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Celebrity Impact on Fashion Brand Choice Using Social Media

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CELEBRITY IMPACT ON FASHION BRAND CHOICE USING SOCIAL MEDIA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all my family and friends. I especially give thanks and dedication to my mother, Diana, my sisters, Carli and Dara, my boyfriend Danniel, and his mother, Phyllis. All of these wonderful people have been by my side, and have given me support, and unconditional love throughout this journey. I would like to thank the professor at the University of South Carolina who assisted me every step of this process, whether your contribution was large or small, you are all so appreciated. Finally, to my father Dennis, I thank you for never allowing me to give up on this dream. While I have been on my own life journey with this endeavor, you never left my side when you were fighting for your own life. Dad, I am beyond thankful you are here with us today!

ABSTRACT

Today social media is rapidly growing. Many social media users, specifically Instagram users, are from the Millennial generation (born between 1982 and 1999), and Generation-Z (born between 2000 and 2020) (knoema.com, 2020). They love to share their life through social media, especially by posting and viewing others' photos and videos on Instagram. Celebrity endorsement of products and brands has shown to increase both brand awareness and sales for companies. The purpose of this study is to investigate social media influence of celebrities on consumers' brand choices. A conceptual model is developed to investigate the influences of physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity's activeness on social media, perceived brand credibility, and a consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed and intentions to choose a celebrity-endorsed brand. The findings of this study will add knowledge to the field of celebrity endorsements on social media, with regard to the Generation-Z and Millennial generations.

Keywords- Celebrity Endorsement, Celebrity Credibility, Consumer Attitude, Social Learning Theory

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Celebrities have been around for centuries in the United States. Celebrity culture began during the Revolutionary War period, and thus, how celebrity is defined has shifted multiple times throughout the centuries (History of Celebrity Culture, n.d.). Celebrities in the Revolutionary War period (1764-1789) were typically considered brave, honorable, and dedicated, and included scholars, military heroes, and patriots. Today, celebrities are known for being role models whom others look up to and are usually a widely recognized person who commands a high degree of visibility in public and media presence. The scope of what can be defined as a celebrity has widened through the years, especially with people gaining notoriety from their initial, and sometimes almost exclusive exposure from being on the internet, such as being a fashion blogger or vlogger on YouTube. Traditional celebrities differ from online celebrities because they are known not from gaining followers on social media, but rather they achieve their fame as a singer, actor, actress, etc. For the present study, celebrity will be defined in the traditional sense where a person gains their status by starring in movies, appearing on television shows, showcased in television advertisements, or other traditional ways of gaining stardom.

Celebrity endorsements have been shown to exert a great deal of influence on consumers' purchasing behaviors (Adam & Hussain, 2017). Popular personalities and their well-known bodies and faces are considered a good way for a brand to develop a bond with consumers (Singh & Banerjee, 2018). Whether we like or agree with celebrities and their influence on society, they will likely continue to be an important part of the social scene, and as such, will also probably continue to exert change on the way people act and dress. A study by Rafique and Zafar (2012) found that celebrity endorsements have a reasonable impact on consumers' attitudes. Another study, Cuomo et al. (2019), found that celebrity credibility has a positive effect on attitude towards a celebrity endorsement. Although there have been studies on how celebrity endorsements impact consumers' attitudes and behavior, no studies were found that specifically document the important generations of Millennials and Generation-Z.

In marketing, endorsements may play a significant role in achieving a company's good reputation and reaching business goals (Lim, Rozaini, Radzol, Cheah, & Wong, 2017). When celebrity endorsements are used effectively, they can help a brand stand out from its competitors and create awareness (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Celebrity endorsements have also been found to create more positive feelings about the brand and product (Min et al., 2017). Thus, celebrities' endorsements can impact consumers' buying intentions (Malik et al., 2018). Research has shown that due to positive impact, sales may increase as much as 4% (on average) after signing on a celebrity (Bradic, 2015; Olenski, 2016). Celebrities have been used to endorse many brands including Pepsi, Adidas, Louis Vuitton, Express, New Balance and Nike, to name only a few.

Whether it is a small business or a huge retailer, a business can take advantage of using celebrity endorsers to help maximize profit and sway consumers to choose their brand over competitors. For example, during the 2014-2015 NBA basketball season, clothing retailer, Express, contracted with the National Basketball Association's (NBA) Golden State Warrior player, Stephen Curry, to endorse their men's suiting line. At the time of Curry's endorsement, he was a record-breaking point guard and was regarded as one of the NBA's top players. He joined the Express brand in its mission to engage with its fan base through affiliations with inspiring role models (Express, Inc., 2014). As an Express Brand Ambassador, Curry made a great endorsement of the brand (Spagnolo, 2017). In May of 2018, Express also signed Trae Young and Mohamed (Mo) Bamba who were both NBA first-round draft picks for 2018, as Express Brand Ambassadors. Both rookies were wearing Express tailoring for their signing ceremonies (O'Donnell, 2018).

In order to have an effective marketing campaign, fashion brand companies have to identify the right celebrity to successfully endorse their product and brand. According to Startup Fashion (n.d.), companies must first research a celebrity and their public figure record to see if they a) are a good fit with the brand, b) have a successful past endorsing products, and c) have a good public image (StartupFashion.com,2016). Companies must also determine if the celebrities' likes, interests, and activities will fit with the brand. In addition, it is suggested that companies should also track their engagement with social media sites to determine if the potential exists to reach a large number of consumers and to see if their audience fanbase matches the company's target market (StartupFashion.com, 2016).

According to Startup Fashion, a way to calculate a celebrity's engagement is to calculate the 'engagement ratio' by dividing the amount of average "likes" a celebrity gets on a post by the total number of followers for that celebrity. This is important for a company to look at as it helps to measure the number of genuine followers of a celebrity or influencer. Typically, a celebrity engagement ratio that benefits a company will be at, or is over, 0.5% (StartupFashion.com, 2016).

After conducting the research points mentioned above, then companies have to get the chosen celebrities on board. They can do this by determining a mutually-beneficial financial agreement as well as work with the celebrity to determine how to best utilize the celebrity (StartupFashion.com, 2016).

A social media site is a web-based communication tool that enables people to interact with friends, family, and colleagues by sharing and consuming information (Nations, 2019). Sites such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter can help consumers become aware of brands as well as exposing them to countless celebrity personalities. Such sites therefore are used by many brands today as an effective marketing communication tool to connect with, and sell their products to, consumers.

The fashion industry as a whole allocates a large amount of its marketing dollars to social media promotions. Celebrities are often paid to promote companies' fashion brands and to sell products through chosen social media sites. As some celebrities can have millions of social media followers, companies are very aware that loyal fans can be

directly responsible for buying millions of dollars' worth of fashion products advertised on celebrities' social media sites.

Kylie Jenner is a prime example of how successful celebrity brand endorsement campaigns can work. She may be the youngest member of the famous Kardashian-Jenner family, but she has become the highest-paid family member per social media post. It has been estimated that Kylie Jenner earns $1.27 million per sponsored Instagram post (Pesce, 2019). Forbes has named Kylie Jenner as the youngest self-made billionaire in March 2019 for the second year in a row when she was put on the cover of its world billionaire issue, with much of her wealth generated by her online presence (Yates, 2020). Kylie Jenner has approximately 161 million followers on her personal Instagram account (@kyliejenner), and on her Kylie Cosmetics Instagram account (@kyliecosmetics) she has 23.3 million followers. On November 30, 2015, Jenner launched her beauty brand on her Kylie Cosmetics account releasing her first product, Kylie Lip Kit for $29 which sold out almost immediately (Mejia, 2017).

Kylie Jenner's older half-sister, Kim Kardashian, is also a well-known fashion celebrity who is an important icon of the beauty and fashion industries. She has millions of her own followers on her social media accounts and endorses many product brands. Although starting earlier and being older than her half-sister by 17 years, Kardashian earns less than Jenner, but nonetheless, she still makes up to 1 million dollars per sponsored Instagram post (Xidias, 2019).

Other celebrities who endorse fashion and cosmetic products and brands on their social media sites include Beyoncé, who endorses her own clothing collection, IVY PARK, a label under the well-known Adidas brand which she launched in January of 2020. Beyoncé makes up to $785,000 per Instagram post (Hanbury, 2019). Another celebrity, well-known singer and actor, Rihanna, also endorses her own line, Fenty, through a partnership with shoe company Puma.

Many social media users today are those from both the Millennials and Generation-Z generations. Social media sites are well-adapted to these users who love to share their lives posting their thoughts, activities, and photos (Fromm, 2016). Millennial and Generation-Z consumers depend on social media for entertainment, education, and general information on a plethora of topics including which type or brand of products to buy. Millennials and Generation-Z consumers use social media multiple times a day and divide their time throughout multiple platforms. Millennials have been socialized to believe they live in a society where physical comforts and acquisition of material possessions are important. In the only study that could be found using the Millennial generation, but not the Generation-Z, McCormick (2016) found that for the Millennial generation, there is great importance in picking the right celebrity to endorse apparel brands and products. It was also found that celebrities can attract more attention in an advertisement when they are endorsing products that appeal to their image.

Generation-Z has never known a world without the internet (Viens, 2019). A study by PrakashYadav and Rai (2017) stated that Generation-Z needs to be involved

and informed when interacting with other people. It is also important, when marketing to Generation-Z users, to remember that they want to feel important by providing feedback actively, and knowing that their opinions and/or comments given are valued whether their input is about brands, products, services, or issues.

Instagram was reported as one of the top social media platforms for both Millennials and Generation-Z internet users (Clement, 2020). Clement (2020) said this site allows the Millennials and Generation-Z users to interact with and stay connected to others that helps them feel a needed sense of importance and involvement. During the September 2019 survey, Clement (2020) found that 69% of the male and 79% of the female respondents of these two generation groups used Instagram. In addition, Clement found that these two groups are very attuned to whether, and to what extent, people accept them. They are very influenced by celebrities and other social media influences (McCormick, 2016). These findings lend credence to further research being needed to understand the attitudes of Millennials and Generation-Z especially toward fashion brand choice and how celebrity endorsements influence their fashion purchase intentions.

