THEORIES OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Theories have been applied to explain why celebrity endorsements might be effective in advertising.

3.1. Celebrity Endorsement Communication Theories

3.1.1. The Communication Process

According to Belch and Belch (2001) a basic model of the various elements of the communication process has evolved over the years. Two elements represent the major participants in the communication process, the sender and the receiver. Another two are the major communication tools, message and channel. Four others are the major communication functions and processes: encoding, decoding, response, and feedback. The last element, noise, refers to any extraneous factors in the system that
can interfere with the process and work against effective communication\(^1\) (Fig.9).

\[\text{Source Encoding} \]

The sender, or source, of a communication is the person or organization that has information to share with another person or group of people. The source may be an individual, say a salesperson or hired spokesperson, such as a celebrity, who appears in a company’s advertisements or a non personal entity, such as the corporation or organization itself. Because the receiver’s perceptions of the source

influence how the communication is received, marketers must be careful to select a communicator the receiver believes is knowledgeable and trustworthy or with whom the receiver can identify or relate in some manner. The communication process begins when the source selects words, symbols, and pictures to represent the message that will be delivered to the receiver. This process, known as encoding, involves putting thoughts, ideas, or information into a symbolic form. The sender’s goal is to encode the message in such a way that the receiver will understand it. This means using words, signs, or symbols that are familiar to the target audience.

**Message**

The encoding process leads to development of a message that contains the information or meaning the source hopes to convey. The message may be verbal, nonverbal, or symbolic. Messages must be put into a transmittable form that is appropriate for the channel of communication being used. In advertising, this may range from simply writing some words or copy that will be read as a radio message to producing an expensive television commercial. For many products, it is not the actual words of the message that determine its communication effectiveness but rather the impression or image the advertisement creates.

To better understand the symbolic meaning that might be conveyed in a communication, advertising and marketing researchers have begun focusing
attention on semiotics, which studies the nature of meaning and asks how our reality – words, gestures, myths, signs, symbols, products/services, theories – acquire meaning. Semiotics is important in marketing communications since products and brands acquire meaning through the way they are advertised and consumers use products and brands to express their social identities.

Some advertising and marketing people are sceptical about the value of semiotics. They question whether social scientists read too much into advertising messages and are overly intellectual in interpreting them. However, the meaning of an advertising message or other form of marketing communication lies not in the message but with people who see and interpret it. Moreover, consumers behave on the basis of meanings they ascribe to marketplace stimuli. Thus, marketers must consider the meanings consumers attach to the various signs and symbols. Semiotics may be helpful in analyzing how various aspects of the marketing program – such as advertising messages, packaging, brand names, and even the nonverbal communications of salespeople – are interpreted by receivers.

**Channel**

The channel is the method by which the communication travels from the source or sender to the receiver. Belch and Belch (2001) talk about two types of communication channels, personal and non personal channels. Personal channels
of communication are face-to-face communication with target individuals or groups, such as salespeople delivering their sales message to a potential customer or social channels, such as friends, neighbours, co-workers, or family members. Personal channels often represent word-of-mouth communication, which is a powerful source of information for customers.

Non personal channels of communication are those that carry a message without face-to-face contact between sender and receiver. Non personal channels are generally referred to as mass media or mass communications, since the message is sent to many individuals at one time. Two major types of non personal channels of communication exist, print and broadcast. Print media include newspapers, magazines, direct mail, and billboards. Broadcast media include radio and television.

**Receiver / Decoding**

The receiver is the person with whom the sender shares thoughts or information. Generally, receivers are the consumers in the target market or audience who read, hear, and/or see the marketer’s message and decode it. Decoding is the process of transforming the sender’s message back into thought. This process is heavily influenced by the receiver’s field of experience, which refers to the experiences, perceptions, attitudes, and values he or she brings to the communication situation. Effective communication is more likely when there is
some common ground between the two parties. The more knowledge the sender has about the receivers, the better the sender can understand their needs, empathize with them, and communicate effectively.

**Noise**

Errors or problems that occur in the encoding of the message, distortion in a radio or television signal, or distractions at the point of reception are examples of noise. Noise can be explained as extraneous factors that can distort or interfere with its reception throughout the communication process. Noise may also occur because the fields of experience of the sender and receiver do not overlap. Lack of common ground may result in improper encoding of the message, so the more common ground there is between the sender and the receiver; the less likely it is that noise will occur.

