

Abstract

The celebrity endorsers in need of several firms, especially for the popular one called as the multiple product endorsers because their reputation, appearance, personality or talents can grab attention from consumers and it is easier for firms rather than build awareness by themselves. However, it is well-known that the cost to hire those multiple product endorsers is extremely high but firms still prefer those kinds of endorsers, and compete with competitors to hire them. This research analyses whether those multiple product endorsers that are hired to as be quality signaling for a product will be obstacle for firms to inform quality through them or not since it is likely that the image from previous or other current endorsement job can intervene the information of another product that those celebrities also endorse by obtaining data through in-depth interview method and descriptive research as an interview guideline. As the result, the paper found that it partially distort information and the reason behind interference is mainly from the popularity in those celebrities themselves can shadow the quality signal of certain products and the several product endorsement jobs even in the other category. Contribution of this study is that firms that consider using celebrity endorsement for their products or services and firms that relate to marketing job such as advertising agency, event organizer, etc. Those firms should reconsider on choosing celebrities, not just compete to grab the most popular one but those should be the right one and can be used in effective way. To sustain their future income, celebrities themselves and their personal managers should also concern on the job offers.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Significance of Problem

Advertising is a significant economic activity for firms in order to create brand awareness and gain trust from their customers because it is potential way to reach a big number of consumers through traditional way like TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, or new way such as social media, etc. In the sense of economics, these kinds of activity results to advertised product being outstanding in the world of competitive market and probably holding certain market power over other competitors. Apart from price, the level of advertising can be information in advance to help consumers make purchasing decision. In the other word, it is called as quality signaling. The result of reminding is potentially to increase demand and sales of product. Even the firms with some market power also advertise because they are able to enjoy the shifting of demand and higher price (Bagwell 2005).

Recently, using celebrities in advertising is a widespread and powerful alternative in Thai products and service marketing since their reputation, appearance, personality or talents can grab high attention from audience. The power of celebrities is beyond to just entertain audience but being the role models of people's life. Generally, human always seek for the same lifestyle as their group or ideal group in order to be accepted as members or be involved with some society and firms are able to take advantage from this point by using celebrity endorsement. For example, a famous case in Thailand is Chompoo Araya A. Hargett. She is brand ambassador of several products such as L'oreal Paris, Sabina, the daughter brand, Dutch mil, Sunbite, to name but a few. She created a lot of buzz in Thai society. Every brand that she have been brand ambassador are all well-known and good-looking partially affected by her image.

To clarify the definition, Pringle (2004) mentioned celebrity endorser is anyone who familiar with firm's target people and their characteristics is related to the brand. Thereby, the brand communicates their product through their image and reputation. These day, the framework of great celebrity usage campaign now is not limited only presenter (who present the product or service) or brand ambassadors (who is familiar with that kind of product or service). For example, celebrity can be a person who has a big number of followers on Instagram that might be real user of a product or not. Not only actors, but ordinary people, animal, cartoons character or even politicians can be celebrity endorsers if they have something related to the brand and are famous enough to influence people behavior.

As mentioned above, celebrity endorsement, a type of advertising, mainly purpose to increase sale from customer based being inspired by those celebrities and create some market power to the products. By doing so, it make those celebrities in need of several firms, especially for the popular one called as the multiple product endorsers. However, it is well-known that the cost to hire those multiple product endorsers is extremely high. The underlying question is why firms still prefer those kinds of endorsers, and why they have to compete with competitors to hire them and willing to pay them at high wage.

Many paper tried to explain and analyze how the case of foreign celebrity endorsement to the brand effect. However, it is not enough for firms who want to target and set up business in Thai market because their culture and behavior is quite different. Therefore, this research focuses on specific cases of Thailand.

1.2 Research Objectives

- a) To study the effect of using the popular celebrities who are multiple product endorsers to represent the brand or product on transferring information of product quality.
- b) To study the perception of consumers on the received information from those celebrities.

1.3 Research problems

Does the use of celebrity as a multiple product endorser distort information about product that the brand intent to transfer to customers? And How?

1.4 Scope and limitations

The research limit into mentioned only the case of actors and actresses in Thailand since it has high degree of renown and is the easiest type of celebrities for audiences and informants to remind. Because of the limited time, the sample size is only 5 persons and the testing in workshop is only 6 stars.