1.2 Justification and Purpose

Using social media to market fashion-related products has become increasingly popular. With the rise of fashion marketing using celebrity endorsements on social media sites, it is somewhat perplexing that there has been relatively little research

conducted to understand the role of celebrity endorsements using social media and their influence on consumer fashion brand choice.

A number of studies have investigated the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior (Jamil, 2014), consumers' attitude toward the brand being endorsed (Radha & Jija, 2013), and celebrity credibility and purchasing intentions (Singh & Banerjee, 2018). However, to date there have been few studies that have investigated celebrities' influence on Millennial and Generation-Z users who are large users of social media sites, specifically a celebrity's activeness on social media and their endorsing of fashion brands. This study contributes to the research gap because it is studying celebrities' characteristics that affect consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed by celebrities on social media sites. This study also seeks to examine the little-researched topics of the importance of celebrity-endorsed fashion brands and perceived brand credibility on social media sites, and how it influences the consumers' intention to choose the brand being endorsed.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate celebrity-specific characteristics as well as perceived brand credibility and celebrity activeness on social media and how these constructs influence Millennials and Generation-Z attitudes towards brands on social media sites. It will also study how attitude may influence the consumers intention to choose the brand being endorsed. Specifically, the characteristics to be investigated include celebrities' physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity's activeness on social media, and perceived brand credibility.

Millennials and Generation-Z individuals are big social media users due to these generations growing up with the internet. Some of the most visited sites that these two generations know are social media sites to stay connected with friends and family and to gain information about new and upcoming products and brands. A conceptual model will be developed to show how a consumer's attitude towards the brand being endorsed by celebrities, and intentions to choose a brand being endorsed on social media sites. The findings will add to existing literature and knowledge about celebrity endorsements on social media sites and consumers' fashion brand choice.

1.3 Thesis Organization

Following the introduction of the study as outlined in chapter one, the second chapter includes the review of literature important to this subject. This will provide a discussion on the consumer buying process, social media sites, celebrity endorsements and information about the Millennial and Generation-Z.

The third chapter will include the theoretical framework and information about each hypothesis construct to support the hypotheses development. The information and hypothesis development will be to explore the constructs of celebrity physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity activeness on social media, perceived brand credibility, consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed and the intention to choose the brand being endorsed.

The fourth chapter will cover methodology used in this study including the sample, questionnaire development, data collection and distribution. The fifth chapter

covers analysis of the collected data and results specifically looking at the sample and

results of the hypotheses testing. The final chapter, six, will provide a discussion of the

implications of the study and a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Discussed in the following review of literature is the consumer buying process and how the six steps specifically connect to celebrity endorsements using social media to influence consumers fashion brand purchase intention. Following this will be literature regarding social media sites and the celebrity endorsements.

2.1 Consumer Buying Process

When consumers are thinking of making a purchase, they, consciously or subconsciously, go through a buying process which consists of six sequential steps to arrive at the final buying decision. The six steps are: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, purchase stage and post-purchase (Jones, 2014). The six-step consumer buying process model is developed to break down the steps in which a consumer goes through when deciding whether to make a purchase or not.

The consumer buying process plays an important role when making a decision on a product. In the context of this study, the second step, information search, can be thought of as when a consumer is scrolling through their social media account and sees one of their idolized celebrity's posts come through their feed and thus they see what

that celebrity is wearing and/or endorsing. For example, Instagram has been shown to be a great place to create interest and desire as well as increasing a consumer's desire to seek more information after seeing a photo of the celebrity with a caption that tells about the clothing or cosmetic the celebrity is wearing. Another step that is very important in studying the influence of celebrity endorsements through social media is the fourth step, the purchase decision. In the context of this study, a consumer is debating whether to buy or not to buy a product being endorsed by the celebrity. A study by Araigy (2018) stated that consumers take into careful consideration when they are choosing a brand endorsed by a celebrity. Understanding whether a celebrity-endorsed product is actually purchased after being endorsed on a celebrity's social media feed can either credit or discredit the influence that a celebrity may have on fashion-related products. Understanding how often this happens is important because it shows the impact of a celebrity influencer has on consumers, and it also will help map the process used by a consumer, and when an influencer has an effect on a customer's buying choices.

2.2 Social Media Sites

Social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., which are also known as social networking sites (SNS) can be defined as "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, to create a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and to view and negotiate their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p.211). The social part of the phrase, social media, describes the act of

interacting with others by sharing and consuming information with and about themselves. The media part of the phrase, social media, refers to the instrument of communication used, such as the internet or more traditional communication forms of media including newspapers, radio, and television. Social media sites are used for many different reasons including personal use, catching up with old and new friends, spreading word on new or upcoming business, and/or just staying connected with business colleagues.

There is a dearth of research regarding social media sites and celebrity influence. One study by Chung and Cho (2017) investigated the underlying mechanisms through which the use of social media sites affects endorser effectiveness by investigating the role in which mediating the relationships between social media interactions and parasocial relationships. One of the study results suggested useful guidelines for celebrity endorser selection and also the management strategies in the social media era. No studies have been found on social media sites and celebrity influence with specific regard to the Millennial and Generation-Z generations.

2.3 Celebrity Endorsements

The celebrity endorsement industry is a billion-dollar industry. Traditional celebrity influence can come from a favorite musician, an artist, an actress/actor, or a professional athlete, etc. A consumer's view of a celebrity can vary depending on how that celebrity influences the person. A celebrity's influence can be because of what they do for a profession, what they do for the world/society, or simply because they model and endorse a particular brand or product. Celebrity-endorsed products are especially

important in fashion-brand advertisements because a visual product, especially a product such as a clothing item, needs to be seen on a mannequin or human, or tried on in person to give a truer picture of how the garment looks. When worn by a celebrity, the garment(s) may be additionally enhanced by the celebrity by making the brand more appealing to the consumer and make the celebrity approachable to consumers. Olenski (2016) said that celebrity endorsement marketing campaigns can be very successful as consumers who see a favorite celebrity wearing or using a certain product or brand may be swayed to make subsequent purchases because they want to emulate that celebrity.

There have been numerous studies investigating the factors that influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, the extent these endorsements influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions toward a product, and on subsequent consumer buying behavior. Several studies were found that investigated the different celebrity factors that influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. Ibok (2013) investigated celebrity factors influencing effectiveness of endorsements and found that a celebrity's credibility, as well as their expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness were the most crucial factors in determining how effective and persuasive a celebrity would be in an advertisement. In a similar study by Akram et al. (2017), the factors that were attributed to effectiveness of celebrity endorsements included celebrity popularity, a celebrity's knowledge and skills, their credibility, the celebrity-brand match up and perceived loyalty of the celebrity. The factor of a celebrity-brand match was explored in a study by Rafique and Zafar (2012) who found that consumers have a

better self-brand connection for brands with images that have a good brand match with a celebrity and will more likely have the intention to choose that brand. McCormick (2016) also found that when Millennials feel there is an unsuitable fit between a product and an unfamiliar celebrity, they are less prone to be influenced to make a purchase. Results from a study by Chung and Cho (2017) indicate that the effectiveness of a celebrity endorsement on a social media site depends not only on celebrity characteristics, but also on the quality of celebrity-consumer relationships. This study helps to support the celebrity endorsement effectiveness on social media sites and how consumers interact with celebrities via social media. Numerous studies have also examined the effectiveness of using a celebrity endorsement in influencing consumers' attitudes and their subsequent purchase intentions. Ahmed et al. (2015) found that celebrity-endorsed product advertisements have a positive impact on consumers, both in terms of their attitude towards a fashion brand being endorsed, and their buying intentions although the study was done on print advertisements and not on ads using social media sites. A study by Vijayakumar and Ramakrishanan (2015) also found that a celebrity endorser plays a vital role in the purchase decision of the consumers. As it has been shown that celebrity-endorsed advertisements are indeed more convincing than non-celebrity-endorsed advertisements in persuading consumers to buy a product (Ahmed, 2015; Olenski, 2016), companies continue to employ celebrity endorsers in an attempt to maximize their profits, many with very effective and profitable results.

Although the results of the previous studies show how celebrity-endorsed products or brands are valuable in their results, they did not focus specifically on

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Millennial or Generation Z consumers, two generations who are specifically heavy social media users. One study was found that specifically investigated Millennials was done by McCormick (2016). Although this targeted Millennials, it was a convenience sample that investigated only students who were undergrads and grads in college and not the entire Millennial generation. This study investigated whether the presence of a congruent product-endorser match helped to influence the purchase intent of Millennials and aided in favorable attitudes towards the advertisement (McCormick, 2016).

