Examining the Effect of Endorser Credibility on the Consumers' Buying Intentions: An Empirical Study in Turkey

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to test whether the source credibility affects buying intention and measure the perceived credibility differences between created spokesperson and celebrity endorser. The influence that endorser credibility dimensions (i.e. attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) have on purchase intentions of 326 young consumers has been examined. The results showed that all of the three credibility dimensions for both celebrity endorser and created spokesperson have a positive relationship with purchase intention. Created spokesperson is perceived to be more trustworthy and competent whereas the celebrity endorser is found to be more attractive by the respondents. This study is unique in a way that it covers fairly new and rapidly growing Turkish market. One factor that makes this study unique in Turkey, in which the usage of celebrity endorsers holds significant part in the marketing of products, is the lack of studies that would measure the effectiveness of this method.

Keywords: Celebrity endorser; created spokesperson; endorser credibility; buying intention; advertisement
JEL Classifications: M31; M37

1. Introduction

It is very common for many countries to use the celebrities (actors, actresses, entertainers and athletes) for promotional activities (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Companies use the image of celebrities in order to increase the brand awareness as well as their sales. However, cost of hiring celebrities and lack of control has pushed the marketing managers towards creating their own spokespersons. Another reason for creating a spokesperson is that it has a long lifespan. Even though it has many benefits, choosing or creating the right endorser is both a crucial and a risky decision. At this point, the effectiveness of the endorsement becomes a much-debated issue. While there are different models in the literature developed to assess the effectiveness, one of the mostly used one is Ohanian's (1990) credibility model. According to this model, perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness and level of expertise affect the credibility of the endorser. Source credibility, in turn can affect the intention to purchase of given product or brand. Thus, the purpose of this study is to test whether the source credibility affects buying intention and measure the perceived credibility differences between created spokesperson and celebrity endorser in this regard.

1.1. What is Celebrity Endorsement?

The use of endorsements in marketing is not a new phenomenon (van der Waldt et al., 2009). It is important in terms of getting attention and achieving good recall from customers. Endorsements can either be in the form of celebrity or a created spokesperson.

Endorsement holds a significant part of brand management process as a competitive and distinguishing feature. Endorsers, because of their visual attractiveness, are frequently used in order to reach target customers. In this way brand awareness, recall and recognition can be provided.

Using celebrity endorsement is "a ubiquitous feature of modern marketing" (McCracken, 1989: 310). Celebrity is a person who is widely known to the public for accomplishments in domains that are unrelated to the product class (Friedman et al., 1977). Celebrity endorser can be defined as "any individual who enjoys public recognition and takes advantage of this recognition by appearing with consumer good in an advertisement" (McCracken, 1989: 310). Actors, sport figures and entertainers (actors, sports figures, entertainers, etc.) are being used quite frequently as company spokesmen and product endorsers (Friedman et al., 1978).

Companies sometimes prefer created and artificial ones to real celebrities, as they have more controlling power over them since they are created for specific purposes and means (Erdoğan, 1999). Created spokespersons can either be real (unknown) people acting out a role or animated/imagery characters (van der Waldt et al., 2009). Firms can build characters which are congruent with their brands and target audiences, thus they can ensure these characters endorse one particular product (Erdoğan, 1999).

1.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Endorsement

Celebrities and created spokespersons are used in variety of ways in marketing and advertising (Mehulkumar, 2005). Both of these endorsements have advantages and disadvantages.

Using celebrities help advertisers to stand out from the crowd and attract attention (Kaikati, 1987). They also are being perceived as more entertaining and trustworthy (Atkin and Block, 1983). Furthermore, celebrity image has an impact on brand image (Walker et al., 1992) which helps the marketing manager to introduce a new product or reposition the existing one (Kaikati, 1987). A celebrity program that has been planned in a successful way can change negative perceptions on advertised products and services. Right choice of celebrity can be effective in establishing a position for newly launched product and it can also change perceptions on a product that has been positioned in a wrong way (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 102). It is known that the use of celebrity endorsement has been generating a positive impact on strengthening the firm financially (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995; Mathur et al., 1997). For example, event study reported that Michael Jordan's return to the National Basketball Association (NBA) in 1995 increased his client firms' market-adjusted values by almost two per cent on average, or over $1 billion in stock market value (Pornpitakpan, 2004:56). Globally known celebrities can also provide the same prestige to a product that is being established in an international market (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 102).

