

Title;

***“A Quantitative Study of the Effect of Celebrity Endorsers on
Consumer Purchase Intent”***

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Erdogen (1999) claims that the act of endorsing products has been around for years and cites an example as early as the 19th century of Queen Victoria in association with the then Cadbury's cocoa company. The growth of cinema into western culture allowed for celebrity endorsing to be transmitted, audio-visually, to a greater audience than ever before. Unsurprisingly there were fewer endorsements then as opposed to now and this has been due to the growth of the *östarö* (McDonough 1995). The number has risen considerably due to the fact that there are far more TV shows and movies than there was 50 years ago. Perhaps most importantly it has now become the norm for celebrities to endorse products, as opposed to the 1960's when *öseriousö* actors thought it tarnished their art form (McDonough 1995). Erdogen (1999) published a table which shows the percentage change in the number of advertisements that use endorsers over the last thirty years. In 1981 he claims that 15% of all advertisements used some form of endorsement. In 1988 that figure stood at 20% of all advertisements and by 1997 that figure had risen to 25%. This is taken a step further by Shimp (2009) who claims that 25% of all American companies use some form of celebrity endorsement in their advertising campaigns. This highlights the steady and persistent increase in the use of endorsers in western culture.

This study attempts to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers on consumer purchase intent within an Irish context. As has been explained above the use of celebrities endorsing products has steadily been increasing in western society. The research's primary aim is to find out if the presence of an endorser is likely to alter the purchase intent of respondents. There is a dearth of research on this topic within an Irish context. Whether or not there is any gender differential is also examined as Klaus and Bailey (2009) contend that endorsers generate a greater response amongst women as opposed to men. The effectiveness of endorsers to influence is dependent on the cognitive ability of the respondent (McCutcheon *et al* 2012). This is examined in this research by comparing respondent's motivation levels against their level of educational attainment. Finally

this research seeks to establish whether the negative behaviour of an endorser will affect the purchase intent of respondents.

Chapter one deals with introducing the research topic with some liturgical context. Chapter two outlines the pre-eminent literature around the topic of celebrity endorsers. The chapter begins with an explanation of the two most used models in the literature (Source Credibility and The Meaning Transfer Model). The review then looks at the ethics of using celebrity endorsers and its role in the new post-modern advertising world. It then looks specifically at the literature regarding differences in attitude based on gender and cognitive ability. The chapter concludes by looking at the risks inherent in using celebrity endorsers including when the endorser attracts negative publicity. The third chapter outlines the primary research objective and the three sub-hypothesis. These are each justified by relevant literature. Chapter four explains for the reader the methodological framework within which this research was conducted. The chapter begins by explaining the method employed for this study and goes on to outline the alternative methods that were available. Chapter five outlines the main findings from the survey and links them back to the objectives and hypothesis. Any statistically significant differences are revealed as well as other findings of interest. Chapter six discusses the practical implications of the findings and attempts to link them back to relevant literature. It also outlines the limitations of the study. Chapter seven concludes the study, summarises the pre-eminent findings and outlines areas for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Models of Analysis

2.1.1 Source Credibility Model

Ohanian (1990) defines source credibility as *“a term commonly used to imply a communicator’s acceptance of a message, (pg 41). A further study by the author claimed that three dimensions of a credible source exist.*

2.1.2 Credibility

Koo *et al* (2012) describes credibility as how believable the consumer perceives the endorser’s credibility to be. They simplify the point by saying it is *“the amount of knowledge the source has about the product or topic that he/she is endorsing”* (Koo *et al* 2012 pg. 148). For example if a professional golfer is paid a large sum of money to extol the virtues of a particular brand of club then he/she, by virtue of their profession, is deemed to be an expert in this area. They both have expertise in the area and both have credibility due to their profession. Koo *et al* (2012) claim that the credibility of an athlete is sourced from their on-field/track performances. In other words an athlete who is performing at a higher level has more credibility with the general public. As a result of this the biggest stars get paid the greatest amount of money for their endorsement (Koo *et al* 2012). Away from sport Ohanian (1990) cites a study conducted by Crsici and Kassinove (1973) investigating the effect on perceived expertise of the endorser by changing the title of the person from Mr to Dr. Unsurprisingly people rated the *“Dr”* as having a higher level of expertise.

2.1.3 Trustworthiness

Ohanian (1990 + 1991) identifies source credibility as a dimension of trustworthiness. He outlines how the trust paradigm can be defined as the listener’s degree of confidence in and acceptance of, the speaker and the message (Ohanian, 1991). Griffen (1967) claims that as a result of having trustworthiness favourable

terms such as acceptance and favourable disposition are attributed to brands and products endorsed by individuals perceived as trustworthy. McGinnies and Ward (1980) published a study which changed the expertise and trustworthiness of a source. Their findings revealed that a source that had both trustworthiness and expertise generated the most opinion change among respondents. Furthermore they found that the source deemed to be trustworthy generated more opinion change than the source that was deemed an expert. Koo *et al* (2012) use Tiger Woods' marital indiscretions as an example of someone losing trustworthiness. They point to a number of companies that dropped Woods after the scandal broke.

Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Expertise
Unattractive-Attractive Not Classy-Classy Ugly-Beautiful Plain-Elegant Not Sexy-Sexy	Not Dependable-Dependable Dishonest-Honest Unreliable-Reliable Insincere-Sincere Untrustworthy-Trustworthy	Not Expert-Expert Inexperienced-Experienced Unknowledgeable- Knowledgeable Unqualified-Qualified Unskilled-Skilled

Source;

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=1832947&show=html>

2.1.4 Attractiveness

McCracken (1989) proposes that the source attractiveness model is based upon social psychological research. He quotes the McGuire (1985) model, which states that a message depends on three things; the familiarity, likability and similarity of the source. Ohanian (1991) conducted a study which found that an attractive source was more likely to change opinion than an unattractive one. Ohanian (1990) claimed that, despite extensive academic research, the definition of source attractiveness is still somewhat vague. Furthermore he outlines that there are different description terms such as *õchicnessõ*, *õsexinessõ*, *õsexualnessõ* and *õlikabilityõ* among others. While there may be some disagreement with regard to a definitive classification of attractiveness there is widespread agreement that an

attractive source is more likely to change opinion than an unattractive one (Ohanian 1991 & McCracken 1989).

2.1.5 Limitations

Sternthal, Dholakia and Leavitt (1978) argue that in some cases highly credible sources are less effective than sources with low levels of credibility. Sternthal *et al* (1978) claim that when the audience is favourably pre disposed to the message that a less credible source can induce a higher level of persuasion than a credible one. The Ohanian (1991) model looks at the three sources in isolation and fails to examine whether or not, for example, endorsers attractiveness has an effect on their perceived expertise or trustworthiness. Another shortcoming pointed out by Ohanian (1990) is whether or not source credibility has the same effect on purchasers of high-involvement goods as it does with low-involvement goods. These limitations highlight that while the source credibility model is in no way a bulwark against the risks of celebrity endorsements, it certainly is a useful pointer for marketing practitioners (Ohanian 1990).

2.2 Meaning Transfer Model

Grant McCracken, (1986, 1988 & 1989) contends that meaning moves along quite a conventional path. The model is born within the parameters of society creating and adding credence to things in order to give them meaning. This culture assigns meaning to various people, objects and types of behaviour. The second stage involves this meaning being transferred on to consumer goods and lastly these meanings are transferred on to the end user, in this case the consumer. This creates a neat progression from meaning being created by cultural norms to becoming part of a consumer's life. This transfer is done through advertising and fashion McCracken (1986, 1988 and 1989) contends.

Advertising is used to transfer meaning in a subtle and simple way. The advertiser begins by looking around for the cultural meanings they want the product to portray. McCracken (1988) uses the contemporary term *“what do they want the product to say?”* The next stage involves selecting the objects or people that are going to facilitate this meaning transfer. Using people or situations *“solidifies”* this message for the target audience. McCracken (1989) claims this phase is the most

difficult and requires the most skill and care from the advertiser. This is for two main reasons;

Firstly the marketers must realise that people, places and objects come attached with more than one meaning. Advertisers need to take care that one set of meanings do not completely undermine the original set.

Secondly the meanings and what is being used to project them must be packaged together in a way that proves itself irresistible to the consumer. These two reasons must be combined by the advertiser and presented in a way that leaves no doubt as to the meaning transfer in the mind of the consumer. McCracken (1989) contends that if advertising is used appropriately it can attach any meaning to any product. He outlines in great detail how a celebrity endorser adds greatly to the transfer of meaning process.

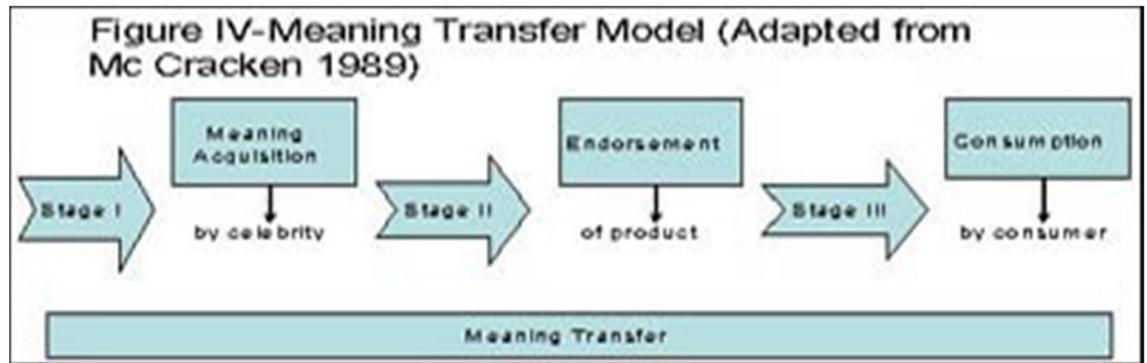
2.2.1 Stage 1

McCracken (1989) explains the three stages laid out above in greater detail. The first stage questions the reasons for using well-known actors and sportspeople to endorse products at all. Using ordinary actors and portraying them in certain situations can give plenty of meaning to products or brands and these models are infinitely cheaper than the global megastar. However celebrities come with a huge amount of meanings already attached and these meanings are instantly recognised and understood by the viewer. McCracken (1989) argues that the meanings are also far more effective when delivered by a well-known celebrity. These meanings have come to be understood by consumers through our relationship with the celebrity.

2.2.2 Stage 2

Stage two outlines that the celebrity will only be chosen after a clear set of meanings and values are decided upon for the product. Consumer wants and needs should be the driving force and McCracken (1989) outlines that all of the desired meanings must be captured in the advertisement. However it must be remembered that just like other endorsers celebrities come packed with a wide range of meanings. It is impossible to identify one specific celebrity that possesses all of the meanings required. Also, as with other endorsers, celebrities may come with undesirable meanings that will need to be separated from the product. A connection between the

celebrity and the values and meanings of the product must be made very easy for the consumer to identify. A modern example of this is Virgin Airlines use of Kate Moss as she is seen as British, edgy and rebellious.



Source; http://www.indianmba.com/Faculty_Column/FC706/fc706.html

2.2.3 Stage 3

The most difficult and complex stage in the process, according to McCracken (1989) is the final stage. One of the primary reasons for celebrities being effective is that they have managed to create the image of self that ordinary people are trying to achieve. McCracken (1989) acknowledges the lack of clarity in this whole area and terms it *“terra incognita”*. He claims that celebrities have taken meanings from their interactions with people, places and objects and have made their lives attractive. This turns the celebrity into an inspirational figure and it is the consumers’ needs and wants to absorb these meanings that give celebrity endorsing its power. The value and credence that modern society places on the celebrity due to the decline of previously culture forming institutions is a debate that is worth acknowledging.

2.2.4 Criticisms

Twitchell (1996) contends that advertisers once had a captive and ready audience whereas now they are faced with consumers who are savvy and *“choice-ridden”*. Consumers have the ultimate power in a consumer society according to Boultus (2000). This would contradict the notion that McCracken outlines above where the consumer is viewed as passive and that the meanings are simply

transferred on to us without any resistance from the consumer. Boulton (2000) argues that this view of the consumer as simply non-independent thinkers and people who can be easily duped comes from the "golden age" of advertising and has lost relevance in modern society. Boulton (2000) also references the "Frankfurt School" where the overriding concept was that advertising "brainwashes the masses so that they forget they are being exploited". The view that consumers simply accept the meanings from this model without any resistance is criticised by Twitchell (1996) and Boulton (2000).

2.3 Ethical Implications of using endorsers

Brands continue to recognise the power of the celebrity as the number of companies using celebrity endorsers has remained quite robust, even during this period of global economic uncertainty (Miller and Lazniak 2011). This section aims to investigate whether it is ethical for companies to use celebrities to endorse their products.

2.3.1 Framework

Lazniak and Miller (2011) put forward a conceptualised framework that can help firms better to aspire to a higher or more consistent standard of morality in their advertising practices. They quote McCracken's 1989 article that states there are three different types of endorser;

- The explicit which generally carries the tag line "I recommend this product"
- The implicit which generally carries the tag line "I use this product"
- Co-present endorsement which is generally just the endorser appearing with the product.

Lazniak and Miller (2011) outline a three stage framework. Firstly the advertising firm needs to identify their clients' primary values and principles. They also recommend that the firm adopt values from the AMA Statement of Ethics which include transparency, fairness and respect among others. Secondly the brand needs to be sure that the endorser chosen best represents the brand.

The framework outlines, in its final stage, that the brand managers need to constantly evaluate the endorsers meaning and value set in the minds of consumer as this may change over a period of time. The Koo *et al* (2012) example of an athlete having a dip in form and this affecting their credibility among consumers is important to note in this section. This example is given credence by the fact that a lot of endorsement contracts are over a number of years and the brand need to monitor the value of their endorser. It's also important for brands to have a proper understanding of the implications of discontinuing, continuing or deferring a relationship with an endorser if they have form or behavioural lapses (Lazniak and Miller 2011).

2.3.2 Mission Creep

Choi and Berger (2009) blame the internet for the rise of the celebrity culture. This is what is called *mission creep*, the idea that the industry and meaning of celebrity is expanding beyond its original goals. Choi and Berger (2009) claim that now somebody does not need athletic or artistic achievements in order to be classified as a celebrity. Carter (2006) cites the example of Paris Hilton who he claims is famous for simply being famous. Choi and Berger (2009) claim that although the internet has driven down costs and increased accessibility of information it has spawned a societal obsession with celebrity. Cohen (2001) contends that this internet driven sensation has affected the younger generation disproportionately as they are the generation that spend, proportionally, most of the time on-line. All of the authors cited above use the example of the modern television reality show. These shows allow ordinary people to achieve the same level of fame as trained actors or trained sports people. A by-product of this fame is that young people give these *stars* the same level of credibility as people who are famous for acting or being an athlete. Choi and Berger (2009), Maury, Kleiner & Spurgin (2003) all make the argument that the internet has facilitated the growth of the celebrity culture without the presence of any safeguards. Furthermore using these non-celebrities as endorsers raises questions as to their trustworthiness, credibility and expertise as put forward in the meaning transfer model (Ohanian 1990).