Although past studies have examined celebrity endorsements on products, no studies could be found that looked at celebrity endorsements of fashion products on social media sites and their influence on the heavy users of social media sites, the Millennial and Generation Z generations.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the celebrity endorsements of brands on social media on consumers' attitude toward the brand being endorsed and the intention to choose the brand being endorsed. The conceptual model (see Figure 3.1 below) is developed based on Social Learning Theory (SLT)(see the discussion of SLT following this section on Conceptual Framework). The conceptual model includes the impacts of four characteristics of the celebrities endorsing the brand and one brand characteristic, perceived brand credibility on consumers attitude towards the brand being endorsed which in turn influence their intention to choose the brand. The model shows the influences of physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity activeness , and perceived brand credibility on consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed on social media and its subsequent influence on the intention to choose the brand being endorsed. These factors are important in understanding the process of the celebrity influence on brand.
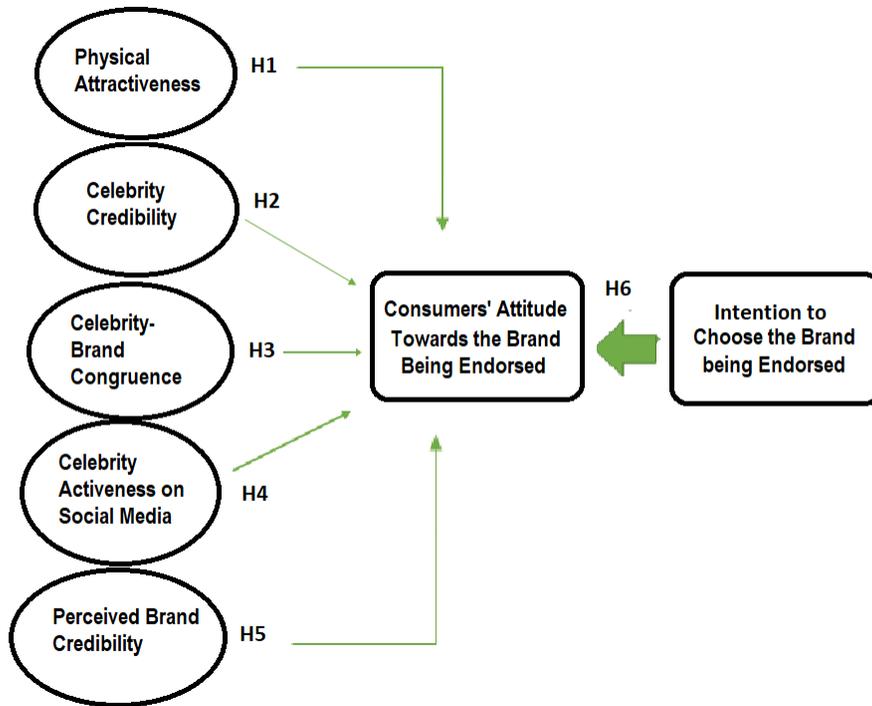
Figure 3.1: Celebrity Influence Impact on Social Media Model

In addition to investigating the relationships between the celebrity endorser-related characteristics and attitude towards the brand being endorsed, perceived brand credibility is also considered as an affecting factor of the consumer attitude towards the brand being endorsed. The attitude expected to influence the consumers' intention to choose the brand that is endorsed by the celebrity.

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) which helps to shed light on the understanding of how celebrity endorsers impact consumers brand choices through social media sites.

3.2 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT) explains how an individual can derive motivation and exhibit favorable attitudes from socialization agents through either direct or indirect social interaction (Lim et al., 2017). SLT was originated by Albert Bandura (1977) who believed that behaviorism alone could not explain all there is about learning. His theory created a foundation to see how social media influencers interact when they are representing brands. In the SLT explanation, people rely on symbols (such as speech, dress, and possessions) that serve as tangible signs of their current status and past success (Bohra, 2015). A person's expectations are shaped by the society in which they live, work and study. As such, social learning can happen when there is social interaction between role models and learners (Powell, 2019). SLT explains this learning in terms of interrelationships between behavior, environmental factors, and personal factors (Deaton, 2014).

Furthermore, SLT is a theory of how people learn new things and develop new behaviors by observing other people. Learning is a social activity that is facilitated when people can observe a behavior exhibited by someone else and then mimic this behavior. In addition to people learning from observing other people's behaviors, people can also learn by mimicking their attitudes. Those who exhibit a behavior or attitude can be amplified if these people are important, in some way, to the people who are viewing or listening to the behavior/attitude, as is often the case with celebrities (Bohra, 2015). As in the case of social media, the application of SLT presents an opportunity to enhance

the somewhat limiting cognitive concepts of attention, memory and motivation as these

cognitive concepts can often overcome through visuals, repeated viewings, and other

forms of attention-grabbing visual and audio stimuli that are all a part of social media

platforms (Deaton, 2014). SLT thereby provides a connection between the behaviorist

approach and the cognitive approaches to learning. The behaviorist approach focuses

on the observable stimulus-response behaviors and all behaviors are learned through

interaction with the environment (Learningtheories.com, n.d.). SLT was used in a study

by Makgosa (2010), who found that SLT can strongly explain the impact of celebrities on

consumption behaviors. Social Learning Theory suggests that an individual's intention to

choose the brand or product to purchase is highly influenced by the consumers' attitude

and also the effectiveness of social media influencers endorsing the brand or product

(Lim et al., 2017). Table 3.1 (see below) defines the key terms used in this study.

Table 3.1: *Definition of Factors*

Factors	Conceptual Definitions	Adapted from
Physical Attractiveness	Physical attractiveness is conceptualized to the level of which a person's physical characteristics which might include weight, height, shape, looks, etc., are considered aesthetically charming or beautiful.	Agam, 2017
Celebrity	Well-known and famous people whose actions and opinions strongly influence the course of events in the society, and their status is often associated with wealth. A person who is famous, especially in the entertainment business.	Nelson, & Deborah, 2017

Celebrity Activeness on Social Media	Celebrity activeness on social media is conceptualized as the degree at which a celebrity engages with his or her fans by the way of posting pictures or videos, tagging brands, responding to comments, or interacting with others content on his or her social media page.	Nouri, 2018
Celebrity Credibility	Celebrity credibility is conceptualized by the quality of being trusted and believed in to give an objective opinion on a subject.	Goldsmith et al., 2000
Celebrity-Brand Congruence	Celebrity- brand congruence is conceptualized as the consistency between the personality of a celebrity and the characteristics of the brand that he or she is endorsing.	Choi & Rifon, 2012
Perceived Brand Credibility	Perceived brand credibility is conceptualized as the believability of the product position information which is contained in a brand.	Spry et al., 2011
Consumers' attitude toward the brand being endorsed	Consumer attitudes are a learned tendency to respond in a consistent favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object.	Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975
Intention to choose the brand being endorsed	Intention to choose the brand is conceptualized as when the consumer is attracted toward a specific brand and personal action tendencies towards a brand.	Singh & Banerjee, 2018

3.3 Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness is conceptualized to the level of which a person's physical characteristics which might include weight, height, shape, looks, etc., are considered aesthetically charming or beautiful (Agam, 2017). For instance, when a fan of a celebrity sees their idol on Instagram, they may judge that celebrity to be attractive because of their body proportions and the make-up that enhances their facial features and in

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addition they may be wearing a clothing piece that a viewer sees as attractive on the celebrity. In a brand-specific example, a sequin dress from Express' holiday line is worn by the movie actress, Sandra Bullock, the consumer may feel that they can look as attractive as Bullock if they wear the same dress. Agam (2017) documented the phenomenon that the physical attractiveness of celebrities on social media used to endorse a brand has a high tendency to drive acceptance for consumers to choose that brand. Thus, the physical attractiveness of an influencer can play an important role in forming a positive attitude toward the brand being endorsed by the celebrity.

There have been numerous research studies that have supported the assertion that a relationship between physical attractiveness and a consumers' attitude can lead to a positive outcome (Morrow, 1990). Most studies have shown that physical attractiveness is of utmost value in that a physically attractive source is actually able to assist in changing consumer attitudes (Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985). The study by Kahle and Homer (1985) found that a product endorsed by a good-looking celebrity can help to promote the attractiveness of the product. After Chanel signed Nicole Kidman in 2003, it was reported that global sales of the promoted Chanel No. 5 L'Eau perfume increased by 30% (Young, 2018). Following in the footsteps of the beautiful Marilyn Monroe and then Nicole Kidman, Chanel No 5 L'Eau got a new face, that of Lily-Rose Depp, who was at the time only 16-years-old (Young, 2018). Following in the footsteps of her attractive celebrity parents, Chanel made it clear that they considered the fresh, young beauty of Depp to be a good brand choice to promote one of their

most popular perfumes to younger consumers such as those in the Millennial or Generation Z generations.

Engaging attractive celebrities with brands, rather than ones considered to be less attractive may therefore help the effectiveness of brand endorsements especially when consumers have several brands from which to choose. One study investigating physical attractiveness of celebrity endorsers for products was done using female athletes in China and was conducted by Liu et al. (2010). Results indicated that female athlete endorsers who are physically attractive could indeed affect consumers intention to choose the brand being endorsed more significantly than less attractive female athletes (Liu et al., 2010). Another study, this one by Agman (2017), investigated a celebrity endorsers' physical attractiveness and its impact on consumers' attitude towards an online advertisement. The results of this study show that physical attractiveness is indeed positively related to consumer attitude towards an advertisement. The results show that attractive celebrity endorsers have higher influences on consumers' attitude towards advertisements for consumer products than less attractive celebrity endorsers (Agam, 2017). These studies have shown that there is a positive connection between the physical attractiveness of a celebrity-endorser and a consumers' attitude towards the brand.

As social media relies on gaining consumer interest based on largely visual content, the physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorsing a brand is important to gaining consumer interest and hopefully triggering the desired consumer outcome (McCormick, 2016). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is:

*H1: Physical attractiveness of celebrity will positively influence consumers'
attitude towards the brand being endorsed.*

3.4 Celebrity Credibility

Celebrities who are well-known in their field for their achievements and who
have gained popularity with a segment of consumers helps them to stand out when
endorsing a brand. A celebrity is considered credible (an important consideration for
companies when choosing a celebrity to form a partnership with), when they are well
known in their personal careers (competent) and have had positive experiences in their
past with endorsing brands and products. Celebrity credibility is relatable to perceived
brand credibility (Aziz et al., 2013; Spry et al., 2011).

Being trustworthy also strengthens the perception of a celebrity's credibility, and
in turn, a celebrity's credibility helps to instill trust in a company, something that is very
important in the eyes and mind of a consumer when considering purchasing a brand's
product. In other words, celebrity credibility is relatable to perceived brand credibility in
terms of trust (Aziz, Chani, & Niazi, 2013).

This transference of credibility from a celebrity to a company works because the
consumer assumes that a company willing to make a large investment in a celebrity
endorser to promote their brand must be trustworthy enough to provide the endorsed
product. This thereby instills trust in the consumer for the brand. Likewise, celebrity
endorsers who promote a specific brand gives consumers the feeling that they are
actual customers of the brand they are endorsing. Positive celebrity credibility often

leads to positive influence on attitudes towards the endorsed brand and the trustworthiness of the brand.