Besides positive impacts celebrity endorsement may also have disadvantages. Depending on the popularity of the celebrity, costs of using him/her as a spokesperson for a product can reach up to millions of dollars (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Celebrity's personal problems and negative publicity about these may adversely affect the brand image (Till and Shimp, 1998). If celebrity loses his/her popularity, becomes overexposed or changes his/her image, this may cause negative effects on brand/product (Kaikati, 1987). Celebrities can also harm the company-product by stating that "they never use this product (vegetarian endorsing a meat product) or overuse the controversial products (alcohol & tobacco)" (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 103). The relationship between brand and celebrity ceases to be distinctive if celebrity starts endorsing too many unrelated brands which may harm celebrity's image (Mehulkumar, 2005).

Created spokespersons gave the company a chance for high degree of control and cost advantage. Marketing managers can create a better fit between the product and the endorser. The long-term influence of the created characters is another advantage over real celebrities as the same created spokesperson can be used for a long time and adapted to the changing circumstances (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 103). The biggest disadvantage of a created spokesperson is that it takes a long time and requires a good amount of advertising spending to create awareness. The creation of endorsement is

recommended when the goal is to create a long-term relationship between the endorser and the company (Tom et al., 1992: 51).

1.3. Models in Celebrity Endorsement Literature

Companies use celebrities in order to sell their products to target market or change the behaviors of consumers (Byrne et al., 2003; Silvera and Austad, 2004). Consumers purchase more of company's products when endorsers can create credibility about their association with the product and show the public that they would love to use the particular product (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991; van der Waldt et al., 2009). Nevertheless, selecting endorsers is not an easy task (Erdoğan, 1999). Therefore, celebrity endorsement is a challenging topic in the literature. Many researchers tried to create models for selecting the right celebrity endorsers. Source credibility model (Hovland et al., 1953: Ohanian, 1991), the Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1985), the Product Match-Up Model (Forkan, 1980; Kamins, 1989; 1990), and the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989) are mostly accepted models.

Source Attractiveness Model as a component of the "source valance" model (McGuire, 1985) is mainly based on four dimensions; namely "familiarity" (knowledge of source through exposure), "likeability" (affection for source based on its physical appearance or behavior), "similarity" (resemblance between the source and the audience), and "attractiveness" (McCracken, 1989: 311; Mehulkumar, 2005: 6). Accordingly, the effectiveness of the message depends on these dimensions. Familiar, likeable and/or similar sources are seen as more attractive and persuasive (Ohanian 1990). Such people evoke positive stereotypes and as a result physically attractive communicators are more successful at changing believes (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Chaiken 1979), attitudes (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Caballero and Pride, 1984; Chaiken, 1979) and generating purchasing intentions (Friedman et al., 1977; Petty and Cacioppo, 1980; Till and Busler, 2000).

The Product Match-up Model promotes the congruence between the product and endorser in terms of image, expertise, and/or attractiveness (Till and Busler, 2000; Baker and Churchill, 1977; Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Forkan, 1980; Kamins, 1990). A celebrity who has a congruent image with the product can lead to better advertisement and credibility (Levy, 1959; Kamins and Gupta, 1994). According to Kahle and Homer (1985), in the use of products that can attract people, celebrities with good physical appearances were pretty effective in the recall of products, product attitudes, and purchasing intentions. Till and Busler (1998, 2000) examined attractiveness versus expertise as a relevant match-up factor and proposed that although attractiveness has quite a level of significance, expertise is more appropriate for matching products with a celebrity endorser.