2.3.3 Hypodermic Needle Model

The crux of the ethical argument about advertisers using a celebrity endorser is that it is unfair on the consumer because it attempts to trick him or her. This in turn leads to a change in behaviour brought about as a result of seeing the endorser and that this behaviour is somehow directly attributable to the advertisement. Such a conclusion is incredibly difficult to prove as Gillian Dyer points out in her 1988 book *“Advertising as Communication”*. It is claimed that a lot of the sociological research carried out focuses very much on the short term effect of advertising. Dyer (1998) contends that implicit in much of this short-term research is the hypodermic needle model. This model focuses on the idea that the influence of media is like a needle injecting a message into the mind of the consumer. This message then in turn causes the shift in behaviour desired by the advertiser. Dyer (1988) goes on to explain that it is difficult to directly attribute an advertisement to changes in behaviour over a short term. For the purposes of balance it is important to note that the model outlined above fails to acknowledge the fact that most modern westernised consumers have grown up constantly being bombarded with advertisements (Bouttis 2000). To simply say that an idea is planted in a consumer’s head without any resistance doesn’t give due recognition of the innate cynicism of the modern consumer (Bouttis 2000 & Obermiller *et al* 2005).

2.4 The Post-Modernist Attitudes towards Advertising

According to Brown (2006) postmodernism (PoMo) has two crucial characteristics. Firstly it is a critique, not a concept. This means that PoMo is simply pointing out that something is wrong within a discipline while making no attempt to provide a solution. Brown (2006) highlights his point by saying that *“it tells us that the emperor has got no clothes, it doesn’t attempt to tailor a new suit”*. Secondly PoMo is a *“Pan-disciplinary concept”* and has occurred across many academic domains. According to Piercy (1997) the same concepts of crisis that are occupying mainstream marketing academics at the moment are the same that caused derision only ten years earlier. Bergmann and Grahn (1991) question the growing gap between academia and practical applications for marketers.

2.4.1 Consumer Cynicism

One of the fears for the PoMo activists is the cynicism with which modern, westernised consumers view advertising as a whole. Obermiller, Spangenberg and MacLachlan (2005) define the concept of advertising scepticism as the tendency to disbelieve the informational claims of advertisements. Being expected to pay attention, decipher meaning and register effect from advertisements which are being constantly fired at you is a lot to expect from consumers. MacInnis *et al* (1991) contend that to pay attention to the constant bombardment requires too much effort on the part of the consumer and they lack the required motivation. For many western consumers this bombardment takes place over a lifetime. Another possible reason for consumers rejecting the traditional sender receiver model of advertising is that they are aware of the strategies employed by advertisers and this knowledge reduces the intended effect (Friestad and Wright 1994). Calfee and Ringold (1994) report that results from a number of public opinion polls in the US show that up to two thirds of respondents doubt the validity of advertising claims.

2.4.2 Co-Creation of Value

This increasing cynicism towards advertising has resulted in many practitioners being forced to become more creative with the medium. One of the more recent developments has been the phenomenon of “*Co-Creation of Value*”. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) claim that co-creation is a joint venture between both the company/advertiser and the consumer. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) further claim that now value creation focus is rapidly shifting from product/internal focus to a focus on personalised consumer experience. Gronross (2011) points out that the process of value co-creation is an interactive set of interactions shared by both the consumer and the firm. Involving the customer in the value creation process is now a necessity for success (Guido, Braga and Casas 2013). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) acknowledge that while technology has made such concepts easier to perform they are not easy to succeed with. It requires a huge commitment to transparency from senior management, which hasn't traditionally been forthcoming. Such a policy requires a large amount of dialogue which also costs capital and time (Pralhad and Ramaswamy 2004).

2.4.3 Experiential Marketing

Schmitt (1999) defined experiential marketing as the customer's recognition of and purchasing of goods or services from a brand or a company after they have had an experience that resulted in perceived stimulations. Experiential Marketing is everywhere and this has happened for three reasons; *the omnipresence of Information Technology, the supremacy of the brand and the ubiquity of communications and entertainment* (Schmitt, 1999 pg. 54)

Experiential Marketing does not overlook the quality, or lack, of a product or service it enhances the emotions and sense stimulation of the consumer (Maghati, Ling & Nasermodeli, 2012). Schmitt (1999) goes on to divide the types of experiential marketing into five dimensions;

- (a) **Sense Experience;** this is primarily the experience that consumers get from their sight, taste, smell, touch and sound. Vargo & Lusch (2004) argue that through this sense experience consumers will develop what they call "experience logic" and from this logic they will be able to form value judgements to differentiate between products and services.
- (b) **Feel Experience;** Yang and He (2011) refer to feel experience as the customer's inner emotions after consuming a product or service and that these emotions can range from passionate to temperate. Unsurprisingly Schmitt (1999) contends that positive feelings generated during the consumption process leads to positive emotions.
- (c) **Think Experience;** Schmitt (1999) argues that think experience allows consumers to develop a new idea or concept about a brand or a service provider after the consumption of the product or the service. As a result of this experience individual consumers will have generated their own opinion of the brand or service provider.
- (d) **Act Experience;** this experience deals with the physical implications of having interacted with a brand or service for a consumer. Also consumers develop a sense of influence and the establishment of a relationship with the brand or service provider (Schmitt 1999).
- (e) **Relate Experience;** Maghati *et al* (2012) claim that relate experience allows consumers who have just had an experience with a brand or service build that

connection with other likeminded consumers. This experience focuses on the individual's desire for self-improvement. This connection is increasingly being facilitated by the internet in the form of viral communities formed around specific products or services in what Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) call 'brand communities'.

Schmitt (1999) argues that traditional marketing has given us valuable structures and strategies for the industrial age. However we have moved into a new era and managers need to move away from the features and benefits model and focus more on the experiences felt by the consumers (Schmitt 1999).

2.5 Celebrity Worship

According to McCutcheon, Ashe, Houran and Maltby (2003) the adoration of celebrity as idols or role models is a normal part of identity development in childhood and adolescence. However it can reach extreme forms whereby people who previously had perfectly intact identities become overly obsessed with one particular celebrity. McCutcheon, Lange and Houran (2002) put forward an 'absorption-addiction model' to try and explain the different levels of celebrity worship. The first stage has what McCutcheon *et al* (2002) call *entertainment-social* value is mainly made up of the behaviours associated with normal teenagers discussing the lives of their favourite celebrity. *Intermediate levels* of celebrity are characterised by more personal feelings like 'Celebrity X is my soul mate etc'. According to Giles (2000) this stage gives indications of the individual's compulsive behavioural tendencies. The final and most extreme stage is what McCutcheon *et al* (2002) call 'Borderline Pathological' which manifests itself with statements such as 'if my favourite celebrity asked me to do something illegal, I probably would'. McCutcheon, Griffith, Aruguete and Haight (2012) went further and conducted a study in to whether a person's obsession with a celebrity could in some way be connected to their overall intelligence or I.Q. Previous studies conducted have led to the development of the hypothesis who would score modestly on in terms of cognitive ability are more likely to have stronger feelings of attachment towards celebrities. However McCutcheon *et al* (2012) failed to build on previous research and couldn't provide absolute proof that there was a correlation between cognitive ability and celebrity worship.

2.5.1 Empty Self

Cushman (1990) put forward the idea of the empty self whereby people's self was empty and they needed to consume material objects in order to fill this self. Cushman (1990) further contends that in the post-World War II United States there has gradually been an erosion of traditional values of church, community and family. This absence is manifested by a "hunger" that needs to be satisfied. Cushman (1990) expands on this by claiming that advertisements using celebrities aim to fill a void in consumers, which is the "empty self". He further argues that over the last half century America has changed from a saving economy to a debtor economy and this is due to an explosion of materialism, fuelled by a national obsession with celebrities. It is important to note that Cushman's focus is entirely on the United States of America and doesn't allow for cultural differences i.e. the more collectivist mindset of many Eastern cultures. Rostafinski (1991) argues that Cushman's (1990) thought provoking contention focused too much on a social constructionist model of self. Rostafinski (1991) also disagrees that an empty self needs to be filled up with cultural contents. The author contends that the self is far more affected by interpersonal relationships with real figures of influence i.e. friends and parents.

2.5.2 The Web is the new altar

Hamilton and Hewer (2010) claim that the future is bright, the future is social. This means that the future of internet usage is with social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Nielsen (2009) contends that usage of these sites has dramatically increased has huge ramifications for the way we live our lives. This increasingly connected world allows people to come together and connect over topic of common interest. This may be people who share a passion for a product, service or Celebrity, (Hamilton and Hewer 2010). Kozinets (1997) claims that unlike other consumption processes interaction with a celebrity involves a high level of emotion and in part reflects for many participants a desired image of self. O Guinn (1991) argues, for many, celebrities are said to perform some of the functions of Gods who are worshipped by their adoring fans. Such a need to invest time, energy and emotion is greatly facilitated by the advent of these social media sites (Hamilton and Hewer 2010).

For fans these sites are opportunities to come together in an almost tribal setting and share common experiences with a common hero. Hamilton and Hewer (2010) claim that this allows fans to come together and in many cases disregard the overtly commercial nature of the modern celebrity and share a purer experience. These fan sites also force us to change the way we think about the fan. Their passivity was previously highlighted by Jenkins (2006), however we need to begin to see the value of the celebrity as being re-worked and projected on to them by the consumers (Marshall 2005). Hamilton and Hewer (2010) contend that these on-line communities of common interest are an ideal location for academics and practitioners to explore this new participatory culture.

2.6 Risks of using Celebrity Endorsers

2.6.1 Overshadowing the brand

The potential benefits of utilising celebrity endorsers are significant, so are the risks and costs”, (Erdogen, 1999, pg. 295). As with any marketing strategy there are many inherent risks. Rossiter and Percy (1987) contend that one of the most common concerns when using celebrity endorsers is that the consumer will focus too much of their attention on the celebrity and not on the product that they are endorsing. Erdogen (1999) references Cooper (1984) when he says that the product must be the star, not the celebrity. Badenhausen (2004) claim that some companies are now abandoning their strategy of using celebrity endorsers because they feel that high-profile celebrities are actually overshadowing the brands that they are endorsing.

2.6.2 Multi-Product Endorsement

Tripp, Jensen & Carlson (1994) suggest that firms that engage with modern celebrities with the intention for them to endorse their brand must contend with sharing the celebrity as exclusivity is too costly. Kaikata (1987) suggests that consumers may view the celebrity as less credible if they are engaged in too many endorsements. Tripp *et al* (1994) argue that empirical evidence is scant in the area of consumer reaction to multiple product endorsers. Trip *et al* (1994) carried out a study which showed that indeed consumers reacted negatively to the endorser and the advertising when shown the multiple advertising campaigns. This negativity directly

affects the credibility of the endorser as opposed to effecting their trustworthiness or expertise (Trip *et al* 1994).

2.6.3 Negative Publicity

Koo *et al* (2012) claim that off the field actions can be a source of negative information about an endorser. They claim examples may be a scandal, an issue with the law, a crime or a fight. According to Money, Shimp & Sakano (2006) the negative behaviour of sports stars receives more attention and is more readily received by consumers than their positive behaviour. Koo *et al* (2012) extend this by saying that this phenomenon directly effects consumer perception of a brand endorsed by the athlete endorser. The issue of endorsers receiving negative attention has many examples in literature, Michael Jackson's child molestation charges and Pepsi Co (Erdogen, 1999) and Tiger Woods's extra marital affairs and Gatorade (Koo *et al* 2012) to name but a few. Both examples caused huge embarrassment for both parties and resulted in both endorsers being dropped by the respective brands. Paradoxically an endorser who has received negative publicity for misbehaviour can actually recover their reputation and in some cases receive more favourable publicity than before, (Rice, Kelting & Lutz 2012). However it's important to note that not all misbehaviours carry the same public judgement. Louie and Obermiller (2002) give the example that Mike Tyson's advertising value suffered more when he was convicted of rape than when he was convicted of bribing a police officer.

2.6.4 Mitigating the Risk

Earlier the author cited the example that some companies use "spokespeople" as opposed to endorsers. This works particularly well in the hygiene area where advertisers use dentists and doctors who have no public persona, (Erdogen, 1999). Using such personalities gives the advertisers or brand creator greater control as these spokespeople have limited public exposure beyond the actual advertisement. Because celebrities misbehave companies need to decide how they are going to deal with the issue if it ever arises (Louie & Obermiller 2002). Furthermore companies need to know that the decisions taken with regard to a celebrity will directly affect the public view of the brand. Louie and Obermiller (2002), claim that the extent to

which the celebrity is to blame is very relevant to how consumers will judge the reaction of the brand.

According to Scholz (2010) companies may dismiss an endorser after negative behaviour to show that they condone such behaviour but also to distance themselves from the affected celebrity. Many brands will have clauses in contracts that deal with possible acts of misbehaviour.

2.6.5 Celebrities impacting purchasing intent

According to Erdogan (1999) a positive reaction from a consumer to a celebrity does not necessarily result in actual behavioural change or purchase intent. Baker and Churchill (1977) argue that this is because advertising works on the cognitive and affective components of attitudes as opposed to behavioural components. There is a gap in the literature examined by this author with regards to whether or not the presence of a celebrity endorser directly motivates consumers to purchase the product/service that they are endorsing.

2.7 The Gender of the Consumer

Klaus and Bailey (2008) claim that generally men and women respond differently to persuasive advertising and that in general women are more responsive than men. Berney-Riddish and Areni (2006) found that females were more receptive and willing to believe the claims of advertisers. Literature in the area of different consumer attitudes based on gender is scant (Klaus and Bailey, 2008, Erdogan, 1999 & Boyd and Shank 2004). However two areas of difference are evident from a study of the relevant literature.

2.7.1 Gender of the Endorser

Petroshius and Schulman (1989) found that the gender of the endorser had little or no impact either on a respondents view neither of an advertisement nor on their intention to purchase. Conversely Boyd and Shank (2004) contend that female respondents react more favourably to female endorsers and male respondents respond more favourably to male endorsers. Boyd and Shank (2004) acknowledge that the difference in opinion related to the trustworthiness of the endorser and found no significant difference in either attractiveness or expertise.

Klaus and Bailey (2008) contend that there is indeed a differential in terms of effect among male and female consumers towards the gender of the endorser. In fact overall the female endorser in the study engendered a more positive reaction than the male endorser from all respondents.

2.7.2 Athlete Endorsers

Jones and Schumann (2000) claim that professional sports are one the major spectacles of modern media culture. Sassen (1984) claims that in the early 1960s only 5% of advertisements contained an athlete endorser and twenty years later that figure was almost 20%. Jones and Schumann (2000) claim that in modern society role models are more likely to be sports stars and that they are likely to be immortalised, by adults and children as a result of their sporting achievements.

Men generally are more receptive to a male athlete endorser than to a female endorser, (Klaus and Bailey, 2008, Jones and Schumann, 2000 & Klaus and Bailey 2004). This is worth noting as Debevec and Kernan (1984) found that attractive female endorsers generated more enhanced attitudes than attractive male models among male respondents. The arena of athlete endorsements appears to buck the trend highlighted above.

Chapter 3

Research Aims and Objectives

Research Aims and Objectives;

As detailed below, a number of research aims emerged from the core research question. Each aim was then translated into a number of specific research objectives which allowed for a methodological framework for achieving these aims to be formulated.