**Feedback / Response**

The receiver’s set of reactions after seeing, hearing, or reading the message is known as response. Receivers’ responses can range from not observable actions such as storing information in memory to immediate action such as dialling a toll free number to order a product advertised on television. The part of the receiver’s response that is communicated back to the sender is called feedback. The ultimate
form of feedback occurs through sales, but it is often hard to show a direct relationship between advertising and purchase behaviour. So marketers use other methods to obtain feedback, such as customer inquiries, store visits, coupon redemptions and reply cards. Research based feedback analyzes readership and recall of advertisements, message comprehension, attitude change, and other forms of response. With this information, the advertiser can determine reasons for success or failure in the communication process and make adjustments.

3.1.2. The Meaning Transfer Model

McCracken (1989) proposes the meaning transfer model as a rich and comprehensive description of the endorsement process. The central premise of the meaning transfer model is that a celebrity encodes a unique set of meanings that can, if the celebrity is well used, be transferred to the endorsed product. The model is divided into three stages: culture, endorsement and consumption\(^2\). The meaning transfer model was found valid in a study conducted by Mitchell and Boustani (1992)\(^3\) who tested the model on breakfast cereals. The model was also used by Walker,


Langmeyer and Langmeyer (1993)\(^4\) who conducted a study on Jeans and VCRs including celebrities Christie Brinkley and Madonna (Fig.3.2).

![Figure-3.2: Meaning Transfer Model](image)

**Stage 1: Culture**

According to McCracken (1989) celebrities are different from the anonymous models (or anonymous actors) that are normally used to bring meanings to the advertisement. Celebrities deliver meanings of extra subtlety, depth, and power. It is clear enough that advertisements can undertake meaning transfer without the aid of celebrities. Anonymous actors and models are charged with meaning, and, obviously, they are available at a fraction of the cost. Indeed,

for most advertising purposes, the meanings that can be "imported" through an anonymous model are perfectly sufficient. The question, then, is why celebrities should be used for an advertisement. How does the celebrity "add value" to the meaning transfer process? What special powers and properties does the celebrity bring to the advertisement, to the product, and, ultimately, the consumer?⁵.

Anonymous models offer demographic information, such as distinctions of gender, age, and status, but these useful meanings are relatively imprecise and blunt. Celebrities offer all these meanings with special precision. Furthermore, celebrities offer a range of personality and lifestyle meanings that the anonymous model cannot provide. Finally, celebrities offer configurations of meaning that anonymous models can never possess. Each celebrity has particular configurations of meanings that cannot be found elsewhere.

In addition, celebrities are more powerful endorsers than anonymous models and actors. Even when they deliver meanings that can be found elsewhere, they deliver them more powerfully. Celebrities evoke the meanings in their persona with greater vividness and clarity. Models and actors are, after all, merely "borrowing" or acting out the meanings they bring to the advertisement. The celebrity, however, speaks with meanings of long acquaintance. Celebrities "own"

⁵ Ibid.,
their meanings because they have created them on the public stage by dint of intense and repeated performance.

Celebrities draw these powerful meanings from the roles they assume in their television, movie, military, athletic, and other careers. Indeed, these careers act very much like large advertisements. Each new dramatic role brings the celebrity into contact with a range of objects, persons, and contexts. Out of these objects, persons, and contexts are transferred meanings that then reside in the celebrity. When the celebrity brings these meanings into an advertisement, they are, in a sense, merely passing along meanings with which they have been charged by another meaning transfer process, or, to put this way, the meaning that the celebrity endorsement gives to the product was generated in distant movie performances, political campaigns, or athletic achievements.

**Stage 2: Endorsement**

McCracken (1989) suggests that the choice of particular celebrities is based on the meanings they epitomize and on a sophisticated marketing plan. In the best of all possible worlds, the marketing/advertising firm first would determine the symbolic properties sought for the product (having determined which symbolic properties are in fact sought by the consumer). It would then consult a roster of celebrities and the meanings they make available and, taking into account budget
and availability constraints, and then choose the celebrity who best represents the appropriate symbolic properties\textsuperscript{6}.