1.5 Definition of terms

- a) Celebrity endorsement = A well-known person who is used to promote product or service.
- b) Multiple product endorser = the celebrity endorser who is used to promote more than to 2 product or service.

2. Literature review

Celebrities significantly impact on almost aspect of life such as the trend on media, fashion, body shape, etc. For example, more celebrities are show up on reality TV or Gossip magazine. The implication is that their personality and private life are interesting. For fashion dimension, many celebrities are as trend setters or aspirations of people to imitate or follow what

they have done on appearance. Also, on beauty item and body shape, celebrities have impact on women's physical self-image to improve their sexual attractiveness such as cosmetics, plastic surgery, etc (Pringle 2004).

2.1 Why use Endorsement suitable for this era?

Pringle (2004) explain briefly that the supportive reasons to place celebrities in advertising through. It is because they are 1) famous, 2) liability and 3) consistent. It help product being famous following the reputation of celebrities, being likable from their fan club or whoever that have preference on them, and being consistent from frequently show up celebrity and product on media.

Pringle (2004) and Khatri (2006) summarized into 3 main factors to confirm that the use of celebrity is more suitable for recently trend and tend to increase in marketing communication. First of all, interactivity between brands and customers is going to increase. Nowadays, there is more availability of commercial communication channels such as increasing number of TV channels and radio stations, emerging of e-commerce, growing of social media, more number of people owning smart phone, to name but a few. In the sense of marketers, people in this field see these complex kind of change as opportunity and challenging in producing integrated brand communication that have to be convey in the same message to reflect brand image in several media. There might be many ways to create idea for brands, but this is obviously that it is easier to celebrities have ability and potential to be the center and link media channel with a brand's message by their characteristics that might be created by the previous entertainment job.

Second factor in the book is 'the era of consent '. Since there are significance number of message and promotion pushing to customers, only the brands that relate to customers and

customers are really interested and pay attention in are allowed to access and others that is seen as just a nuisance will be eliminated. On the other word, customers have more power to control the commercial communication message and only outstanding brand can get permission to send their message to them. For instance, customers always move some weird e-mail to junk box when they are not interested in or because they think it might be spam. As mentioned above, celebrities can influence in many aspects of people's life. It finds that people tend to like product more when it is endorsed by celebrities. So it can be implied that the power of celebrities use is attractive enough to get the permission to communicate with customers who see the celebrities as iconic or partially linked to them.

Third, the fame is a key of success. As increasing of commercial communication, firms are more difficult to gain attention from customers to their products. Khatri (2006) mentioned and Pringle (2004) also explained purchasing decision process through the Butterfield model which consists of awareness, visualization, familiarity, resonance, disposition, and subscription respectively. First step, famous person have high level of public awareness so that people are easily to visualize because they are familiar with or they have often seen them from previous entertainment jobs or media. Then, their image transfer resonance to them through product. If customer associates with them and feel appreciated, it might lead to subscription to products at the end and that mean the successful in building customer relationship. On the other word, the higher degree of celebrities' reputation can increase a chance to attract attention broader from customers and achieve more sales. By doing so, it also helps the brand differentiated themselves from other crowded brands in the market and generated better image in the sense of credibility and authenticity.

2.2 Model of Meaning Transfer

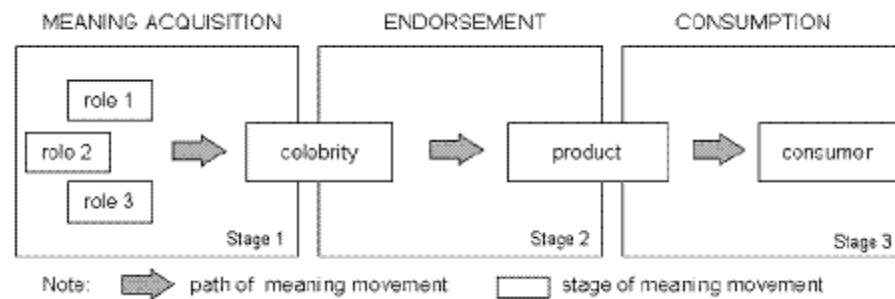


Figure 1 (Mc Cracken 1989 cited in Anekthammakul, 2010)

Even if there is plenty of benefit to use celebrity sells these days, the brand will achieve the most effectiveness of using the celebrity endorsement only if they selected the right endorser to help brand as a bridge to transfer information to consumers. Mc Cracken (1989 cited in Anekthammakul, 2010) explains the meaning transfer model, the process of endorsement, into 3 stages respectively.