3.1 Primary Research Aim

“To find out how much celebrity endorsers affect consumers purchase intention”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The extent to which consumers are aware of celebrity endorsers
2. The type of celebrity endorser which is most likely to alter a consumers intention in terms of purchasing a product or service
3. The extent by which the age of a consumer impacts their receptiveness to celebrity endorsement

Erdogen (1999) contends that the use celebrity endorsers is not a new phenomenon citing an example from the late 19th Century involving Queen Victoria's association with Cadbury's Cocoa. What has changed, however, is the sums of money are involved in contemporary celebrity product endorsement, and it is against the backdrop of NIKE signing a ten year endorsement deal worth \$250 million with golfing professional Rory McIlroy that this research strives to investigate the extent of the motivational affect, if any, the presence of a celebrity endorser has on people purchasing products or services. Erdogen (1999) highlights the source credibility model but considering, as an example, the fact that all golf product manufacturers use golfers to endorse their products, the model is, in this

instance, clearly adhered to and applies to these companies and the products they are retailing. In the context of this thesis, this primary research aim seeks to provide a greater understanding of what impact these endorsers have in terms of motivating Irish consumers to go out and purchase certain products.

3.2 Secondary Research Aim 1;

“To determine if there are the differences in the purchase behaviour of consumers based on the gender of the consumer”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The extent to which the gender of the consumer appears significant in terms of responsiveness to celebrity endorsement
2. The similarities and contrasts with regard to gender appeal, in terms of the sex and category of celebrity endorser

Klaus and Bailey (2008) highlight a dearth of literature in the area of gender difference in relation to celebrity endorsers, *“the results from published articles have been mixed at best.”* This secondary research aim seeks to investigate, in an Irish context, the extent of the effect, if any, the gender of the consumer has in terms of motivation to purchase. Does the presence of an endorser make men more inclined to purchase than women or vice versa? Boyd and Shank (2004) conducted a study, within an American context on the effects of gender and found that women responded more favourably to women endorsers while males responded better to male endorsers in terms of trustworthiness. However, they also claimed that, overall, men responded more favourably to sports endorsers than women. Men, they claimed, placed a higher level of validity on the endorser than women. However, as Klaus and Bailey (2008) point out there are further areas for investigation left open.

H1; *“The gender of the consumer will have an effect on the purchasing behaviour of respondents as celebrity endorsers have more of an effect on females as opposed to males”*

3.3 Secondary Research Aim 2;

“To assert if level of educational attainment is a determining factor with regard to the receptiveness of consumers to celebrity endorsement”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The correlated/divergent relationship between level of educational attainment and responsiveness to celebrity endorsement
2. The extent to which, if any, educational attainment as a determining factor in consumer receptiveness is gender aligned/divergent
3. The extent to which, if any, educational attainment as a determining factor in consumer receptiveness is age aligned/divergent

This secondary research aim seeks to determine if level of educational attainment plays a role in the susceptibility of the consumer to product endorsement by celebrities. Critics of advertising argue that using celebrity endorsers offers people unrealistic expectations. This question will seek to answer if people who have been exposed to higher levels of education are more or less affected than those who have not. McCutcheon *et al* (2012) examined, within an American context, whether people’s IQ affected their views on celebrity and similarly, this secondary aim and associated objectives attempt to assert whether a consumer’s formal education level is correlated to a celebrity’s ability to motivate them.

H2; *“Educational attainment will have very little effect on a consumers receptiveness to celebrity endorsers”*

3.4 Secondary Research Aim 3;

“To investigate if the negative behaviour of an endorser has a negative effect on consumer purchase intent”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The extent by which the success of product endorsement is affected by the perceived negative actions of celebrities associated with given products/services
2. The gender differential in terms of how negative publicity for a celebrity endorser may affect consumer purchase
3. The age differential in terms of how negative publicity for a celebrity endorser may affect consumer purchase
4. The educational differential in terms of how negative publicity for a celebrity endorser may affect consumer purchase

Miller and Lazniak (2011) claim that empirical evidence has suggested that celebrity endorsers are at their most affective when the attributes of the endorser match those of the product. Following this logic would suggest that once an endorser's behaviour fails to align to these attributes the brand should drop the endorser. The consumer will develop attitudes towards an endorser due to their behaviour, which for the most part will be positive. It is those attitudes that have attracted the brand to choose this endorser. When the endorser's behaviour comes to be viewed as negative then surely the negative attitudes of the consumer towards this person will transfer to the brand? Despite this assertion, the authors outline multiple examples of where this scenario has not occurred. This secondary research aim seeks to assert if the motivation to purchase brands is reduced if an endorser behaves in a manner which is deemed to be inappropriate. Presently, in an Irish context, there is a dearth of empirical information addressing this question.

H3; *“Due to the heightened exposure of consumers to all aspects of celebrity culture the negative behaviour of an endorser will have little effect on the purchase intent of the respondents”*

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Preamble

This research is centred upon one core research question:

- To what extent do celebrity endorsers affect consumer purchasing behaviour?

Upon identifying and delineating the core research question of this thesis, it was necessary to establish a suitable methodological framework within which the primary research component of this project could be operationalized. This chapter outlines the most common primary research strategies and highlights the common methodologies employed in studies relating to celebrity endorsements. The chapter concludes by providing an analysis and justification of the primary research strategies chosen to examine the core research question of this project.

4.2 Chosen Strategy for Primary Data Collection

This section outlines the strategies employed throughout this thesis in the completion of the primary and secondary aims and associated objectives.

4.2.1 Questionnaire Survey

In order to gain an empirical insight into the motivational effect of celebrity endorsers this study aimed to document the perspectives of respondents through a questionnaire. As this study attempts to examine the effect of celebrity endorsers on purchase intent it will be exploratory research as defined by Domegan and Fleming (2007).

As Czala and Blair (1996) have noted it is important to pilot test questionnaires prior to beginning the study and this was done using ten respondents who matched the sampling frame as there were five male and five female. The respondents in the pilot test expressed a clear understanding of the questions. A number of pilot respondents made suggestions regarding lay-out and these were taken into consideration in the final questionnaire.

There will also be an outline as to the true nature of the study given to each respondent prior to the questionnaire being administered. From the four options given by Fink (2000) this will be a self-administered questionnaire. A shopping centre intercept was used over two weekends to gather the necessary data. Domegan and Fleming (2007) outline how this method is efficient in terms of gaining access to a large pool of respondents.

4.2.2 Construction of a Sampling Frame

The sampling will be a combination of a number of options. The researcher will employ non-probability, judgemental and convenience sampling. As has been outlined by Domegan and Fleming (2007) this is due to the restrictions in terms of finance, access and time placed upon the researcher. There will also be an element of quota sampling in that the respondents will be 50% male and 50% female. This is an attempt by the researcher to overcome some of the bias that is inherently present when employing non-probability sampling as outlined by Creswell (2009). The sample size will aim for 120 respondents, 60 male and 60 female. Due to the use of non-probability sampling the researcher acknowledges that the results will not be representative of the population at large and therefore the results will not be generalisable.

4.2.3 Survey Design

Following the identification and analysis of the core issues to be addressed, survey questions were developed to engage the respondents accordingly. Questionnaire design will be a combination of the methods outlined by Bryman and Bell (2003), Domegan and Fleming (2007) & Creswell (2009). The questionnaire will be divided into three main sections, namely A, B and C, similar to Maghnati, Ling and Nasermoaldi (2012). Given the large volume of surveys intended to be retrieved questions were constructed, where possible, to be close ended in style. This ensured a greater consistency of response across the respondents and meant that the resultant quantitative data was easier and faster to tabulate. Close-ended questions are also known to be the most popular among respondents especially in a situation where the process is time sensitive as is the case with Shopping Centre intercepts.

Given that close ended questions tend to limit the breath of responses, multiple choice using Likert scales were used, where necessary, in the questionnaire. Also considering the questionnaire was intended to measure experiential responses some open-ended questions were incorporated. Where appropriate these open-ended questions generally followed dichotomous ones. This is a similar design used in Keng *et al* (2007), Maghnati *et al* (2012), McCutcheon *et al* (2012) and Boyd and Shank (2004).

4.2.4 Distribution of the Survey

Initially a pilot survey was distributed to 10 respondents all of whom were demographically reflective of the proposed respondents. The responses showed that all respondents clearly understood the questioning and found the survey and line of questioning easy to follow. A number of respondents made suggestions regarding the layout of the likert scales in terms of aesthetics and these views were taken into account when progressing to survey distribution stage.

The survey was distributed over two weekends in the Jervis Street shopping centre. An explanation was given to each respondent outlining the purpose of the survey and that their participation was entirely voluntary. It was also outlined that the survey was in part completion of the MSc programme in NCI.

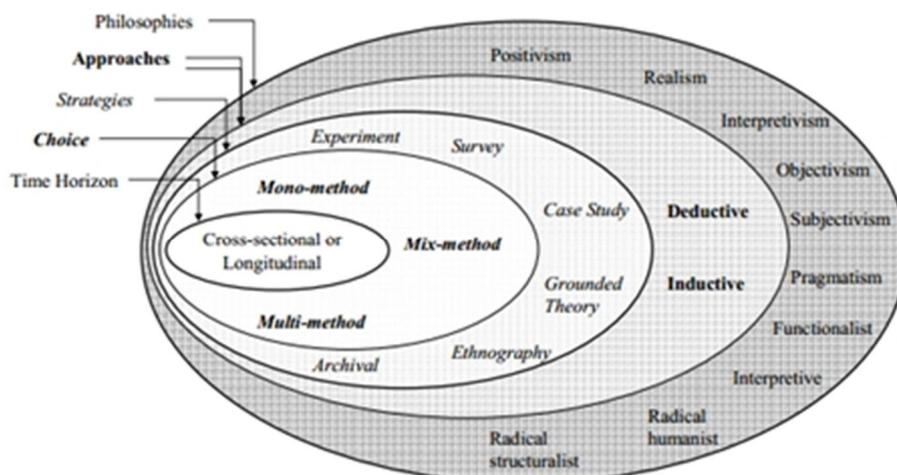


Figure 1.3: The research 'onion' (Source: Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill (2007), *Research Methods for Business Students*, Fourth Edition, pg-102)

Saunders *et al* (2007) gives a diagram outlining the different layers to the research process and likens the process to the different layers of an onion.

4.3 Research Philosophies

Research design involves the coming together of philosophy, strategies of enquiry (quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods) and specific methods (questions, data collection and interpretation) (Creswell 2009).

Positivism is where data and its analysis are value-free and data do not change because they are being observed (Guba et al 2005). Fisher (2007) maintains that positivism holds an accurate and value-free knowledge of all things possible and that human beings and their actions and institutions can be studied as objectively as the natural world.

Post positivist philosophy is one of determination, reductionism and theory verification (Creswell 2009 & Domegan and Fleming 2007). Post positivist challenged the positivist notion that we cannot be 'absolute' in our claims of knowledge when studying human behaviour. Creswell (2009) references Philips and Burbules (2000) when he says that knowledge is conjecture and absolute truth can never be found. This worldview is sometimes also called the scientific method. Followers of this philosophy tend to focus on the causes that affect certain behaviours (Domegan and Fleming 2007).

Social Constructivist philosophy is more seen as a qualitative approach to research design (Creswell 2009). These followers focus more on the subjective meanings of respondent's experiences. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participant's views of the situations being studied (Creswell 2009). This research involves open ended questioning where the respondents are encouraged to provide as much information as possible.

The advocacy and participatory worldview rose to prominence during the 1980's and 1990's as a result of researchers believing that constructivist philosophy

did not go far enough in pushing for an action agenda to help marginalised people (Creswell 2009). Important social issues such as empowerment, domination and alienation are given an action agenda that will improve people's lives. Creswell (2009) contends that this philosophy provides the theoretical lens mentioned in the mixed methods section of this section.

The pragmatic worldview deals predominantly with the mixed methods research method and arises out of situations, actions and consequences (Creswell 2009). Pragmatic philosophers are not committed to any one system of research and will use all available methods in order to deal with the issue. Individual researchers are given a freedom of choice in terms of methods, techniques and procedures based upon their needs (Creswell 2009).

4.4 Research Approach

There are two general approaches to reasoning which may result in the acquisition of new knowledge, namely inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning (Spens and Kovacs, 2006).

4.4.1 Deductive approach

A deductive research approach is most suitable for testing existing theories, not creating new science (Arlbjorn & Halldorsson, 2002). Saunders et al. (2007) has defined that "the deductive approach in which you develop a theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) and design a research strategy to test the hypothesis" (Saunders et al., 2007). In deductive approach, the researcher will collect specific quantitative information i.e. numbers and figures and with the use of logical reasoning will arrive with a conclusion which will either prove or disprove the hypothesis (or hypotheses). The deductive approach also dictates that the researcher is independent of the sampled population to ensure a high level of objectivity is maintained.

4.4.2 Inductive approach

Blumberg et al. (2005) defined the inductive approach as "a qualitative investigation would not use large scale survey to develop conclusions; rather it would be based on observations or deeper and less structured interviews". In this

approach, the researcher develops theory on a purely inductive basis. Fisher (2007) has criticised this approach for not specifying how large the range of observation should be and how often a set of circumstances must be repeated before a conclusion can be deduced.

The researcher has chosen a deductive approach as the study aims to prove or disprove hypothesis drawn from a study of the literature in the area of celebrity endorsers. As this is a predominantly a quantitative study the deductive method is most appropriate. Studies in the area of celebrity endorsement such as Klaus & Bailey (2008) adopted a deductive approach.

4.5 Formulating a Methodological Framework – An Examination of Research Choices

This section examines the various methodological styles which can be employed in the collection of empirical information, critically analysing the benefits and disadvantages of each in terms of which is the most appropriate with regard to the operationalising of the primary research component of this project.

Quantitative, Qualitative & Mixed Methods

The conclusions drawn from the extensive study of the extant literature in the area of celebrity endorsement, Erdogen (1999), Klaus and Bailey (2008) & Baker and Churchill (1977) is that it has an effect on consumers' awareness of brands. However there is a significant gap in the literature in relation to quantifiably showing how much an endorser directly affects the purchasing behaviour of consumers. There is also limited available data within an Irish context.

4.5.1 Qualitative Methods

“We conceive of qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities that seek to understand the situated meaning behind actions and behaviours”, (Sinkovics & Adolfi 2012 page 818). Qualitative research methods are increasingly being recognised by the business and management community as messy and non-linear

(Sinkovics and Adolphi 2012). Qualitative research ranges from in-depth interviews, focus groups, problem-centred interviews and both structured and unstructured observations (Koller 2008). Qualitative research procedures rely on text and image data as opposed to the statistical analysis involved in quantitative research (Creswell 2009). Creswell (2009) argues that for many years researchers had to fight for the legitimacy of qualitative as a research tool but contends that now there is some general consensus as to what needs to be present in order for a qualitative study to be effective. In terms of data collection Creswell (2009) claims that there are four main types of data collection types.

Observations are where the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of subjects at the particular field site. These notes and observations will usually be taken in both a structured and un-structured way usually based upon some pre-decided questions. Furthermore qualitative observers can engage in roles varying from non-participant to complete participant, (Creswell 2009). Benefits of such research include being able to record information as it occurs and it can be useful in exploring unusual topics (Creswell 2009, Domegan and Fleming 2007 & Koller 2008). Limitations however may include an over-reliance on the researcher's skill and the fact that he/she may be seen as intrusive (Domegan and Fleming 2007, Koller 2008 & Creswell 2009).

Interviews involve the researcher conducting interviews with respondents either face to face or over the telephone. It may also involve what is known as focus groups with up to 6-8 people in each group. Technological advancements have now facilitated this to be conducted on-line, (Creswell 2009). One of the benefits of this method is that it allows the researcher to control the line of questioning, participants from different locations can be included and participants can provide historical contexts (Creswell 2009 & Bryman and Bell 2003). Limitations include the fact that the presence of the researcher may induce bias, not all people are equally articulate and some respondents may dominate the conversation thereby restricting the input from other interviewees, (Creswell 2009, Bryman and Bell 2003 & Domegan and Fleming 2007).

