proposed model. The fit indices of path analysis indicated an acceptable model fit: $\chi2$ (615) = 1309.23, p=0.000, CFI=0.87, IFI=0.87, RMSEA=0.06 (Appendix D).

Figure 4.1: Path Analysis
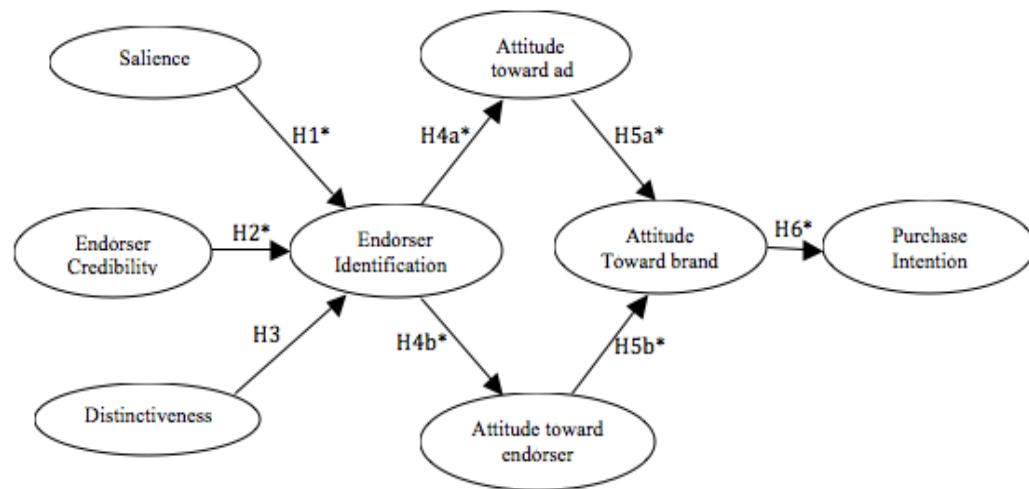


More specifically, in Table 4.3, the results indicate the following:

1. Hypotheses 1-3 refer to the antecedents of endorser identification. Both ideal identity salience and endorser credibility were found to have a significant positive effect on endorser identification with β values of 0.30, 0.26 respectively (p<0.05), supporting H1 and H2. However, the relationship between distinctiveness and endorser identification was not supported at a significant level, H3 was rejected.

2. Hypotheses 4a and 4b proposed that endorser identification would have a positive influence on both consumers' attitude toward ad and endorser was supported. The estimated β values are 0.50 and 0.49 at a significant level (p<0.00)

3. In addition, consumers' attitude toward ad was found to have a significant effect on consumers' attitude toward brand, with β=0.60, p=0.00, supporting H5a. Moreover, consumers' attitude toward endorser was observed to significantly influence consumers' attitude toward brand, with β=0.17, p<0.00, thus, H5b was supported.

4. Hypothesis 6 argued that consumers' favorable brand attitude would lead to a positive purchase intention. This relationship was supported with β=0.73, p<0.00.

Table 4.3: Hypotheses Test Results

| Hypotheses Test | | | β value | S.E. | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1: Salience | ---> | Endorser Identification | .298 | .053 | .004 |
| H2: Source Credibility | ---> | Endorser Identification | .259 | .104 | .011 |
| H3: Distinctiveness | ---> | Endorser Identification | -.037 | .046 | .559 |
| H4a:Endorser Identification | ---> | Attitude toward ad | .501 | .259 | *** |
| H4b:Endorser Identification | ---> | Attitude toward endorser | .487 | .238 | *** |
| H5a:Attitude toward ad | ---> | Attitude toward brand | .602 | .058 | *** |
| H5b:Attitude toward endorser | ---> | Attitude toward brand | .168 | .054 | .006 |
| H6: Attitude toward brand | ---> | Purchase Intention | .728 | .092 | *** |

***: p<0.00

## 4.3 Analysis of Variance

In order to test hypotheses 7 and 8, using SPSS 20.0, a two by two anova analysis was conducted in terms of attractiveness, reputation and expertise. The results were showed as following:

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1. Attractiveness: In Table 4.4, the result shows that there is a partially significantly difference between different endorsers F=2.79 (p<0.1). Besides, statistics of product type (F=0.13, p=0.72) show that it has no significant effect on attractiveness and the interaction between product type and endorser type is not significant either.

Table 4.4: Effectiveness of Product/Endorser Type on Endorser Attractiveness

Dependent Variable: Attractiveness

| Source | Type III Sum | df | Mean | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5576.615 | 1 | 5576.615 | 3436.075 | .000 |
| Endorser_type | 4.534 | 1 | 4.534 | 2.794 | .096 |
| product_type | .213 | 1 | .213 | .131 | .717 |
| Endorser_type * product_type | 3.295 | 1 | 3.295 | 2.030 | .156 |
| Error | 378.150 | 233 | 1.623 | | |
| Total | 5968.785 | 237 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 386.190 | 236 | | | |

More specifically, in Figure 4.2, we can see that no matter what type the product is, Chinese consumers tend to have a higher level of attractiveness for the local celebrity than for the foreign celebrity.