Once the celebrity is chosen, an advertising campaign must then identify and deliver these meanings to the product. It must capture all the meanings it wishes to obtain from the celebrity and leave no salient meanings untapped. Furthermore, it must capture only the meanings it wishes to obtain from the celebrity. All celebrities will encompass in their range of cultural significance some meanings that are not sought for the product. Care must be taken to see that these unwanted meanings are kept out of the evoked set. This will be accomplished by filling the advertisement with people, objects, contexts, and copy that have the same meanings as the celebrity.

According to McCracken (1989) the advertisement will sometimes operate on the meanings of the celebrity, and may even modestly help transform them. In other words, an advertising campaign can sometimes have the effect of a new dramatic role, bringing the celebrity into contact with symbolic materials that change the meanings contained in their persona. Celebrities have been known to exploit this effect by choosing their endorsement to tune their image. Typically, however, the

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.,
advertisement is not trying to transform the meanings of the celebrity. In most circumstances, it seeks only to transfer them.

Finally, the advertisement must be designed to suggest the essential similarity between the celebrity and the product so that the consumer will be able to take the last step in the meaning transfer process. In a perfect world, copy testing is then used to judge whether indeed the advertisement succeeds in this regard. When assurance is forthcoming, the second stage of transfer is complete and the advertisement is put before the consumer. The consumer suddenly "sees" the similarity between the celebrity and the product, and is prepared to accept that the meanings in the celebrity are in the product.

**Stage 3: Consumption**

Consumers are constantly searching the object world for goods with useful meanings. They use them to furnish certain aspects of the self and the world. The object world gives them access to workable ideas of gender, class, age, personality, and lifestyle, in addition to cultural principles of great number and variety. The material world of consumer goods offers a vast inventory of possible selves and thinkable worlds. Consumers are constantly rummaging here.

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7 Ibid.,
According to McCracken (1989) the final stage of the transfer process is complicated and sometimes difficult. It is not enough for the consumer merely to own an object to take possession of its meanings, or to incorporate these meanings into the self. The meanings of the object do not merely lift off the object and enter into the consumer’s concept of self and world. There is, in other words, neither automatic transfer of meaning nor any automatic transformation of the self. The consumer must claim the meanings and then work with them. Rituals play an important part in this process. Consumers must claim, exchange, care for, and use the consumer good to appropriate its meanings. They must select and combine these meanings in a process of experimentation\textsuperscript{8}.

Celebrities play a role in the final stage of meaning transfer because they have created the self. They have done so in public, in the first stage of the meaning transfer process, out of bits and pieces of each role in their careers. The entire world has watched them take shape. Consumers have looked on as celebrities have selected and combined the meanings contained in the objects, people, and events around them. The self so created is almost always attractive and accomplished. Celebrities build selves well.

The constructed self makes the celebrity a kind of exemplary, inspirational figure to the consumer. Consumers are themselves constantly moving symbolic

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.,
properties out of consumer goods into their lives to construct aspects of self and world. Not surprisingly, they admire individuals who have accomplished this task and accomplished it well. Celebrities are proof that the process works. Celebrities have been where the consumer is going. They have done in Stage 1 what the consumer is now labouring to do in Stage 3 of the meaning transfer model. Consumers are all labouring to perform their own Stage 1 construction of the self out of the meanings supplied by previous and present roles and the meanings accessible to them there.

Furthermore, McCracken (1998) claims that this is more than just a formal parallel between celebrities and consumers in stages 1 and 3. The consumer does not revere the celebrity merely because the celebrity has done what the consumer wants to do, but also because the celebrity actually supplies certain meanings to the consumer. Celebrities create a self out of the elements put at their disposal in dramatic roles, fashioning cultural meanings into a practicable form. When they enter the endorsement process, they make these meanings available in material form to the consumer. Consumers are grateful for these meanings and keen to build a self from them. The celebrity is supplying not just an example of self-creation, but the very stuff with which this difficult act is undertaken.\footnote{Ibid.}
There is also a second way in which celebrities play the role of a "super consumer." This occurs, for example, when the film character of the celebrity consists not merely in the presentation of an interesting film character but actually in the creation of a self that is new and innovative. Most film stars bring to the screen a self; cut whole cloth, from the standard personality inventory. But there are a few who have undertaken a much more difficult and creative innovation in which personality elements are created or dramatically reconfigured. In this highly creative mode, the celebrity becomes a kind of experiment in self-construction. This makes the celebrity very powerful indeed. He or she has become an inventor of a new self the consumer can use.