The Meaning Transfer Model looks at the topic from a cultural perspective. Celebrity endorsers are important as they add value to a company, brand or product through the process of meaning transfer (Amos et al., 2008). According to meaning transfer model (McCracken, 1986; 1989), celebrities develop a persona in the society by the help of their statuses and images promoted by the media. Then the society assigns certain meanings to them and when they endorse a product, these meanings transfer to a company, brand or product. Because of that consumers will be convinced to purchase the product "in the hope of transferring some of these meanings to their own lives" (Amos et al., 2008: 208). As McCracken (1989) suggested, advertisers should explore the symbolism that encompasses a celebrity to determine whether these meanings are desirable for brands since the effectiveness of the endorser depends, in part, on the meanings he or she brings to the endorsement process. Meanings that are chosen for the product will depend on the participants (e.g. client, account executive, research group, and creative team) (Erdoğan, 1999: 308).

The Source Credibility Model basically states that the effectiveness of a message depends on perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of an endorser (Hovland et al.,, 1953; Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1991). Information from a credible source can influence believes, opinions, attitudes and/or behaviors through a process called "internalization", which occurs when receivers embrace the source influence in terms of their personal attitude and value structures (Erdoğan, 1999: 297). Ohanian (1990) mentioned that "source credibility" is commonly used to take attention to the communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message. Because the celebrity endorser is the main source of information, his credibility is an important consideration for the advertiser (Friedman et al., 1978). The definition and content of credibility varies in the related literature. For example, according to Hovland et al. (1953, p. 21) credibility consists of two

components called perceived expertness and trustworthiness. Trust is a significant component in many studies (Bowers and Phillips, 1967; Whitehead, 1968; Applbaum and Anatol, 1972; 1973). Smith (1973, p. 309) accepted the negative side of trustworthiness as the major component of credibility because "The untrustworthy speaker, irrespective of his other qualities, is viewed as questionable message source." Besides trust, expertise (and/or competence) is also mentioned as a crucial factor of source credibility (eg. Applbaum and Anatol, 1972; DeSarbo and Harshman, 1985). In recent studies attractiveness of the source is also accepted as a dimension of credibility (Ohanian, 1990; 1991; Goldsmith et al., 2000).

Ohanian (1990) created a scale to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers through looking at expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of the endorser, especially in the advertisement process. Fifteen sub credibility factors which have been widely accepted and used by different researchers (Pornpitakpan, 2003; Till and Busler, 1998; 2000) take part in these three factors (i.e. expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the endorser). In this study, source credibility is measured in three dimensions which is composed of celebrity expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness as proposed by Ohanian (1990).

Trustworthiness: "The trust paradigm in communication is the listener's degree of confidence in, and level of acceptance of, the speaker and the message" (Abdulmajid-Sallam and Wahid, 2012). Ohanian (1990) stated that the trustworthy communicator was persuasive, whether an expert or not. Trustworthiness can be defined as "the honesty, integrity and believability the endorser possesses" (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 104). It is the degree of confidence consumers place in a communicator's intent to convey the assertions she/he considers most valid (Ohanian, 1990). Much of the literature supports the positive effect of trustworthiness on effectiveness (Chao et al., 2005).

Expertise: Expertise dimension is also referred to as "authoritativeness" (McCroskey, 1966), "competence" (Whitehead, 1968), "expertness" (Applbaum and Anatol, 1972), or "qualification" (Berlo et al., 1969). Expertise is "the degree to which the endorser is perceived to have the adequate knowledge, experience or skills to promote the product" (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 104). The expertise of the endorser is not important unless consumers perceive it to be so (Erdogan, 1999: 298). Expertise is accepted as the most important component for endorsement to be successful as Daneshvary and Schwer indicated (2000: 204). Celebrities might be perceived as having more expertise than created spokespersons (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 104). Celebrity endorsers' expertise is "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions" (Erdogan, 1999: 298).