Figure 4.2: Endorser Attractiveness
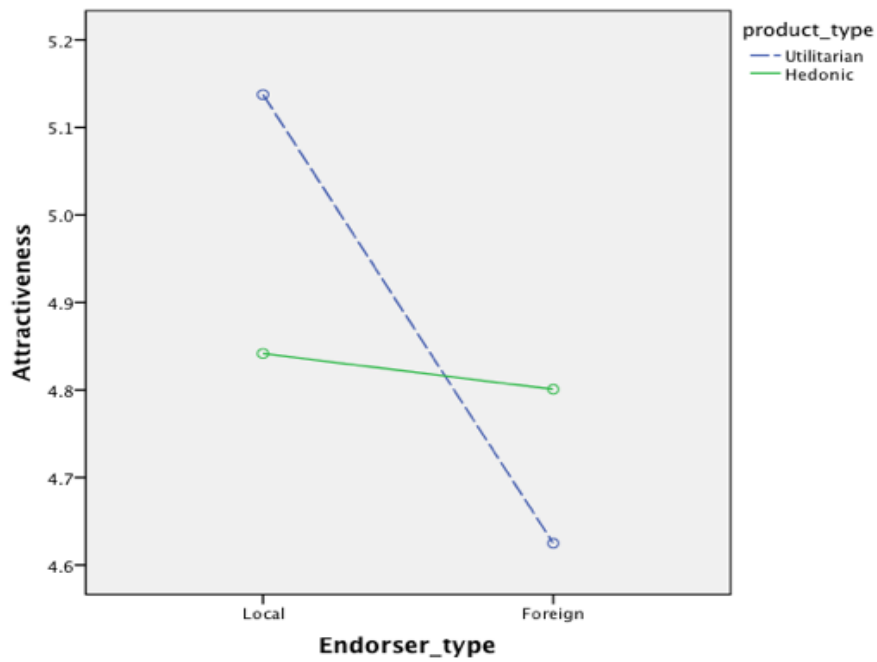


2. Reputation: In Table 4.5, it is found that endorser type has a significant influence on consumers' evaluation of reputation (F=4.425, p<0.05). Neither product type nor the interaction between product type and endorser has a significant impact on reputation.

Table 4.5: Effectiveness of Product/Endorser Type on Endorser Reputation

Dependent Variable: Reputation

| Source | Type III | df | Mean | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 6377.024 | 1 | 6377.024 | 2996.324 | .000 |
| Endorser_type | 9.417 | 1 | 9.417 | 4.425 | .036 |
| product_type | .005 | 1 | .005 | .003 | .960 |
| Endorser_type * product_type | .004 | 1 | .004 | .002 | .964 |
| Error | 495.890 | 233 | 2.128 | | |

| Total | 6889.895 | 237 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Total | 505.313 | 236 | | | |

Moreover, Figure 4.3 shows that local celebrity possesses a higher level reputation than local celebrity does for both utilitarian and hedonic products.

Figure 4.3: Endorser Reputation
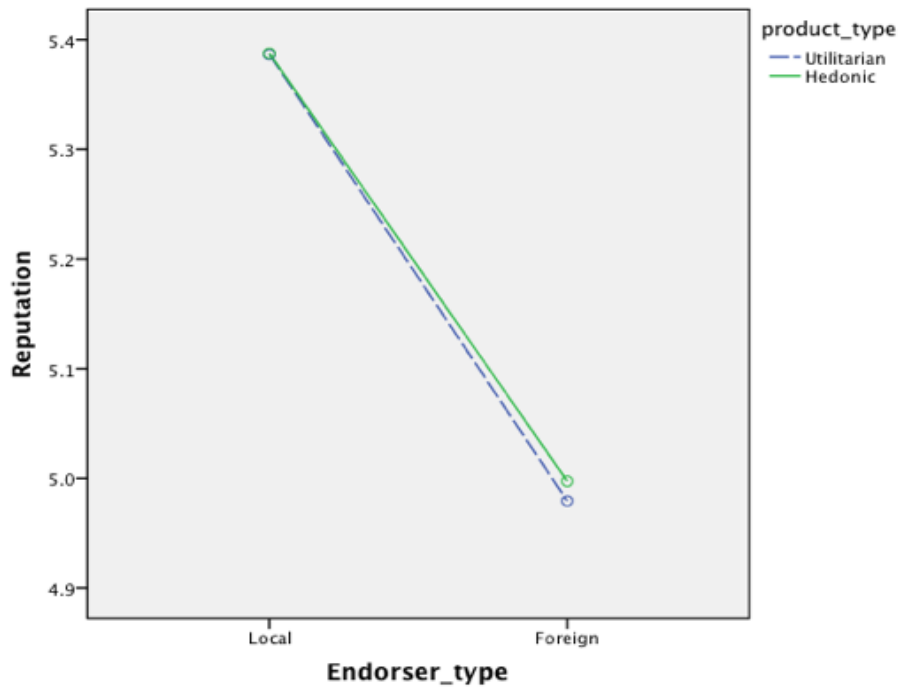


3.  Expertise: In Table 4.6, we can see that there is no significant effect on all three variables, indicating that endorser type and product type don't have any impact on consumers' evaluation of expertise.