During the research process the researcher may collect various documents that are available and helpful to the process. These may include newspaper articles,

official reports, minutes of meetings etc. Some benefits include the fact that it saves the researcher time as the information is already written and it can also be accessed at a convenient time for the researcher. Limitations include the fact that access may be restricted or not possible and the information may be extremely difficult to find.

The use of audio-visual materials is another tool open to researchers (Creswell 2009). These may include photographs, video tapes and film. This is an unobtrusive and creative way to collect such research but it may be difficult to interpret and there is also a risk that the research may induce bias (Creswell 2009). Audio-Visual material was included in Boyd and Shank (2004) where the researchers attempted to measure the effectiveness of celebrity athletes and the effect on the gender of the consumer.

The researcher chose not to pursue the qualitative research path as previous studies employing the qualitative approach have conducted large scale focus groups and a large number of interviews. Such studies include Roy *et al* (2012) where the author's study attempted to predict the effectiveness of endorsers using in-depth interviews with over 500 respondents.

4.5.2 Mixed Methods

Mixed method is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research. Koller (2008) surmises that mixed method research combines both quantitative and qualitative methods and uses different methods of data collection. Creswell (2009) identifies its inception in psychology with the Campbell and Fish (1959) study which used multi-methods to study the validity of psychological traits. The mixing of these methods soon spread and researchers began to argue that mixing the best elements of both would significantly negate the disadvantages of both in isolation (Koller 2008). Creswell (2009) outlines three general strategies within mixed methods which have come to the fore.

Sequential mixed methods involves the researcher seeking to elaborate or expand on the findings of one method using other methods. An example of this would be seeking to expand on findings found from quantitative by using qualitative methods (Domegan and Fleming 2007).

Concurrent mixed methods involve the researcher merging quantitative and qualitative data in order to give a broader understanding of the findings. Both sets of data need not be the same size as this method can also involve embedding one set of smaller with a larger set (Creswell 2009).

Transformative mixed methods involves using a "theoretical lens" as an overall perspective within a design tool that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. Creswell (2009) describes the "theoretical lens" as the overarching theory or perspective that guides the study. Mertens (2003) claims that studies are beginning to emerge employing mixed methods with the lens of gender or race and other basis of diversity.

Creswell (2009) contends that there are three main challenges facing researchers employing mixed methods research. Firstly a researcher needs to collect huge amounts of data. For example if a researcher chooses to conduct both interviews and questionnaires both methods would need to yield large levels of data in order to be justifiable (Koller 2008). Another consideration is the amount of time it takes in order to adequately analyse data sets from both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell 2009). The familiarity of the researcher with using both methods is the final consideration according to Creswell (2009). It requires a lot of experience to be sufficiently adept at one method and adding in a second one places a lot of emphasis on the individual researcher, (Koller 2008). Examples of studies in the area of celebrity endorsers include Ohanian (1990) & Louie and Obemiller (2002).

4.5.3 Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research is research that tests objectives and theories by examining the relationship between variables (Creswell 2009). The results of these relationships can be statistically presented in the report section of a piece of research. Researchers who engage in this type of research are attempting to test hypothesis and assumptions deductively and will build in safeguards against bias etc. The use of quantitative research began in the late 19th and throughout the 20th century and involved those who held a post positivist world view (Payne and Wansink 2011). Creswell (2009) outlines main strategies of inquiry for quantitative researchers.

Survey research provides for quantifiable data regarding trends, attitudes or opinions by studying a sample of that population (Creswell 2009). From this the researcher can make claims or generalised statements about the population (Payne and Wansink 2011). Survey design is a critically important element when considering survey research. Advantages of survey design include cost and also the rapid turnaround of the information. It also allows the researcher, provided the sampling is carried out correctly to make statements about a large population from a small group of respondents (Creswell 2009). Surveys can also be cross-sectional, with data collected at one point in time, or longitudinal where data collected over a longer period of time. Fink (2002) identified four types of data collection methods; Self-administered questionnaires, interviews, structured record reviews and structured observations.

Experimental research tries to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome. Creswell (2009) gives an example of providing a specific treatment to one group and withholding it from another group and assessing the impact. There are two main types of experiments that can be carried out by experimental researchers. Firstly random sampling allows every individual an equal chance of being selected to partake within the experiment. This ensures that the experiment is truly representational of the population (Creswell 2009). Convenience sampling is generally the most common as the researcher may only have access to naturally formed groups, such as friends and family. Examples in the literature of studies using quantitative methods are plenty including McCutcheon, Griffith, Aruguete and Haight (2012), Maghnati, Ling and Nasermoaldi (2012), Till and Shimp (1998)

Quantitative research was employed by this researcher as this study attempted to test hypothesis drawn from studying research in the area of celebrity endorsers. As outlined by Creswell (2009) quantitative research provides quantifiable data regarding trends, attitudes and opinions. This study aims to quantify the extent to which celebrity endorsers affect a consumers purchasing behaviour. Studies that have used quantitative research in this area include Alsmadi (2006) where the author used quantitative methods in an attempt to gain an insight into consumer's brand choice as a result of celebrity endorsers.

4.6 Time Horizons

Research time horizons take into account the period of time that the researcher is collecting primary data to prove/disprove the research hypothesis. Whether the research is to be a snapshot of a particular event taken at a specific time or a representation of events over a given period of time, will dictate the time dimension of a piece of research (Saunders et al., 2007). The two principal time horizons to be considered by the researcher is a cross-sectional study or a longitudinal study. In determining which method to select, the researcher should decide, if the research is to be a 'snapshot' taken at a particular time or if the researcher wishes it to resemble a 'diary' with a representation of events over a period of time (Creswell 2009 & Saunders *et al* 2007).

4.6.1 Cross-Sectional Studies

A cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the variables included in the study, at one particular point in time. The cross-sectional is the most common for research projects as they are usually subject to time constraints (Blumberg et al., 2005). This study is usually carried out once and is a representative 'snapshot' of one point in time. Cross-sectional studies often follow a survey strategy as in the majority of cases the research being undertaken is subjected to limited time constraints.

4.6.2 Longitudinal Studies

In contrast to cross-sectional studies, longitudinal studies are repeated over a period of time and therefore provide the capacity for the researcher to study change and development over a period of time. The main strength of longitudinal research is the capacity that it has to study change and development (Saunders et al., 2007). Bryman & Bell (2007) highlight their usefulness to organisations as they provide data on processes and mechanisms through which change is created and are predominantly used to answer questions.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher has decided to undertake a cross-sectional approach, which will allow the collection of quantitative data using a survey method as this study is subject to strict time constraints

4.7 Data Collection Methods

4.7.1 Sampling

Sampling is about taking a small portion of the larger part and drawing conclusions about the larger part from our experience of the smaller part”, (Domegan and Fleming 2007, pg. 372). Creswell (2009) outlines two methods of sample collection;

4.7.2 Probability Sampling

Probability Sampling is where each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This is also called a systematic or probabilistic sample (Creswell 2009). According to Domegan and Fleiming (2007) in Ireland many national surveys such as the JNLR or political opinion polls employ probability sampling methods in order to be able to make generalizable statements of opinion. Probability sampling excludes the researcher from choosing the respondent population and by doing so removes bias in terms of interviewer selection (Domegan and Fleming 2007, Bryman and Bell 2003 & Creswell 2009).

Creswell (2009) points out that there are four kinds of random sampling; Simple Random Sampling, Systematic Sampling, Stratified Sampling and Cluster Sampling.

Simple Random Sampling allows all sample members the same or equal chance of being selected. Domegan and Fleming (2007) contend that simplicity is SRS's biggest strength and that computer software allows for the easy administration among a relatively small sample population. However a complete and accurate sampling frame is needed in order for SRS to be utilised. Without such a sampling frame SRS cannot be used (Creswell 2009 & Domegan and Fleming 2007).

Systematic Sampling is a variation of Simple Random Sampling where every n th member of the sample population is chosen. Domegan and Fleming (2007) give the example when you have a population of 400 and you want a sample of 40 you divide 400 by 40 which gives you ten, therefore the n th number is ten. One the benefits of Systematic Sampling is when your sampling list is ordered in some way (Creswell 2009 & Bryman and Bell 2003).

Stratified Sampling means that specific characteristics of individuals are represented in the sample and that the sample reflects the true proportion in the population of people with those characteristics,(Fowler 2002). Stratified Sampling allows for variations in the total sample population (Domegan and Fleming 2007).

Cluster Sampling, or multi-stage sampling, is beneficial when it is impossible to obtain a list of the elements composing the population, (Creswell 2009). The population is sub-divided into clusters or groups and Simple Random Selection is applied to the sub-groups as opposed to the whole sample population (Domegan and Fleming 2007). Benefits include saving time and money in carrying out the research. However the results can suffer due to too tightly defined cluster groups (Bryman and Bell 2003).

4.7.3 Non-Probability Sampling

Non-Probability Sampling does not allow for every member of the population having an equal chance of selection. The sample is chosen based on the judgement of the interviewer, accessibility, finance and time frame (Domegan and Fleming 2007, Bryman and Bell 2003 & Creswell 2009). There are four main types of non-probability sampling

Convenience Sampling is where the units for sampling easily present themselves to the interviewer. Respondents are chosen because they are in the right place at the right time (Domegan and Fleming 2007). This sample is the easiest to access, relatively cheap and not hugely constrained by time (Bryman and Bell 2003 & Domegan and Fleming 2007). Some disadvantages include bias and non-representation. Inferences and generalisations cannot be made about the population at large (Bryman and Bell 2003). Common studies are conducted in shopping centres, on the street etc.

Purposive Sampling is where respondents are chosen specifically because they are not representative of the population (Domegan and Fleming 2007). They are generally chosen because they fit some pre-arranged criteria that are specific to the study e.g. a study of Opel Insignia owners.

Judgement Sampling is where the researcher uses their skill and experience to select the respondents themselves. According to Domegan and Fleming (2007)

this method is cheap, easy and time-efficient. However it is based on the premise that the researcher thinks that the study is representative of the population as a whole as opposed to it actually being representative.

Quota Sampling is where the researcher attempts to replicate the population without using Simple Random Sampling. The researcher uses a pre-determined control to select sample respondents e.g. age, gender etc. More than one control can also be used. While quota sampling attempts to select a sample that is representational of the population there is no mechanism to confirm this (Domegan and Fleming 2007 & Creswell 2009). However quota sampling is the most commonly used non-probability sampling used in Ireland for survey work by professional research organisations (Domegan and Fleming 2007).

4.8 Instrumentation

Domegan and Fleming (2007) contend that using questionnaires are beneficial in terms of cost, access, experience and quantity of respondents. It also allows for greater clarity when presenting findings in terms of being able to differentiate between two or more variables. *“Questionnaires can be used to measure customers’ behaviour, their attitudes, awareness and characteristics”*, (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, pg.291). Generally questionnaires are classified in terms of their level of structure.

A highly structured questionnaire will have a collection of formalised questions which will limit the response of the respondent (Domegan and Fleming 2007 & Czala and Blair 1996). Highly structured questionnaires generally have closed ended questions leaving the respondent no room to voice a further opinion. Open ended questions lead to investigative or in-depth analysis (Czala and Blair, 1996). According to Domegan and Fleming (2007) most survey questionnaires are a combination of both. Directness refers to the degree to which the respondents are aware of the true purpose of the survey. Czala and Blair (1996) recommend conducting pre-tests in order to ensure that the questionnaire can be easily interpreted by the respondents. This generally involves giving a number of sample questionnaires to people, getting them to fill them out and then asking them questions about the ease of understanding etc (Czala and Blair 1996). Czala and Blair (1996) also advocate using friends and family to pilot test a survey.

Previous studies, Atkin and Block (1983), Klaus and Bailey (2008) & Boyd and Shank (2004), have used questionnaires in their studies regarding celebrity endorsers, gender and purchaser intent.

4.8.1 Questionnaire Design

Domegan and Fleming (2007) contend that there are three basic types of questions which may be utilised in questionnaires.

Open ended questions are easy to create and will engender a variety of responses from respondents. Respondents less likely to be swayed towards a response that is not reflective of their views and this makes them particularly effective for exploratory research (Domegan and Fleming 2007 & Czala and Blair 1996). Using open ended questions does leave the findings open to interviewer bias (Creswell 2009 and Bryman and Bell 2003).

Multiple-choice questions present the respondents with a list of possible answers to a question. The respondent must pick the answer they feel best represents their view. These types of questions are generally easier for both the respondent and the interviewer (Czala and Blair 1996). They ensure greater ease of data recording and tabulation which eliminates interviewer bias and editing subjectivity (Domegan and Fleming 2007). However with some multiple-choice questions the respondent may not have an option which reflects his/her true opinion and therefore they may answer a question incorrectly thereby affecting the validity of the data (Domegan and Fleming 2007).

Dichotomous questions are ones which extremely limit the responder's options. This is generally only giving the respondent two options e.g. 'yes' or 'no'. Often, however, questions are supplemented with a 'don't know' option. While this may allow a respondent not to take a position on a subject not to include such an option would possibly force respondents to take a position they do not hold (Domegan and Fleming 2007 & Czala and Blair 1996).

Chapter 5

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the main findings from the survey of 100 respondents, 50 of which are male and 50 of which are female. There are five age brackets and each age bracket is represented by 10 male and 10 female respondents. In order to provide structure to the chapter each of the hypotheses outlined in the Research Objectives chapter will be dealt with individually.

5.2 Primary Research Aim

“To find out how much celebrity endorsers affect consumers purchase intention”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The extent to which consumers are aware of celebrity endorsers
2. Whether or not the respondents felt that the presence of a particular celebrity endorser was the determining factor for them purchasing a product/service.
3. The attribute that respondents felt was the most important for a celebrity to possess when endorsing a product

The extent to which respondents are aware of celebrity endorsements was measured by asking the respondents whether they had ever purchased a product/service that was endorsed by a celebrity. As can be seen by the results the overwhelming majority (76%) answered that they had at some stage in their life purchased a product that was endorsed by a celebrity. This shows that the vast majority of respondents are aware of the presence of celebrity endorsement and that it had directly impacted upon their lives.

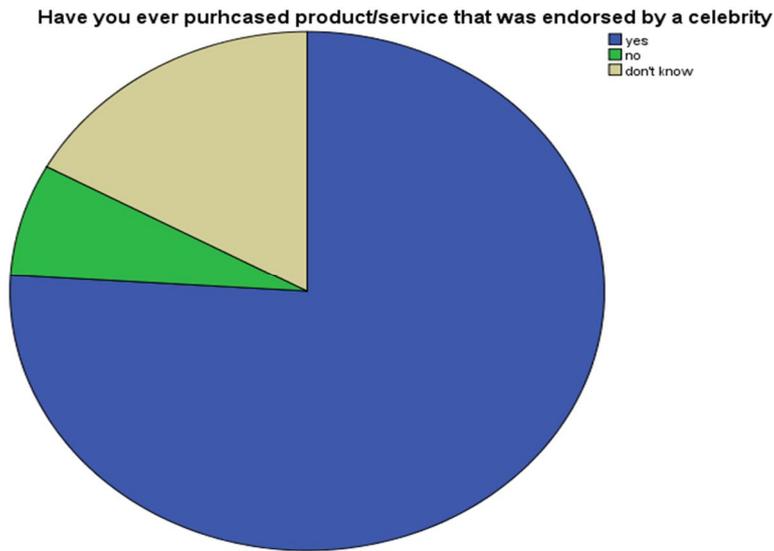


Fig 5.1

Respondents were asked to rate how effective they felt celebrity endorsers were in raising the awareness of an advertising campaign. They were given the option of a 1-5 Likert Scale where 1 was least effective and 5 was very effective.