Attractiveness: Attractiveness is another important component of source credibility (Chaiken, 1979; Joseph, 1982; Kahle and Homer, 1985; Ohanian, 1990; Patzer, 1983). According to Erdogan (1999: 299), attractiveness is the stereotype of positive associations to a person and not only entails physical attractiveness but also other characteristics such as personality and athletic ability. Joseph (1982) summarized the experimental evidence regarding physically attractive communicator's impact on different dependent measures, and stated that attractive communicators are mostly preferred, liked and believed to have a positive impact on products over unattractive ones. Endorsers "who are perceived to be attractive are more likely to lead the purchase intent" (van der Waldt et al., 2009: 104). Attractiveness can be a crucial factor in creating effective messages (Schlecht, 2003). Attractive endorsers do have more influence over consumers compared to less attractive ones (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Joseph, 1982). However Baker and Churchill (1977) stated that while attractiveness positively affects evaluations, it is immaterial in affecting purchasing intentions. While advertisers have frequently chosen endorsers based on their physical attractiveness in order to affect consumer attitudes (eg Chaiken, 1979; Kahle and Homer, 1985), some researchers (Joseph, 1982; Kahle and Homer, 1985) assert that source attractiveness may only be effective if the product enhances the attractiveness of the user as it is also stated in match-up model.

2. Research Problem and Objectives

With regard to celebrity endorsement, there are different problems facing marketing managers and advertisers. For instance, they do not know whether celebrity endorsers are more effective than created spokespersons. Furthermore, the effect of source credibility on attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and intentions is questionable. In this regard, the purpose of this study refers to two dimensions: to test

whether the source credibility affects buying intention and measure the perceived credibility differences between created spokesperson and celebrity endorser in this regard.

The researches comparing the effectiveness of celebrities and created spokespersons revealed contradictory results. In their study Atkin and Block (1983) used an advertising with two versions, one including a celebrity and the other a created one. They stated that celebrity was accepted as more competent and trustworthy and therefore this version was perceived more positively compared to the other version. On the other hand van der Waldt et al. (2009) found that neither celebrities nor created endorsers are perceived to be more trustworthy or to possess more expertise than the other. However, celebrity endorsers were perceived to be more attractive.

The findings about the effect of credibility on intention are also equivocal. In her study Ohanian (1991) analyzed the impact of the celebrity spokespersons' perceived credibility on consumers' purchase intentions and found that a relationship between expertise of the celebrity and intention. Contrary to expectations the effect of trustworthiness and attractiveness on buying intention couldn't be proved. This conflicts with the result of Yoon et al. (1998) who proved that the three dimensions of endorser have normal significance on respondent's purchase intention. Pornpitakpan (2004), also, found that all three dimensions positively relate to purchase intention.

Young consumers were agreed on as the population for the study. As they were interested in using different media channels, the opportunity to come across the mentioned advertisements and so the celebrities and/or created spokespersons were high for them.

In order to develop a list of celebrities and created spokerperson for this research, the author gave a panel of 40 graduate students, giving them 5 minutes to list all the celebrity and created spokerperson names they can remember. These names were ranked based on their frequency. The most frequently mentioned names for celebrities were; Paris Hilton (actress-model), Murat Boz (singer), Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ (actor), Adriana Lima (model), Ronaldo (football player) and Cem Yılmaz (comedian), most frequently mentioned names for created spokerperson were; Arçelik-Çelik/Çelik Naz (domestic appliance), Yapı Kredi – Vadaa (bank), Turkcell –Selocan (gsm operator). A well known member of a famous Hilton family, Paris Hilton was chosen as the celebrity endorser. She was the face of Defacto (clothing brand). Company that was founded in 2003 could succeed in creating a brand recognition with its intense promotion efforts. Its reasonable price strategy made it a preferable brand for low-middle income young consumers. Celebrities who are used in the company's advertisements in the current time are known well by the youth. So this advertisement and brand belongs to a shoe firm which is one of the leading companies in domestic appliances sector in Turkey. Çelik was chosen to be the created spokesperson, since the export potential and recognition level of the brand was perceived to be high enough. Although young consumers are not the major target for this product class, every young consumer could be seen as a potential future buyer of domestic appliances. If we assume that consumers use at least one of the company's products at their homes, there should not be any doubt about the company's products.