Table 4.6: Effectiveness of Product/Endorser Type on Endorser Expertise

Dependent Variable: Expertise

| Source | Type III Sum | df | Mean | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5760.127 | 1 | 5760.127 | 3232.477 | .000 |
| Endorser_type | 2.679 | 1 | 2.679 | 1.503 | .221 |
| product_type | .383 | 1 | .383 | .215 | .644 |
| Endorser_type * product_type | .360 | 1 | .360 | .202 | .654 |
| Error | 415.195 | 233 | 1.782 | | |
| Total | 6184.708 | 237 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 418.628 | 236 | | | |

H7 predicts that an ad for a hedonic product that uses a foreign celebrity is more effective than would an ad for a hedonic product that uses a Chinese celebrity in terms of attractiveness, reputation, and expertise. In addition, H8 assumes that an ad for a utilitarian product uses a Chinese celebrity is more effective than would an ad for a utilitarian product that uses a foreign celebrity in terms of attractiveness, reputation and expertise.

Results seem to indicate that an endorser type plays a significantly important role in consumers' evaluation of attractiveness and reputation. However, there is no significant result for the evaluation of expertise. Specifically, local endorsers are perceived to be more attractive and reputable than foreign counterpart. Second, product type has no

significant impact on attractiveness, reputation and expertise. Based on the results, both H7 and H8 were rejected.

## 5.      Discussion

### 5.1      Theoretical Implication

Previous research of celebrity endorsement has focused mainly on three aspects: source credibility, match-up theory, and meaning transfer model. Few studies have been done concerning social identity theory in the Chinese market. We shed new light on the current celebrity endorsement research. This study introduces social identity theory to investigate celebrity endorsement, offering a new insight to understand the mechanism of celebrity endorsement. Since this study was conducted in China, the results provide evidence for the practical implications. More specifically, in our model, we propose that endorser identification is an important determinant in influencing consumer's attitudes and purchase intention. Ideal identity salience, endorser credibility, and endorser distinctiveness were assumed as antecedents of endorser identification. Relations among endorser identification, consumers' attitudes and purchase were included in the model as well. In addition, we also examined how endorser type and product affected consumers' evaluation on the celebrity in terms of attractiveness, reputation and expertise.

The findings reveal that both ideal identity salience and endorser credibility exert a positive impact on consumers' identification with endorser, while endorser distinctiveness does not have an effect on endorser identification. Specifically, for Chinese consumers, celebrity endorsers represent the ideal image they would like to be compared with. Results from this study demonstrate that ideal identity salience has a positive influence on endorser identification. Celebrities usually carry social meaning for

consumers and are more likely to elicit a salient social comparison that in turn leads to assimilative response (Musswiler, 2003). A celebrity is often regarded as a hero, a role model or someone that fans want to worship and dream to be (Kozinet, 2001). This can be explained from a social identity perspective, when people have a strong feeling for a celebrity, they tend to admire and behave like the celebrity in order to achieve their ideal identity, resulting a high level of ideal salience identity (Boon and Lomore, 2001). In fact, advertisement endorsed by celebrities is likely to trigger the ideal identity salience, therefore influencing consumers' identification with celebrity. When consumers view advertisement, celebrity endorsers manage to elicit identity salience for viewers, whereas non-celebrity endorsers are not able to do so. It is reasonable for consumers to identify themselves with endorsers, enhancing the relationship between ideal identity salience and endorser identification.

Endorser credibility has a significant positive influence on consumer's identification with the celebrity. The present study suggests that the effectiveness of endorser depends on the extent to which she/he is perceived to be credible in terms of attractiveness, reputation and expertise. Moreover, the relationship between endorser credibility and endorser identification was confirmed. The identification process occurs when the endorser is regarded as an attractive, trustful and professional. Celebrity endorsers are considered to possess more credibility with which individuals are more willing to identify. According to the reference group theory, people use principles and standards of others as an indicator to make a comparison between the endorser and consumers (Loken, 2006). Since celebrities usually represent cultural meaning which individuals admire and want to be associated with, a credible endorser tend to elicit

identification process with consumers and thus influence their attitudes and buying behavior.

Endorser distinctiveness, which was assumed to have a positive impact on endorser identification, turns out to have no significant influence on the identification between consumers and celebrity. This surprising result may due to the fact that all the participants in our study were Chinese. The hypothesis of distinctiveness was built on that individuals not only seek for similarity with others, but also search for differences with others. However, there might be a cultural difference between western and eastern consumers.

