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The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Young Consumers' Purchase Intention: The Case of L'oreal's Skin-Care Products

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Abstract

The changing business environment has propelled marketers to use different kinds of marketing strategies to achieve their organizational goals and celebrity endorsement is often adopted by corporations to attain marketing objectives. Despite the importance of celebrity endorsement in making products more noticeable, attractive and compelling to consumers, there are little or no studies that specifically investigate how endorsing celebrities influence young consumers to purchase L'Oreal's skin-care products in Malaysia. Thus, the study is undertaken to investigate how celebrity endorsement influences young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products. The study aims to ascertain whether there is a correlation between celebrity endorsement in advertising campaigns and young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products in Selangor. Young consumers were selected because they tend to be more beauty and image conscious. Random sampling procedure is used in this study to select the subjects. A questionnaire instrument is used to measure celebrity endorsement, source attractiveness, source expertise, source trustworthiness and consumer's purchase intentions. The data collected through the questionnaire instrument answered the research questions in this study namely, a) what is the impact of celebrity endorsement on young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products? b) How do endorsers' characteristics influence young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products? This study was designed based on Ohanian's Source Credibility Theory because the effectiveness of an advertisement is determined by the source's credibility, attractiveness and expertise. On analyzing the data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, the results found that celebrity endorsement and celebrity characteristics enhance young consumers' purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products. The implication of this finding is that the brand managers of L'Oreal should pay more attention to the expertise of the endorsers and select the celebrities based on their level of experience and knowledge to make correct claims about the advertised brand instead of selecting celebrities solely based on their physical appearance and attractiveness.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Young Consumers, Purchase Intentions, L'oreal's Skin-Care Products.

Introduction

The changing business environment has propelled marketers to use different kinds of marketing strategies to achieve their organizational goals. Celebrity endorsement is one of the marketing strategies adopted by many companies today to attain their marketing objectives (Lee and Thorson, 2008). Driven by this, celebrity endorsement advertisement has become a common feature of modern marketing all over the world. For example, about 25% of all television advertisements feature celebrity endorsers in the United States (Erdogan *et al.*, 2001) while over 12% of all advertising campaigns use celebrity endorsers in Germany. Similarly, studies from Korea indicate that 32% of television advertisements and 59% of prime time television commercial uses celebrities while over 70% of Japanese television advertisements endorse celebrities (Shukre and Dugar, 2012). Although the use of celebrity in advertising appears to be more recent when compared to the Western countries, Malaysian marketers are rapidly embracing celebrity endorsement practice in their commercials with appropriately 15% of advertisements (Rashid, *et al.* 2002) using diverse celebrities including Chef Wan for endorsing Vesawit, Siti Nurhaliza endorsing Pepsi, Sarimah endorsing Rejoice, Erra Fazira endorsing beauty products such as Lux (Kok and Li, 2013), Aiman Hakim Ridza endorsing Garnier Men and Diana Danielle promoting L'Oreal's skin-care products.

When implemented correctly, advertising strategy that endorses credible celebrities as spokespersons positively influences the image of the advertised brand, thereby creating favourable brand association that differentiates a company's products from other competing brands. The study of Seno and Lukas, (2007) assert that quite number of companies now explore the possibilities of making their advertisements more compelling, eye-catching and noticeable to their target audience because capturing consumers' attention is becoming very tough in today's changing business environment with increasing competition. Thus, celebrity endorsement has become a popular advertising strategy to make products more noticeable, attractive and compelling to the target audience. However, other views seem to offer a competing perspective. According to this latter claim, endorsing celebrities in advertisements costs marketers' huge amount of money and this increases the marketing costs of the company, thereby reducing the net profit of the business (Jaiprakash, 2008; Klaus and Bailey, 2008). Besides, when a celebrity is overexposed – that is, endorsing too many products – his or her perceived credibility may suffer and this may reduce the effectiveness and persuasiveness of the advertisement (Belch and Belch, 2009). Therefore, the study aims to ascertain whether there is a correlation between celebrity endorsement in advertising campaigns and young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products.