In the research, all of the respondents answer questions about both the created spokesperson (Çelik) and celebrity endorser (Paris Hilton). Pictures represented on the questionnaire came before the related questions for each endorser (Figure 1). Ohanian's Scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived credibility (Ohanian, 1990) was used to sustain the reliability of the study. Ohanian (1991: 46) stated that, higher the perceived credibility of an endorser, the more effective advertising tends to be. A point semantic differential scale was used to measure each of the sub-dimensions, with five pairs of descriptive words for each sub-dimension. Higher values indicate more positive options. That is why, thus greater mean (*M*) indicates a high credibility rating. Dependent variable which is the purchase intention is measured by three items which were summed in order to operationalize the intention to purchase scale (Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Moon et al., 2008).

There is sufficial evidence that the three dimensions of source credibility could contribute to source effectiveness independently (Weiner and Mowen, 1985; Pornpitakpan, 2004), this study takes the position that these three dimensions of source credibility can have direct, independent effects on purchase intention. An alternative model will not be tested that these three dimensions influence a common factor of credibility, which in turn influences purchase intention.

Reliability assessments were conducted separately in order to determine the Cronbach alphas for the celebrity and created spokesperson. The results were presented on Table 1. All Alpha values

are above the recommended level (0.70) and indicate acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978).

Figure 1. Advertisements Used in Study
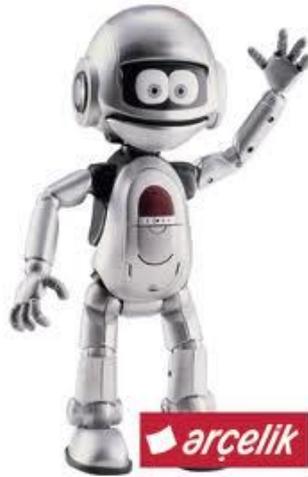
Advertisement 1   **Advertisement 2**

Table 1. Cronbach Alphas for Created and Celebrity Endorser

	Advertisement 1 (created spokesperson)	Advertisement 2 (celebrity)
	Alpha value	Alpha value
Attractiveness	0.86	0.95
Trustworthiness	0.93	0.85
Expertise (Competence)	0.79	0.94
Credibility	0.94	0.96
Purchase intention	0.94	0.95

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of Respondents and Descriptive Statistics

The characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 2. As it can be seen from the Table 2, a total of 174 female and 152 male students participated in the survey. 57.4% of the participants' age ranged between 21 and 25. As of marital status, the majority of respondents were single (85. 3%).

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents

		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	174	53.4
	Male	152	46.6
Age	under 20	65	19.9
	21-25	187	57.4
	26-30	40	12.3
	31-35	20	6.1
	over 36	14	4.3
Marital status	Single	278	85.3
	Married	48	14.7
Education	Primary school	1	0.3
	High school	20	6.1
	Graduate	258	79.1
	Master-Phd	47	14.4
Income	under 750 TL	145	44.5
	751-1500 TL	85	26.1
	1501-2250 TL	40	12.3
	over 2251TL	56	17.2

For three sub-dimensions of credibility construct and purchase intention variable, the mean values and standard deviation scores were calcutated and shown in Table 3. According to the results, the credibility of created spokesperson seems to be higher than the celebrity's credibility (M=3.31 S=1.003, M=3.16 S=1.024, respectively), while purchase intention for both the created one and celebrity can be said to be similar (M=3.23 S=1.055 , M=3.12 S=1.173, respectively). In order to test the significance level for the differences, required statistical tests were used and explained in next paragraphs.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Created and Celebrity Endorser

	Advertisement 1 (created spokesperson)		Advertisement 2 (celebrity)	
	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Attractiveness	3.10	1.049	3.55	1.162
Trustworthiness	3.35	1.089	2.91	1.131
Expertise (Comp.)	3.47	1.196	3.01	1.177
Credibility	3.31	1.003	3.16	1.024
Purchase inten.	3.23	1.055	3.12	1.173

3.2. Hypotheses

As mentioned above, the hypotheses were tested and results were given below. The first and second hypotheses focused on the the relationship between the source credibility and purhase intention. The hypothesis is tested both for created spokesperson and celebrity endorser. For that purpose a model was specified and tested by AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures). The model is given in Figure 2.

For created spokesperson;

H1a= The created spokesperson's perceived attractiveness will positively influence the intention to purchase.

H1b= The created spokesperson's perceived trustworthiness will positively influence the intention to purchase.