Cultures can be divided into individualism and collectivism based on individuals' behavioral pattern (Triandis and Gelfand, 1998). People with individualist values tend to view themselves as independent of others and act based on their free will, such as people from United States, Canada and other western countries, whereas individuals with collectivist values usually see themselves as a part of the group and interdependent with others, and behave according to social rules, such as Chinese, Korean, and other Asian countries (Triandis, 1995). For Chinese consumers, celebrities who possess the common values of the society are perceived to be more credible and influential in a collectivistic culture (Kim, 1996). In contrast, consumers in individualistic culture tend to view celebrities as unique individuals who are distinguished in their fields, not necessarily owning a high reputation. Unlike Caucasian participants, Asian participants tend to have a positive attitude toward the advertisement endorsed by Asian spokesperson (Forehand et al., 2002). Chinese consumers are more likely to identify with a celebrity who shares characteristics with others rather than another one who is perceived to be different.

Interestingly, the present study underlies that, in the Chinese market, how the role of endorser identification is effectiveness on consumers' attitude. Endorser identification has a positive influence on both consumers' attitude toward the ad and the endorser. Respondents who identified strongly with the endorser were more likely to elicit more favorable attitudes toward ad and endorser, which in turn influenced brand attitude and purchase intention. Therefore, our study suggests that endorser identification is a crucial construct linking source characteristic to consumers' attitude and purchase intention.

In addition, the type of product and endorser influences source credibility in terms of attractiveness, reputation and expertise. On the basis of social identity theory, we proposed that local celebrity would generate more favorable attitude than foreign celebrity on attractiveness, reputation and expertise. However, results show that only endorser type has a marginally significant effect on attractiveness while product type does not affect consumers' evaluation of attractiveness. Besides, the endorser type also has a significant influence on reputation, whereas product type has nothing to do with it. For expertise, both product type and endorser type are proved to be irrelevant in the present study. This is consistent with the previous finding that same ethnicity between endorser and audience has a positive effect on perceived similarity (Whittler and DiMeo, 1991). Although many researches emphasize the importance of congruence between endorser and product in celebrity endorsement, we provide another explanation from a social identity perspective. Compared to foreign celebrities, local celebrities are more likely to be seen and be viewed as real by consumers. Individuals tend to depend on the people who shared certain characteristics with them, in this case, ethnicity. For Chinese consumers, although foreign celebrities sometimes stand for a prestigious and relax style,

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it doesn't seem to be real to their daily life. Local celebrity endorsers are likely to be more emotionally involved than a foreign celebrity. Studies in social psychology support that the similarity between the endorser and audience can lead to positive perceptions of advertisement and product (DeShields, Kara, and Santos, 1999). According to the congruence theory, Chinese consumers would consider that Chinese celebrities are more congruent with their ethnic background and share the same common values with them, thus leading to a more effective advertising. Perceived similarity between endorser and individual is positively related to message effectiveness (Andsager et al., 2006). This study shows that in the Chinese market, local endorsers are evaluated to possess more attractiveness and reputation than their foreign counterparts. An explanation could be that Chinese consumers rely more on the similarities between celebrities and themselves, regardless of the product type.

## 5.2    Managerial Implication

In this study, we build a model that emphasizes the role of endorser identification and examines the relations among many constructs. Based on the results, we find that, for Chinese consumers, endorser identification that influenced by ideal identity salience and endorser credibility both plays a crucial role in the celebrity endorsement process. There are two determinants for endorser identification: Ideal identity salience and endorser credibility. Moreover, a high level of endorser identification leads to a more positive attitude towards ad and endorsers, therefore influencing the brand attitude and purchase intention. In addition, we also examine the role of endorser type and product type in endorser credibility for Chinese consumers. A notable effect is how endorser type affects

endorser credibility in terms of attractiveness and reputation, whereas product type does not influence endorser credibility. The result shows that Chinese consumers appreciate local celebrity more than foreign celebrity regardless of product categories. Our results contradict previous researches that claim foreign celebrities are more effective for hedonic product than local celebrities in China (Chang, 2008; Zhou and Belk, 2004). An explanation could be that Chinese consumers tend to view celebrities who possess the same ethnic background as more attractive and trustful over celebrities with different ethnicity.

Marketers often question standardization versus localization of the marketing strategy (Zhang and Gelb, 1996; Crawford, 2000). Choosing a local or foreign celebrity endorser would have different advertising effectiveness. The results indicate that under different ethnicities, we could probably have different types of impact. American consumers tend to view Asians as technically superior and Westerners as elegant in their tastes (Cohen, 1992). Cui and Yang (2009) confirm that Chinese consumers generate more positive attitudes toward advertisements containing Chinese models than those featuring Caucasian model. Our study suggests that for marketers who want to explore the Chinese market with a celebrity endorsement strategy, it could be better to choose local endorsers rather than foreign endorsers. From a social identity perspective, Chinese consumers tend to view local endorsers as an in-group member, and are motived to maintain a positive self-image through the identification process, therefore, they tend to show an in-group bias toward advertisements endorsed by celebrities with the same ethnicity rather than foreign ones. In contrast, product type doesn't affect Chinese consumers' evaluation of endorser credibility.  For both hedonic and utilitarian products,

local endorsers elicit more positive attitude than foreign counterparts. Localization strategy is more important than globalization in China in terms of celebrity endorsement. Many global brands have already adopted local celebrities as endorsers to replace foreign endorsers. For instance, Louis Vuitton and Mercedes-Benz chose local celebrities as endorsers in advertisement.