Problem Statement

There are little or no studies that specifically investigate the effectiveness of endorsing celebrities in advertisements on young consumers' purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products in Malaysia. This is because most of the prior studies conducted in Malaysia tend to focus only on the attitudes and perceptions of consumers towards celebrity endorsements. For example, while many researches tend to study the response of Malaysian media audience on celebrity advertisements, others study the consumers' responses toward celebrity endorsements base on gender differences. Besides,

extant celebrity endorsement studies are limited to literature concerning the selection of celebrity endorsers meanwhile selection is just one aspect of the development and execution of a celebrity endorsed advertising campaign (Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell, 2000; Bahrom and Idris, 2013). This indicates that there is an incomplete picture of the impact of celebrity endorsement on young consumers' purchase intentions of skin-care products. It is posited here that prior studies on celebrity endorsement has concentrated more on the present behavior and perceptions of consumers towards celebrity endorsements in the consumer market due to the difficulty in measuring the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumers as a psychological construct as shown in the significant increase in the number of academic studies but with little attention on young consumers' purchase intentions of skin-care products. This indicates that the literature is almost silent on the details of how endorsing celebrities in advertisements can influence or suppress young consumers' attitudes towards the advertised brand and ultimately persuade them to purchase the product. Thus, there is an incomplete picture of the way celebrity endorsement influences or suppresses consumer's behavioral beliefs and intentions especially when it comes to skin-care products in the Malaysia cosmetic and beauty product market.

Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following specific research objectives:

1. To determine how celebrity endorsement influences young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products.
2. To identify how celebrity endorsers' characteristics determine young consumer's purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products

Definition of Consumer's Purchase Intentions

Purchase intention entails the likelihood of a person buying certain product over competing brands due to an interaction between the needs and expectations, perception toward the brand and promotional efforts (Tirtiroglu and Elbeck, 2008; Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). According to this claim, purchase intention is known as a consumer's interest shown towards a particular brand after a careful evaluation of the competing brands which may influence his or her decision to buy the brand among the numerous options. This indicates that a consumers' decision to purchase L'Oreal skin-care product is seen as the end result of consumer's behaviour process which starts from the need identification to information searching and the evaluation of the available product options. However, the studies of Sam and Tahir, (2009); Khan, *et al.* (2012) defined purchase intention as the degree of future behavioral orientation shown by consumers in purchasing a brand shown in an advertisement. According to this perspective, purchase intention is the chances of a potential customer buying a particular product advertised by a marketer. However, both claims show that purchase intention is the probability of a customer buying L'Oreal's skin-care products after a careful evaluation of other competing brands due to marketing efforts.

The Importance of Young Consumers' Purchases of Skin-care Products to L'Oreal

There is no gain saying the fact that consumers are the most significant people for any business and every marketer intends to attract and retain as many customers as possible. This is because the chances of consumers buying L'Oreal's skin-care products among other competing brands determine both the short-term and long-term survival and success of the business as measured by increased

sales revenue, bottom line performance and market share (Sivesan, 2013). However, increased purchase intentions can only be determined by how well the company provides quality products that will meet the expectations and needs of the consumers at competitive prices. This indicates that consumers play a critical role in the marketing process of the company because the main goal of any marketing strategy is to identify and meet the needs and expectations of the consumers (Belch and Belch, 2009; Fah, *et al.* 2011). Driven by this, the marketing communication department of L’Oreal should remember that the consumer is the central element of all decisions concerning marketing especially when developing the marketing plan. Given this, all advertisements need to take the consumer’s perspective into consideration and it should reflect the buying habits and needs of the customers so as to raise brand awareness and attract and retain customers. In supporting this claim, the studies of Baheti, *et al.* (2012); Weng and Run, (2013) opine that marketers believe that the power of a brand relies in the mind of existing or potential customers and what they experience either directly or indirectly about the brand determines their behavioural attitudes and purchase intentions. This indicates that consumers determine the success or failure of L’Oreal company, thus their needs and expectations should be put into consideration when designing the marketing campaign.

Advertisements with Celebrity

The following issues are discussed here: definition of a celebrity, the characteristics of a celebrity, celebrity endorsement and the impact of celebrity endorsement on young consumers’ purchase intentions of L’Oreal skin-care creams.

Definition of a Celebrity

A celebrity can be defined as a person who is famous especially in the entertainment or sport industries (Schlecht, 2003; Hakimi, *et al.* 2011). This indicates that a celebrity refers to a popular person who enjoys public attention in the media due to his or her unique lifestyle, actions or characteristics. Successful careers in sport and entertainments are often related with celebrity status. Thus, a person can become a celebrity due to media attention for his or her lifestyles, wealth or actions. Based on their unique personality and lifestyles, celebrities are commonly used as brand ambassadors to promote products.