The celebrity world is, to this extent, a realm of experimentation in which actors sometimes do more than merely play out cultural categories and principles. This experimentation makes the celebrity an especially potent source of meaning for the marketing system and a guide to the process of self-invention in which all consumers are engaged. Celebrities serve the final stage of meaning transfer because they are "super consumers" of a kind. They are exemplary figures because they are seen to have created the clear, coherent, and powerful selves that everyone seeks. They are compelling partners to the meaning transfer process because they demonstrate so vividly the process by which these meanings can be assembled and some of the novel shapes into which they can be assembled.
Certain groups use the meanings created by celebrities more than others. Anyone undergoing any sort of role change or status mobility is especially dependent on the meanings of their possessions, such as those who are moving from one age category to another or those who are newly arrived to a culture. But it has also been asserted that everyone in a modern, developed society is under specified in this sense. Modern Western selves are deliberately left blank so that the individual may exercise the right of choice. Also important is the relative collapse of institutions that once supplied the self with meaning and definition (e.g., the family, the church, the community). Working together, individualism and alienation have conspired to give individuals new freedom to define matters of gender, class, age, personality, and lifestyle. The freedom to choose is now also an obligation to decide and this makes us especially eager consumers of the symbolic meanings contained in celebrities and the goods they endorse.

According to McCracken (1989) this, in broad detail, suggests how celebrity endorsement operates as a process of meaning transfer. It is a review of each of the three stages in this process, considering in turn how meaning moves into the persona of the celebrity, how it then moves from the celebrity into the product, and, finally, how it moves from the product into the consumer. Celebrities are, by this account, key players in the meanings transfer process\textsuperscript{10}.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.,
3.2. Celebrity Endorsement Situation/Product Theories

In this section theories that deal with when a celebrity should be used as an endorser are reviewed.

3.2.1. The Elaboration Likelihood Model

Differences in the ways consumer’s process and respond to persuasive messages are addressed in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion. The ELM was devised by Petty and Jacopo (1983)\(^\text{11}\) and has since then been the base for many studies (Mackenzie and Belch, (1986)\(^\text{12}\); Heath, McCarthy and Mothers Baugh, (1994)\(^\text{13}\); Stephenson, \textit{et.al}, (2001)\(^\text{14}\)). It was developed to explain the process by which persuasive communications, such as advertising lead to persuasion by influencing attitudes. According to this model, the attitude formation


or change process depends on the amount and nature of elaboration, or processing, of relevant information that occurs in response to a persuasive message. High elaboration means that the receiver engages in careful consideration, thinking, and evaluation of the information or arguments contained in the message. Low elaboration occurs when the receiver does not engage in active information processing or thinking but rather makes inferences about the position being advocated in the message on the basis of simple positive or negative cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1983)\textsuperscript{15}.

The ELM shows that elaboration likelihood is a function of two elements, motivation and ability to process the message. Motivation to process the message depends on such factors as involvement, personal relevance, and individual’s needs and arousal levels. Ability depends on the individual’s knowledge, intellectual capacity, and opportunity to process the message. According to the ELM, there are two basic routes to persuasion or attitude change. The routes are central routes to persuasion and peripheral routes to persuasion. (Fig-3.3)

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.,
Figure 3.3: Elaboration Likelihood Model
i. Central route to persuasion

Under the central route to persuasion, the receiver is viewed as very active, involved participants in the communication process whose ability and motivation to attend, comprehend, and evaluate messages are high. When central processing of an advertising message occurs, the consumer pays close attention to message content and looks deeply into the message arguments. A high level of cognitive response activity or processing occurs and the advertisement’s ability to persuade the receiver depends primarily on the receiver’s evaluation of quality of the arguments presented.