# 6.    Limitations and Future Research

There are several theoretical and methodological limitations of this study. A student sample does not offer a "real case scenario". Almost all participants were less than 22 years old, which suggests that the result may not be applicable to the general public. Moreover, the scales adopted from previous literature for ideal identity salience and distinctiveness are not found to be very robust for Chinese consumers. The construct reliabilities are less than 0.7, generating cultural context is a important aspect in measures.

Second, this study was conducted in China, a collectivistic culture. Under these circumstances, endorser distinctiveness is identified to have no impact on endorser identification. However, this may be due to the cultural difference between Western and Eastern countries. Although the economy of China is developing a faster pace, the idea of the Confucian culture is still in a dominant position. Confucianism emphasizes tolerance and does not encourage people to be different from another. As a result, we suggest for future research that in western countries, role of endorser distinctiveness may be different with our result.

In addition, the products in this study were adapted from the previous literature. So the categorization of hedonic/utilitarian products needs to be reviewed. The camera was viewed as a hedonic product in the study, whereas there is still a possibility that it could be perceived as a utilitarian product. So it is suggested to replicate our study with different products in future research.

This study also did not take gender effects into account. Endorsers in this study are male actors. However, the role of female endorsers has not been studies yet. Klaus and Bailey (2008) found that advertisement featured women played an important role in influencing consumers purchase behavior than advertisement that featured men. Peetz et al (2004) also showed that subjects inclined to be influenced by male endorsers. The different impact between male and female endorsers suggests that male endorsers are more effective than female endorsers (Boyd and Shank 2004). It would be quite interesting to see how gender would affect consumers' decision in future research. This study was conducted in southern China, which makes results a litter questionable because China is a big country in which regional differences exist. People living in different regions may perceive celebrity endorsement from a different perspective. It would be interesting to replicate this study in another region in China.

Finally, advertising effectiveness is influenced by many factors. There may be other determinants of celebrity identification that were not included in this study, for example, some contextual factors. We encourage further research to focus on more substantial factors in order to find out which condition works better in China or any other countries.

# Appendix A: Pretest

**A foreign company is planning to promote its digital camera in Chinese market. In order to success in Chinese market, a celebrity has been employed to endorser the product in advertising. Please read the advertisement and after that, read each question or statement carefully, responding by using the following scales. There is no right or wrong answer to each question or statement; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions.**



Johnny Depp

1.As an endorser for camera, I think he is:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Appropriate |
| Ineffective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Effective |

2 I think the combination of camera and Johnny Depp:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does not belong with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Belongs with |
| Does not go together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goes together |
| Does not fit together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fits together |



Leonardo Dicaprio

1. As an endorser for camera, I think he is:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Appropriate |
| Ineffective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Effective |

2. I think the combination of camera and Leonardo Dicaprio:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does not belong with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Belongs with |
| Does not go together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goes together |
| Does not fit together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fits together |

| Brad Pitt | 1. As an endorser for camera, I think he is: |
|---|---|

**Brad Pitt**

1. As an endorser for camera, I think he is:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Appropriate |
| Ineffective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Effective |

2. I think the combination of camera and Brad Pitt :

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does not belong with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Belongs with |
| Does not go together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goes together |
| Does not fit together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fits together |

**Hugh Jackman**

1. As an endorser for camera, I think he is :

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Appropriate |
| Ineffective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Effective |

2. I think the combination of camera and Hugh Jackman :

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does not belong with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Belongs with |
| Does not go together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goes together |
| Does not fit together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fits together |

**Nicolas Cage**

1. As an endorser for camera, I think he is :

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Appropriate |
| Ineffective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Effective |

2. I think the combination of camera and Nicolas Cage:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Does not belong with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Belongs with |
| Does not go together | 1 | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Goes together |
| Does not fit together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Fits together |

## Appendix B: Survey

**Preamble: A foreign company is planning to promote its laptop in the Chinese market. In order to succeed in the Chinese market, a celebrity has been used to endorse the product in advertisements. Please read the advertisement and after that, read each question or statement carefully, responding by using the following scales. There is no right or wrong answer to each question or statement; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions.**
**Below are statements relating to your attitudes toward the ad. Please circle one of the numbers from 1 to 7 to express your views (1= strongly disagree; 7= strongly agree).**

# Part I

**This section asks you as an in-group member of the endorser you have just read in the ad, a type of ideal person you may regard yourself to be. Think that the endorser would be ideally someone who represents this group identity. Please rate on the 7-point scale below:**

**Ideal Identity Salience**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This is something I barely even think about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I would feel at a loss if I were forced to give this up. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I really have any clear feelings about this. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| For me, being a person in this group identity means more than just belonging to it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This is an important part of who I am. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**On each of the scales below, please rate the extent to which you feel best describe the endorser in the advertisement you just read:**