Characteristics of a Celebrity

Much study has been documented on celebrity characteristics. While many earlier researchers have focused on either source credibility or source attractiveness (Simmers, Damron-Martinez, and Haytko, 2009), Ohanian, (1990) presented three basic characteristics of celebrities: trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness.

Source Trustworthiness

Ohanian, (1990) asserts that the source’s trustworthiness entails the degree to which an audience considers the claims of a communicator to be valid. According to this claim, the target audience may tend to listen to an advertising campaign if they perceived the spokesperson to be dependable and honest about the claims of the product benefits. This indicates that when young consumers perceive the claims made by endorsers about L’Oreal’s skin-care products to be honest and truthful, it will enhance the effectiveness of the advertising campaign. This shows that the persuasiveness and effectiveness of the advertisement depends on the honesty and reliability of the endorser. In

supporting this claim, the study of Prasad, (2013) found that the endorsers' ability to bring meaning to the endorsement process is by communicating honest product messages to the target audience.

Source Expertise

The expertise attribute is considered as when the spokesperson is being capable of making correct claims. According to Zoubi and Bataineh, (2011) expertise has been shown to have a positive impact on the spokesperson's effectiveness and when the endorser is perceived to be experienced or knowledgeable about the product or brand, it will influence the consumer's response to an advertisement. This indicates that a perception about the trustworthiness and expertise of the endorsers is central to the success of L'Oreal's advertisement and subsequent business exchanges.

Source Attractiveness

The attractiveness attribute of the communication source considers the physical traits of the endorser in terms of beauty, elegance and class. Since skin-care products concern the physical appearance of consumers, the study of Zafar and Rafique, (2012) assert that attractiveness of the communication source enhances the impact of the message conveyed by the endorser. This indicates that when beautiful and elegant celebrities endorse L'Oreal's skin-care products, it may separate the brand from the competitor in the mind of the consumers as well as influence them to choose the brand over other competing products.

To conclude, celebrities are known for their expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness and these attract consumers' attentions to advertisements. The next section will focus on discussing how to match the celebrity's characteristics with the advertised brand for effective ad campaign.

Definition of Celebrity Endorsement Advertisement

Waldt, *et al*, (2007); Jain, (2011) defined celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy where individuals who are publicly known are used to promote a brand or the organization. According to this claim, celebrity endorsement means the use of a person who is publicly recognized to advertise skin-care products. However, the study of Daye and Auken, (2010) defined celebrity endorsement as a channel of brand communication where a celebrity serves as the spokesperson for the brand by certifying the claims made about the brand position through transferring the celebrity image into the brand. This claim indicates that celebrity endorsement is a form of advertisement where popular personalities are used to advertise products by lending their names or images to promote the products or services. However, there seems to be a consensus among both claims and the common thread running through them is that celebrity endorsement is an advertising campaign that uses famous people who command a high degree of recognition to promote a brand.

The Relationship between Celebrity Characteristics and Young Consumers' Purchase Intentions

Much research has been documented on the relationship between celebrity characteristics and consumers' intention to buy the advertised product. According to these studies, the target audience may tend to listen to an advertising campaign if they perceived the spokesperson to be an expert, trustworthy and honest about the claims made about the product benefits. This indicates that when young consumers perceive the claims made by endorsers about L'Oreal's skin-care products to be honest and truthful, it will enhance the effectiveness of the advertising campaign. This shows that

the persuasiveness and effectiveness of the advertisement depends on the honesty, experience and reliability of the endorser. Prasad, (2013) supports that the endorsers' ability to bring meaning to the endorsement process is by communicating honest product messages to the target audience. Similarly, Zoubi and Bataineh, (2011) support that celebrity characteristics such as expertise has been shown to have a positive impact on the spokesperson's effectiveness and when the endorser is perceived to be experienced or knowledgeable about the product or brand, it will influence the consumer's response to an advertisement. This indicates that the persuasiveness of an advertisement message is determined by the characteristics of the source selected to convey the advertisement message. This indicates that an advertising campaign is determined by the trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness of the communicator. However, the study of Ohanian, (1990) found that the expertise characteristics of celebrity endorsers were more important in explaining purchase intentions of the consumers than celebrity attractiveness and trustworthiness. This is because when L'Oreal endorses celebrity who possesses the right skills and experience about the advertised product, it will increase the chances of the consumers responding positively to the advertisement by trying the product.

The Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Young Consumers' Purchase Intentions

Studies on celebrity endorsement indicate that endorsing credible and reputable people in advertising campaigns can enhance consumers' behavioural attitudes towards the brand and their purchase intentions. According to these studies, when marketers endorse the right celebrities in their advertisements, they transfer their unique images into the product and this stimulates the chances of consumers buying the advertised brand more than advertisements that do not endorse celebrities. In supporting this claim, the studies of Lin, (2011) opines that endorsing people of repute in advertisements to communicate the features and benefits of a product or service to the target audience can convey a more convincing message because such endorsers are seen as dynamic and they possess attractive and likable characteristics. According to this optimistic claim, a celebrity's unique qualities can be transferred to the products contained in the advertisement. Similarly, the study of Shukre and Dugar, (2012) assert that marketers spend lots of money in endorsing celebrities as spokespersons every year believing that they will enhance the sales of their products. For example, when L'Oreal endorses famous celebrities such as Diana Danielle to promote its skin-care products, they will attract more attention to the advertisement and achieve a higher recall rate. In supporting this claim, the source credibility theory postulates that the persuasiveness of an advertising campaign is determined by the various characteristics of the source selected and since celebrity endorsers are believed to be credible and trustworthy, they create an impression for the product and influence the target audience to respond in some way, thereby enhancing purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products.

However, while the foregoing claim paints a positive picture about the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer's purchase intentions of products, a number of other studies indicate a somewhat negative view. According to this pessimistic view, a celebrity endorser can have a negative impact on the advertised brand especially when the wrong person serves as the spokesperson for the brand. This is because when a celebrity with questionable character or scandal is endorsed, the endorser's image will be transferred to the advertised brand and this will negatively affect the brand. In supporting this claim, the studies of Bowman, (2002); Alsmadi, (2006) opine that endorsing

celebrities with prior lawsuit or scandal can generate negative impressions about the advertised products and this may reduce the consumer's purchase intentions of the advertised brand. Besides, endorsing too much celebrity can result to overshadowing of the brand. According to this claim, when too much emphasis is placed on the celebrity, he or she becomes the centre of attraction and the advertised brand is downplayed, thereby resulting to an ineffective advertisement. According to these claims, endorsing celebrities in advertisements has its own associated financial and reputational risks.

Methods

The following issues will be discussed here: subjects of the study, sampling procedure, sample size analysis, measurement and data collection instrument.

Participants

The participants of this study consist of young consumers between the age range of 15 to 35 years old who often purchase L'Oreal's skin-care products who stay in Serdang. Young consumers were selected as the subjects of the study because they tend to be more beauty and image conscious and they are always on the lookout for innovative beauty and skin-care products that will enhance their self-esteem.

Sampling Procedures

The target respondents for this study are chosen randomly in order to ensure adequate representativeness of the study population. This indicates that the study uses random sampling technique when choosing 300 respondents who live in Serdang based on Morgan's sampling chart and a 95% Confidence Level with 5% Margin of Error. Random sampling is construed as giving every unit in the population an equal and independent chance of being chosen as a subject. Simple random sampling technique was used for this study because it has a high generalizability of the findings to the whole population because it reduces sampling error. In supporting this claim, Sekaran and Bougie, (2010) opine that random sampling helps a researcher to study a small sampling frame without biasing the results and it enhances the ability of the study to be generalized beyond the sample size to the larger population because all elements in the population is considered and given an even opportunity to be included in the study.

Sample Size

The target population of this research consists of young consumers of L'Oreal's skin-care products and the unit of analysis is the individual shoppers. However, since it appears to be difficult to include every member of the target population, a sample size of 300 from the total population is selected to represent the population and they were surveyed through face-to-face personal delivery. The sample size selection is based on Morgan's sampling chart and a 95% Confidence Level with 5% Margin of Error. The sample size selection is based on the ease and convenience of collecting and analyzing a manageable sample given the limited budget and time meant for completing the study. In supporting this claim, Collis and Hussey, (2009) assert that a manageable sample size should be selected to represent the population since it is not feasible to study the entire population. However, a large enough sample size reduces the level of sampling error because it ensures adequate

representativeness of the population. In supporting this claim, the study of Fosgate, (2009) assert that the probability of a study yielding statistically sound findings is based on a large sample size.