Numerous studies have looked at the link between celebrity endorsements and credibility. In a fairly recent study by Cuomo et. al. (2019) results show that a celebrity endorser was highly credible and showed a positive impact with persuasiveness and attitude change (Cuomo et. al., 2019). An earlier study by Aziz et al. (2013) also showed that there was a positive impact of celebrity credibility on advertising effectiveness both in terms of consumers' attitudes toward the brand being endorsed and their purchase intentions.

Celebrities often help with their own credibility in a positive way because they reinforce to consumers that the product being endorsed is a good brand. As the consumers trust the celebrity that they respect and idolize, they will be more likely to try the brand even if a brand is not well-known. Janjua (2017) investigated the decision-making process of consumers and whether an individual's intention to purchase a product can be influenced by the attitude of the consumer towards the brand. Results showed that the relationship between the effectiveness of a celebrity endorsement and the consumer's evaluation of a brand was determined by the credibility of the celebrity endorsing the brand. In other words, it was found that loyal consumers are loyal to specific brands based on the credibility of the celebrity endorsing the brand. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is:

H2: Celebrity credibility will positively influence the consumers' attitude towards

   the brand being endorsed.

3.5 Celebrity-Brand Congruence

Having the celebrity only endorsing one brand at a time allows the consumer to be able to trust the celebrity that they admire thereby respecting the brand (Olenski, 2016). A company that has a celebrity endorsing their brand or product also needs to have a good match-up of celebrity-brand and product congruence in order to generate more effective and positive advertisement evaluations (Min et al., 2017). Celebrity-brand congruence works as an efficient way to improve the effectiveness of advertising which helps to lead to the influence of the consumers attitude towards the brand being endorsed. Celebrity-brand congruence is conceptualized as the consistency between the personality of a celebrity and the characteristics of the brand that he or she is endorsing (Choi & Rifon, 2012). The congruence has been conceptualized as a bi-dimensional concept in terms of relevancy and expectancy of association (Hecker & Childers, 1992). These two dimensions, relevancy and expectancy, can be translated into a celebrity-brand match. Matching a celebrity with the right brand can contribute to increased awareness and the strengthening or changing of the brand's image (Hecker & Childers, 1992). This congruence has been studied for "fittingness" of an endorser with the advertised product (Gaied & Rached, 2015).

Research has confirmed that consumers tend to anticipate the congruence between the image of the endorsers and that of the product being advertised (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Studies have shown that celebrity endorsers have a positive impact on consumers when it comes to intention to choose the brand over a non-celebrity endorser (Min et al., 2017). Um (2017) studied the effectiveness of celebrity

endorsements influencing of three different factors: 1) congruence between a celebrity endorser and endorsed brand/product; 2) identification with a celebrity endorser; and 3) consumers' attribution styles. This study confirmed that there is a positive relationship between celebrity-brand congruence and consumers' attitudes toward brand being endorsed.

With celebrity-brand congruence, a celebrity can be considered an appropriate match for a product endorsement when there is a clear meaning as to why he or she is endorsing the brand or product (Fleck, Korchia, & Roy, 2012). Research by Min et al. (2017) found that a positive celebrity-brand congruence leads to a consumers' ideal self-image and a closer relationship to the image projected by the celebrity. The more the celebrity is relatable and suitable for the brand or product, the more relevant or congruent the celebrity and brand paring will influence consumers attitude towards the brand being endorsed. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is:

H3: Celebrity-Brand congruence will positively influence the consumers' attitude
towards the brand being endorsed.

3.6 Celebrity Activeness on Social Media

Celebrities are becoming more and more active on social media in order to get the attention of their fans. Social media tends to provide a sense of 'realness' to celebrities which makes their endorsements much more powerful (Bradic, 2015).

Celebrity activeness on social media is conceptualized as the degree at which a celebrity engages with his or her fans by the way of posting pictures or videos, tagging brands,

responding to comments, or interacting with others' content on his or her social media page (Nouri, 2018). Celebrities typically have thousands, if not millions, of followers on Instagram, Twitter, and other social media presences. Brands will pay top dollars to have celebrities endorse their brands for what they see as a healthy return on their investment. Companies since the late 1930s have been using athletes and celebrities to promote their brand because of the impact it has on a brand (Bradic, 2015). Celebrities who are very active on social media usually possess a more positive image for a brand (Min et al., 2017). Hailey Baldwin (also known as Hailey Rhode Bieber), was voted one of the top five endorsers for apparel brands in 2016. She endorsed brands such as Tommy Hilfiger and Adidas. Karlie Kloss was also in the top five for endorsers in 2016. Some brand relationships she has endorsed include Marc Jacobs, Express, and Adidas. These celebrities are very active on social media, especially Instagram, in order to get their names out there. They endorse the brands they are paid for by clothing companies, which in turn, also help with increasing interest in the products they wear while also increasing their views on Instagram. Having a celebrity endorse a brand often brings more worth to the brand. Once a celebrity signs with the brand, an element of legitimacy is instantly presented because of the power of the name backing the brand.

Consumers who are active on social media and engaged when they view a social media site as a part of their daily life routine are ensuring their needs are satisfied. Thus, the more active a celebrity is on social media, the better the chance a celebrity has in satisfying their consumers' needs. So, the more active they are when they are endorsing a brand and being involved on social media, the more they have the potential to engage

with their followers and interact or influence their buying behavior of an endorsed

product. For the matter of the present study, Hypothesis 4 is:

H4: Celebrities activeness on social media will positively affect the consumers'

attitude towards the brand being endorsed.

3.7 Perceived Brand Credibility

Perceived brand credibility addresses the concept that consumer-based brand

equity can be influenced through a celebrity's brand endorsements. Specifically, brand

credibility is the believability of the product position information contained in a brand,

which depends on the willingness and ability of firms to deliver what they promise (Spry

et al., 2011). Perceived brand credibility has been studied in the context of celebrity

endorsements for the brand (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Zipporah and Mberia (2014)

found that perceived brand credibility increases the consumer expected value of a

brand and also adds value to the brand for the consumer. Although several studies have

found that a credible celebrity endorser can help with perceived brand credibility, pre-

existing perceived brand credibility has also been found to be important in positive

attitude formation. This credibility involves the extent to which a consumer perceives a

brand has a reliable source of information and skills. Prior research has shown that

perceived brand credibility does positively affect brand purchasing intention through

perceived value, specifically, celebrity-endorsed brands (Baek, Kim, & Yu, 2010). This

study by Baek et al. (2010) explained that perceived brand credibility does have a strong

influence on a consumers' intention to choose the brand.

Introducing potential and current consumers to a brand in the correct way

matters. How a brand is recognized, and how consumers remember it, all relies on

brand awareness and how perceived brand credibility affects the consumer's attitude

towards the brand being endorsed. Based on this, Hypothesis 5 is proposed:

H5: Perceived brand credibility will positively affect the consumers' attitude

toward the brand being endorsed

3.8 Consumers' Attitude towards the brand being endorsed and Intention to Choose the Brand Being Endorsed

Consumer attitude plays an important role when it comes to consumers'

purchasing intention to choose the brand or product. In the decision-making process,

measuring consumers' attitudes are considered to be one of the best ways to predict

intention to buying behaviors. Attitude is an individual's affective response towards

performing a behavior that is based on his or her positive approach or negative

avoidance of an object or situation (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988).

It is fairly obvious that celebrities who have a large number of followers on social

media will have more influential power to drive their followers to their endorsed brand.

This will positively affect the consumers' attitudes toward the brand being endorsed,

and they will be more likely to choose that brand over other (Djafarova, & Rushworth,

2017). Consumers attitudes are a learned tendency to respond in a consistent favorable

or unfavorable manner, with respect to a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Lim et

al. (2017) says that consumer attitude can relate to both favorable and/or unfavorable

beliefs towards social media influencers.

Consumer attitude has been used in studies investigating different aspects of celebrity endorsements. There has been previous research to show that an endorser with positive credibility does have a significant impact on a consumer's attitude towards the advertisement for consumers intentions to choose a brand (Spry et al., 2011; Singh & Banerjee, 2018: Lim et al., 2017). With regard to the present study, a consumer's attitude toward a brand endorsed by a celebrity can then influence their intention to choose the brand or product. Intention to choose the brand is conceptualized as when the consumer is attracted toward a specific brand and personal action tendencies towards a brand being endorsed. (Singh & Banerjee, 2018). Positive attitude towards a brand or product will increase the probability of the consumers intention to choose the brand. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is:

H6: Consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed will positively influence the intention to choose the brand being endorsed.

In review, the six hypotheses developed to test the impacts of celebrity characteristics and brand credibility on their evaluation of fashion brand choice being endorsed on social media are as follows:

H1: Physical attractiveness of a celebrity will positively influence consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed.

H2: Celebrity credibility will positively influence the consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed.

H3: Celebrity-brand congruence will positively influence the consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed.

H4: Celebrity activeness on social media will positively affect the consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed.

H5: Perceived brand credibility will positively affect the consumers' attitude toward the brand being endorsed.

H6: Consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed will positively influence the intention to choose the brand being endorsed.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

4.1 Questionnaire Development

The primary purpose of this research is to explore factors that influence consumers' attitude towards celebrity endorsed brands. An online survey questionnaire was developed about general social media uses and purchasing behavior, along with questions regarding physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity activeness on social media, perceived brand credibility, consumer attitudes' toward the brand being endorsed, and the intention to choose the brand being endorsed (See Appendix C). Most of the questions are adopted from previous studies. The 7-page instrument included an invitation letter page and 40 questions. In addition, questions regarding demographic information was asked to be answered.

