

The Impact of Chinese Celebrity Endorsements on Chinese Consumers' Purchasing Intentions

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Abstract: In recent years, with the continuous development of the commodity economy, various industries have begun to use the marketing strategy of celebrity endorsement. Idol worship has existed since ancient times, and the meaning of idols has also changed with the changes of the times. Idols have a positive role in providing people with imitation and spiritual power. Famous film and television actors, singers, and social celebrities have developed celebrity endorsements, covering all aspects of life. Major social media and our daily necessities all have celebrity endorsements and promotional information about celebrity endorsements shown on streets and alleys. In the economic era of brand competition, companies choose celebrity endorsements to create product profits. These are all based on the fact that most people have a specific interest and attention to celebrities and want to learn from and imitate the idols they admire in their hearts. This study starts from the perspective of consumers and studies the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchasing intentions and attitudes through reading relevant literature and combining it with a questionnaire survey. Consumers will choose whether to purchase the product based on the celebrity's own reputation, and most celebrities will also choose the products they endorse in order to improve their commercial value.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Purchase Intention, Brand Attitude

1. Introduction

In a highly competitive market environment, product differentiation becomes difficult, and celebrity endorsements become one of the best marketing strategies to attract customers to buy branded products. Celebrity endorsements build consumer confidence in marketing communications, leading to a good attitude towards the brand. As one of the important celebrity groups, celebrities have a huge impact on consumers' consumption. According to the survey, Chinese consumers have a high acceptance of celebrity endorsement advertising in terms of the influence of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchasing decisions, so the company spends a lot of money to sign celebrities for product endorsements.

The fan community has an increasing influence in the entertainment industry and brings a lot of impact and change to consumer brands, and celebrity endorsements show the most direct impact. Fan groups show their support by buying a large number of celebrity endorsements. In the social media environment, intervening between celebrities and brands affects the market performance of

celebrity endorsements. In East Asian cultures, society recognized the value of individual urgently. Therefore, for China, the value of luxury goods is not the product itself but the social recognition it brings, which is one of the reasons why Bulgari and other luxury brands are particularly popular in the Chinese market. At the same time, Shu Qi and Liu Yifei are two Chinese artists, which shows that Bulgari's importance to the Chinese market is self-evident. Although Bulgari did not disclose the performance of the jewelry business in the Chinese market as early as four years ago, Bulgari CEO WWD revealed in an interview that "Chinese mainland will become Bulgari's first world market in 2019." "Every year, Hurun Research Institute surveys hundreds of Chinese high-net-rich people with an average total household asset of about 45 million yuan. Bulgari has become their favorite jewelry brand for five consecutive years. In addition, the celebrity strategy has been tried in China. Shu Qi's influence covers the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. Liu Yifei can further stimulate consumer groups of all ages, showing the star spokesperson's image and international popularity.

2. Literature Review

The act of promoting a brand through the introduction of spokespersons first appeared in the late 19th century, and the lack of uniformity in the concept of spokespersons is an important reason for not forming a widely accepted classification standard [1]. McCracken explains celebrity endorsers as "any individual who enjoys public recognition and uses this recognition on behalf of consumers through advertising" [2].

Hu Xiaoyun divided brand spokespersons into two categories: one is real spokespersons; The second is the virtual spokesperson. Real spokespersons can be divided into 16 categories, while virtual spokespersons can be divided into 20 categories [3]. Real person spokespersons can be divided into team endorsements and personal endorsements, while virtual spokespersons are spokespersons who use animals or virtual images to resonate with consumers and bring emotional benefits to them. Nowadays [4], celebrity endorsements occupy the main market for advertising endorsements. Research shows that 25% of global advertisements use celebrity endorsements, which is because celebrity endorsements can enhance consumers' willingness to purchase products and have a positive impact [5, 6].

Stars have a certain level of credibility, which can deepen consumers' perception and impression of the brand, shape unique brand personality, and be recognized by consumers. This will also drive consumers to purchase this product. It can be found that in densely populated areas, consumers will be attracted by some huge posters, attracting people's attention to the brand [7]. Research on the dimensions of celebrity endorsement has found that attractiveness, credibility, and professionalism are the main dimensions of celebrity endorsement. Therefore, this article will start from the three main dimensions of attractiveness, credibility, and professionalism [6]. Attraction is defined as attracting others' attention through appearance in a specific group, described by the elegance, sexiness, and attractiveness of the spokesperson. Credibility refers to the degree to which consumers perceive celebrities to convey honest, honest, and trustworthy information through advertising. Research has found that trustworthy spokespersons can enhance brand credibility and promote economic benefits [2].