Measurement :Operational definition

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention entails the likelihood of a person buying certain product over competing brands due to an interaction between the needs and expectations, perception toward the brand and promotional efforts (Tirtiroglu and Elbeck, 2008).

Celebrity Endorsement

In this study, celebrity endorsement is defined as a marketing strategy where individuals who are publicly known are used to promote a brand or the organization (Jain, 2011).

Celebrity Trustworthiness

Source's trustworthiness is construed as the degree to which an audience considers the claims of a communicator to be valid (Ohanian, 1990).

Celebrity Expertise

Source expertise is considered as when the spokesperson is being capable of making correct claims (Ohanian, 1990).

Celebrity Attractiveness

The attractiveness attribute of the communication source considers the physical traits of the endorser in terms of beauty, elegance and classy (Ohanian, 1990).

Data Collection Instrument

Since the study uses quantitative research method, questionnaire is used to collect the required data. Questionnaire was used in this study because it is less expensive in collecting a large amount of data within a short period of time. Also, questionnaire was used because the respondents can answer at their convenience and the response rate is high. In supporting these claims, the study of Bluman, (2001); White, *et al.* (2005) assert that questionnaire happens to be the only feasible tool for collecting quantitative data when conducting quantitative studies. Similarly, the study of Lefever, *et al.* (2007) opines that questionnaire is easy to administer and when personally administered, it can establish rapport and motivate respondents to answer the questions at their own convenient time.

Results and Discussions

The discussion is based on the following subheadings: demographic characteristics of the respondents, respondents' knowledge and usage of L'Oreal's products, celebrity endorsement, celebrity characteristics, product match-up and purchase intentions of L'Oreal's products.

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 below provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The data shows that over half of the respondents are Malay consumers and this could be due to a number of reasons, part of which include the Malays dominating the Malaysian population in

virtually all the 13 states including Selangor where the study was conducted. In supporting this claim, the Department of Statistics Malaysia, (2012) reports that Malays account for over half of the total Malaysian population (i.e. 67.4%) followed by the Chinese (24.6%).

On the gender distribution, majority of the respondents are females and this indicates that there are more female consumers of L'Oreal's products when compared to the male. This is because women are more beauty and image conscious when compared to men and they are more likely to buy innovative cosmetic products that will help them enhance the need to feel good and portray their beauty. In supporting this claim, the study of Azuizkulov, (2013) found that there is a growing demand of colored cosmetic products such as anti-ageing, UV protection and skin protection among Malaysian women so as satisfy their beauty needs.

In terms of the age distribution, half of the respondents are within the age bracket of 21 - 25 years old and this is followed by 27.9% of the respondents aged between 15 - 20 years old. This indicates that majority of the respondents are teenagers and young adults and this could be due to a number of reasons, part of which include the focus of the study and beauty consciousness among young adults. The reasons why there are more young respondents is because, first, the study was limited to young consumers of L'Oreal's products and this account for the reason why there are more young respondents. Secondly, young adults are more concerned about feeling good, portraying the beauty and satisfying their egoistic needs and these elements justify the reason for increase purchase intention of cosmetic products among young adults in Malaysia. In supporting this claims, the study of Norudin, (2005) found that youths tend to place more interest in maintaining their self-image and beauty and this account for the increase use of cosmetics among young Malaysia adults especially the female consumers.

As for the educational level, the data show that over half of the respondents are diploma holders followed by foundation and bachelor degree holders as evidenced in the data presented in Table 3 below. This indicates that there are more diploma holders among L'Oreal's young consumers in the study location and it shows that virtually all the consumers are literates and well-informed consumers who make informed purchasing decisions. This conforms to the high level of literacy in Malaysia as the New Straits Times, (2012) reports that Malaysia has over 93% literacy rate. However, the data on the income distribution indicates that over half of the respondents (i.e. 64.6%) earn a monthly income of less than RM1,000 and this is followed by respondents who earn an average of RM1,000 – RM1,600 per month. The relatively low income level could be due to the educational level of the respondents. For example, the data on the educational level indicates that majority of the respondents are diploma holders and working with diploma certificate can only result to lower salary. Secondly, majority of the respondents are fulltime students who do not work but rely on either their parents or sponsors for financial assistance and this may be another reason for the low income level.