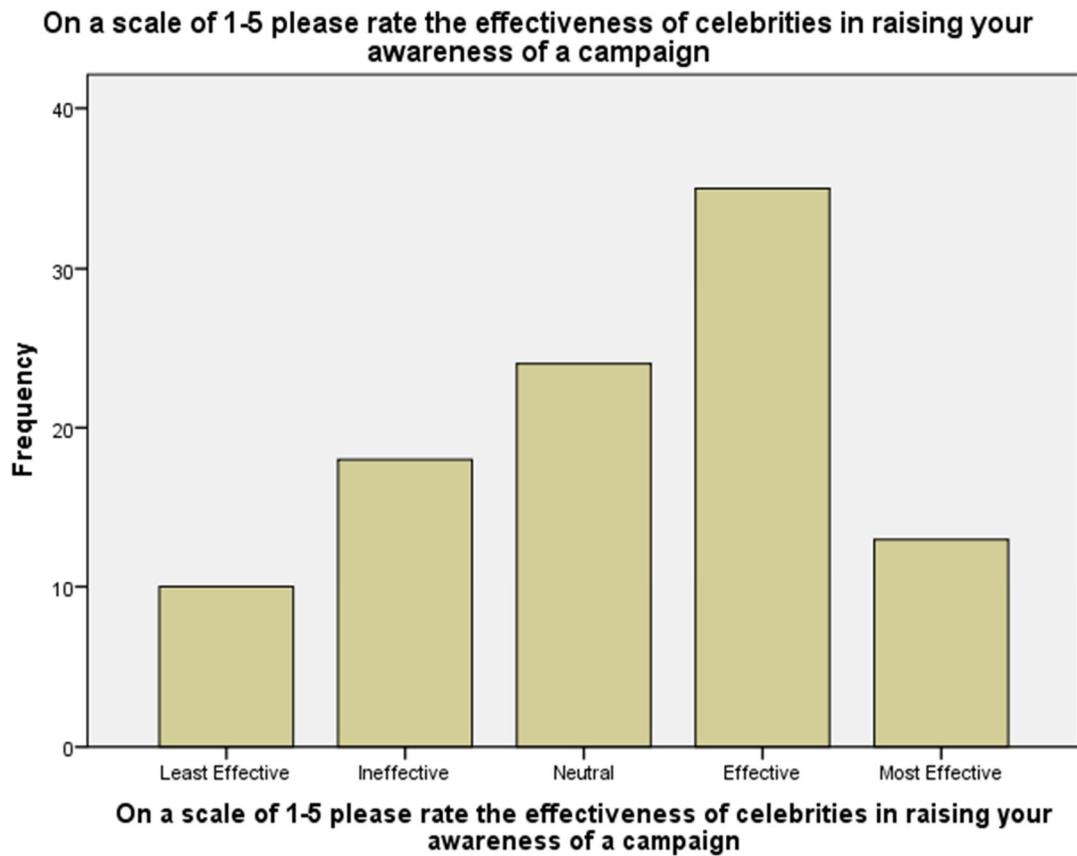


Fig 5.2

As can be seen in *Fig 5.2* 35% of respondents felt that using celebrity endorsers was an effective method of raising the awareness of an advertising campaign. Furthermore 48% of respondents rated using celebrity endorsers as either "effective" or "most effective". This is compared to 28% of respondents who felt it was either "ineffective" or "least effective". It is also worth noting that almost a quarter of respondents had a "neutral" response to the issue. Combining the findings of *Fig 5.1* & *Fig 5.2* shows that overall the respondents in this survey highlighted a high level of awareness with the practise of celebrities endorsing goods/services. This high level of awareness would confirm the comments made by Lord and Putrevu (2009) when they said that one of the benefits of using celebrities to endorse products was that it generated good recall among consumers.

The respondents were asked directly whether or not they ever purchased a product because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity. They were given a simple dichotomous set of possible answers.

Have you ever purchased a product or service because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity

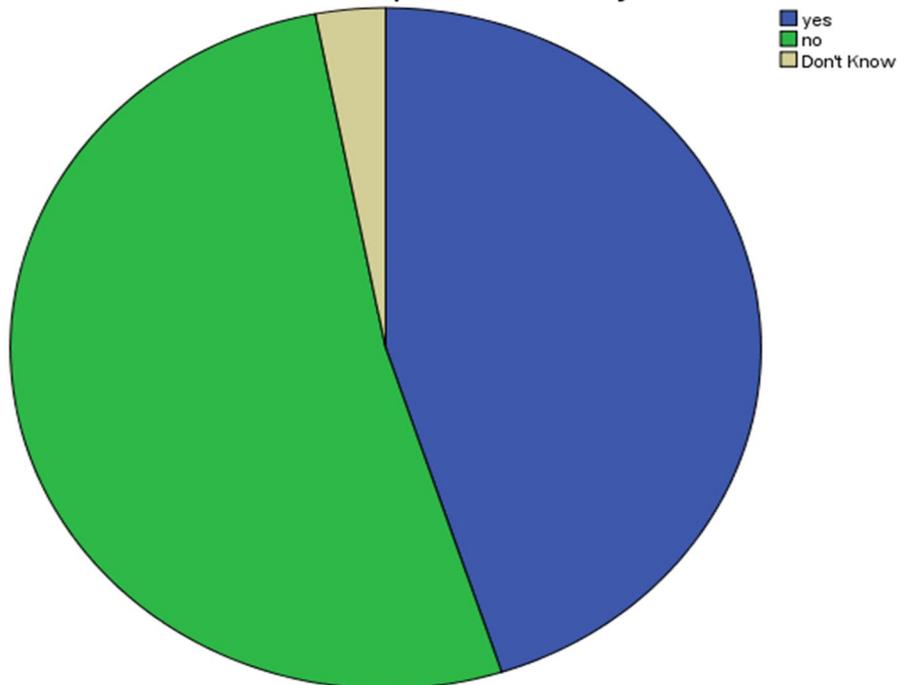


Fig 5.3

The results as to whether or not a respondent had ever purchased a product simply because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity shows no real difference in opinion. 45% of respondents answered yes, 52% answered no with 3% claiming that they didn't know. The intimacy of these results makes it difficult to say definitively whether celebrity endorsers directly affect the purchase intention of consumers. However an examination of those who answered 'yes' reveals that Athletes (51%) was the most influential field. This would confirm the contention of Miller and Lazniak (2011) that athlete endorsers are a mainstay of popular culture and an increasingly important part of the marketing eco-system.

Ohanian (1990 + 1991) identified credibility as the pre-eminent attribute necessary for an endorser to possess in order to generate the greatest opinion change among respondents. McGinnies and Ward (1980) published a study which showed that trustworthiness engendered the greatest opinion change among respondents. In this study respondents were asked what was the most important attribute, they felt, a celebrity should possess when endorsing a product/service. They were given a choice of appearance, popularity, credibility and trustworthiness. *Fig 5.4* highlights the results.

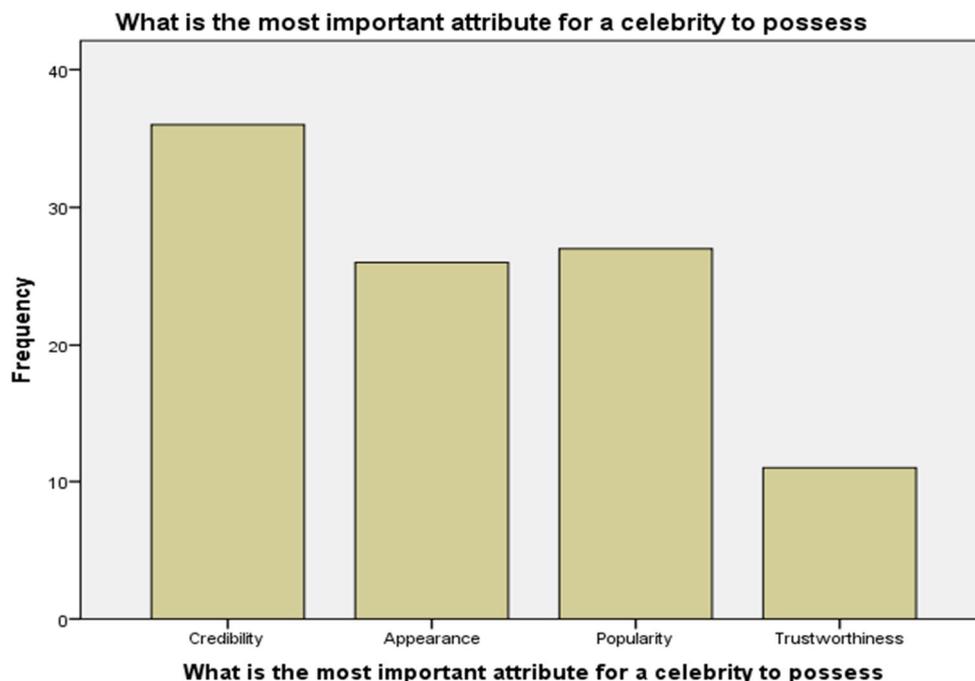


Fig 5.4

The findings highlight that respondents felt that credibility was the most important attribute (37%) for celebrities to possess when endorsing a product. This result is in agreement with Koo *et al* (2012) who claim that credibility is the attribute most likely to alter behaviour among consumers. Trustworthiness scored the lowest in this study with only 11% of respondents ranking it as the most important attribute. This is contrast to McGinnies and Ward (1980) study which contended that trustworthiness was the attribute most likely to engender behavioural change among consumers.

However an argument can be made for combing the results of both appearance and popularity as they are very similar attributes. Both attributes scored very similar results, 26% for appearance and 27% for popularity. These 'aesthetic' attributes, when combined, account for 53% in total. Similarly when the more 'traditional' values (credibility and trustworthiness) are combined the results are 47%. This shows a fairly even spread of opinion between the 'aesthetic' attributes and the 'traditional' ones.

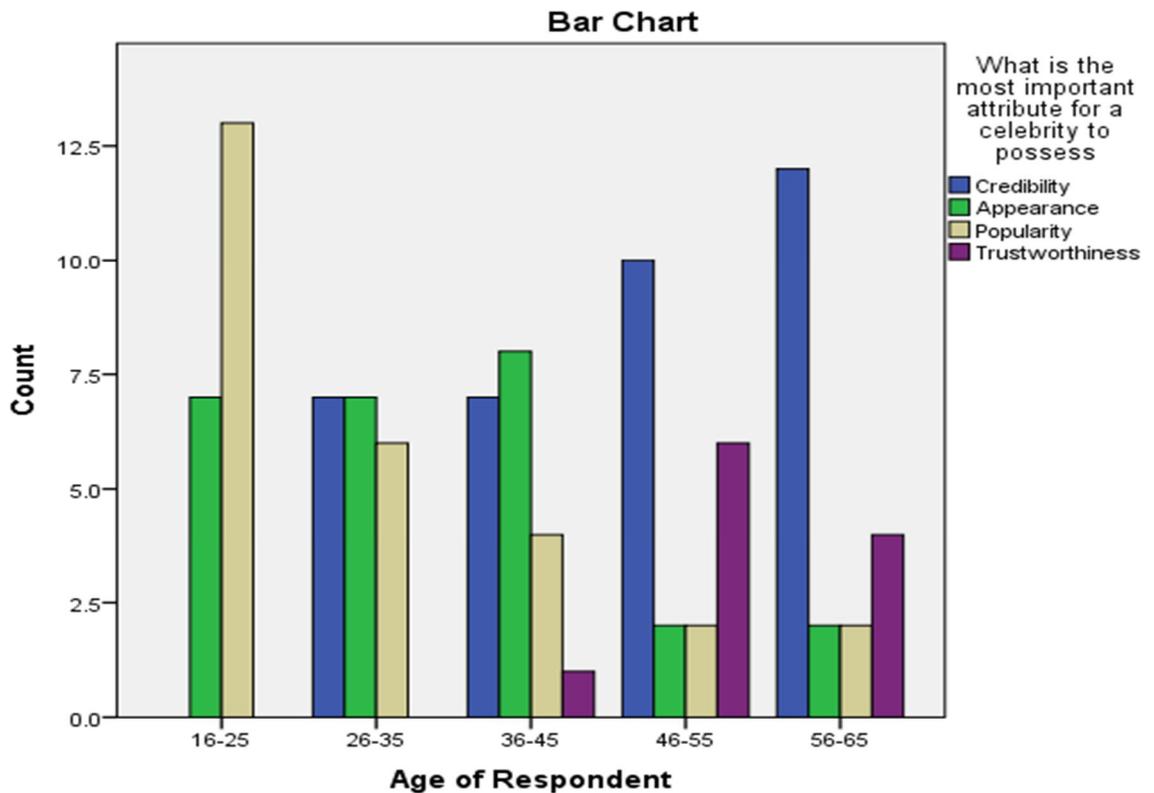
The significant difference in opinion occurs when the ages of the respondents are compared against the attributes. There was a significant differential found when applying a chi-square cross-tabulation; $\chi^2(12) = 46.691$; $p = 0.000$

Fig 5.5

		What is the most important attribute for a celebrity to possess				Total
		Credibility	Appearance	Popularity	Trustworthines s	
Age of Respondent	16-25	0	7	13	0	20
	26-35	7	7	6	0	20
	36-45	7	8	4	1	20
	46-55	10	2	2	6	20
	56-65	12	2	2	4	20
Total		36	26	27	11	100

If the two youngest age groups answers are taken (16-25 & 26-35) and compared against those of the two oldest age groups (46-55 & 56-65) we see a significant difference in opinion. Of the 40 respondents in the two youngest age brackets thirty three (82.5%) of them chose either appearance or popularity while seven (17.5%) respondents chose credibility and no respondent chose trustworthiness. In comparison of the forty respondents in the two oldest age brackets thirty two (80%) chose either credibility or trustworthiness while eight (20%) of respondents chose either appearance or popularity. The middle group showed less of a significant difference with 35% choosing credibility, 5% choosing trustworthiness, 40% choosing appearance and the remaining 20% opting for popularity. These results show that if you group the four options into two common areas there is a less than significant differential among the respondent group as a whole. However when you look closer at the responses of the different age groups you see a trend that as the respondents get older they move from the more aesthetic attributes towards to the more traditional attributes. *Fig 5.6* gives a good visual of this trend. The age differential is a common trend throughout the findings and will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Fig 5.6



5.2.1 Conclusion

The primary research objective was to attempt to quantifiably measure how much a celebrity endorser would affect a consumer's purchase intention. This required the research to examine respondents' awareness of celebrity endorsers, what attributes they felt were important and whether or not the presence of a particular celebrity was ever the determining factor in choosing a product or service. The results showed that among the respondent group there was a high level of awareness around the concept of celebrity endorsers. 76% acknowledged that they had at some stage purchased a product that was endorsed by a celebrity. There was also an overall positive response when the respondents were asked to rate from 1-5 the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in raising the awareness of a campaign with a mean rating of 3.56.

However when the respondents were asked directly if they had ever purchased a product/service simply because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity a slight majority answered no, 52%, while 45% answered yes. There was a significant difference found when the answers regarding the most important attribute were differentiated by the age of the respondent. As the respondents got older they began to rate credibility and trustworthiness higher than the younger respondents who placed a higher value on appearance and popularity.