First stage, the celebrities are transferred the meaning acquisition that is own by them in terms of their personality or lifestyles creating on public. Next stage, the celebrities perform as the endorser of product by passing their meaning into products. The third stage, consumers eventually get the meaning of product from celebrity endorsers. Celebrity endorsements would achieve accessing to consumers only if they go through all these 3 stages.

This can illustrate by example of Chompoo Araya as a brand ambassador of L'oreal Paris Thailand. She is well-known as an actress and fashionista in Thailand. Several brands in beauty and healthy product usually choose her to be a presenter including L'oreal Paris. Lately, she went to Canne festival 2014 and was the actress of Sai See Plerng, the famous TV series on channel 3. L'oreal create ads 'get the look' of Chompoo in each episode of Sai See Plerng

through official Instagram. She is half-Thai and her characteristics look beautiful and luxury that are suitable for the global brand like L'oreal. Also, she is a hot TV series actress. She therefore has closer relationship to Thai women customers who is L'oreal's target customers. This is one of successful case of meaning transferring in Thailand.

2.3 Match- Product-to-Buyers Effect

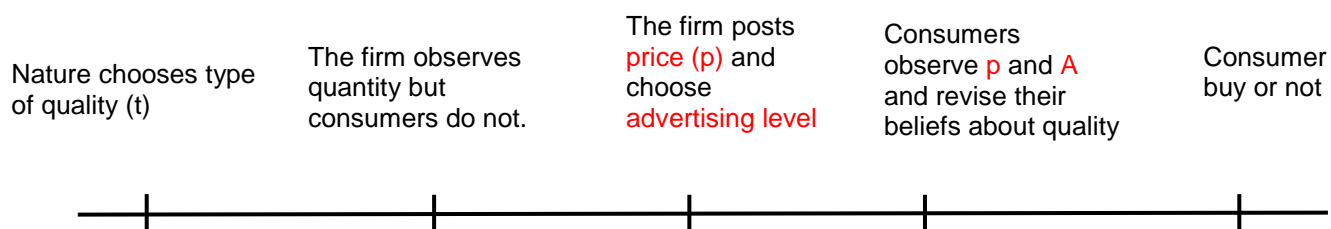


Figure 2 (Linnemer 2008)

In fact, the purpose behind the use of celebrities in promoting product is to achieve firms' sale goal. However, endorsed product would not be successful in conveying message unless the firms can choose the right endorser. If the endorsers perform well, they may create miracle to firms. Put simply, the benefits that they would get will be not only impact in terms of marketing and psychology, celebrity endorsement also affect in terms of economics.

In the sense of economics, Bagwell (2005) and Linnemer (2008) explained through 'Match-Products-to-Buyers effect', impact of advertising on buyer behavior when providing direct or indirect information for improving the matching between products and buyers.

The assumption is that some consumer prefer high-quality and high-priced product and some might prefer low-quality and low-priced goods. Form figure 2, the model composes of 5 stages of the game which are 1) firms choose type of quality, 2) the firms choose price but consumers do not, 3) the firm posts price and choose advertising level, 4) consumers observe

price and advertising and revise their belief about quality, and 5) consumers make decision to buy or not to buy.

Firstly, firms make decision whether to enter or not. If they decide to enter, they choose their quality level. For buyers, they could not observe from this stage. Then, firms choose price and the level of advertising activities. In the next stage, it is the turn of consumers to observe advertising activities first and pick a firm to visit and check price. Last stage, consumers choose make purchasing decision by considering price and quality in the previous one. This process is as similar as the decision process in the sense of marketing as mentioned above.

In this paper, it will focus only in the third and fourth stages of the model which is the role of advertising as signal of quality which inform about product attribution in advance to match with consumers' preference and convincing consumers for trial product and ultimately purchase. In this case, celebrity endorsement is an advertising activity that creates high level of attention and trustworthy on quality information.