Table 1: Respondents' demographic characteristics

| Respondents' demographic | Variables | Number | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| Ethnic composition | Malay | 183 | 65.4 |
| | Indian | 21 | 7.5 |
| | Chinese | 32 | 11.4 |
| | Others | 44 | 15.7 |
| | Total | 280 | 100 |
| Gender distribution | Male | 93 | 33.2 |
| | Female | 187 | 66.8 |
| | Total | 280 | 100 |
| Age distribution | 15 -20 years old | 78 | 27.9 |
| | 21 -25 years old | 140 | 50 |
| | 26 -31 years old | 39 | 13.9 |
| | Above 31 years old | 23 | 8.2 |
| | Total | 280 | 100 |
| Educational level | SPM | 29 | 10.4 |
| | Foundation | 41 | 14.6 |
| | Diploma | 154 | 55 |
| | Bachelor degree | 37 | 13.2 |
| | Master | 3 | 1.1 |
| | PhD | 16 | 5.7 |
| Total | 280 | 100 | |
| Monthly income | Less than RM1,000 | 181 | 64.6 |
| | RM1,000 – M1,600 | 41 | 14.6 |
| | RM1,601 – M2,300 | 23 | 8.2 |
| | RM2,301 – M2,900 | 14 | 5 |
| | Above RM2,900 | 21 | 7.5 |
| Total | 280 | 100 | |

Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Young Consumers' Purchase Intention

Table 2 below presents the results on how celebrities draw attention to the advertisements. The data indicate that most of the respondents agree that endorsing celebrities attract more attention to L'Oreal's advertisement campaigns among the media audience. This is because the glamour and unique personality of the celebrity capture the attentions of the consumers and this consequently enhances brand awareness among wide target group. This supports the findings of Belch and Belch, (2009) that a celebrity helps to draw attention to advertisements. The implication of this finding is that celebrity can help capture young consumers' attention to L'Oreal's advertising campaigns when it endorses celebrities with unique and likeable personality especially in today's media audience where consumers are bombarded with large number of ads everyday which makes it difficult for advertisers to break through the clutter. Therefore, it is suggested here that the marketing management of L'Oreal should deal with the problem of media clutter by using sources such as attractive models or actresses who will attract the target audience's attention to its brand.

Table 2: Results on how celebrity attract attention to the ad

| Measurement scales | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 94 | 33.6 |
| Agree | 126 | 45.0 |
| Neutral | 45 | 16.1 |
| Disagree | 10 | 3.6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 5 | 1.8 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Table 3 below presents the data on the role of celebrities. The results indicate that majority of the respondents agree that celebrities bring their own distinctive images to the advertised brand and this enhances the effectiveness of the advertisement campaign. This is because the celebrity endorsers transfer their meanings such as status, class and lifestyle into the advertisement and subsequently to the product they are endorsing. This supports Belch and Belch, (2009) claims that a celebrity's effectiveness as an endorser depends on the culturally acquired meaning he or she brings to the endorsement process. This indicates that celebrities bring their meanings and image into the ad and transfer them to the brand they represent. The implication of this finding for L'Oreal is that before endorsing celebrities, the marketing managers must first decide on the image or symbolic meanings important to the target audience for skin-care products. Secondly, the managers must then determine which celebrity best represents the meaning or image to be projected to the consumers. Therefore, it is suggested that the management of L'Oreal should first conduct research studies to determine young consumers' perceptions of celebrities meaning and design an advertising campaign that will capture that meaning in the product and moves it to the consumers.

Table 3: Results on celebrity transferring their image to the brand

| Measurement scale | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 75 | 26.8 |
| Agree | 141 | 50.4 |
| Neutral | 41 | 14.6 |
| Disagree | 19 | 6.8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 | 1.4 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Table 4 below presents the data on the influence of celebrity endorsement on young consumers' purchase intentions of skin-care products. The results indicate that over half of the respondents agree that endorsing favorite celebrity will influence the consumers' intentions to buy the advertised product. This is because a celebrity draws attention to advertising messages in a very cluttered media environment and enhances the audience's perceptions of the product. This supports the findings of Agarwal, *et al.* (2011) that endorsing reliable celebrities in advertising campaign enhances the consumers' purchasing decisions. The implication of this finding is that endorsing the target audience's favorite celebrity in advertisement will enhance the sales performance of the company because more potential buyers may be convinced that the product will enhance their own

performance. Therefore, it is suggested here that L’Oreal should conduct research among the target consumers to know their favorite celebrities and use them to promote its skin-care products so as to favorably influence the consumers’ decision to buy the advertised products.