Favourable cognitive responses, such as source bolsters and support arguments, lead to favourable changes in cognitive structure, which lead to positive attitude change or persuasion. Conversely, unfavourable cognitive responses lead to counterarguments and/or source derogations, and result in negative attitude change. Attitude change that occurs through central processing is relatively enduring and should resist subsequent efforts to change it.

ii. Peripheral route to persuasion

Under the peripheral route to persuasion, the receiver is viewed as lacking the motivation or ability to process information and is not likely to engage in detailed cognitive processing. Rather than evaluating the information presented in the message, the receiver relies on peripheral cues that may be incidental to the main
arguments. The receiver’s reaction to the message depends on how he or she evaluates these peripheral cues. The consumer may use several types of peripheral cues or cognitive shortcuts rather than carefully evaluating the message arguments presented in an advertisement. Favourable attitudes may be formed if the endorser in the advertisement is viewed as an expert or is attractive and/or likable or if the consumer likes certain aspects of the advertisement such as the way it is made, the music or the imagery. However, these favourable attitudes resulting from peripheral processing are only temporary. So these favourable attitudes must be maintained by continual exposure to the peripheral cues, such as through repetitive advertising. Peripheral cues can also lead to rejection of a message. For example, advertisements that advocate extreme positions, use endorsers who are not well liked or have credibility problems, or are not executed well may be rejected without any consideration of their information or message arguments.

iii. Implications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model

According to Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann (1983) the ELM has important implications for marketing communications, particularly with respect to involvement. For example, if the involvement level of consumers in the target audience is high, an advertisement or sales presentation should contain strong arguments that are difficult for the message recipient to refute or counter argue. If
the involvement level of the target audience is low, peripheral cues may be more important than detailed message arguments\textsuperscript{16}.

A test of the ELM showed that the effectiveness of a celebrity endorser in an advertisement depends on the receiver’s involvement level. When involvement was low, a celebrity endorser had a significant effect on attitudes. When the receiver’s involvement was high, however the use of a celebrity had no effect on brand attitudes; the quality of the arguments used in the advertisement was more important. The explanation given for these findings was that a celebrity might serve as a peripheral cue in the low-involvement situation, allowing the receiver to develop favourable attitudes based on feelings towards the source rather than engaging in extensive processing of the message. A highly involved consumer, however, engages in more detailed central processing of the message content. In this case, the quality of the message claims becomes more important than the identity of the endorser (Lord, \textit{et.al}, 1995)\textsuperscript{17}.

Stephenson, Benoit and Tschida (2001) further suggest that the most effective type of message depends on the route to persuasion the consumer follows. Many marketers recognize that involvement levels are low for their product categories and consumers are not motivated to process advertising messages in any

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.,

detail. That is why marketers of low-involvement products often rely on creative tactics that emphasize peripheral cues and use repetitive advertising to create and maintain favourable attitudes toward their brand\textsuperscript{18}.

### 3.2.2. The Three-Order Hierarchy Model

Perhaps the most important aspect of developing effective communication programs involves understanding the response process the receiver may go through in moving towards a specific behaviour and how the promotional efforts of the marketer influence consumer responses. In many instances, the marketer’s only objective may be to create awareness of the company or brand name, which may trigger interest in the product. In other situations, the marketer may want to convey detailed information to change consumer’s knowledge of and attitudes toward the brand and ultimately change their behaviour (Belch and Belch, 2001)\textsuperscript{19} (Fig. 3.4) .

A number of models have been developed to depict the stages a consumer may pass through in moving from a state of not being aware of a company, product, or brand to actual purchase behaviour, such as the traditional AIDA and hierarchy of effects model . According to Floyd (1999) the traditional hierarchy-of-effects models vary greatly in specific terminology and the steps that a consumer may progress

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\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.,

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.,
through. All of the steps in the various models may be divided into one of three basic types of psychological effects: cognitive (learn), affective (feel), and conative (do)\textsuperscript{20}. Floyd (1999) conducted an examination of the Three-Orders Hierarchy Model that was first developed by Ray (1973)\textsuperscript{21}. The Three-Orders Hierarchy Model identifies three response hierarchy stages based on perceived product differentiation and product involvement. These alternative response hierarchies are the standard learning, dissonance/attribution, and low-involvement models.


TOPICAL INVOLVEMENT

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**Figure – 3.4: Three – Orders Hierarchy Model**

**i. The Standard Learning Hierarchy:**

In many purchase situations, the consumer will go through the response process in the sequence depicted by the traditional communication models. Floyd terms this a standard learning model, which consists of a learn feel do sequence.
Information and knowledge acquired or learned about the various brands are the basis for developing affect, or feelings that guide what the consumer will do (e.g., actual trial or purchase). In this hierarchy, the consumer is viewed as an active participant in the communication process who gathers information through active learning.