**Attractiveness**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unattractive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Attractive |
| Not Classy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Classy |
| Ugly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Beautiful |
| Plain | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Elegant |
| Not Sexy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Sexy |

**Reputation**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Undependable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Dependable |
| Dishonest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Honest |
| Unreliable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Reliable |
| Insincere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Sincere |
| Untrustworthy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Trustworthy |
| Terrible Reputation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Great Reputation |

**Expertise**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inexperienced | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Experienced |
| Not knowledgeable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Knowledgeable |
| Not qualified | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Qualified |
| Unskilled | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Skilled |
| Not an Expert | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Expert |

**On the statements below, rate the extent to which you agree/disagree. The scales are marked from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7).**

**Endorser Distinctiveness**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I believe this endorser is very unique as compared to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I feel that this endorser is unlike any others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This endorser is a very special celebrity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**The following section indicates the extent to which you feel about the endorser: 1=Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree.**
**I find the endorser to be:**
**Attitude toward Endorser**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not sincere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Sincere |
| Unreliable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Reliable |
| Untrustworthy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Trustworthy |
| Not Objective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Objective |

**Endorser Identification**
**1.Please indicate which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between your and endorser's identities.**



| | |
|---|---|
| A | Far Apart |
| B | Close Together but Seperate |
| C | Very Small Overlap |
| D | Small Overlap |
| E | Moderate Overlap |
| F | Large Overlap |
| G | Very Large Overlap |
| H | Complete Overlap |

**2. Please indicate to what degree your self-image overlaps with the image of the celebrity endorser. (From 1 to 7)**

No overlap    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Complete overlap

**3. On the statements below, rate the extent to which you agree/disagree. The scales are marked from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7).**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am very interested in what others think about (celebrity's name) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| When someone criticizes the (celebrity's name), it feels like a personal insult. (Celebrity)'s successes are my successes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| When someone praises (celebrity's name), it feels like a personal compliment. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| If a story in the media criticized (celebrity's name), I would feel embarrassed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

## Attitude toward the Ad
**Toward the advertisement, I feel:**

| Unfavorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Favorable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good |
| Negative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Positive |
| Unappealing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Appealing |
| Not Likeable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Likeable |

## Attitude toward the Brand
**Toward the brand, I feel:**

| Unfavorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Favorable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good |
| Negative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Positive |

## Purchase Intention
**Based on the advertisement, the following scales indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statement:**

| The next time I purchase a laptop, I will buy the advertised brand in the ad | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely Unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Extremely Likely |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Strongly Agree |

## Part II: General Information

1. Gender:  _____ male  _____ female

2. Age:
__Younger than 18
__ 18-22
__23 – 25
__older than 25

3. Where is your hometown? ____

Continued: Four conditions

# Appendix C: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

**Result (Default model)**

Minimum was achieved
Chi-square = 1149.137
Degrees of freedom = 598
Probability level = .000

**Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)**

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| expertise | <--- | source_credibility | 1.561 | .312 | 5.003 | *** | par_28 |
| attractiveness | <--- | source_credibility | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| reputation | <--- | source_credibility | 2.031 | .378 | 5.370 | *** | par_29 |
| b4 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.451 | .174 | 8.335 | *** | par_1 |
| b3 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.445 | .175 | 8.275 | *** | par_2 |
| b2 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.225 | .158 | 7.749 | *** | par_3 |
| b5 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| c5 | <--- | reputation | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| c4 | <--- | reputation | 1.120 | .076 | 14.761 | *** | par_4 |
| c3 | <--- | reputation | 1.289 | .082 | 15.782 | *** | par_5 |
| c2 | <--- | reputation | 1.258 | .079 | 16.008 | *** | par_6 |
| c1 | <--- | reputation | 1.244 | .082 | 15.089 | *** | par_7 |
| d5 | <--- | expertise | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| d4 | <--- | expertise | 1.149 | .113 | 10.198 | *** | par_8 |
| d3 | <--- | expertise | 1.260 | .118 | 10.692 | *** | par_9 |
| d1 | <--- | expertise | 1.143 | .132 | 8.662 | *** | par_10 |
| h6 | <--- | ID | 2.114 | .439 | 4.821 | *** | par_11 |
| h4 | <--- | ID | 2.317 | .471 | 4.917 | *** | par_12 |
| a2 | <--- | salience1 | .888 | .137 | 6.500 | *** | par_13 |
| a5 | <--- | salience1 | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| i1 | <--- | ad | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| i2 | <--- | ad | .863 | .060 | 14.374 | *** | par_14 |
| i3 | <--- | ad | .779 | .061 | 12.680 | *** | par_15 |
| i4 | <--- | ad | .890 | .064 | 13.829 | *** | par_16 |
| i5 | <--- | ad | .877 | .065 | 13.454 | *** | par_17 |
| g4 | <--- | endorser | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| g3 | <--- | endorser | 1.099 | .075 | 14.671 | *** | par_18 |
| g2 | <--- | endorser | 1.175 | .078 | 14.966 | *** | par_19 |
| g1 | <--- | endorser | 1.040 | .088 | 11.881 | *** | par_20 |
| j1 | <--- | brand | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| j2 | <--- | brand | .974 | .060 | 16.323 | *** | par_21 |