Table 4: Influence of favorite celebrity on young consumers’ purchase intentions

| Measurement scale | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 70 | 25.0 |
| Agree | 112 | 40.0 |
| Neutral | 54 | 19.3 |
| Disagree | 34 | 12.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 9 | 3.2 |
| 34.00 | 1 | 0.4 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Effect of Celebrity Characteristics on Young Consumer’s Purchase Intentions of L’Oreal’s Skin-care Products

The focus here is to analyze the results on the celebrity’s characteristics based on attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness.

Celebrity Attractiveness

Table 5 below presents the results on the effectiveness of the advertisement being determined by the attractive quality of the celebrity endorser. The data show that over half of the respondents agree that the advertisement is more effective when attractive celebrity is endorsed. This is because when the consumers perceive a celebrity endorser to be attractive, they identify with the endorser and are likely to adapt the endorser’s preferences and interests. This finding supports prior celebrity endorsement literature among which include the study of Erdogan, (2010) who found that a general attribute that contributes to endorser’s effectiveness is his or her attractiveness. According to this study, when the consumers find something in an endorser that they consider attractive, persuasion occurs through identification. This is because the consumers will respect and admire the celebrity when they are attractive and this admiration and likeness will be transferred to the brand being advertised by the endorser. The implication of this finding is that a celebrity who possesses the entire package of attractiveness attributes such as physical attractiveness, respect and similarity with the brand image and the audience would represent awesome endorsement potential. Therefore, it is suggested here that the brand management of L’Oreal should select only highly attractive celebrities to endorse its skin-care products. This is because physically attractive endorsers produce more favourable evaluations of ads and advertised brands than do less attractive communicators.

Table 5: Attractive celebrity enhances ads effectiveness

| Measurement scales | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 63 | 22.5 |
| Agree | 133 | 47.5 |
| Neutral | 63 | 22.5 |
| Disagree | 17 | 6.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 | 1.4 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Table 6 below presents the results on how a beautiful celebrity influences young consumers' purchase intention of L'Oreal's skin-care products. The results indicate that majority of the respondents seem to support the claim that using beautiful celebrities such as models and actresses in promoting skin-care products will influence them to buy the product. This is because models and actresses are portrayed as beautiful by using the advertised skin-care product and since most young adults especially females would like to be beautiful and good looking, they tend to buy the product so as to look like the models. This supports the findings of Amos, *et al.* (2008) that using physically attractive communicators such as beautiful models can have a positive impact on the purchasing decisions of the consumers and generate more sales messages than less attractive endorsers. The implication of this finding is that using beautiful endorsers with smooth and bright skins with an ideal body shape for a wonderful life will positively influence young consumers' intention to purchase the products because they would want to have similar skin. Therefore, it is recommended that the brand managers of L'Oreal should only use physically attractive and appealing celebrities when promoting the company's skin-care products. This is because it will influence the young consumers to respond in some way towards the advertised brand and influence them to choose L'Oreal's brand over competing products.

Table 6: Endorsing beautiful celebrity influences purchase intention

| Measurement scale | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 70 | 25.0 |
| Agree | 112 | 40.0 |
| Neutral | 54 | 19.3 |
| Disagree | 34 | 12.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 9 | 3.2 |
| 34.00 | 1 | .4 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Celebrity Expertise

Table 7 below presents the results on celebrity expertise influence on brand preference. The results show that over half of the respondents agree that using celebrities with good expertise about the product will enhance their likelihood of preferring the brand. This is because using such celebrities will guarantee the chances of the endorser properly explaining the functions and side effects of the

products and this will help them better understand whether the product will be good for their skin type or not. This supports the claims of Shimp, (2007) that a communicator with expertise is more persuasive than one with less expertise. The implication of this finding is that using expert endorser will enhance the persuasiveness of the ad and the celebrity than sources who are less expert or trustworthy. This is because information from a credible endorser will influence the attitudes and perceptions of the consumers about the brand. Therefore, it is suggested that the brand manager of L’Oreal can enhance brand preference among young consumers by using credible celebrity with the right expertise to promote the company’s skin-care products.