Floyd further suggests that the standard learning hierarchy is likely when the consumer is highly involved in the purchase process and there is much differentiation among competing brands. High-involvement purchase decisions such as those for industrial products and services and consumer durables like personal computers, cameras, appliances, and cars are areas where a standard learning hierarchy response process is likely. Advertisements for products and services in these areas are usually very detailed and provide customers with information that can be used to evaluate brands and help them make a purchase decision.

**ii. The Dissonance / Attribution Hierarchy:**

A second response hierarchy proposed by Floyd involves situations where consumers first behave, then develop attitudes or feelings as a result of that behaviour, and then learn or process information that supports the behaviour. This dissonance/attribution model, or do feel learn occurs in situations where consumers must choose between two alternatives that are similar in quality but are complex and
may have hidden or unknown attributes. The consumer may purchase the product on the basis of a recommendation by some non-media source and then attempt to support the decision by developing a positive attitude toward the brand and perhaps even developing negative feelings toward rejected alternatives. This reduces any post purchase dissonance or anxiety the consumer may experience resulting from doubt over the purchase. Dissonance reduction involves selective learning, whereby the consumer seeks information that supports the choice made and avoids information that would raise doubts about the decision. According to the model, marketers need to recognize that in some situations, attitudes develop after purchase, as does learning from the mass media. In these situations the main effect of mass media is not the promotion of original choice behaviour and attitude change but rather the reduction of dissonance by reinforcing the wisdom of the purchase or providing supporting information. As with the standard learning model, this response hierarchy is likely to occur when the consumer is involved in the purchase situation; it is particularly relevant for post purchase situations. For example, a consumer may purchase tires recommended by a friend and then develop a favourable attitude toward the company and pay close attention to its advertisements to reduce dissonance.

Floyd further discusses that some marketers resist this view of the response hierarchy because they cannot accept the notion that mass media have no effect on
the consumer’s initial purchase decision. But the model does not claim that the mass media has no effect - just which their major impact occurs after the purchase has been made. Marketing communications planners must be aware of the need for advertising and promotion efforts not just to encourage brand selection but also to reinforce choices and ensure that a purchase pattern will continue.

iii. The Low-Involvement Hierarchy

The final response hierarchy proposed by Floyd is the low-involvement hierarchy, in which the receiver is viewed as passing from cognition to behaviour to attitude change. This learns do feel sequence is thought to characterize situations of low consumer involvement in the purchase process. It tends to occur when involvement in the purchase decision is low, there are minimal differences among brand alternatives, and mass-media advertising is important.

The notion of a low-involvement hierarchy is based in large part on Krugman’s theory explaining the effects of television advertising (Krugman, 1965). Krugman wanted to find out why television advertising produced a strong effect on brand awareness and recall but little change in consumers’ attitudes toward the product. He hypothesized that television is basically a low-involvement medium and the viewer’s perceptual defences are reduced or even absent during commercials. In a low-involvement situation, the consumer does not compare the
message with previously acquired beliefs, needs or past experiences. The commercial results in subtle changes in the consumer’s knowledge structure, particularly with repeated exposure. This change in the consumer’s knowledge does not result in attitude change but is related to learning something about the advertised brand, such as a brand name, the advertisement theme, the endorser or slogan. According to Krugman, when the consumer enters a purchase situation, this information may be sufficient to trigger a purchase. The consumer will then form an attitude toward the purchased brand as a result of experience with it.\textsuperscript{22}

Furthermore, Floyd (1999) discusses that in the low-involvement hierarchy, the consumer engages in passive learning and random information catching rather than active information seeking. The advertiser must recognize that a passive, uninterested consumer may focus more on non message elements such as music, characters, symbols, and slogans or jingles than actual message content. The advertiser might capitalize on this situation by developing a catchy jingle, or use a famous endorser that is stored in the consumer’s mind without any active cognitive processing that becomes salient when he or she enters the actual purchase situation.\textsuperscript{23}

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\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.,
3.3. Celebrity Endorsement Selection Theories

In this section theories that deal with how companies select a celebrity as endorser are reviewed.

