CHAPTER 7
MODEL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Prior research on the congruence between endorser and product postulated that the effectiveness of celebrity advertising could be enhanced by matching the attributes of an endorser with the attributes of a product (Lynch and Schuler, 1994). It has also been determined that the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsement depends on how well the image of the spokesperson fits with that of the product (Kahle and Homer, 1985). The idea behind congruence or match-up, according to Till and Busler (2000), is that “…the endorsers are more effective when there is a fit between the endorser and the endorsed product” (p. 1). As per the studies related to match-up hypothesis (section 3.4 of literature review), the impact of endorser-product match has been observed on different advertising effectiveness measures, such as endorser believability and credibility (Kamins, 1990), brand recall (Misra and Beatty 1990), attitude toward the advertisement (Kamins, 1990), brand affect (Misra and Beatty, 1990), brand attitude (Till and Busler, 1998, 2000), purchase intention (Till and Busler 1998, 2000). Based on these research findings, it could be argued that the impact on these advertising effectiveness measures would be positive and significant, when the condition of congruence is extended to celebrity personality-brand personality.

Assessing an endorser’s suitability is a very important step to ensure advertising effectiveness. Endorser suitability in this study relates to the extent to which consumers are likely to think of the celebrity as being an acceptable choice for an endorsement. Even though this variable may look similar to attitude toward endorser, it represents a broader concept including not only attitudes but additional marketing related attributes such as cultural fit. According to Bekk and Sporrle (2010): “It is not only important to predict consumers’ general positive attitudes towards an endorser, but also to predict whether or not a celebrity is perceived as being specifically suitable as a marketing campaign endorser” (p. 57).
Based on the findings drawn from various studies under match-up stream of celebrity endorsement literature (discussed in detail in section 3.4.) and theories discussed in Chapter 6, the first set of hypotheses are proposed as:

**H1:** Perceived congruence of celebrity endorser personality and brand personality will have a positive and significant effect on celebrity endorser suitability.

**H2:** Perceived congruence of celebrity endorser personality and brand personality will have a positive and significant effect on celebrity endorser credibility.

Bekk and Sporrle (2010) have found endorser credibility (for example, expertise, attractiveness, likeability, and trustworthiness) to have significant effect on a celebrity’s overall suitability for an endorsement. They have also found a significant impact of endorser personality on consumer attitudes. After multiple mediation analyses, Bekk and Sporrle (2010) found that the perceived personality dimensions of the celebrity has a positive impact on attitude toward the celebrity mediated by the celebrity credibility dimensions such as, trustworthiness and likeability. Further, the attitude theory (Fishbein and Azen, 1975) suggests the mediating role of advertisement believability on the attitude change and formation.

Therefore, it could be argued that the endorser credibility will have a significant impact on endorser suitability and, subsequently, endorser suitability will have a significant effect on the believability of advertisements. Hence, the third and fourth hypotheses of this study are proposed as:
**H3:** Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, celebrity endorser credibility will have a positive and significant impact on celebrity endorser suitability.

**H4:** Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, celebrity endorser suitability will have a positive and significant impact on ad believability.

Pornpitakpan (2003) contends that persuasive communication has five components: source, message, channel, receiver, and destination variables. The source variables have three main aspects, namely credibility, attractiveness and power. Of these components, credibility has been found to be the most effective variable in influencing persuasion. Pornpitakpan (2003) on the basis of her literature review postulated high credible sources to be more persuasive than low credible sources in marketing communications. This review further indicated that advertisements associated with highly credible sources were rated as more believable and truthful than were those associated with low credible sources. Rifon et al. (2004) in their study supported the mediating role of credibility and found that, under conditions of the sponsoring company-sponsored cause congruence, the enhanced credibility perceptions of a sponsor would lead to a positive attitude toward the sponsor. Atkin and Block (1983) postulated that celebrities are perceived as high credible sources and their credibility has a positive and significant impact on adolescents’ attitude toward product and behavioral intention. Ohanian (1991) found a significant impact of expertise, an element of source credibility, on purchase intention. Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell (2000) argued that endorser credibility would have a strong impact on attitude toward advertisement.

But Fishbein and Azen’s (1975) attitude theory suggests that, “A person’s attitude is a function of his/her salient beliefs at a given point in time” (p. 222), which indicates the
mediating role of advertisement believability on the attitude change and formation. The cognitive response theory too suggests that the persuasive communications which are perceived as more credible or include strong arguments for the product would have more favorable cognitive responses and attitude toward advertisements (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). This theory tags believability of the advertisement as a major determinant for attitude toward advertisement. Further, studies from Yagci, Biswas and Dutta (2009), MacKenzie and Lutz (1989), Lutz (1985), and Cotte, Coulter and Moore (2005) have found the advertisement believability and credibility as the mediator for the attitude toward ad, attitude toward brand and purchase intention.

On the basis of the arguments cited, it could be argued that endorser credibility through advertisement believability will have positive and significant impact on consumer attitudes. Thus, the fifth to eighth hypotheses are related to the impact of the endorser’s credibility on ad believability and effect of ad believability on different consumer attitudes and are proposed as:

**H5:** Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, celebrity endorser credibility will have a positive and significant impact on ad believability.

**H6:** Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, ad believability will have a positive and significant impact on the attitude toward the ad.

**H7:** Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, ad believability will have a positive and significant impact on the attitude toward the brand.
H8: Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, ad believability will have a positive and significant impact on purchase intentions.

Mitchell & Olson (1981) found that, apart from advertisement believability, attitude toward ad too, plays as a mediator in forming attitude toward brand. Further, prior research has shown that more favorable attitudes toward an ad lead to more favorable attitudes toward a brand and higher purchase intentions (Goldsmith et al., 2000; and Silvera & Austad, 2004). Consequently, it could be argued that these attitudes toward brands and advertisements should also impact the purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, the next set of hypotheses is presented as:

H9: Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, attitude toward the ad will have a positive and significant impact on the attitude toward the brand.

H10: Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, attitude toward the brand will have a positive and significant impact on purchase intentions.

H11: Under conditions of personality-based brand-celebrity congruence, attitude toward the ad will have a positive and significant impact on purchase intentions.

Integrating hypotheses 1 to 11, the conceptual framework to be tested is created and given in Figure-1.
Figure-1. Model of Personality Congruence Effects
As mentioned earlier, various studies in the area of the match-up hypothesis have shown that highly congruent stimuli to have a greater positive impact on those perceiving them, as compared to lowly congruent stimuli (Kamins 1990; Ohanian 1991; Ang et al. 2007; Misra and Beatty 1990; Lynch and Schuler 1994; Rifon et al. 2004 and Lee & Thorson 2008). Based on this, the study proposes a final set of hypotheses as follows:

**H12: Believability of the advertisement will be significantly higher in a high brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition than in a low brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition.**

**H13: Attitude toward the advertisement will be significantly higher in a high brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition than in a low brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition.**

**H14: Attitude toward the brand will be significantly higher in a high brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition than in a low brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition.**

**H15: Purchase intention will be significantly higher in a high brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition than in a low brand personality-endorser personality congruence condition.**