H1c= The created spokesperson's perceived expertise will positively influence the intention to purchase.

For celebrity endorser;

H2a= The celebrity endorser's perceived attractiveness will positively influence the intention to purchase.

H2b= The celebrity endorser's perceived trustworthiness will positively influence the intention to purchase.

H2c= The celebrity endorser's perceived expertise will positively influence the intention to purchase.

As mentioned above, two models were tested–one model for created spokesperson and one for celebrity endorser- using the structural equation modeling technique by the help of AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) 16.0 programme and were assessed for model fit. In model 1, the effect of created spokesperson's perceived credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise) on intention to purchase was tested. Various model fit indices indicated that the model-data fit is in acceptable limits ($\Delta X2= 168,68$, df=112, NFI=0,90, GFI=0,95, CFI=0,90 RMSEA=0,08) (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003: 52). According to findings, the perceived attractiveness ($\beta=0,21$; p<0.05), trustworthiness ($\beta=0,28$; p<0.05) and expertise ($\beta=0,42$; p<0.05) of the created spokesperson influence the intention to purchase in a significantly positive way, supporting H1a, H1b and H1c.

In model 2, the effect of celebrity endorser's perceived credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise) on intention to purchase was tested. Various model fit indices also showed an acceptable model-data fit ($\Delta X2= 160,56$, df=108, NFI=0,90, GFI=0,86, CFI=0,95 RMSEA=0,07) (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003: 52). According to findings, the perceived attractiveness ($\beta=0,21$; p<0.05), trustworthiness ($\beta=0,08$; p<0.05) and expertise ($\beta=0,12$; p<0.05) of the created spokesperson influence the intention to purchase in a significantly positive way, supporting H2a, H2b and H2c.

Figure 2. Research Model
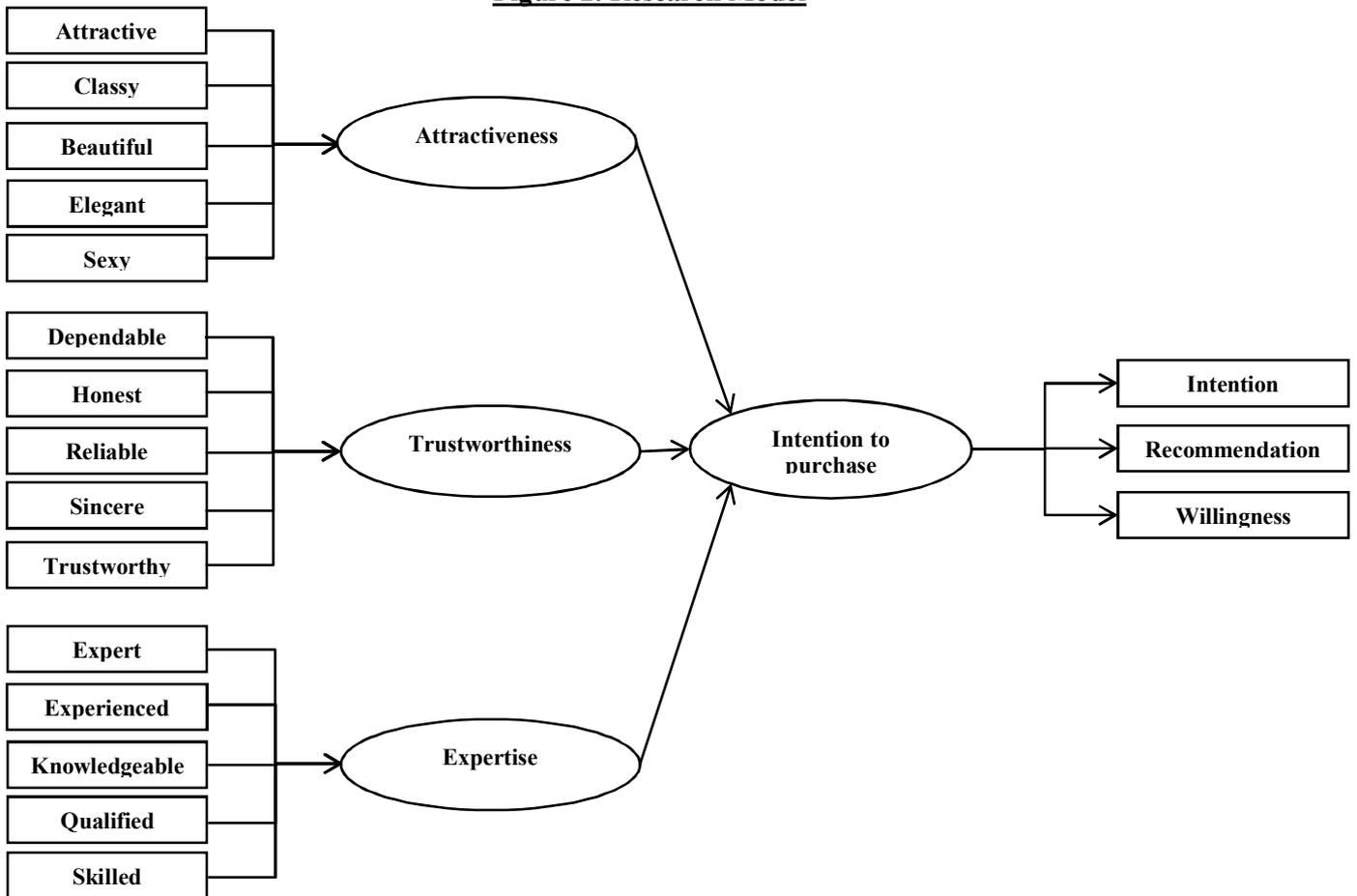
This part of the study focused on the statistical tests used to compare the credibility of created spokesperson and credibility of celebrity endorser. Hypotheses specified for that purpose were as follows:

H3a= Created spokespersons are perceived to be more attractive than celebrity endorser.

H3b= Created spokespersons are perceived to be more trustworthy than celebrity endorser

H3c= Created spokespersons are perceived to have more expertise than celebrity endorser

H3d= Created spokespersons are perceived to be more credible than celebrity endorser

First of all, normality was tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test when analyzing H3a (Table 4). These tests indicated that there is a shift from normality to attractiveness of both created spokesperson and celebrity endorser. To compare the data, non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted. According to findings (Z=-5.436; p=0.000) there is a significant difference between the attractiveness of created spokesperson and celebrity endorser. The descriptive statistics indicate that the findings are at odds with H3a, as the mean value of attractiveness contruct for the created spokesperson is smaller than the celebrity endorser's (M=3.10, M= 3.55, respectively). The results are indicating that celebrities are perceived to be more attractive than created spokespersons. That is why, H3a hypothesis can be rejected.

H3b compared the trustworthiness between created spokespersons and celebrity endorsers. Mean values indicate that the trustworthiness for created spokesperson (M=3.35) is higher than celebrity endorser's (M=2.91). As there is a shift from normality for both of them (created spokespersons and celebrity endorsers), non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted to identify the significance of the difference, as such in H3a. Results supported H3b hypothesis (Z=-5.880; p=0.000), so it can be said that created spokespersons are perceived to be more trustworthy than celebrity endorsers.

The same process is followed for analyzing H3c since the normality could not be satisfied (Table 4). According to mean values, the perceived expertise for created spokesperson seemed to be higher than celebrity endorser's (M=3.47, M= 3.01, respectively). This difference, also, is statistically proved (Z=-5.880; p=0.000). As the findings are supporting H3c, it can be stated that created spokespersons are perceived to have more expertise than celebrity endorser.

As the components of endorser credibility were analyzed seperately, the credibility as a construct can also be used to make a comparison. The mean value for the credibility of created spokesperson is higher than the one for celebrity endorser (M=3.31, M= 3. 16, respectively). The difference was statistically tested by Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test as it was done before. The findings revealed that created spokespersons are perceived to be more credible than celebrity endorser (Z=-2,468; p=0.014). That is why, H3d hypothesis can be supported.