While acknowledging the short comings, which will be outlined in a subsequent chapter, these findings indicate that celebrity endorsers do have an effect on the purchase intention of consumers. These findings also prove that respondents across all age and gender brackets believe that celebrity endorsers are very effective in raising the awareness levels of advertising campaigns.

5.3 Secondary Research Aim 1;

“To determine if there are the differences in the purchase behaviour of consumers based on the gender of the consumer”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The extent to which the gender of the consumer appears significant in terms of responsiveness to celebrity endorsement
2. The similarities and contrasts with regard to gender appeal, in terms of the sex and category of celebrity endorser

H1; *“The gender of the consumer will have an effect on the purchasing behaviour of respondents as celebrity endorsers have more of an effect on females as opposed to males”*

In order to examine the extent to which the gender of the consumer has an effect on the purchasing behaviour of consumers the results of two questions will be highlighted here. Firstly whether or not there is any significant difference on how effective the respondent felt celebrity endorsements are in terms of raising awareness of campaigns. Also whether there was any difference between males and females regarding whether or not they ever purchased a product because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity. The results will also highlight whether or not there was any significant difference about what type of celebrity is most likely to change opinion and the gender of the most influential celebrity over the last ten years.

		Have you ever purchased product/service that was endorsed by a celebrity			Total
		yes	no	don't know	
Gender of Respondent	male	33	5	12	50
	Female	43	2	5	50
Total		76	7	17	100

Fig 5.7

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.484 ^a	2	.064
Likelihood Ratio	5.618	2	.060
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.917	1	.027
N of Valid Cases	100		

Fig 5.8

$X(2) = 5.484; p=0.64$

The results outlined in **Fig 5.7** and **Fig 5.8** show that there was 100 valid responses to the question of whether or not the respondent had ever purchased a product that was endorsed by a celebrity. The result of **p=0.64** shows that while there was a gender difference it was not statistically significant. In percentage terms 66% of male respondents claimed that they had purchased a product that was endorsed while 86% of females claimed to have knowingly done so. Furthermore when asked to rate, on a scale of 1-5 the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in raising awareness there was very little statistical difference found. The results from an independent t-test were; **t(98) = -.756; p=.451**. The mean rating for females was 3.32 while for male respondents it was 3.11 which highlights that while there was a differential it was not statistically significant.

When asked what category of celebrity was most likely to have an impact on their purchasing of a product or service there was a significant difference found.

Fig 5.9

	What category of Celebrity is most likely to have an impact on your purchasing					Total	
	Athlete	Musician	T.V / Movie Star	Other	None		
Gender of Respondent	male	19	7	8	0	16	50
	Female	3	11	21	2	13	50
Total		22	18	29	2	29	100

As can be seen in **Fig 5.9** the majority of male respondents (28%) reported that an athlete was the category of celebrity most likely to impact their purchasing behaviour as opposed to only 6% of female respondents. 42% of female respondents chose T.V/Movie stars as the category most likely to have an impact on their purchasing as opposed to 16% of males. The results from running a Pearson Chi-Square highlights the statistical difference; $\chi^2(4) = 20.663$; $p = .000$.

A further area of difference is with regard to the gender of the most influential celebrity over the last ten years. 92% of males voted for a male celebrity whereas 68% of females voted for a female celebrity, $\chi^2(1) = 38.200$; $p = .000$. However it should also be pointed out that overall 62% of respondents voted for a male celebrity as opposed to 38% who voted for a female celebrity.

5.3.2 Conclusion

In conclusion **H1** argued that there would be a significant difference between male and female respondents with regard to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers. It also contended that female respondents would be more affected by celebrity endorsers than male respondents. The results from this study do not support this hypothesis as the findings from the two most relevant questions showed no statistical difference, $P = 0.64$ and $P = 0.451$. Therefore it can be said that from these findings there was no significant difference between males and females regarding the effect of celebrity endorsers on purchase intention. However there was significant difference regarding the category of celebrity and the gender of the celebrity which may have implications for future endorsements.

5.4 Secondary Research Aim 2;

“To assert if level of educational attainment is a determining factor with regard to the receptiveness of consumers to celebrity endorsement”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The correlated/divergent relationship between level of educational attainment and responsiveness to celebrity endorsement
2. The extent to which, if any, educational attainment as a determining factor in consumer receptiveness is gender aligned/divergent
3. The extent to which, if any, educational attainment as a determining factor in consumer receptiveness is age aligned/divergent

H2 “Educational attainment will have no statistical implication on a consumer’s receptiveness to celebrity endorsers”

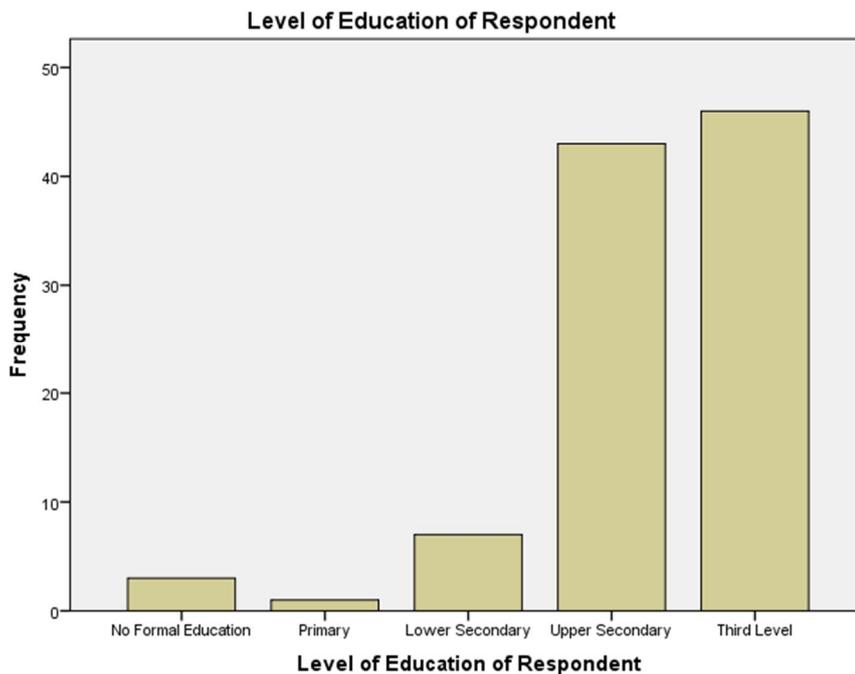


Fig 5.10

As can be seen from **Fig 5.10** the vast majority of the respondents (89%) had either an Upper Secondary or Third Level qualification. There was no statistical difference regarding educational attainment and whether or not a respondent had ever purchased a product because of a particular endorser, $\chi^2(8) = 3.802 ; p = .875$. Similarly there was no statistical difference when the level of education was taken against the rating of the effectiveness of endorsers in raising awareness levels, $t(2) = .500; p = .667$. The expectation was that there would be no statistical difference

among the respondents with regards to educational attainment and purchase intention. The results highlighted above support this hypothesis.

5.5 Secondary Research Aim 3;

“To investigate if the negative behaviour of an endorser has a negative effect on consumer purchase intent”

Research Objective

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to examine:

1. The extent by which the success of product endorsement is affected by the perceived negative actions of celebrities associated with given products/services
2. The gender differential in terms of how negative publicity for a celebrity endorser may affect consumer purchase
3. The age differential in terms of how negative publicity for a celebrity endorser may affect consumer purchase
4. The educational differential in terms of how negative publicity for a celebrity endorser may affect consumer purchase

H3 *“Due to the heightened exposure of consumers to all aspects of celebrity culture the negative behaviour of an endorser will not highlight any statistically significant effect on the purchase intent of the respondents”*

In order to establish whether or not the negative behaviour of celebrities will have a statistically significant effect on the purchase intention of consumers the results from section C of the survey will be outlined. Question 9 asked respondents whether or not a celebrity being associated with negative publicity would affect their inclination to buy a product or service being endorsed by them. **Fig 5.11** shows the results from the respondent's answers.

would a celebrity being associated with negative publicity affect your purchasing of their endorsed product

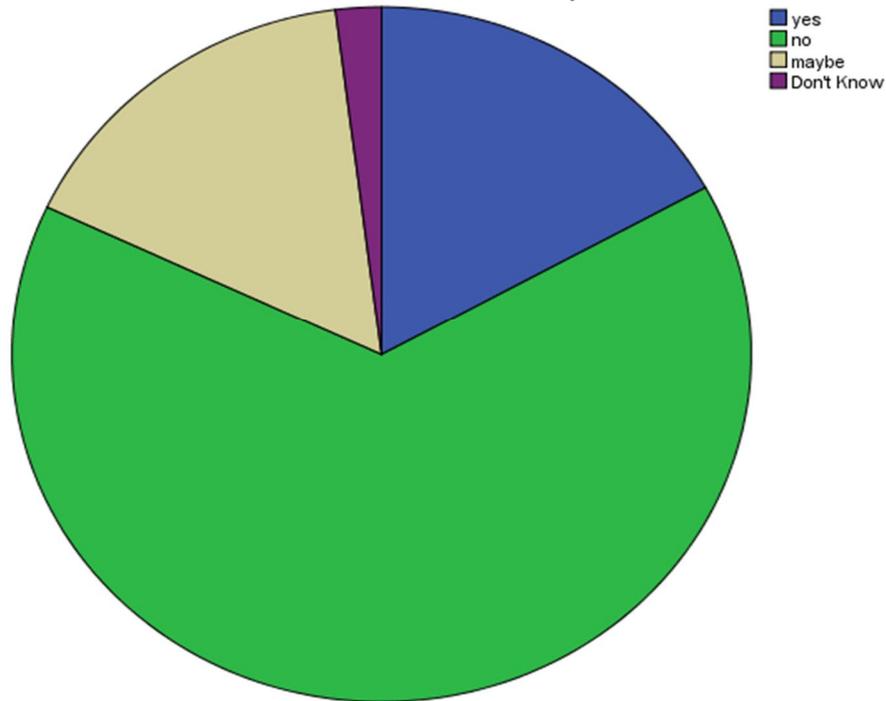


Fig 5.11

Overall 65% of respondents claimed that an endorser being involved in negative behaviour would not affect their inclination to purchase the product being endorsed by that celebrity. There is no statistically significant gender differential with regard to this question either as a Pearson Chi-Square result shows $X(3) = 3.063 ; p = .382$. This is also the case when examining whether there is a differential regarding educational attainment, $X(3) = 10.986 ; p = .530$.

Further evidence to support **H3** comes when the results are highlighted for question 11 which asks whether a respondent has ever not purchased a product or service due to that endorser being associated with negative publicity.

Has a celebrity ever been involved in behaviour after which you refused to purchase their product

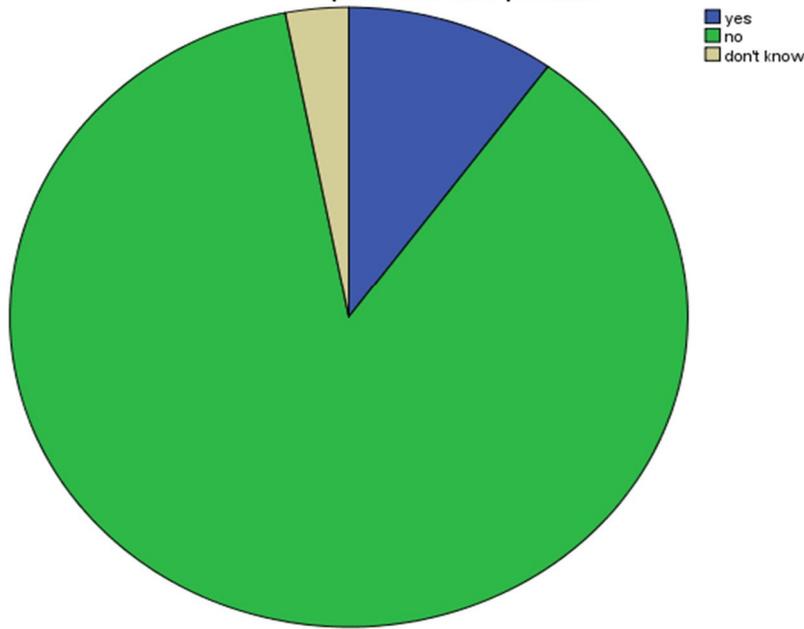


Fig 5.12

An overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) reported that they had never refused to purchase a product or service as a result of an endorser being associated with negative publicity. This is also consistent when looking at a gender or an educational attainment differential with $p = .357$ educational differential and $p = .842$ for gender. Both results highlight no significant statistical difference. Interestingly of the 10 respondents who claimed that they had refused to purchase products after negative publicity 7 of them gave the example of Michael Jackson and child abuse allegations.

Whether or not respondents were aware of celebrities being associated with negative attention was asked in question 8.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	58	58.0	58.0	58.0
no	37	37.0	37.0	95.0
Valid Don't Know	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
4.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Fig 5.13

As *Fig 5.13* highlights the majority of respondents are aware of celebrities that have been associated with negative publicity. This shows that, even though awareness is high, the consumer doesn't feel strongly enough about it to retaliate against the particular product or service. Significantly, of the respondents who said they were aware of negative publicity 80.7% named an athlete endorser with over 50% of those naming Tiger Woods specifically. The findings of the survey outlined above support **H3** which contends that the negative behaviour of a celebrity will have no significant effect on the purchase intent of consumers. There is also no statistical difference regarding gender or level of educational attainment.

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to try and explore how effective celebrity endorsers are in altering the purchase intent of consumers. The self-administered questionnaire resulted in 100 respondents, fifty of whom were male and fifty of whom were female. There was a further quota placed on the study by ensuring that each of the five age brackets had an equal gender representation, ten male and ten female in each. The primary research objective and each of the three sub-hypothesis will be dealt with in this chapter. There will also be a section outlining some additional findings of interest that were as well as the practical implications for marketing managers using celebrity endorsement as a promotional strategy. This chapter will conclude by highlighting some of the limitations of this study.

6.2 Primary Research Aim

The primary research aim was to establish how much of an effect celebrity endorsements have on the purchase intent of consumers. The results showed that overall respondents showed a high level of awareness of celebrity endorsements. This high level of recall and awareness would show agreement with Erdogen (1999) and Lord and Petruvu (2009) who claimed that using endorsers was effective because it led to high levels of recall among consumers. The mean score of 3.23/5 highlights that overall respondents felt that celebrity endorsers are an effective tool to raise the awareness of an advertising campaign.

When questioned whether or not they had ever purchased a product simply because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity the majority of respondents answered negatively. This would indicate that in terms of being the primary motivator for people purchasing goods or services celebrity endorsers are not effective. However the results were not overwhelming and a large proportion (45%) said they had purchased a product because of a particular endorser. The significant variable in whether or not celebrity endorsers directly influence purchase intent is the age of the respondent. 80% of 16-25 year olds claimed that they had purchased a

product or service. This is in comparison to only 15% of 56-65 year olds. In fact the percentage number steadily decreases when charted along the age profiles, (16-25; **80%**, 26-35; **50%**, 36-45; **45%**, 46-55; **35%**, 56-65; **15%**).

Also for the 45 respondents who said they had purchased a product because of a celebrity an athlete was the most frequent category of celebrity chosen. This would seem to confirm Miller and Lazniak (2011) assertions that using an athlete endorser creates greater awareness and purchase intent among consumers. It must be acknowledged however that the celebrity world is of greater significance for the younger population and that most of the celebrity news is aimed at this younger demographic. The age variance also continued when respondents were asked what attribute they felt was the most important for a celebrity to possess. The fact that credibility was the most popular attribute (37%) would agree with Koo *et al* (2012) claim that credibility was the attribute most likely to alter purchase behaviour.