4.2 Opening Question

To determine the accurate consumer base of respondents who follow celebrities on social media, the first question asked is whether the respondent follows celebrities on Instagram, assuming they currently follow. This was asked to determine if they were suitable to continue taking the survey for relevance. The respondents who selected "no"

were sent to end of survey and the thank you page. Those survey respondents are unrelated to the data research being studied because if they do not follow a celebrity, they cannot properly answer the questions. Only those respondents who follow celebrities on Instagram would be able to accurately give responses to the questions posed. The question was measured categorical with a simple yes or no for answers.

- Do you follow celebrities on Instagram?

4.3 Physical Attractiveness Questions

There was a total of four questions covering physical attractiveness of a celebrity. All of these questions were adapted from the Singh and Bangerjee (2018) study. The questions in the article were plural and changed to singular for this study so the consumer would specifically think about one celebrity opposed to many. All four questions deal with attractiveness features of the followed celebrity such as handsome/beautiful, charming, eye-catching, and classy. All measurements were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

- The celebrity is handsome/beautiful.

- The celebrity is charming.

- The celebrity is eye-catching.

- The celebrity is classy.

4.4 Celebrity Credibility Questions

There were four questions covering celebrity credibility. The measurements were again adapted from Singh and Banerjee (2018). These questions were slightly altered to have the respondent think of a single celebrity rather than numerous celebrities. These are appropriate measurements for this topic because it tests the credibility of a celebrity which can help to persuade a consumer's opinion negatively or positively. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

- The celebrity I follow is trustworthy.

- The celebrity I follow is reliable.

- The celebrity I follow is not involved in any controversy.

- I can trust the celebrity I follow.

4.5 Celebrity-Brand Congruence Questions

There were four questions covering celebrity-brand congruence. These questions were adapted from Malik, Sudhakar and Dutta (2018). The measurement items were taken directly from the constructs and slightly altered to test the measurements for celebrity-brand congruence for this study. These measurements are appropriate because they test the celebrity-brand congruence of the celebrity being relatable to, and a good match for, the brand that they are endorsing. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

- The celebrity is compatible with the brand that she/he endorses.

- I feel the celebrity is best fit for the brand that she/he endorses.

- I feel the celebrity is relevant to the brand that she/he endorses.

- I feel the celebrity is a good match for the brand that she/he endorses.

4.6 Celebrity Activeness on Social Media Questions

There were three questions covering celebrity activeness on social media. These measurements were created by the researcher for this study. The measurements were created based on the perceptions of consumers' viewpoint on celebrities and their activeness on social media. These measurements are appropriate because they are assessing the perceived opinions from a consumer viewpoint about the activeness of celebrities on social media based on a consumer following celebrities' social media accounts and a celebrity staying current with posting, stories, etc. on their pages. The items were all measured using a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

- The celebrity I follow has numerous postings on social media.

- The celebrity I follow on social media has many followers.

- The celebrity I follow on social media posts stories frequently.

4.7 Perceived Brand Credibility Questions

There were four questions that covered perceived brand credibility. These measurements were adapted from the study by Baek et al. (2010) to meet the needs of the current study. The item posed as "The brand has the ability to deliver what it promises" was adapted from the Baek et al. (2010) study came from "This brand delivers (or would deliver) what its promises". The measurement item "The brand has a name to trust" was adapted from "This brand has a name you can trust". The measurement item "The brand product claims are believable" were adapted from "Product claims from this brand are believable". The measurement item "Overtime, my experiences with the brand led me to expect it to keep its promise" was adapted from "Over time, my experiences with this brand led me to expect it to keep its promises". These measurements are appropriate because it measures the credibility of brands in which consumers choose over other brands for various reasons. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

To reiterate the questions for investigating perceived brand credibility are:

- The brand has the ability to deliver what it promises.

- The brand has a name to trust.

- The brand's product claims are believable.

- Overtime, my experiences with the brand led me to expect it to keep its promise.

4.8 Consumers' Attitude Towards the Brand Being Endorsed Questions

For this question section, there was one main question with five items for respondents to answer. Consumer attitude towards the brand being endorsed was adapted from the study conducted by Osei-Frimpong, Donkor, and Owusu-Frimpong, (2019). "Please indicate your overall opinion about the brand endorsed by the celebrity" has five scale items which were altered to fit from the study. The five measurement scale choices were unfavorable/favorable, unlikeable/likeable, unappealing/appealing, bad/good, and unpleasant/pleasant. These measurements are appropriate because they measure the reliability of consumers attitude towards the brand being endorsed in which is being decided on.

The questions used to examine consumer attitude towards a brand being endorsed are:

Please indicate your overall opinion about the brand endorsed by the celebrity.

- Unfavorable/Favorable

- Unlikeable/Likeable

- Unappealing/Appealing

- Bad/Good

- Unpleasant/Pleasant

4.9 Intention to Choose the Brand being Endorsed Questions

There were three questions that were used to assess a respondent's intention to choose the brand being endorsed. These questions were adapted from Baker, and Churchill Jr (1977). The questions for this study were taken from the article and slightly altered to fit the needs of the studies measurement. These measurements are appropriate because they assess the likeliness of a consumer's intention on choosing a specific brand being endorsed. The instrument items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree).

- I would like to try the brand.

- I would actively seek out the brand.

- I would like to buy the brand.

The following table, Table 4.1, is a review of the construct and scale items about celebrity influence on social media and their influence used in this research study and the studies from which they were borrowed. In the following table, celebrity activeness on social media research questions were adapted from the researcher.

Table 4.1: *Constructs and Scale Items*

Construct	Items	Adopted from
Physical Attractiveness	The celebrity is handsome/beautiful. The celebrity is charming. The celebrity is eye-catching. The celebrity is classy.	Singh, & Banerjee, 2018

Celebrity Credibility	The celebrity I follow is trustworthy. The celebrity I follow is reliable. The celebrity I follow is not involved in any controversy. I can trust the celebrity I follow.	Singh, & Banerjee, 2018
Celebrity-Brand Congruence	The celebrity is compatible with the brand that she/he endorses. I feel the celebrity is best fit for the brand that she/he endorses. I feel the celebrity is relevant to the brand that she/he endorses. I feel the celebrity is a good match for the brand that she/he endorses.	Malik, Sudhakar, & Dutta, 2018
Celebrity Activeness on Social media	The celebrity I follow on has numerous postings on social media. The celebrity I follow on social media has many followers. The celebrity I follow on social media posts stories frequently.	Created for this study by the researcher
Perceived Brand Credibility	The brand has the ability to deliver what it promises. The brand has a name to trust. The brand product claims are believable. Overtime, my experiences with the brand led me to expect it to keep its promise. The brand is credible.	Baek, Kim, & Yu, 2010
Consumers' Attitude towards the brand being endorsed	Please indicate your overall opinion about the brand endorsed by the celebrity. - Unfavorable/favorable - Unlikeable/likeable - Unappealing/appealing - Bad/good - Unpleasant/pleasant	Osei-Frimpong, Donkor, & Owusu-Frimpong, 2019
Intention to choose the brand being endorsed	I would like to try the brand. I would actively seek out the brand. I would like to buy the brand.	Baker, & Churchill Jr, 1977

4.10 Demographic Questions

The last section of the survey was designed to collect demographic information of respondents including gender, age, employment status, highest level of education completed and income range.

The questions were:

- Gender

- Age

- Employment status

- Please select your highest level of education completed

- Please select your annual income range

4.11 Human Subjects

Upon completion of the questionnaire development the questionnaire was submitted to the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (IRB) to gain Human Subjects approval. The research design, questionnaire and human subjects' sample was given approval without changed being required.

4.12 Sample Section and Distribution

The study uses a convenience sample of students attending multiple schools including the University of South Carolina, Columbia Campus and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville Campus, as well as the author's Facebook list of people many of

whom are in the target market area being sampled. The target sample is identified as

members of Generation-Z (respondents born between 2000 and 2020) and Millennials

(respondents born between 1982 and 1999). This is an appropriate sample for the study

due to the fact that these generations are heavy users of social media and these two

generations have not been specially targeted by previous studies.

Participants were asked questions about their social media usage. The survey

invitation includes a link to the survey via email, Blackboard and also through the

author's Facebook personal page. The survey was available for two weeks before the

data was analyzed. Overall, one hundred and thirty questionnaires were completed.

It is assumed that all of the participants will answer the questions truthfully and

to the best of their ability.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1 Sample Response

IBM's SPSS (2020) was used to perform the statistical analysis for this research study. A total of 210 responses were initially gathered. The purpose of this study was to examine celebrity influence on fashion choice by consumers using social media, the surveys of 80 respondents who indicated they do not follow celebrities on social media were deemed unsuitable for data analysis thereby leaving the final sample of 130 useable responses. These were deemed unsuitable because if one does not follow a celebrity on social media sites, they cannot truthfully answer the survey questions.

5.2 Demographic Information

The usable sample consisted of consumers ages 18-43 years old that follow celebrities on social media sites. The demographic was analyzed for frequencies and percentages.

The majority (79.3%) of respondents are female, while 25 (19.2%) are male, with 2 respondents choosing not to answer (see Table 5.1 under section 5.3 below) although the sample, as a whole was skewed because of the female-to-male ratio.

5.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

Table 5.1: *Gender Results*

	Frequency	Percent
Male	25	19.2
Female	103	79.3
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

For the age groups, 41 of the 130 respondents (31.5%) were aged 20 or 21 years old (see Table 5.2). The next largest age group was 28 and older comprising 30.0% of the total sample. The ages between 24-27 was composed of 10% of all the respondents.

Table 5.2: *Age Frequencies and Percentages*

	Frequency	Percent
18-19	7	5.4
20-21	41	31.5
22-23	28	21.5
24-25	5	3.8
26-27	8	6.2
28 and older	39	30.0
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

The highest level of education completed was skewed as well with the majority of respondents or approximately 45% having completed their third-year in college (see Table 5.3). Almost 25% of the next largest group of respondents have graduated from college.