3.3.1. Source Credibility

Credibility is the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skill, or experience and trusts the source to give unbiased, objective information. There are two important dimensions to credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness. A source seen as knowledgeable and an expert is more persuasive than one with less expertise, but the source also has to be trustworthy, which includes being honest, ethical, and believable (Kelman, 1961)\textsuperscript{24}.

Information from a credible source influences beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behaviour through a process known as internalization, which occurs when the receiver adopts the opinion of a credible source since he or she believes information from this source is accurate. Once the receiver internalizes an opinion or attitude, it becomes integrated into his or her belief system and may be maintained even after the source of the message is forgotten. A highly credible source is particularly important when the message recipient have a negative position toward the product,

service, brand or issue being promoted. This is true, because the credible source is likely to inhibit counterarguments and reduced counter arguing should result in greater message acceptance and persuasion (Belch and Belch, 2001)\textsuperscript{25}.

A high-credibility source is not always an asset, nor is a low-credibility source always a liability. High- and low credibility sources are equally effective when they are arguing for a position opposing their own best interest (Eagly and Chaiken, 1975)\textsuperscript{26}. A credible source is more effective when message recipients are not in favour of the position advocated in the message. However, a very credible source is less important when the audience has a neutral position, and such a source may even be less effective than a moderately credible source when the receiver’s initial attitude is favourable (Belch and Belch, 2001)\textsuperscript{27}.

Another way of enhancing source credibility is to use the company president or Chief Executive Officer as endorser in the firm’s advertising. Research suggests that the use of corporate leaders is the ultimate expression of the company’s commitment to quality and customer service. In some cases, these advertisements

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.,


\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.,
have not only increased sales, but also helped turn the corporate leaders into celebrities (Reidenback and Pitts, 1986)\textsuperscript{28}.

### 3.3.2. Source Attractiveness

The second category of source attributes according to Kelman (1961) is source attractiveness, which encompasses similarity, familiarity, and likeability. Source attractiveness leads to persuasion through a process of identification, whereby the receiver is motivated to seek some type of relationship with the source and thus adopts similar beliefs, attitudes, preferences, or behaviour. If the receiver maintains this position depends on the source’s continued support for the position as well as the receiver’s continued identification with the source. If the source changes position, the receiver may also change. Unlike internalization, identification does not usually integrate information from an attractive source into the receiver’s belief system. The receiver may maintain his or her position or behaviour only as long as it is supported by the source or the source remains attractive\textsuperscript{29}.


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.,
According to Belch and Belch (2001) marketers recognize that receivers of persuasive communication, such as advertising, are more likely to attend and identify with people they find likable or similar to themselves\textsuperscript{30}.

Decorative models are also used to draw attention to advertisements. This is done by the use of a physically attractive person who serves as a passive or decorative model rather than as an active endorser. Physically attractive endorsers generally have a positive impact and generate more favourable evaluations of both advertisements and products than less attractive models (Jones, \textit{et.al}, 1982)\textsuperscript{31}. The gender appropriateness of the model for the product being advertised and his or her relevance to the product are also important considerations. Products such as cosmetics or fashionable clothing are likely to benefit from the use of an attractive model, since physical appearance is very relevant in promoting these items (Solomon, \textit{et.al}, 1977)\textsuperscript{32}. Some models draw attention to the advertisement but not to the product or message. A study conducted by Reid and Soley (1983) showed that an attractive model facilitates recognition of the advertisement but does not enhance copy readership or message recall. This shows that advertisers must ensure that the

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid.,


consumer’s attention will go beyond the model to the product and advertising message.\(^{33}\)

### 3.3.3. Source Power

The third and final source attribute is power. According to Kelman (1961) a source has power when he or she can actually administer rewards and punishments to the receiver. As a result of this power, a source may be able to induce another person to respond to the request or position the source is advocating. In this case, influence occurs through a process known as compliance, which means that the receiver accepts the persuasive influence of the source and takes his or her position in hopes of obtaining a favourable reaction or avoid punishment. The receiver may show agreement with the source’s position in public, at the same time as he or she does not have an internal or private commitment to this position. Persuasion induced through compliance may be superficial and last only as long as the receiver perceives that the source can administer some rewards or punishments.\(^{34}\)

According to Belch and Belch (2001) source power is very difficult to apply in a nonpersonal influence situation such as advertising. An endorser in an advertisement generally cannot apply any sanctions to the receiver or determine


\(^{34}\) Ibid.,
whether compliance actually occurs. An indirect way of using power is by using an individual with an authoritative personality as endorser. The use of source power applies better in situations involving face-to-face communication and influence. One example is personal selling. In a selling situation the sales representative may have some power over a buyer if the latter anticipates receiving special rewards or favours for complying with the salesperson. However, sales representatives must be very careful in their use of a power position, since abusing a power base to maximize short-term gains can damage long-term relationships with customers.