Celebrities can have a strong impact on consumers' purchasing of products and services, as well as brand choices. Celebrities can become an important product marketing tool, and their inherent charm and reputation can generate incredible attraction. Using celebrities to endorse products can bring great benefits. The attractiveness and persuasiveness of celebrities themselves can attract consumers to purchase advertising products, as well as bring promotion and consumer attention to the products. Simultaneously using celebrities as endorsers also plays an important role in shaping

the brand's personality, which places high demands on the compatibility between celebrities and products, and also requires consumers to shift their attention from celebrities to products [5].

Products can bring demand to the consumer market, with a wide range of definitions, including specific items and tertiary industry services, making it difficult to classify them clearly. For research on product types, some scholars choose to use different scenarios for research, and have found that products with pleasure and functionality as selling points can more stimulate consumers' willingness to purchase [8].

Consumer purchasing behavior is a psychological activity that occurs when consumers enjoy services before and after purchasing. Consumer consumption behavior is a response of consumers to environmental stimuli. Environmental changes are not only reflected in external environmental changes, but also in the internal environment [9].

Virtual tactile perception mainly comes from two aspects: firstly, the overall interaction of human senses, and good visual and auditory perception can compensate for the shortcomings of tactile perception; The second is to influence consumers' tactile perception formed by association through immersive perception [10].

Based on the above research analysis, this study proposes three hypotheses:

H1: The attractiveness of Chinese celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on Chinese consumers' purchase intentions

Based on social cognitive theory, perceptual behavior control is included as an essential factor of people's behavioral intention, and the impact of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention is insightful, as well as the influence of celebrity endorsement attraction on consumers' purchase intention [6].

H2: Chinese consumers' attitude towards Chinese celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on brand consumption

The difference in consumer purchasing power is that the available funds are different, and for some consumers, taking Bulgari as an example, luxury goods are a significant expense for such consumers, and they will choose not to buy. For consumers with more money, the cost of luxury goods will not have much impact on their lives so they will support the products endorsed by the star.

H3: The credibility of Chinese celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on the attitude of Chinese consumers

After endorsements, celebrities will often use the products of their endorsement brands in front of the camera, and the audience will analyze from these shots whether the product is worth buying. In most of the programs, the effect and process of celebrities using endorsement products will be displayed in front of the audience. Products with sound effects, coupled with celebrity endorsements, consumers will make purchases, which is the credibility of celebrity endorsements. Rather than believing in the word of advertising, consumers want to see the actual effect of the product.

3. Methodology

This paper uses the questionnaire method to create a questionnaire using the questionnaire star platform. The questionnaire was distributed through social media for three hours. Five hundred thirty questionnaires were returned, excluding questionnaires with apparent regularity or age matches, and five hundred eight questionnaires were valid. The variables in this paper include celebrity endorsement, brand attitude, and consumer purchase intention, and a scale is made based on the above variables. This paper takes the influence of Chinese celebrity endorsements on Chinese consumers' purchase intention as the research direction, puts forward a hypothesis, and

then produces a scale. The study, combined with the scale, designed 13 questions in the questionnaire.

4. Results

Through the quantitative research method, using the data recovered in the questionnaire survey and SPSS 27 to analyze the data, the two independent variables of celebrity endorsement, brand attitude, obtained 0.938 and < 0.001 data, and the model R^2 was 0.708.

According to the research data, substituting the assumptions set in this paper, the β value of the independent variable celebrity endorsement is -0.12, and the p-value is more significant than 0.05, so the celebrity endorsement has no correlation with the purchase intention, and H1 is not valid.

The independent variable brand attitude β value is 0.852, and the p-value is less than 0.001, so celebrity endorsement correlates with brand attitude, and H2 is valid.

The independent variable star endorsement β value is -0.12, the p-value is more significant than 0.05, the brand attitude β value is 0.852, and the p-value is less than 0.001, so the credibility of celebrity endorsement is related to consumer brand attitude, and H3 is valid.

5. Discussion

This study assumes that the attraction of celebrity endorsements positively impacts consumers' purchase intentions, and H1 is not valid through data collection and calculation.

Further analysis of the data shows that the reasons for the failure are different consumer preferences, different purchasing power, and low consumer demand for the product.

There are two categories divided into Consumer groups: those who are interested in the entertainment industry and those who are not interested in the entertainment industry. Consumers who pay more attention to entertainment news in daily life will increase support for celebrity endorsement products. For consumers who are not interested in the star industry in daily life, celebrity endorsement is dispensable for products, and this type of consumer cares more about product quality.

The difference in consumer purchasing power is that the available funds are different, and for some consumers, taking Bulgari as an example, luxury goods are a significant expense for such consumers, and they will choose not to buy. For consumers with more money, the cost of luxury goods will not have much impact on their lives so they will support the products endorsed by the star.

The different consumer demand for this product is a big reason. Most consumers who buy items are concerned about the characteristics of practicality, whether the product can be used in their daily life rather than put in the dust at home. Consumers are rational in the face of celebrity endorsements most of the time, considering product practicality before buying items and secondly supporting celebrity sales.