Table 7: Influence of celebrity expertise on brand preference

| Measurement scale | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 47 | 16.8 |
| Agree | 145 | 51.8 |
| Neutral | 61 | 21.8 |
| Disagree | 23 | 8.2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 4 | 1.4 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Table 8 below presents the results on the impact of celebrity’s expertise on respondents’ purchasing decision of L’Oreal’s skin-care products. The results show that majority of the respondents agree that the celebrity’s experience and expertise can enhance the impact of the endorser on the consumer’s response to an advertisement. This indicates when the celebrity possesses the right skills and experience about the product, it will increase the chances of the consumers responding positively to the advertisement by trying the product. Ohanian, (1990) supports the perceived expertise and experience of celebrity endorsers was more important in explaining purchase intentions than their attractiveness and trustworthiness. The implication is that more young consumers will show interest to buy L’Oreal’s skin-care products if experienced and knowledgeable celebrities are endorsed. This indicates that the marketing managers of L’Oreal should select their endorsers based on their level of experience and ability to make correct claims about the advertised product instead of selecting celebrities solely based on their physical appearance and beauty.

Table 8: Impact of celebrity expertise on purchase intentions of L’Oreal’s products

| Measurement scales | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 51 | 18.2 |
| Agree | 126 | 45.0 |
| Neutral | 72 | 25.7 |
| Disagree | 22 | 7.9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 9 | 3.2 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Celebrity Trustworthiness

Table 9 below presents the results on the respondents' likelihood to pay more attention to the advertisements endorsed by depended celebrity. The result indicates that majority of the respondents indicate that they will pay more attention to the advertisement of L'Oreal's skin-care products when the ad is endorsed by dependable celebrities. This is because a depended endorser will give unbiased and objective information about the product. This supports the findings of Zoubi and Bataineh, (2011) who found that trustworthy endorsers often draw more attention to the advertisement of products because they tend to represent the company and deliver unbiased product information to the target audience. The implication of this finding is that the company can attract more consumers' attention to the advertising campaign if it endorsed unbiased and trustworthy celebrities as spokespersons. Driven by this, it is suggested that L'Oreal should only choose trustworthy and dependable celebrities to endorse its skin-care products so as to enhance its ability to attract as many consumers as possible and create brand awareness.

Table 9: Respondents' likelihood to pay more attention to the ads endorsed by depended celebrity

| Measurement scale | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 45 | 16.1 |
| Agree | 124 | 44.3 |
| Neutral | 82 | 29.3 |
| Disagree | 27 | 9.6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 0.7 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Table 10 below presents the results on how the believability of the celebrity can enhance the purchase intentions of L'Oreal's skin-care products. The results show that over half of the respondents agree that they may purchase the products if the endorser actually uses the product being endorsed in real life. This is because when the consumers see the celebrity use the products in real life and if it improved his or her skin, it will make the target audience to believe the advertising message and this will subsequently influence their likelihood of buying the product. This supports the findings of Zoubi and Bataineh, (2011) who found that using trustworthy celebrities in advertising can enhance the buying decision of consumers. The implication of this finding is that L'Oreal can stimulate young consumers to purchase its skin-care products by using honest and reliable endorsers who actually use its products. Therefore, it is suggested that L'Oreal should endorse celebrities and other public figures that actually use its products so as to cultivate the consumers trust on the brand and subsequently enhance purchased intentions.

Table 10: Influence of celebrity trustworthiness on purchase intentions

| Measurement scale | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly Agree | 48 | 17.1 |
| Agree | 113 | 40.4 |
| Neutral | 91 | 32.5 |
| Disagree | 20 | 7.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 2.9 |
| Total | 280 | 100.0 |

Conclusion

While the concept of celebrity endorsement has become a ubiquitous advertising strategy in modern marketing, the limited empirical studies conducted in the Malaysia cosmetic market motivated the conducting of this study. Thus, this research investigated how celebrity endorsement can influence young consumers to purchase L’Oreal’s skin-care products. First, a conceptual framework of the structure of a relationship between celebrity endorsement and young consumers’ purchase intentions was synthesized from the business-to-consumers marketing literature. Then, a sample of 300 L’Oreal’s consumers were surveyed about the effects of celebrity endorsement on young consumers’ purchase intentions of skin-care products. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze the data. The results provided support for the conceptual framework which showed that celebrity endorsement and celebrity characteristics significantly influence young consumers’ purchase intentions of L’Oreal’s skin-care products. This is because when L’Oreal endorses celebrity who possesses the right skills and experience about the advertised product, it will increase the chances of the consumers responding positively to the advertisement by trying the product.

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