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Table 5.3: *Education Level*

	Frequency	Percent
Graduated from high school	12	9.2
1st year of college	9	6.9
2nd year of college	9	6.9
3rd year of college	58	44.6
Graduated from college	32	24.6
Some graduate school	7	5.4
Prefer not to answer	1	0.8
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

The employment rate was fairly evenly distributed throughout the three categories between part-time employees (33.1%), full-time employees (34.6%), and those who are currently unemployed (30.8%)(See Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: *Employment Status*

	Frequency	Percent
Part-time employed	43	33.1
Full-time employed	45	34.6
Currently unemployed	40	30.8
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

Income ranges varied with approximately 45% of the respondents reporting an annual income range between $0 and $15,000, while the next largest group of respondents (23.8%) reported having an annual income range of $30,001 or more. Two respondents chose not to answer this question.

Table 5.5: *Income Range*

	Frequency	Percent
$0-$15.000	58	44.6
$15,001-$20,000	6	4.6
$20,001-$25,000	4	3.1
$25,001-$30,000	9	6.9
$30,001- and over	31	23.8
Prefer not to answer	20	15.4
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

Respondent's Base Questionnaire Results

The first question asked of consumers was designed to establish which social media platform they use most often. Approximately 63% of respondents said Instagram, followed by 19.2% who use Facebook. The third largest response was 10% of the respondents who use Twitter (See table 5.6). Snapchat and 'Other' social media platforms accounted for less than 7% of the total.

Table 5.6: *Social Media Platform*

	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	25	19.2
Twitter	13	10.0
Instagram	82	63.1
Snapchat	7	5.4
Other	2	1.5
Missing	1	0.8
Total	130	100.0

As Instagram is used by over three times more of the respondents than other social media sites, this may attest to the popularity of Instagram to Millennials and Generation Z users in the U.S. population as the social media platform go-to to connect with friends, socialize, gain information, etc.

The second survey question asked respondents who influences their fashion influences. The top response for fashion influencer was celebrities at 26.2%, followed by a tie of almost 21% for both public figures as well as their friends and family (See table 5.7). The fourth largest percentage was bloggers. Approximately 17% of respondents said they are influenced in their fashion choices by bloggers.

Table 5.7: *Fashion Influence*

	Frequency	Percent
Public Figures	27	20.8
Celebrities	34	26.2
Friends/Family	27	20.8
Magazine Ad	7	5.4
Actresses/Actors	5	3.8
Bloggers	22	16.9
Other	7	5.4
Missing	1	0.8
Total	130	100.0

The third question asked respondents how likely they would be influenced by a celebrity on social media when making a fashion choice. This question was based off a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Very Unlikely to 5=Very Likely) (See Table 5.8). The highest

response rate percentage in this category was approximately 60% (n=78), for "likely".

When looking at the responses of "likely" and "very likely" for a celebrity to be

influenced by a celebrity in their fashion choices, the percentage differenced at almost

55%, from very likely at 5.4% and likely at 60.1%. The remaining responses were all

under 20%. It is interesting to note that both the "unlikely" and "neither" responses had

the same percentage of almost 15%.

Table 5.8: *Likely to be Influenced By*

	Frequency	Percent
Very Unlikely	5	3.8
Unlikely	19	14.6
Neither	19	14.6
Likely	78	60.1
Very Likely	7	5.4
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

The fourth question was an opinion selection question asking which type of

celebrity influences one's brand choice when buying fashion items. The options for this

selection include musicians/singers, fashion designers, actors/actresses, professional

athletes, and other (See Table 5.9). Approximately 32% of the respondents indicated

that actors and/or actresses accounted for the greatest influence, while almost 22%

were influenced by fashion designers and almost 21% of musicians and/or singers held

influence over fashion choice.

Table 5.9: *Celebrity Influence Brand Choice*

	Frequency	Percent
Musicians/Singers	27	20.8
Fashion Designers	28	21.5
Actors/Actresses	42	32.3
Professional Athletes	14	10.8
Other	18	13.8
Missing	1	0.8
Total	130	100.0

Respondents were also asked how often they purchased fashion products including shoes, bags, clothing, accessories, etc. (see Table 5.10). Almost 67% of respondents say they shop for fashion items from 0-4 times a month. This was followed by 26.9% of respondents saying they shop for fashion products 5-9 times a month. Only about 5% of respondents say they shop more than 10 times a month.

Table 5.10: *Purchasing Fashion Products*

Number of times per month	Frequency	Percent
0-4 times a month	87	66.9
5-9 times a month	35	26.9
10-14 times a month	5	3.9
15 or more times a month	12	1.5
Missing	1	0.8
Total	1	100.0

Respondents were also asked about the importance of five different criteria when choosing a fashion brand. Below are three of the five criteria that were most relevant: (1) Brand, (2) Reputation of the Brand, and (3) Previous Experience with a

Brand. Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, response choices ranged from "not at all

important" to "very important (see Tables 5.11-5.13).

Respondents were asked first about the fashion product criteria, the importance

of brand. Approximately 63% of respondents felt brand was "important" or "very

important" when choosing a fashion product, while only 13% felt that brand was "not

important" or "not important at all" when choosing a fashion product.

Table 5.11: *Factor- Brand*

Importance of Brand	Frequency	Percent
Not at all important	5	3.8
Not important	12	9.2
Neither	30	23.1
Important	59	45.4
Very Important	23	17.7
Missing	1	0.8
Total	130	100.0

The "reputation of the brand" when choosing a fashion product was the next

fashion criteria measured (see Table 5.12). The greatest number of respondents (almost

59%) said that the reputation of a brand when choosing a fashion product was an

"important" criterion to them. When added to the second highest response, that of it

being a "very important" consideration when choosing a fashion product, the positive

responses of being "very important" or "important" made up approximately 86% of the

sample. There was one response choice with no responses, that of "brand reputation"

being "not at all important".

Table 5.12: *Factor- Reputation of Brand*

Importance of Brand Reputation	Frequency	Percent
Not at all important	0	0
Not important	4	3.1
Neither	12	9.2
Important	76	58.5
Very Important	36	27.7
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

The last category regarding importance when choosing a fashion product was the respondent's "previous experience with the brand" (see Table 5.13). Almost 47% of respondents said that this was an" important" product criteria, followed by approximately 42% of respondents who said this was a "very important" criteria (See Table 5.16). The remaining respondents (approximately 10%) answered with "neither" nor "not important." There was one response choice that none of the respondents chose, that of "previous experience with the brand" being "not at all important" when choosing a fashion product.

Table 5.13: *Factor- Previous Experience with Brand*

Importance of Previous Experience with Brand	Frequency	Percent
Not at all important	0	0
Not important	5	3.8
Neither	7	5.4
Important	61	46.9
Very Important	55	42.3
Missing	2	1.5
Total	130	100.0

The last question of the survey was to determine how many hours, on average, the respondent spends per week on a social media site (see Table 5.14). This question had the most responses in two categories, with 11-16 hours chosen by 54 respondents for a 42.9% share of the responses followed by 41 (32.5%) responding that they spend from 5-10 hours per week on social media sites. When combining these two responses, 73% of the respondents spent between 5 to 16 hours on a social media site. Of the remaining three categories, spending "less than 4 hours", spending between "17-22 hours", and spending "23 or more hours" each had under 10% of the sample responses.

Table 5.14: *Average Hours on Social Media*

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 4 hours	9	6.9
5-10 hours	41	31.5
11-16 hours	54	41.5
17-22 hours	13	10.0
23 hours or more	9	6.9
Missing	4	3.1
Total	130	100.0

Several questions were asked of respondents in order to document their opinions on celebrity endorsements specifically with regards towards the physical attractiveness of a celebrity, a celebrity's credibility, the congruence between celebrity and brand (celebrity-brand congruence) and the celebrity's activeness on social media.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the overall consistency of the measurements of a study. Cronbach's alpha and item-total statistics correlations were used to calculate the internal consistency of them items. Reliability tests were performed on all 28 items within the seven constructs. Based on the reliability analysis, it was discovered that 3 variables, those of celebrity-brand congruence, perceived brand credibility, and consumer's attitude towards choosing the brand being endorsed, exhibited optimal reliability of over .9. Physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, and celebrity activeness on social media all exhibited strong reliability, over the adequate level of .7. The remaining variable, intention to choose the brand being endorsed, had a reliability of over .6 which indicated that it has an acceptable level of reliability. Results of the Cronbach's Alpha is shown in Table 5.15 below.

After checking the reliability for all the items for each construct, they are averaged to create an index measure for individual construct. For example, the responses for the four items that measure physical attractiveness were added up and the results were divided by four. The same process was applied to the other constructs and the results were used in the correlation and hypothesis tests.

Table 5.15: *Cronbach's Reliability Analysis*

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	# of Items
Physical Attractiveness	.840	4
Celebrity Credibility	.871	4
Celebrity Activeness on Social Media	.792	3
Celebrity-Brand Congruence	.940	4
Perceived Brand Credibility	.939	5
Consumers' Attitude towards the brand being endorsed	.989	5
Intention to choose the brand being endorsed	.680	3

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between the factors in this study, and the results shown in table 5.16 below show positive relationships between all factors.

Table 5.16: *Correlations Among Variables*

Variables	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. PhyAtt	4.15	.625	1						
2. CelebC	3.68	.780	.451**	1					
3. CelebASM	4.23	.713	.421**	.053	1				
4. CelebBC	4.02	.699	.493**	.481**	.412**	1			
5. PercBC	4.13	.679	.430**	.419**	.308**	.673**	1		
6. ConsABE	3.49	1.351	.284**	.095	.294**	.376**	.229*	1	
7. IntenB	3.60	.727	.263**	.413**	.262**	.458**	.520**	.327**	1

Notes: PhyAtt (Physical Attractiveness), CelebC (Celebrity Credibility), CelebASM (Celebrity Activeness on Social Media, CelebBC (Celebrity Brand Congruence), PercBC

(Perceived Brand Credibility), ConsABE (Consumers' Attitude towards the Brand being Endorsed), IntenB (Intention to Choose the Brand being Endorsed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Physical attractiveness has a moderate relationship to and is positively correlated with celebrity credibility ($r = .451$, $p < .0001$) as it was also with perceived brand credibility ($r = .430$, $p< .0001$). Physical attractiveness had moderately positive relationship with celebrity-brand congruence ($r = .493$, $p < .0001$) and celebrity activeness on social media ($r = .421$, $p.0001$). Physical attractiveness was positively related to consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed, but had a weak relationship, ($r = .284$, $p < .0001$) and also with intention to choose the brand being endorsed ($r = .263$, $p < .0001$).