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| j3 | <--- | brand | .899 | .063 | 14.215 | *** | par_22 |
| e1 | <--- | distinctiveness | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| e2 | <--- | distinctiveness | 2.401 | .598 | 4.017 | *** | par_23 |
| e3 | <--- | distinctiveness | .997 | .171 | 5.827 | *** | par_24 |
| a4 | <--- | salience1 | 1.224 | .189 | 6.480 | *** | par_25 |
| k1 | <--- | PI | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| k2 | <--- | PI | .877 | .059 | 14.896 | *** | par_26 |
| h5 | <--- | ID | 2.541 | .510 | 4.982 | *** | par_27 |
| h1 | <--- | ID | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |

**Model Fit Summary**

**CMIN**

| Model | NPAR | CMIN | DF | P | CMIN/DF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 142 | 1149.137 | 598 | .000 | 1.922 |
| Saturated model | 740 | .000 | 0 |  |  |
| Independence model | 37 | 5893.295 | 703 | .000 | 8.383 |

**Baseline Comparisons**

| Model | NFI Delta1 | RFI rho1 | IFI Delta2 | TLI rho2 | CFI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .805 | .771 | .896 | .875 | .894 |
| Saturated model | 1.000 |  | 1.000 |  | 1.000 |
| Independence model | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |

**Parsimony-Adjusted Measures**

| Model | PRATIO | PNFI | PCFI |
|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .851 | .685 | .760 |
| Saturated model | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Independence model | 1.000 | .000 | .000 |

**NCP**

| Model | NCP | LO 90 | HI 90 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 551.137 | 459.084 | 650.982 |
| Saturated model | .000 | .000 | .000 |

| Model | NCP | LO 90 | HI 90 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Independence model | 5190.295 | 4948.683 | 5438.452 |

**FMIN**

| Model | FMIN | F0 | LO 90 | HI 90 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 4.849 | 2.325 | 1.937 | 2.747 |
| Saturated model | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Independence model | 24.866 | 21.900 | 20.881 | 22.947 |

**RMSEA**

| Model | RMSEA | LO 90 | HI 90 | PCLOSE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .062 | .057 | .068 | .000 |
| Independence model | .176 | .172 | .181 | .000 |

**AIC**

| Model | AIC | BCC | BIC | CAIC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 1433.137 | 1487.369 | | |
| Saturated model | 1480.000 | 1762.613 | | |
| Independence model | 5967.295 | 5981.425 | | |

**ECVI**

| Model | ECVI | LO 90 | HI 90 | MECVI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 6.047 | 5.659 | 6.468 | 6.276 |
| Saturated model | 6.245 | 6.245 | 6.245 | 7.437 |
| Independence model | 25.178 | 24.159 | 26.226 | 25.238 |

**HOELTER**

| Model | HOELTER .05 | HOELTER .01 |
|---|---|---|
| Default model | 136 | 141 |
| Independence model | 31 | 32 |

# Appendix D: Path Analysis Results

**Result (Default model)**

Minimum was achieved
Chi-square = 1309.230
Degrees of freedom = 615
Probability level = .000

**Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)**

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ID | <--- | salience1 | .152 | .053 | 2.881 | .004 | par_31 |
| ID | <--- | source_credibility | .266 | .104 | 2.555 | .011 | par_32 |
| ID | <--- | distinctiveness | -.027 | .046 | -.585 | .559 | par_34 |
| ad | <--- | ID | 1.088 | .259 | 4.205 | *** | par_25 |
| endorser | <--- | ID | .981 | .238 | 4.126 | *** | par_26 |
| brand | <--- | ad | .499 | .058 | 8.568 | *** | par_27 |
| brand | <--- | endorser | .150 | .054 | 2.748 | .006 | par_28 |
| attractiveness | <--- | source_credibility | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| expertise | <--- | source_credibility | 1.464 | .288 | 5.082 | *** | par_15 |
| reputation | <--- | source_credibility | 1.693 | .320 | 5.284 | *** | par_35 |
| PI | <--- | brand | 1.009 | .092 | 10.995 | *** | par_36 |
| b3 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.440 | .173 | 8.326 | *** | par_2 |
| b2 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.217 | .157 | 7.774 | *** | par_3 |
| b5 | <--- | attractiveness | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| c5 | <--- | reputation | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| c4 | <--- | reputation | 1.118 | .075 | 14.827 | *** | par_4 |
| c3 | <--- | reputation | 1.291 | .081 | 15.888 | *** | par_5 |
| c2 | <--- | reputation | 1.254 | .078 | 16.026 | *** | par_6 |
| c1 | <--- | reputation | 1.240 | .082 | 15.104 | *** | par_7 |
| d5 | <--- | expertise | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| d4 | <--- | expertise | 1.146 | .112 | 10.260 | *** | par_8 |
| d3 | <--- | expertise | 1.246 | .116 | 10.719 | *** | par_9 |
| d1 | <--- | expertise | 1.139 | .131 | 8.704 | *** | par_10 |
| h5 | <--- | ID | 2.407 | .483 | 4.989 | *** | par_11 |
| h6 | <--- | ID | 2.032 | .423 | 4.800 | *** | par_12 |
| h4 | <--- | ID | 2.337 | .473 | 4.944 | *** | par_13 |
| a2 | <--- | salience1 | .879 | .136 | 6.484 | *** | par_14 |
| a5 | <--- | salience1 | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| i1 | <--- | ad | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| i2 | <--- | ad | .858 | .061 | 14.146 | *** | par_16 |
| i3 | <--- | ad | .777 | .062 | 12.571 | *** | par_17 |