Findings from Literature Review

In conclusion, celebrity endorsement is significance and has great impacts on many aspects of human behavior. Recently, the brand or product thus frequently take advantage on them to achieve sale goal because it is more suitable for the day of growing in media and help brands or products outstanding in the more competitive market.

In the consumer view, they all have need but sometimes might not know the solution to satisfy their need. The advertising is the way to inform consumers that there is a kind of these goods existing and attributes the quality of it. On the other word, the role of celebrity endorsers is as a signal of quality. Thereby, celebrities are in need of several firms, particularly for multiple

product endorsers since they are higher degree of popularity, reputation, and attractiveness than general celebrities. Hence, it is no longer to make a lot of effort to convince people to purchase products and to sit in their mind if firm just choose celebrity endorsement that is acceptable and favorable to consumers to be one of the advertising activities.

The underlying question is whether those multiple product endorsers that are hired to be quality signaling for a product will be obstacle for firms to inform quality in advance through them or not. Put simply, it is likely that the impressing image from previous or current endorsing job can distort or intervene the information of other products that those celebrities endorse.

3. Methodology

The methodology of this research is the study on qualitative research by in-depth interview that the questions are guided by document research. This interview method is easily to control following the guideline, detailed-oriented, and flexible in the interview progress.

3.1 Research method

Before interview, informants were tested by doing workshop about brand recognize and remind in product endorsers. Testing began with interviewees matching product endorsers with the endorsed products and interviewer observing their matching process. After that, the results are separated into 4 groups: 1) the set of product that informants can remember endorsers and have ever bought products, 2) the set that informants can remember endorsers but have never bought products, 3) the set that informants cannot remember endorsers but have bought product, and 4) the set that informants cannot remember both products and endorsers. Then, informants were interviewed deeper into detail based on the result of workshop.

For celebrity endorsers, the testing is picked 6 stars from 10 of god mother and father of product presenter in 2014 since they are well-known for Thai people and have high degree of reputation that is convenience for doing research. These 6 stars consist of Mario Maurer, Nadech Kukimiya, Yaya- Urasaya, Chompoo Araya, Ploy-Cherman and Aum Patcharapa. For product, the testing is picked the newest 28 pieces of products and brands that is endorsed by those 6 stars within 2 years from the conducting period which is 2013 and 2014. The following table is the overview of top 6 celebrity endorsers and their endorsed brands.

The multiple celebrity endorsers	The Brand or Products
Mario Maurer	Koncept, Walls Lipton, Calpis Lacto, Pond's Men energy charge, Mitsubishi Attrage,
Chompoo- Araya A. Hargete	Sunbite, D-Na, CP Bucher, L'oreal Lucent, Daughter Brand, Mercedes Benz GLA 2000
Nadech Kukimiya	Lay's, Baoji, Clinic Clear for Men, TrueMoveH , Air Asia, Meji Pigen
Ploy- Cherman Boonyasuk	Scotch Collagen-Aora, Hicee, Dutchie Bio
Yaya- Urasaya Sperbunt	Pond's flawless white, Pantene, Brand Bird nest
Aum - Patcharapa Chaicher	12plus lineless serum, Namu, Mistine, Toyota Corolla Altis, Sunsilk

3.2 Research informants

The 5 key informants are chosen sample space by judgment sampling. The key criteria of informants are: 1) 20-50 years old and 2) watching TV or searching internet frequently. The age of interviewees varies from 20-50 years old since they all have their own income, purchasing power, and ability to buy. Moreover, the informants are all watching TV or connect the internet frequently that would be useful and effective to give information to interviewer.

3.3 Analysis and result interpretation

As a result, informants know all 6 multiple product endorsers in testing but they cannot match some product to celebrities correctly. Thereby, the multiple product endorsers partially impact on information distortion that firms intend to send to buyers.

Here is the some finding from observing matching process and deeply interview the key informants.