Celebrity credibility had a positive but very weak relationship with how active a celebrity is on social media ($r = .053$, $p < .550$) and also was positively correlated, but a week relationship with consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed ($r = .095$, $p < .301$). Celebrity credibility had a positive relationship with celebrity-brand congruence ($r = .481$, $p < .0001$) and also, intention to choose the brand being endorsed ($r = .413$, $p < .0001$). Celebrity credibility had a somewhat strong positive relationship with perceived brand credibility ($r = .419$, $p < .0001$).

Celebrity activeness on social media had a positive, but weak relationship with celebrity-brand congruence ($r = .412$, $p < .0001$) and also with intention to choose the brand being endorsed ($r = .262$, $p < .0001$). Celebrity activeness on social media had a

positive, but fairly weak relationship perceived brand credibility ($r = .308, p < .0001$) and with consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed, the relationship was very weak ($r = .294, p < .0001$).

Celebrity-brand congruence had a very strong relationship with perceived brand credibility ($r = .673, p < .0001$). Celebrity-brand congruence also exhibited a positive relationship with a consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed ($r = .376, p < .0001$) and a bit of a strong relationship with intention to choose the brand being endorsed ($r = .458, p < .0001$).

Perceived brand credibility has a positive, but very weak relationship with consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed ($r = .229, p < .019$). Perceived brand credibility had a strong positive relationship with intention to choose the brand being endorsed ($r = .520, p < .0001$).

Finally, consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed was found to have a positive relationship with intention to choose the brand being endorsed ($r = .327, p < .0001$).

Hypothesis Testing

To test the six hypotheses for this study, a series of regression analyses were conducted. Table 5.17 shows Multiple Regression for the hypotheses 1-5, Table 5.18 shows a Reduced Multiple Regression Table for hypothesis 1 and 3, and Table 5.19 shows Simple Linear Regression for hypothesis 6.

Multiple Regression

Table 5.17: Multiple Regression

Independent Variable (X)	Dependent Variable (Y)	Beta	P-Value (*Sig)	Supported
H1: PhyAtt	ConsABE	.265	.025*	YES
H2: CelebC	ConsABE	-.166	.358	NO
H3: CelebBC	ConsABE	.652	.011*	YES
H4: CelebASM	ConsABE	.250	.186	NO
H5: PercBC	ConsABE	-.141	.558	NO

Notes: PhyAtt (Physical Attractiveness), CelebC (Celebrity Credibility), CelebBC (Celebrity Brand Congruence), CelebASM (Celebrity Activeness on Social Media), PercBC (Perceived Brand Credibility), ConsABE (Consumers' Attitude towards the Brand being Endorsed).

*Significant at .05.

Multiple regression was performed to investigate whether physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity brand congruence, celebrity activeness on social media, and perceived brand credibility could significantly predict consumers' attitudes toward the brand being endorsed. The full model overall is statistically significant (F= 4.912, p =.000*), although when examining each independent variable, not all independent variables were significant. Two variables, physical attractiveness (p = .025*) and celebrity-brand congruity (p = .011*), were found to be statistically significant, while the remaining three independent variables of celebrity credibility, celebrity activeness on social media and perceived brand credibility were not

statistically significant. The results of this regression model indicated that the model explained 18.3% of the variance. The final predictive model as originally run was:

Consumers' Attitude towards the Brand being Endorsed = -.068 + (.265*PhyAtt) + (-.166*CelebC) + (.652*CelebBC) + (.250*ConsASM) + (-.141*PercBC)

Multiple regression was used to test hypothesis 1 through hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 1 revealed that the standardized coefficient for physical attractiveness (.265) is statistically significant at the 0.05 level since the p-value is not greater than .05. Hypothesis 2 revealed that the standardized coefficient for celebrity credibility (-.166) also was not significant at the 0.05 level since the p-value was larger at .358. Hypothesis 3, celebrity brand congruence (.652) is statistically significant because its p-value of .011 is less than .05. Hypothesis 4, celebrity activeness on social media (.250), the standardized coefficient is not statistically significant because its p-value is greater than .05. For the fifth hypothesis, perceived brand credibility (-.141), the coefficient is not statistically significantly because its p-value is greater than .05.

5.18 Reduced Multiple Regression

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta	P-Value (*Sig)	Supported
H1: PhyAtt	ConsABE	.222	.027*	YES
H3: CelebBC	ConsABE	.627	.001*	YES

Notes: PhyAtt (Physical Attractiveness), CelebBC (Celebrity-Brand Congruence), ConsABE (Consumers' Attitude towards the Brand being Endorsed).

*Significant at .05.

Reduced Multiple Regression

The Multiple Regression was reduced because three independent variables (H2, H4, and H5) were not significant and all five independent variables accounted for 18.3%, it was decided to reduce the multiple regression analysis to the two significant independent variables which are physical attractiveness and celebrity-brand congruence which had a variance of 15.3%. It was decided to take out the three independent variables that were not significant because they did not contribute to the model, which is why the reduced multiple regression was ran.

So how can these results be interpreted? First, for the independent variable of physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorsing a fashion product, it means that consumers who perceive the celebrity physically attractive have more positive attitude toward the brand being endorsed by the celebrity than those who don't. This result has been found in numerous previous studies (Felix & Borges, 2014; Kim & Na, 2007; Sliburyte, 2009) but to date, has not been documented with Millennial and Generation Z consumers of fashion products advertised online on social media sites.

Celebrity-brand congruence was the other independent variable found to be significant in multiple regression. As such, celebrity-brand congruence shows a significant relationship to having a positive attitude toward the brand being endorsed with regard to Millennial and Generation Z generation consumers. As with the physical attractiveness independent variable, celebrity-brand congruence has also been shown to be positively related to consumers having a positive attitude toward a brand being endorsed in numerous studies including Desarbo and Harshman (2012), Pradhan,

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Duraipandian and Sethi (2016). However, to date, no studies could be found that investigated consumers from the Millennial and Generation- Z generations and looking at celebrity-endorsements of fashion products on social media sites.

Results of multiple regression show that consumers are, therefore, more likely to choose a brand endorsed by a celebrity if the celebrity is physically attractive and the celebrity and brand being portrayed are congruent or in harmony with the brand image being endorsed on social media. In other words, Millennial or Generation Z consumers who view an attractive celebrity endorsing a brand that is congruent or in harmony to who they are as perceived to be by the consumer (for example, endorsing a cosmetic brand and wearing that brand of cosmetics or seen wearing a pair of jeans and also endorsing that brand of jeans) will have an advantage over a brand being endorsed by a less attractive celebrity or a celebrity endorsing a product that seems to be less congruent with their image (for example, a model endorsing a high-caloric ice cream). This is one indication that makes it easier for consumers to make a celebrity-endorsed brand and buying decision.

So, at least with the sample of Millennial and Generation Z consumers from the current study, both physical attractiveness of a celebrity and the celebrity endorsing a product that is perceived to be congruent in the eyes of these generations, there is a positive relationship to their attitude toward the brand.

Simple Linear Regression

Table 5.19 below shows the testing results for simple linear regression of hypothesis 6, i.e., what kind of relationship exists between the independent variable, consumer attitude towards the brand being endorsed, with the dependent variable, intention to choose the brand being endorsed. The significance level for this table is 0.05 which indicates a 5% risk of concluding that an association exists when there is no actual association.

Table 5.19: *Simple Linear Regression*

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R^2	Beta	P-Value(*Sig)	Supported
H6	Consumer Attitude towards the brand being endorsed	Intention to choose the brand being endorsed	.107	.327	.000	YES

*Significant at .05.

For H6, a simple linear regression was carried out to test if consumer attitude towards the brand being endorsed significantly predicted intention to choose the brand being endorsed. The result of the regression reveals that 10.7% of the variation of intention to choose the brand being endorsed can be explained by consumer attitude towards the brand being endorsed (R^2 = .107, β = .327, p-value < .0001). Therefore, it can be confirmed that the consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed significantly predicts the intention to choose the brand being endorsed, thus H6 is supported.

Results for hypothesis 6 showed that consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed positively influences the intention to choose the brand being endorsed. This may show how consumers express themselves with the brand they choose. The findings relate back to Social Learning Theory in terms of how an individual's intention to choose the brand can be highly influenced by the effectiveness of a celebrity endorsing the brand. These results showed similar findings as the studies done by Spry et al. (2011) and Singh and Banerjee (2018), where an endorser's positive credibility significantly influences a consumer's favorable attitude towards the advertisement and subsequent intention to purchase.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Conclusion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to document the overall relative effectiveness of celebrities on Millennial and Generation Z consumers when it comes to celebrity-endorsed fashion-brand choice in a social media setting.

Although perhaps not surprising, findings show that Millennial and Generation Z consumers who find celebrity endorsers physically attractive are more likely to have a more positive attitude toward the brand being endorsed over a celebrity endorser who is not considered to be physically attractive. Although this result has been found in previous studies (Felix & Borges, 2014; Kim & Na, 2007; Sliburyte, 2009) with other consumer groups, to date, this has not been found for consumers in the Millennial and Z Generations. Additionally, this is something that, to date, has not been documented with Millennial and Generation Z consumers of products advertised on social media sites.