The main implication for advertising practitioners is to appreciate that while celebrity endorsers do have an effect on consumers' intent to purchase it is dependent on variables. The results of this limited study highlight that the presence of a celebrity endorser seems far more likely to affect younger consumers than older ones. Furthermore the actual endorser is more likely to alter behaviour for young people if they are perceived to be attractive and popular. For older consumers credibility and trustworthiness are the most important attributes for the endorser to possess.

6.3 Sub Objectives and Hypothesis

This research also attempted to find out whether or not there would be any difference in the opinion of respondents based upon their gender or level of education. It also attempted to find out if an endorser being associated with negative behaviour would affect the respondent's inclination to purchase the product or service being endorsed.

H1 contends that there will be a difference between male and female respondents regarding the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers. The results showed, however, that in terms of the direct question of whether a respondent had ever purchased a product because of an endorser there was no statistically significant difference. It must be

taken into account, however, that in order to garner a deeper understanding further questioning is needed and it is difficult to draw gender conclusions on the basis of a single question. The results do concur with the study carried out by Boyd and Shank (2004) where it was found that females responded more favourably to female endorsers and males responded more favourably to male endorsers. The Boyd and Shank (2004) study also found that male consumers are more affected by athletes than by any other category of celebrity. This study also makes the same assertion after males claimed that athletes were more likely change their opinion and females claimed that a T.V/Movie star was the category most likely to influence them. The practical implications from these results may be that an advertising practitioner will need to be mindful of what category of celebrity to choose when targeting men and women. Similarly the gender of the actual endorser may also affect how they are received.

The degree to which the educational attainment of the respondent affected the purchase inclination was the subject of **H2**. It was contended that the level of educational attainment would have no impact on the purchase intent. This was proven to be true as no statistically significant difference could be found. However it should be noted that 89% of respondents had either attained upper secondary or third level qualifications. Therefore it is quite difficult to measure respondents with high levels of attainment against respondents with low levels of educational attainment. Therefore while **H2** was supported by the results found it should be qualified somewhat by the small number of respondents with low levels of education. Due to the small number it also difficult to outline practical implications for advertisers.

H3 was concerned with the negative behaviour of celebrities and whether or not that would affect the purchase intention of the respondent. The contention was that a celebrity being associated with negative publicity would not adversely affect the intention of the respondents. The results from the survey confirm the hypothesis and disagree with the contention of Louie and Obermiller (2002) that the negative behaviour of a celebrity will adversely affect the purchase intention of the consumer. Furthermore the fact that there was high awareness of celebrity misbehaviours shows the even though consumers are aware of negative attention it doesn't play a significant part in their decision making process. The main practical implication for advertisers is that while endorser misbehaviour is never a positive thing it is certainly

not fatal. However it is worth noting that of the ten respondents who said they had not purchased a product because of misbehaviour seven cited Michael Jackson and the child abuse charges. It is surprising that this negative attention was still fresh in the minds of respondents despite the long period of time since the accusations were made. While the accused offence probably holds particular resonance in Ireland it is still surprising that this is what the respondents felt most strongly about.

6.3 Other Findings of Note

While the primary research objective, three sub-objectives and hypothesis were dealt with, the results also revealed some other findings of note. The variable which resulted in the most statistical difference was the age of the respondent. When asked directly if they had ever purchased a product because it had been endorsed by a celebrity significant statistical difference was highlighted.

Fig 6.1

		Have you ever purchased a product or service because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity			Total
		yes	no	Don't Know	
Age of Respondent	16-25	16	4	0	20
	26-35	10	10	0	20
	36-45	9	11	0	20
	46-55	7	12	1	20
	56-65	3	15	2	20
Total		45	52	3	100

As can be seen in **Fig 6.1** the number of respondents agreeing with the question gradually decreases as the respondent gets older. In direct contrast the number of respondents who have never purchased a product because of an endorsement increases as the respondents got older. Similarly when asked to rate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in raising the awareness of an advertising campaign the younger respondents consistently rate it higher than older respondents. Another area that showed difference, while not statistically significant, was whether a celebrity's misbehaviour would negatively affect a respondent's inclination to purchase the endorsed product. A Pearson Chi-Square result of $X^2(2) = 20.446$; $p =$

.059 shows that there was a big differential, though not resulting in <0.05 which is classified as statistically significant.

The practical implications as a result of these findings are significant for advertisers. From these results it's clear that using celebrity endorsers is most effective when trying to communicate to younger consumers. This is hardly surprising as the culture of celebrity is, generally, more prevalent among the younger members of society. What is surprising is how important the culture of celebrity seems to be among this younger cohort.

6.4 Limitations of Study

Aside from the limitations in terms of time, experience and finance inherent with part-time study the following is an outline of the areas of limitation with this study;

- Quantitative research does not allow for a deep understanding of the underlying reasons for how endorsers motivate consumers.
- The sample size of 100, while significant, all the respondents were administered the questionnaire in Dublin City Centre resulting in geographic bias
- The use of non-probability sampling does not allow for generalizable findings.
- The low number of respondents with low levels of educational attainment doesn't allow for an extensive comparative analysis with those of high levels of educational attainment.
- Without the presence of some qualitative methods the opportunity to attempt to gain a somewhat deeper understanding of the reasoning for the views expressed was not available.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This research was carried out as part of an MSc in Marketing part-time. The respondents were given a self-administered questionnaire using shopping centre intercepts which resulted in 100 questionnaires being completed. There was one overall research aim and three sub-hypothesis that were to be explored.

7.2 Primary Aim

The primary aim of trying to establish to what extent celebrity endorsers affect the purchase intent of consumers was examined by looking at three main areas. Firstly what was consumers' level of awareness of celebrities that endorse products? Secondly what category of celebrity was most likely to alter purchase intent? Finally the research examined whether or not respondents had ever purchased a product solely because of the particular celebrity endorsing them. The results clearly show that the respondents showed high levels of awareness of celebrity endorsements and the vast majority admitted to knowingly purchasing products that were endorsed. This was true across all categories of age, gender and level of education. Overall the category termed 'Athlete' proved overall the most popular choice among respondents. However when these results were broken down by gender it showed that the majority of males voted for athletes while females preferred category was T.V/Movie Star. The results as to whether or not someone had bought a product/service because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity were reasonably even, 52% No 45% Yes and 3% don't know. Overall the author is confident that the practise of celebrity endorsements does have an effect on consumers although it is highly dependent upon the age of the consumer. The results outlined in Chapter 5 highlight that the older the respondent the less influence endorsers have over their purchase intent.

7.3 Sub-Hypothesis

There were three sub-hypothesis to be examined by this research. The author wanted to see if there would be any difference in purchase intent among consumers

of different gender. The second sub-objective was to establish whether different levels of educational attainment would result in different levels of purchase intent among respondents. Finally the research attempted to find out if a celebrity being associated with negative publicity would negatively affect the respondent's likelihood to purchase the product being endorsed by them.

In terms of the overall question of whether or not a consumer had ever purchased a product because of a particular endorser there was a slight difference based on gender, though not statistically significant. Where significant difference occurred was in what was the most likely to cause a change in purchase intent. For females the results showed that the category of T.V/Movie Star was the most likely to alter intent whereas for males athletes was the most likely category. From these results the author can conclude that celebrities are more likely to alter the purchase intent of females and that T.V or Movie stars are by far the most likely category to do so. Furthermore the results also show that females are far more likely to be influenced by a female endorser and males are more likely to be influenced by male endorsers.

There was little or no statistically significant difference based on the educational attainment of the respondent. The results are somewhat qualified however as 89% of respondents had either attained an upper secondary or third level education. This meant that it was impossible to garner enough respondents from the lower groups to compare. From the small number of respondents however no significant difference was found among respondents with varying levels of education.

Finally the results show that overall consumers are not likely to alter their purchase even after a celebrity has been associated with negative media attention. The results show that a large proportion of respondents were aware and could name individual celebrities that had recently been guilty of negative behaviour. Interestingly seven out of ten respondents who had claimed not to have purchased an endorsed product/service named Michael Jackson and the child abuse allegations. This is unusual given the length of time since those allegations were made and also that the celebrity is subsequently deceased. This highlights that there appears to be certain behaviours that are so egregious that they stay in the conscious of consumers.

7.4 Areas for Future Research

- A subsequent set of focus groups and interviews should be carried out in an attempt to give greater detail to the themes highlighted from this survey.
- A specific emphasis should be placed on the significant difference caused by age in the findings. Greater clarity is needed to see if the older respondents whose views are generally negative to endorsers fully comprehend the intended meaning of celebrity. There may also be reluctance among this older age group to admit to being affected by celebrities as they view that "celebrities are only for younger people". The difference caused by age deserves deeper investigation.
- The type of behaviour that consumers deem "a point of no return" is worth further study as it could be very beneficial to marketing practitioners. From these results it shows that Michael Jackson's child abuse allegations held particular resonance with respondents. Whether or not an expanded study could categorise negative behaviour in terms of severity would be a welcome addition to the pool of research.
- A further study would be recommended to be undertaken from an international perspective to see if there is a cross-cultural similarity with the findings.

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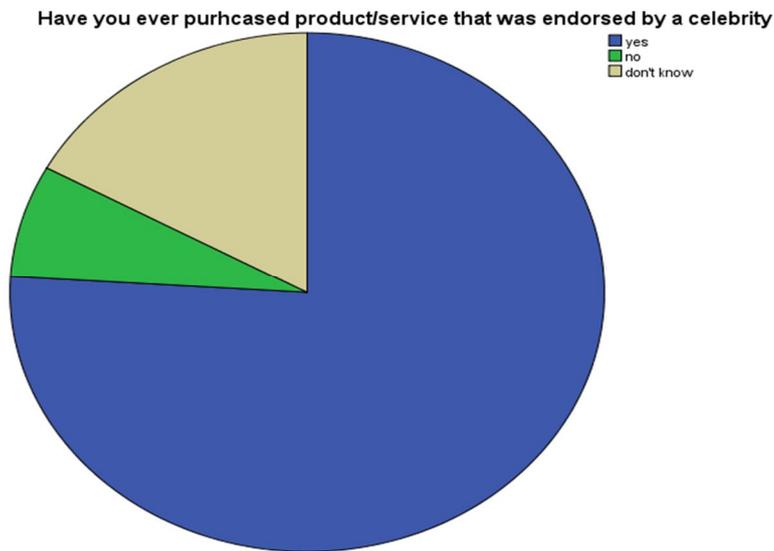
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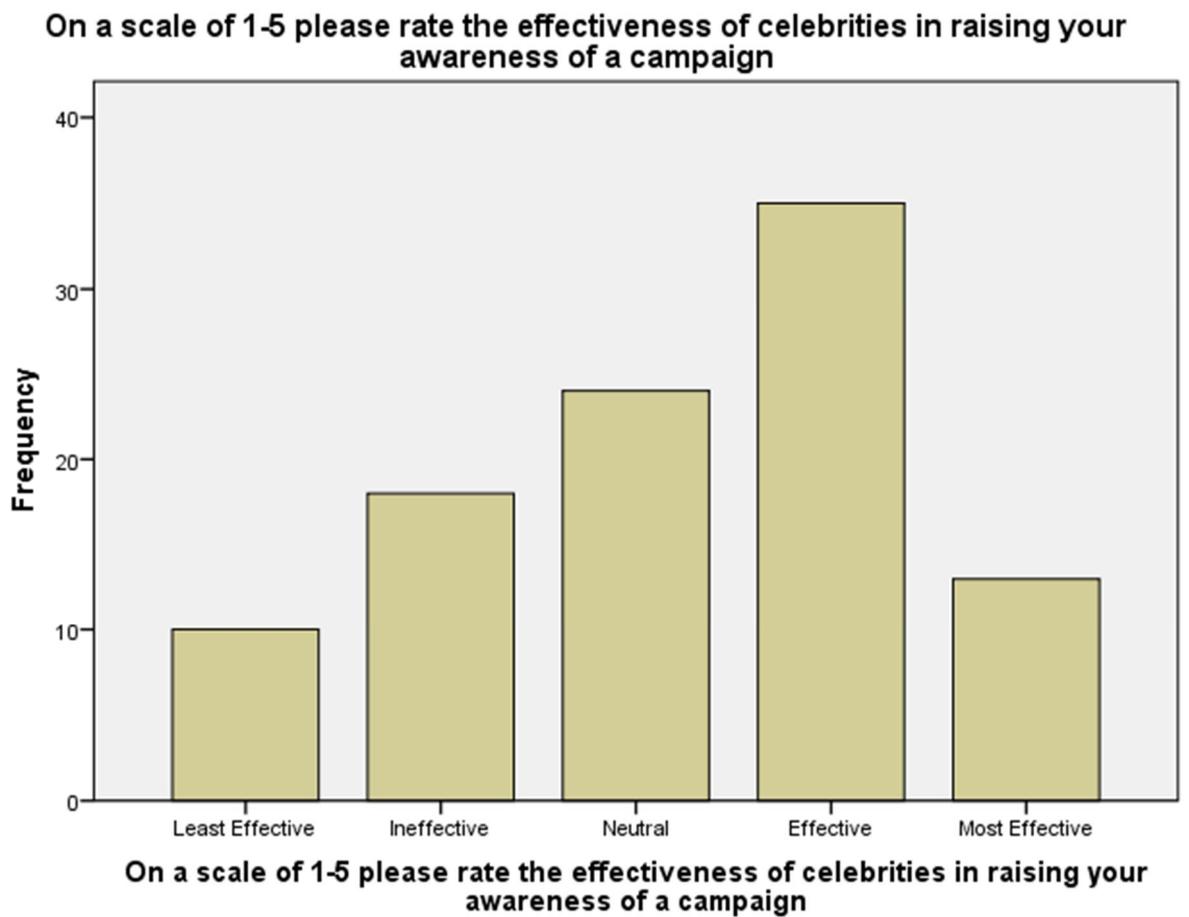
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Appendices