First, some interviewee have never seen or not frequently seen advertising that celebrity endorsing the products so that they cannot recall who the endorsers are. Since a factor that affect customer remind is the frequently of product endorsers exposure. Thereby, product that use multiple product endorsers have to show up their product more frequently to complete with other product that use the same endorsers. For example, the case of Hi-cee vitamin that is endorsed by Ploy Cherman. It not shows up frequently on public so that interviewee knows the product but no one in the interview knows the endorsers. Another example, the case of Namu beauty supplementary advertising that is endorsed by Aum Patcharapa is show up only at point of purchase and on the internet. Thus, it create low exposure comparing to the advertising that use high exposure channel such as TV.

Second, some interviewee recall type of product that celebrity endorsing but not brand or confuse with other similar brand. It implies that too popular might be shadow the product and brand. Audiences often pay attention only on celebrities. For instance, Yaya Urusaya is endorser of Pantene shampoo. Many interviewees can remind that Yaya endorse for some shampoo brand but confuse between Pantene and Sunsilk.

Third, some interviewee has seen the products from other distribution channel but not advertising that show up with endorsers such as sale promotion, point of purchase, etc. For example, several interviewees have ever seen Bio yogurt just from sale promotion in convenient store. Hence, celebrity endorsers might not have influence much for this group.

Last but not least, interviewees sometimes perceived the character of celebrity conflict with the character of products so that they cannot recall them. For example, the case of Chompoo Araya who endorse to Bucher sausage. Even though the positioning of Bucher try to convey that is premium sausage, some interviewee interpret to other ways and feel irrelevance with other healthy food products that Chompoo has been endorsed such as D-Na black sesame soymilk, Sunbite, Daughter brand, etc.

Apart from the probably effects of the use of multiple product endorsers, the following are additional analysis of suggested solutions that firms can use multiple product endorsers more effectively.

First of all, firms or brands should not change their endorsers too many times since strong and long relationship between brand and endorsers can repeat and strengthen the use of multiple product endorsers more effectively. For example, Mistine is the case that almost interviewee could match product with celebrity correctly since Aum Patcharapa has been the endorsers and

belong a part of the brand for a very long time. Conversely, Baoji is an example that changes endorsers too often. One of interviewee tried to dispute who the endorsers actually are at that time and many interviewees were not get anything information from endorsers and believe the quality of shoes is not good. Thereby, it might be a case that waste of money since it cannot convey effectively good message to customers even the firm use the popular celebrities to endorse.

Another, firms should concern more on integrated marketing communication planning such as packaging design, events, etc. It helps strengthen the belief on the use of multiple product endorsers to send information to customers. On the other word, it can help customers look over the interfere message from other products that the celebrities also endorse.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Research result

The use of celebrities who are multiple product endorser in advertising campaign is partially distort and interfere information that firms intend to send to consumers in advance in order to make them belief in product quality. From the research, it reveals that there are several factors that affect confusion in information interpretation of consumers. The main factor is the popularity in those celebrities that might be shadow the quality signal of certain products and the several product endorsement jobs even in the other category that celebrities get from their popularity might be interfere the signaling of the product too. Anyway, marketers or people who related in this area still use the multiple product endorsers continually since it has potential to capture market and consumer attention broader. There are also some solution that can make

consumers ignore the status of those celebrities and the interfered information such as not changing endorsers too often, pushing advertising even in front of distribution channel, etc.

4.2 Contribution and suggestion for future researches

This study contribute to firms that consider to use celebrity endorsement for their products or services and firms that relate to marketing job such as advertising agency, event organizer, etc. Those firms should reconsider on choosing specific celebrities, not just compete to grab the most popular one but those should be the right one can be used in effective way.

Equally important, celebrities themselves and their personal managers should concern on the job offers, product endorsement job in this case, as well. They should not accept in some jobs that not relate to their characteristics since every job can affect their image and reflect their future income. By doing so, it will help sustain their opportunity on further product endorsement job.

Notwithstanding, it really hard to interpret and analyze data since the nature of in-depth is flexible and not go along to the same pattern sometimes. Thereby, this might be missing some important points. For suggestion, it might be more perfect and strengthen the current research if the next research can obtain the quantitative data. Along the ways, the author also discovers many interesting inquiry for the future study such as the effectiveness on using unpopular celebrities or net idol to endorse product instead of those popular celebrities, the impact of celebrity endorsement on brand royalty or celebrity royalty customers, to name but a few.

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