3.4. Selection of Celebrity

There are various scientific ways in which the right celebrity is selected for the product endorsement, which are discussed here after,

3.4.1. The TEARS Model

Shiffman et.al.,(2006) writes that there are two general attributes, credibility and attractiveness that play an important role in facilitating communications effectively. These attributes are also important when it comes to determining how effective an endorser may be. He claims that the first general attributes credibility refer to the tendency to believe or trust someone. When an endorser is perceived as

35 Ibid.,
credible, the attitude of the audience seems to change through a psychological process called internalization. This process occurs when the receiver accepts the endorser’s position on an issue as his or her own. Two important sub attributes of the endorser credibility are Trustworthiness and Expertise.36

Trustworthiness, the T in the TEARS model refers to being seen as believable, dependable and someone who can be trusted. The celebrity earns the trust by his or hers accomplishments, on the movie screen, on the sports field, in public office etc. The trustworthiness of an endorser lays on the audience’s perception of the endorser’s motivation. If the consumers believe that the endorser is endorsing a product for self-interest, the persuasive effect of the endorser will be lower than if the audiences see the endorser as someone having nothing to gain by endorsing the brand. For example – Legendary actor Amitabh who is an icon of trust; promoting ICICI Bank.

The second sub attribute is expertise, the E component of the TEARS model. The expertise is about having specific skills, knowledge or abilities that can be related to the endorsed brand. Shiffman claims that whether the endorser is an expert or not is unimportant. All that matters is how the target audience perceives the endorser. If the endorser is perceived as being an expert he or she is more likely to

be able to change the opinion of the audience than if the endorser is not perceived as an expert by the audience. For Example – Golfer Tiger Woods for a sports brand.

Attractiveness can be divided into three sub attributes, physical attractiveness, respect and similarity. The A component in the TEARS model attractiveness is a key consideration in many endorsement relationships. A good example of a successful attractive endorser is tennis player Anna Kournikova who has never won a tournament on the pro tour. She earns (estimated) 10 Million dollars per year in just endorsement. Shiffman claims that Kournikova was selected to endorse different brands due to her physical attractiveness and not because her credibility or respect for her exceptional tennis abilities. Research supports the idea that attractive people are more likely to produce more favourable evaluations of advertised brands than less attractive endorsers.

Respect is the R in the TEARS model and represents the quality of being admired due to one’s personal qualities and accomplishment. Celebrities can be respected for their acting abilities, athletic skills, political arguments and personality. A respected celebrity who endorses a brand can improve a brand’s equity via the positive effect the consumers may get towards the brand. For example – Former Miss World Aishawarya Rai and the Eye donation campaign.

The final sub attribute in attractiveness is the S, which is similarity. This refers to how the endorser matches with the audience in terms of age, gender,
ethnicity, social class etc. Shiffman says that this is an important attribute because audiences tend to better like individuals who are sharing the same characteristics. A celebrity endorser is more likely to be seen as trustworthy the more he or she matches with the audience’s gender, age, and ethnicity etc. The research done on ethnical minorities reveals that when a spokesperson matches the audience in ethnical terms, the spokespersons trustworthiness is enhanced. This adds more favourable attitudes towards the endorsed brand. For example – a child artist promoting a chocolate brand.

3.4.2. The No TEARS approach

In the No TEARS approach Shiffman explains how the mangers and advertisers actually select particular endorsers to align with their brand. Compared to the use of the TEARS model, which is basically a short form combining the first letter of five endorses attributes, the current lowercase usage is applied in the real sense of the word TEARS. In another way to say it, the “No TEARS” approach is a tool for mangers and their advertisers how to go about selecting celebrities so as to avoid the pitfalls from making an unwise decision.