Appendix 1

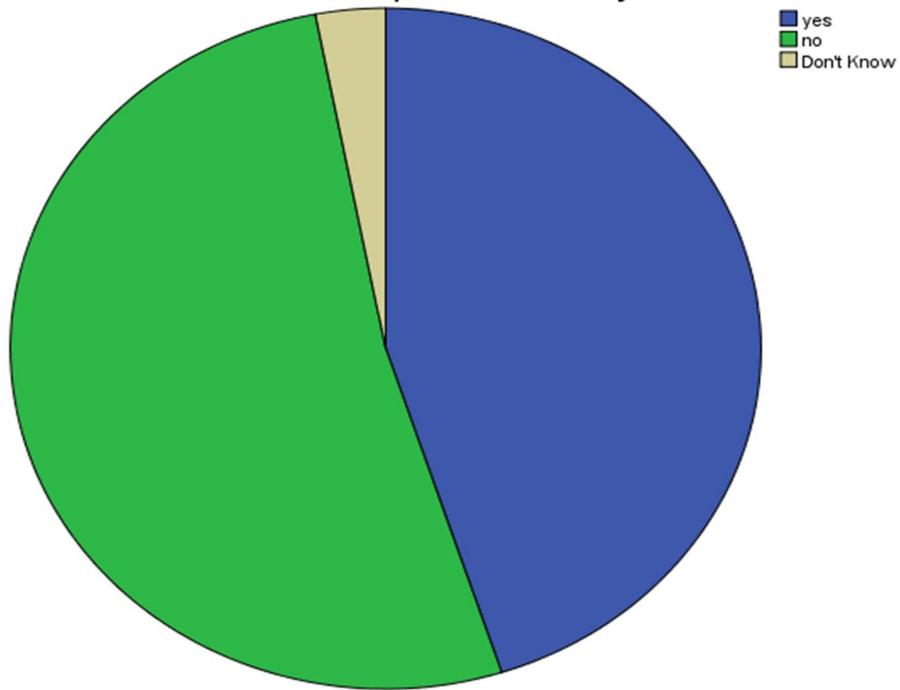


Appendix 2



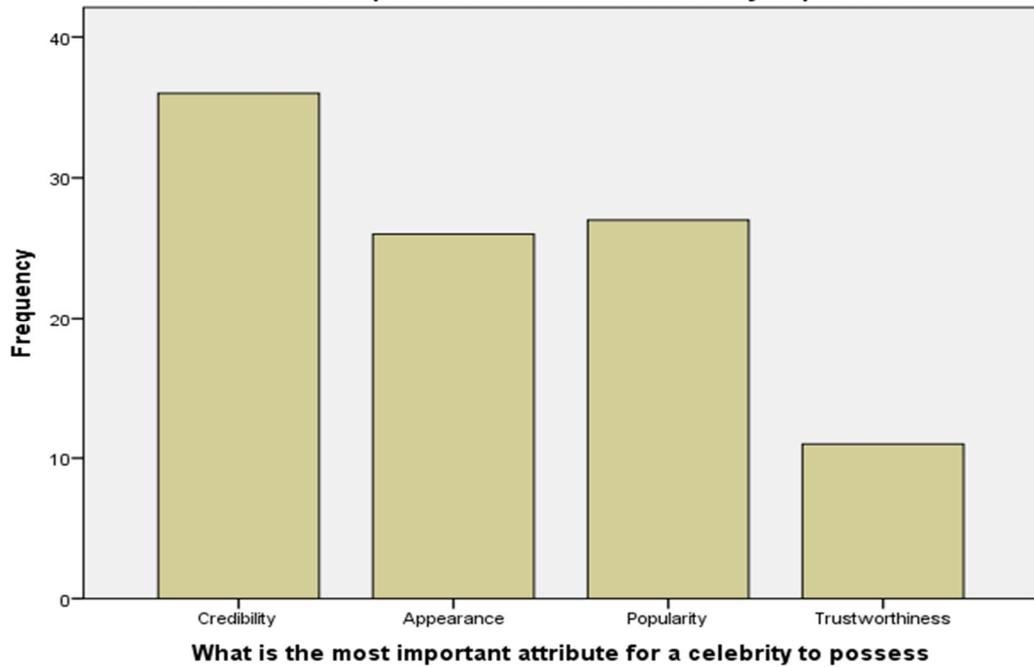
Appendix 3

Have you ever purchased a product or service because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity



Appendix 4

What is the most important attribute for a celebrity to possess

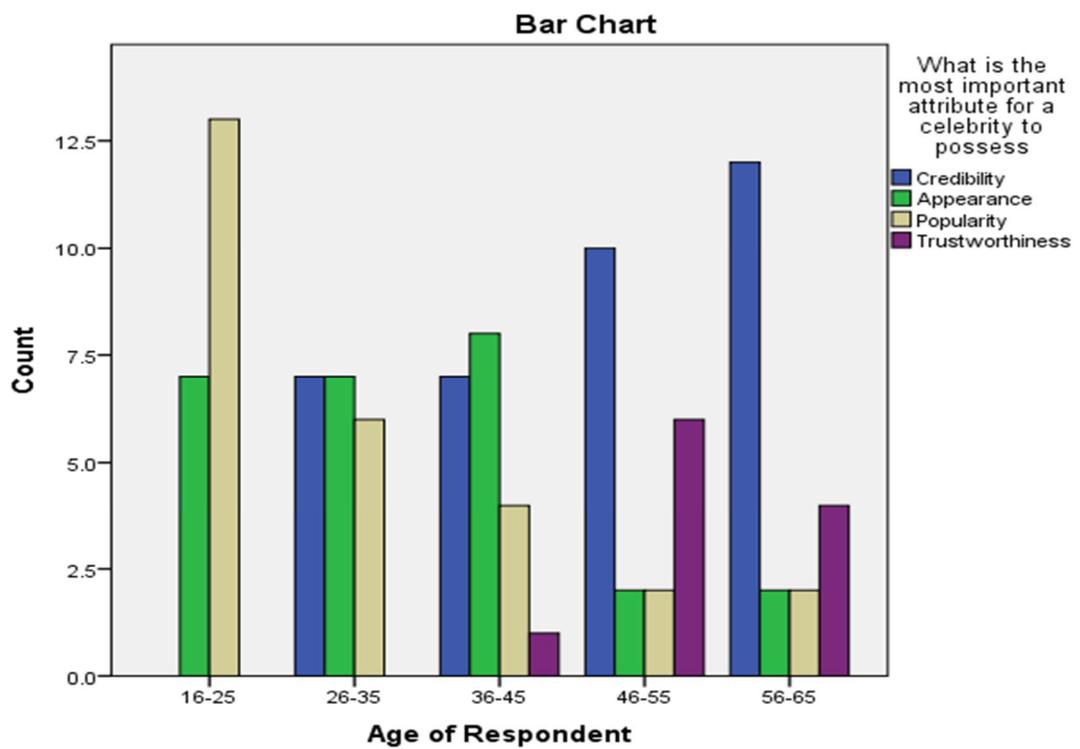


Appendix 5

Fig 5.5

	What is the most important attribute for a celebrity to possess				Total
	Credibility	Appearance	Popularity	Trustworthiness	
16-25	0	7	13	0	20
26-35	7	7	6	0	20
36-45	7	8	4	1	20
46-55	10	2	2	6	20
56-65	12	2	2	4	20
Total	36	26	27	11	100

Appendix 6



Appendix 7

		Have you ever purchased product/service that was endorsed by a celebrity			Total
		yes	no	don't know	
Gender of Respondent	male	33	5	12	50
	Female	43	2	5	50
Total		76	7	17	100

Appendix 8

Chi-Square Tests

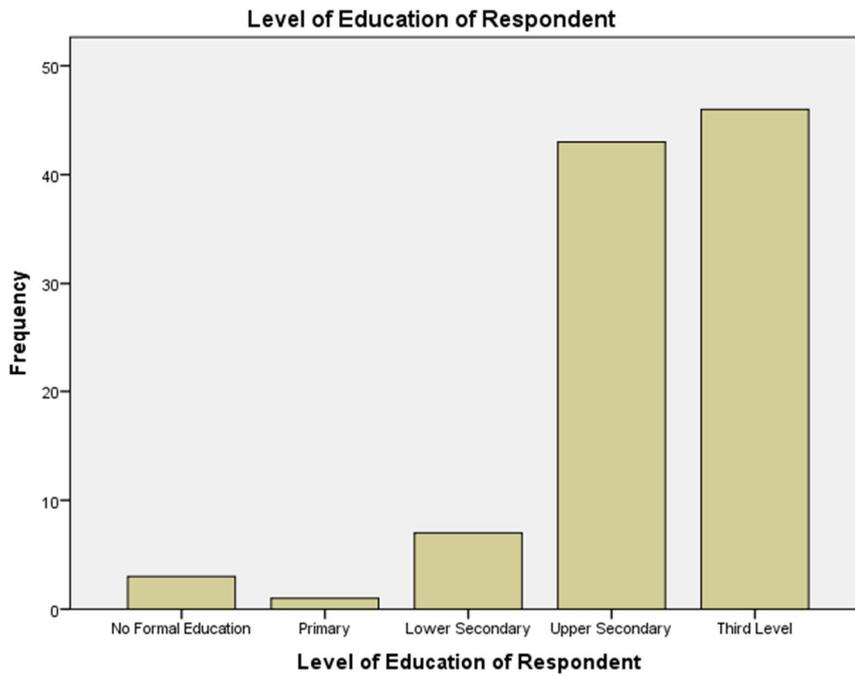
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.484 ^a	2	.064
Likelihood Ratio	5.618	2	.060
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.917	1	.027
N of Valid Cases	100		

Appendix 9

Fig 5.9

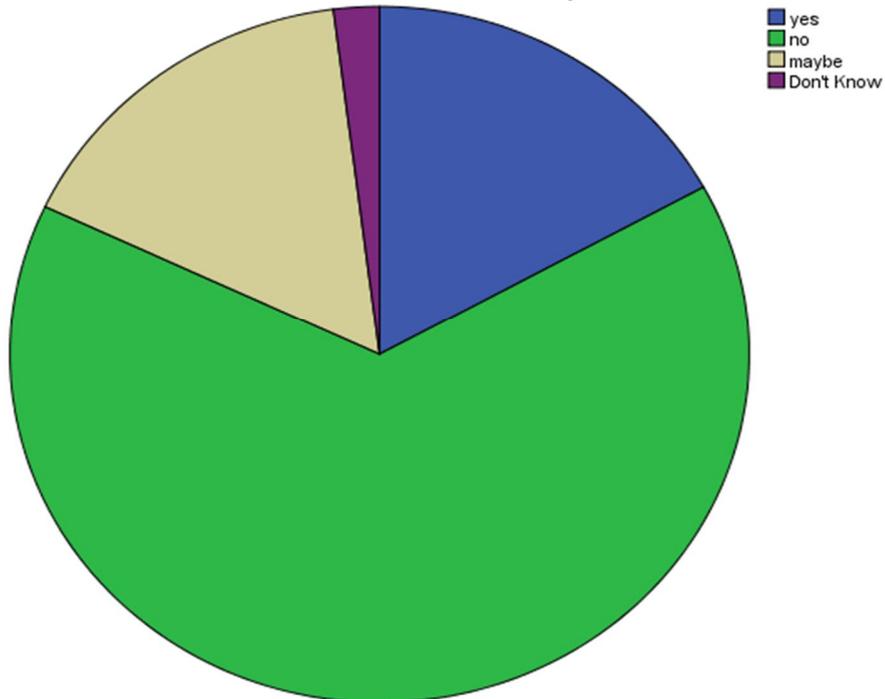
		What category of Celebrity is most likely to have an impact on your purchasing					Total
		Athlete	Musician	T.V / Movie Star	Other	None	
Gender of Respondent	male	19	7	8	0	16	50
	Female	3	11	21	2	13	50
Total		22	18	29	2	29	100

Appendix 10



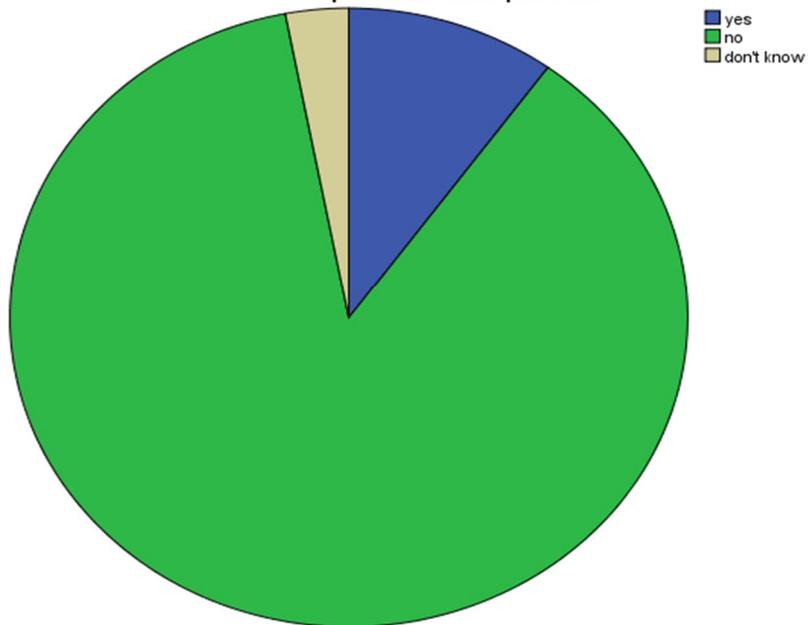
Appendix 11

would a celebrity being associated with negative publicity affect your purchasing of their endorsed product



Appendix 12

Has a celebrity ever been involved in behaviour after which you refused to purchase their product



Appendix 13

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	58	58.0	58.0	58.0
no	37	37.0	37.0	95.0
Valid Don't Know	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
4.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 14- Questionnaire

Questionnaire Title

August 2013

Your involvement in this survey is completely confidential. Your answers will be categorised by gender and age

Section A – Please Tick or Circle as appropriate

1. Please state your gender:

Male	Female
------	--------

2. Please state the age bracket into which you fall:

16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66 years and over
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------------------

3. Please state the stage at which you ceased your formal full-time education.

Note: If your full-time education has not ceased, please state the level at which you are currently enrolled.

No formal education
Primary
Lower secondary
Upper secondary
Third level

	Non-degree (Up to Level 7)
	Degree or higher (Level 8 and above)
Other:	

Section B

4. **Have you ever purchased a product or service that was endorsed/advertised or backed by a celebrity on T.V./newspapers/magazines/radio etc.?**

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

5. **What category of celebrity, do you think, is most likely to have an impact in your purchasing of a product or service.**

You can choose more than one if you wish. Please rank in accordance with your preference.

Athlete
Musician
T.V./Movie Personality
Other (Please State):
None

5a. Why is that the case?

6. Have you ever purchased a product/service because it was endorsed by a particular celebrity?

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

6a. If yes, please give an example of celebrity name, field and type of product/service.

<u>Celebrity Name:</u>	
<u>Field of work:</u> (e.g. Athlete; Musician; T.V./Movie personality)	
<u>Type of product:</u> (e.g. Health & Beauty; Fashion & jewellery; Electronics; Sports & Leisure; Home & Garden)	

6b. What was the main reason you chose to buy this product/service endorsed by this particular celebrity?

7. On a scale of 1-5 (1 being the least effective and 5 being the most effective) please rate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in raising your awareness of advertising campaigns.

Least Effective 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Most Effective 5
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Section C

8. Can you recall any celebrities that have recently been associated with negative publicity?

Yes	No	Don't know/remember
-----	----	---------------------

- 8a. If yes, can you please provide one example stating the celebrity's occupation.

<u>Celebrity Name:</u>	
<u>Field of work:</u> (e.g. Athlete; Musician; T.V./Movie personality)	

9. Would a celebrity being associated with negative publicity affect your inclination to purchase the product/service being endorsed by them?

Yes	No	Maybe	Don't know
-----	----	-------	------------

10. What is the most important attribute you feel a celebrity should possess when endorsing a product/service? (e.g. Appearance; Popularity; Credibility; Trustworthiness?)

11. Has a celebrity ever been involved in negative behaviour after which you refused to purchase a product endorsed by them?

Yes	No	Don't know
-----	----	------------

11a. If yes, please give an example of celebrity name, field and type of product/service.

<u>Celebrity Name:</u>	
<u>Field of work:</u> (e.g. Athlete; Musician; T.V./Movie personality)	
<u>Type of product:</u> (e.g. Health & Beauty; Fashion & jewellery; Electronics; Sports & Leisure; Home & Garden)	

11b. What was the main reason you chose not to buy the product/service?

12. In your opinion who has been the most influential celebrity over the last ten years?

<u>Celebrity Name:</u>	
<u>Field of work:</u> (e.g. Athlete; Musician; T.V./Movie personality)	

12b. Why do you say this?

Thank you for your time.