Table 4. Tests of Normality

		Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
		Statistic	**df**	**Sig.**
Attractiveness	**Created spokesperson**	0.081	326	0.000
	Celebrity endorser	0.114	326	0.000
Trustworthiness	**Created spokesperson**	0.083	326	0.000
	Celebrity endorser	0.082	326	0.000
Expertise	**Created spokesperson**	0.098	326	0.000
	Celebrity endorser	0.087	326	0.000
Credibility	**Created spokesperson**	0.067	326	0.001
	Celebrity endorser	0.057	326	0.012

4. Conclusions

Finding the right celebrity endorser and creating the appropriate spokesperson is a crucial matter for many firms. Ohanian (1990) developed an instrument in order to assess the impact of these endorsers through the measurement of their credibility. Her study (1991) revealed that celebrities' perceived expertise on the product was related to the purchase intention for American respondents. Even though the results indicated that dimensions of attractiveness and trustworthiness did not affect the purchase intention; Pornpitakpan (2004) showed that all these three dimensions (expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness) are positively related with purchase intention for Singaporean consumers. These questionable results and the need for generalizability of the scale (its effects in different cultures) can be accepted as the starting point of the study. It should be stated that the results support the findings in Pornpitakpan's study (2004) which claim that all the dimensions are positively and significantly related with intention to purchase. These relationships are tested for the celebrity endorser and created spokesperson, seperately and they are valid for both conditions.

This study also includes the analysis of differences between the perceived credibility levels of celebrity endorsers and created spokespersons. To that end, all three dimensions are analyzed as well as overall credibility levels. According to the results, created spokespersons are perceived to be more trustworthy and having more expertise than celebrity endorsers whereas celebrity endorsers' attractiveness level is higher than of created spokespersons'. These results can be regarded as being inconsistent with the study of Atkin and Block (1983) who claimed that celebrity endorsers are perceived to be more trustworthy and expert. On the other hand, the results seemed to strengthen the idea that created spokespersons could be more effective than celebrity endorsers as they allow for greater control, specific linkage to the product characteristics and can be associated with only one product or a brand (Tom et al., 1992). Another finding is that celebrity endorsers are perceived to be more attractive and this finding is compatible with the results van der Waldt et al (2009) came up with. Considering the overall credibility level, it can be said that created spokespersons possess more credibility compared to celebrity endorsers. The reason why created spokesperson seems to have more credibility is that his/her brand gets to reflect the perception of its roots to the created character. Because of that the impact of the firm (corporate) credibility and celebrity/spokesperson's credibility should be investigated. As stated previously, celebrity endorsers are perceived to be more attractive.

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Celebrity spokesperson used in this study is a robot and is introduced as a male character. The scale used to measure the attractiveness here includes the adjectives such as sexy-not sexy, beautiful-ugly. Here, the attractiveness scores might have turned out to be relatively lower since these adjectives are not frequently used to describe a robot. On the other hand, the result might have been stemmed from the choice of a woman celebrity. Therefore, sexual factors might be suggested to be considered in the credibility comparison studies.

5. Limitations

Cultural characteristics are accepted as important factors in scientific studies. In this study the chosen created spokesperson is native, while the celebrity is an international endorser. For this reason, these cultural differences might have affected the results of the study. For future researches, selection of both created spokesperson and celebrity endorser as native or foreign (foreign created spokesperson vs foreign celebrity endorser or native created spokesperson vs native celebrity endorser) and comparison in this context should be recommended in order to gain more generalizable results.

This study has been applied to young consumers in general. As a matter of fact, the main target of the brand and accordingly, product class, that the created person represents is not the young consumers while the other brand chosen tried to reach at the younger ones, which eventually could have triggered the different outcomes. Thus, this fact might be taken into consideration on the future studies.

The studies that are based on the interaction between the celebrities and the target consumers' genders, revealed that, when compared to the males, attractive female figures incur positive attitudes for both genders (Debevec, Keman, 1984) despite the fact that male figures are more influential to make the women more intended to purchase. Therefore, the evaluation of the sexual differences might be beneficial on the further studies. On this study, only one celebrity endorser and one created spokesperson were chosen for practical reasons. It might be suggested to raise the numbers if more generalizability of the results is sought.

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