In 2021, a report showed that fans bought a large amount of yogurt to support idols' debut but poured it in the gutter, which verified that most consumers treat celebrity endorsement products rationally and do not mindlessly rush sales.

In order to maintain this positive impact, the media should report more of this kind of news and make consumers pay more attention to such events.

The second hypothesis of this study is that consumers' attitude toward celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on brand consumption, and this hypothesis is valid through data collection and calculation.

This assumption is valid for two reasons: celebrities have a good reputation and high popularity.

The quality of the star's reputation depends on whether the star has excessive negative news; taking Bulgari's two spokespersons, Liu Yifei and Shu Qi, as an example, the two actresses have a positive reputation in the public when consumers hear the Bulgari brand, the impression that emerges is also positive, compared with other brands that invite more artists with negative news, consumers are more inclined to brands with a positive reputation.

High celebrity popularity, on the one hand, can increase the popularity of its endorsement brand; some consumers may not know the brand but often pay attention to entertainment. When their well-known celebrities endorse brands, they have yet to hear of, consumers will go to some basic understanding or purchase products. When the brand is known, sales will also increase. On the other hand, brands that already have some popularity, with the blessing of celebrity endorsements, will be much more well-known than before, and sales will increase.

This hypothesis positively impacts the brand; consumers will choose which brand to buy based on their attitude towards the brand spokesperson, and for well-known and favorable celebrities, consumers will be more inclined to buy the brand endorsed by the celebrity. In order to maintain this positive impact, brands should choose a spokesperson with a good reputation and high visibility, and brand sales will increase much compared to before.

This study assumes that the credibility of three celebrity endorsements positively impacts consumer attitudes toward the brand, and this hypothesis is valid through data collection and calculation.

The credibility of celebrity endorsements positively impacts consumers' attitudes towards the brand, mainly on whether the celebrity's advertising for the brand has credibility, as well as the reputation of the celebrity itself and its work attributes.

After endorsements, celebrities will often use the products of their endorsement brands in front of the camera, and the audience will analyze from these shots whether the product is worth buying. In most of the programs, the effect and process of celebrities using endorsement products will show in front of the audience; products with sound effects, coupled with celebrity endorsements, consumers will make purchases, which is the credibility brought by celebrity endorsements, rather than believing in the word of advertising, consumers want to see the actual effect of the product.

The work attributes of celebrities are the reason for this. Take Chinese athletes' endorsement milk as an example; compare the two major milk brands, Yili and Trensus. Yili's spokespeople are partly Chinese athletes, such as Su Bingtian. Consumers have the impression of athletes as healthy and robust. Out of concern for their health, consumers tend to buy Yili, hoping they can be as strong as athletes. Therefore, at the end of 2022, Yili milk sales exceeded 56 million, while Trensus milk sales were only 3.58 million.

Celebrity reputation is a big reason for credibility. Most celebrities will use it themselves or work with teams for a while before endorsing the product and deciding whether to endorse it. Suppose it is a defective product, in addition to complaining about the merchant for the first time after purchase. In that case, consumers will also have a negative impression of the star, and the star's reputation will decline. This consequence may reduce their commercial value for artists.

This behavior is a good influence on consumers; celebrities will not endorse very low-quality products because once consumers complain too much, the reputation of stars will also be affected, which is a good guarantee that consumers can buy with confidence.

6. Conclusion

From the perspective of consumers, this study explores the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchase intentions and attitudes through research on consumers' purchase intentions and attitudes combined with social cognitive theory. The experimental study sets three hypotheses: H1: The attractiveness of Chinese celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on Chinese

consumers' purchase intention; H2: Chinese consumers' attitude towards Chinese celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on brand consumption; H3: The credibility of Chinese celebrity endorsements has a positive impact on the attitude of Chinese consumers. According to the variables involved in this study, researchers designed 530 questionnaires. Using SPSS version 27.0 statistical analysis to test the purchase intention and credibility, the following conclusion was reached: H1 is not valid. The main reason is that the consumer preferences and purchasing power are different. The consumer population is different, so the product demand is also different. Consumers' different needs for products, different funds available, and different interests in products will change consumers' willingness to buy. H2 is valid; consumers will spend based on the reputation and popularity of the celebrities themselves, and consumers will tend to buy products endorsed by celebrities with less negative news. Well-known celebrities can improve brand awareness that is not well known themselves, and cooperation between well-known brands and well-known stars will also have better results. Stars with high popularity or good reputation will drive brand sales and popularity. H3 is valid. Celebrities and products belong to mutual achievements. In order to improve their commercial value, most stars will not casually sign defective products, so they will also choose good product quality to endorse, which will also be a good guarantee for consumers. The consistency of celebrities and brands will also have a certain impact on purchase intentions, and consumers will consume based on whether the star image meets the brand's needs and whether the star's work attributes complement each other with the brand concept.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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