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i4 | <--- | ad | .890 | .065 | 13.732 | *** | par_18 |
| i5 | <--- | ad | .883 | .065 | 13.500 | *** | par_19 |
| g4 | <--- | endorser | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| g3 | <--- | endorser | 1.106 | .077 | 14.278 | *** | par_20 |
| g2 | <--- | endorser | 1.198 | .082 | 14.652 | *** | par_21 |
| g1 | <--- | endorser | 1.059 | .090 | 11.770 | *** | par_22 |
| j1 | <--- | brand | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| j2 | <--- | brand | .969 | .062 | 15.586 | *** | par_23 |
| j3 | <--- | brand | .902 | .066 | 13.711 | *** | par_24 |
| e1 | <--- | distinctiveness | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| e2 | <--- | distinctiveness | 2.184 | .584 | 3.744 | *** | par_29 |
| e3 | <--- | distinctiveness | .995 | .168 | 5.911 | *** | par_30 |
| h1 | <--- | ID | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| a4 | <--- | salience1 | 1.205 | .186 | 6.464 | *** | par_37 |
| k1 | <--- | PI | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| k2 | <--- | PI | .878 | .063 | 14.011 | *** | par_38 |

**Covariances: (Group number 1 - Default model)**

|  |  |  | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P | Label |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| distinctiveness | <--> | salience1 | .038 | .064 | .599 | .549 | par_33 |
| distinctiveness | <--> | source_credibility | -.052 | .035 | -1.499 | .134 | par_39 |
| salience1 | <--> | source_credibility | .062 | .056 | 1.093 | .274 | par_40 |

**Correlations: (Group number 1 - Default model)**

|  |  |  | Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| distinctiveness | <--> | salience1 | .044 |
| distinctiveness | <--> | source_credibility | -.121 |
| salience1 | <--> | source_credibility | .101 |

**Model Fit Summary**

**CMIN**

| Model | NPAR | CMIN | DF | P | CMIN/DF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 125 | 1309.230 | 615 | .000 | 2.129 |
| Saturated model | 740 | .000 | 0 |  |  |
| Independence model | 37 | 5893.295 | 703 | .000 | 8.383 |

**Baseline Comparisons**

| Model | NFI Delta1 | RFI rho1 | IFI Delta2 | TLI rho2 | CFI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .778 | .746 | .868 | .847 | .866 |
| Saturated model | 1.000 | | 1.000 | | 1.000 |
| Independence model | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |

**Parsimony-Adjusted Measures**

| Model | PRATIO | PNFI | PCFI |
|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .875 | .680 | .758 |
| Saturated model | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Independence model | 1.000 | .000 | .000 |

**NCP**

| Model | NCP | LO 90 | HI 90 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 694.230 | 593.946 | 802.249 |
| Saturated model | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Independence model | 5190.295 | 4948.683 | 5438.452 |

**FMIN**

| Model | FMIN | F0 | LO 90 | HI 90 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 5.524 | 2.929 | 2.506 | 3.385 |
| Saturated model | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Independence model | 24.866 | 21.900 | 20.881 | 22.947 |

**RMSEA**

| Model | RMSEA | LO 90 | HI 90 | PCLOSE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | .069 | .064 | .074 | .000 |
| Independence model | .176 | .172 | .181 | .000 |

**AIC**

| Model | AIC | BCC | BIC | CAIC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 1559.230 | 1606.969 | | |
| Saturated model | 1480.000 | 1762.613 | | |
| Independence model | 5967.295 | 5981.425 | | |

**ECVI**

| Model | ECVI | LO 90 | HI 90 | MECVI |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Default model | 6.579 | 6.156 | 7.035 | 6.780 |
| Saturated model | 6.245 | 6.245 | 6.245 | 7.437 |
| Independence model | 25.178 | 24.159 | 26.226 | 25.238 |

**HOELTER**

| Model | HOELTER .05 | HOELTER .01 |
|---|---|---|
| Default model | 122 | 127 |
| Independence model | 31 | 32 |

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