

Influence of Source Credibility Factors and Celebrity-Fan Relationship on Social Cause: A Conceptual Research Model

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ABSTRACT

The influence of the famous is a widely researched topic. It is equally a sure-shot success formula for marketers selling clothes, cement, life insurance, cars, electronic gadgets, seeking political endorsement, and a plethora of consumption choices. Marketers have been successful with celebrity endorsements to launch a new product, to change negative attitudes towards brands, to influence trial and even convince a purchase. Celebrities, though not at a comparable scale of consumer product advertising, have also shared their liking, views and endorsement on social issues ranging from immunization, safe driving to creating awareness for rare disorders. This paper presents the conceptual framework to understand the influence of the source (celebrity) and the celebrity-fan relationship on the cognitive and affective components of attitude towards a social cause. The conceptual framework examines the source credibility factors specified by Ohanian (1990) - source attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness and proposes the influence of celebrity-fan relationship as measured by McCutcheon, Maltby, Houran, & Ashe (2004) through Celebrity Attitude Scale on the attitude outcomes mediated by Need for Cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982).

Keywords: Source Credibility, Cognitive component, Affective component, Celebrity Endorsements, Social Cause, Social Marketing, Anti-tobacco, Celebrity Attitude Scale.