Celebrity-brand congruence was the other independent variable found to be significant. As such, celebrity-brand congruence also showed a significant relationship with consumers having a positive attitude toward the brand being endorsed, specifically

in this study with regard to Millennial and Generation Z generation consumers. In

previous studies, celebrity-brand congruence also has been shown to be positively

related to consumers' having a positive attitude toward a brand being endorsed

(Desarbo & Harshman, 2012; Fleck, Korchia & Roy, 2012; Min et al., 2017; Pradhan,

Duraipandian & Sethi, 2016). As with the finding on a celebrity's physical attractiveness,

to date, however, no studies could be found that investigated consumers from the

Millennial and Gen Z generations and celebrity-brand congruence having a positive

attitude toward the brand being endorsed on social media sites. Some consumers may

navigate towards social media settings when it comes to the purchasing brands which

are endorsed by a celebrity. Therefore, companies who pay celebrities to endorse their

brands should devote more efforts to ensure the celebrities are physically attractive for

positive consumer experiences, which can indeed lead to increasing intention to choose

the brand.

The findings on the importance of physical attractiveness of celebrities endorsing

brands on social media in this study is important because companies need to

understand what characteristics best capture the attention of their target market and to

make sure they choose the best celebrity to match their brand in order to create

potential for further revenue. When using celebrity endorsements on social media sites,

the main focus should be to ensure that the target market has been properly selected

also with the celebrity to endorse the brand. This appears to be especially true when

targeting Millennials and Generation-Z users, ensuring that they are choosing celebrities

that they know and who are actively followed by other Millennials and Generation Z

consumers is important. Selecting celebrities that are less known to their generational group may have a negative impact on the endorsement of the brand. Celebrity-brand congruence on consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed can be useful for social media marketers because knowing Millennials and Generation-Z users are positively influenced by celebrity brand image is important. It helps companies to narrow down their selection to choose the correct celebrity for their brand.

Somewhat surprisingly, three independent variables were found not to contribute to having a positive attitude toward the brand being endorsed on social media sites. These were celebrity credibility, celebrity activeness on social media, and perceived brand credibility. Although the literature review showed that celebrity credibility (Cuomo et al., 2019 and Aziz et. Al., 2013), celebrity activeness on social media (Min et al., 2017), and perceived brand credibility (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014 and Baek et al., 2010) each of these independent variables were found to be significant on previous studies for the present study these variables were not significant. This could be a result that, because no previous studies could be found on the Millennial and Generation Z consumers, it could be that these variables are not important to these younger consumers, or perhaps it is because the medium were advertisements on social media sites, these consumers may react differently to social media site ads than non-social media site advertisements.

These findings will help to further establish a basis for future research on Millennials and Generation-Z users as these two generations do not have much research focused on them nor on celebrity influences on social media.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study sample was composed of a convenience sample and as such may not be sufficiently broad enough nor large enough to represent a larger population. Future studies should consider using a wider range for gathering respondent results from all over the Unites States to lend itself to more inclusive results. Another limitation of the current study is that it was focused on Millennials and Generation Z consumers as this is a largely under-researched population with regard to celebrity endorsements, but there are other users of social media sites that were not sampled and this may yield different results.

Another limitation of this study was that it has a skewed gender demographic (female = 103, male = 25). More gender-balanced sample may yield different results. As of July 1, 2018 Statista, reported that there were 161.13 million males and 166.04 million females living in the United States born between 1980 and 2018 (Duffin 2020). At of the beginning of 2020, the total population of Millennials were 82.22 million people, and Generation-Z were 86.40 million people in each of these generation groups (knoema.com, 2020). As such, gender in the United States is clearly more evenly distributed than the present sample, to conduct this study to sample additional male respondents.

Another limitation in this study was the measurement issue of perceived activeness. This was a limitation in this research because the measurement was created

by the author of this study as a previously vetted measurement on perceived activeness could not be found.

Although there were limitations to this study, it is important to reiterate that this study contributes to the theoretical and more applied findings on factors that influence intention to choose celebrity-endorsed brands on social media and to the understanding of how to reach the important market of Millennials and Generation-Z consumers. The findings in this study can be used in future strategies for social media practitioners by the positive impact that physical attractiveness and celebrity-brand congruence had on consumers' attitude towards the brand being endorsed in Millennials and Generation-Z users in this study. Since these two generations have not been widely studied in this topic, the new findings that were generated in this study have a source for future researchers to furthermore the study. There is a shortage of information regarding this subject. The findings of this study may add to the gap in literature on this topic of social media context and also create a foundation for future researchers who investigate this subject. The findings may assist with brand company's marketing and understanding with celebrity endorsers and where to focus more on when it comes to celebrity-endorsed brands with the use of social media.

Furthermore, this study relates back to SLT in terms that people rely on tangible signs such as speech, dress, and possessions in which a consumers' expectations are shaped by the society today. As previous findings showed, and confirm, SLT can strongly explain the impact of celebrities on consumption behaviors (Makgosa, 2010). This

confirms that a consumers' attitude towards a brand being endorsed positively affects celebrity endorsements on social media sites.

In conclusion, future study for this topic can help to remedy the limitations as stated previously while adding a richness of information to the field on celebrity endorsement. Future studies could consider the effects of celebrity-brand congruence and physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorsing a brand on social media within the entire United States to further study on Millennials and Generation-Z users and on the three variables not found to be significant in this study.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

APPROVAL LETTER for EXEMPT REVIEW

Jaclyn Newbert
701 Assembly St
Carolina Coliseum

Columbia, SC 29201 USA

Re: **Pro00094377**

Dear Jaclyn Newbert:

This is to certify that the research study *Celerity impact on fashion brand choice using social media* was reviewed in accordance with 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2) and 45 CFR 46.111(a)(7), the study received an exemption from Human Research Subject Regulations on **3/25/2020**. No further action or Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight is required, as long as the study remains the same. However, the Principal Investigator must inform the Office of Research Compliance of any changes in procedures involving human subjects. Changes to the current research study could result in a reclassification of the study and further review by the IRB.

Because this study was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, consent document(s), if applicable, are not stamped with an expiration date.

All research related records are to be retained for at least three (3) years after termination of the study.

The Office of Research Compliance is an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB). If you have questions, contact Lisa Johnson at lisaj@mailbox.sc.edu or
(803) 777-6670.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson

ORC Assistant Director and IRB Manager

APPENDIX B

INVITATION LETTER

Invitation Letter

Dear participant,

My name is Jaclyn Newbert and I am a graduate student in the Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management Department at the University of South Carolina. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my degree in Retailing, and I would like to invite you to participate. This study is sponsored by me.

I am studying the impact of celebrity endorsement influence on social media and how it affects a consumer's brand choice. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey.

In particular, you will be asked questions about general social media uses and purchasing behaviors, along with questions regarding physical attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity activeness on social media, perceived brand credibility, consumer attitude towards the brand, and the intention to choose the brand. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Participation is confidential and anonymous, which means that no one (not even the research team) will know what your answers are. So, please do not write your name or other identifying information on any of the study materials. Participation, non-participation, or withdrawal will not affect your grades in any way.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 860-921-8303 by calling or texting, or my email: jnewbert@email.sc.edu; or my faculty advisor; Dr. Deborah Brosdahl: brosdahl@hrsm.sc.edu

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please follow the link to complete the online survey When you are done, please just make sure to hit submit. Contact me at the number listed below to discuss participating (860-921-8303).

With kind regards,
Jaclyn Newbert
860-921-8303
jnewbert@email.sc.edu

APPENDIX C

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Online Survey Questionnaire

Do you follow celebrities on Instagram?

     Yes   No

(If no is selected, it will skip to end of survey.)

General Questions

Which social media platform do you use most often?

    1. Facebook   2. Twitter   3. Instagram   4. Snapchat

    5. Other, please specify _____

Which of the following give you the most fashion influence? (Choose one)

    1. Public Figures   2. Celebrities   3. Friends/Family   4. Magazine Ad

    5. Actresses/Actors   6. Bloggers   7. Other, please specify _____

How likely would you be influenced by celebrity on social media when making your fashion choices? (Scale 1-5: 1 being very unlikely, 5 being very likely)

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

Which type of celebrity most influences your brand choice when buying fashion items? (Choose one)

    1. Musicians/Singers   2. Fashion Designers   3. Actors/Actresses

    4. Professional Athlete   5. Other: Please specify _____

How often do you purchase fashion products? (Shoes, bags, clothing, accessories, etc.)

    1. 0-4 times a month   2. 5-9 times a month   3. 10-14 times a month

    4. 15 times or more a month

How important is each factor to you when choosing a product to buy from social media?

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither	Very important	important
1. Brand	1	2	3	4	5

2. Celebrity Endorser	1	2	3	4	5
3. Following a Trend	1	2	3	4	5
4. Reputation of Brand	1	2	3	4	5
5. Previous Experience with Brand	1	2	3	4	5

How many hours, on average, per week do you spend on social media?

1. Less than 4 hours   2. 5-10 hours   3. 11-16 hours   4. 17-22 hours

5. 23 hours or more

Physical Attractiveness

For this section, think about a celebrity that you follow on social media.

The celebrity is handsome/beautiful.

1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity is charming.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity is eye-catching.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity is classy.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

Celebrity Credibility

For this section think about a celebrity you follow on social media.

The celebrity I follow is trustworthy.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity I follow is reliable.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity I follow is not involved in any controversy.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

I can trust the celebrity I follow.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

Celebrity Activeness on Social Media

This section is focused on the perceived opinions from a consumer viewpoint. Think about a celebrity you follow on social media.

The celebrity I follow has numerous postings on social media.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity I follow on social media has many followers.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The celebrity I follow on social media posts stories frequently.

        1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

        4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

Celebrity-Brand Congruence

For this section, think about a brand that is endorsed by a celebrity you like to answer the following questions.

The celebrity is compatible with the brand that she/he endorses.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

I feel the celebrity is best fit for the brand that she/he endorses.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

I feel the celebrity is relevant to the brand that she/he endorses.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

I feel the celebrity is a good match for the brand that she/he endorses.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

Perceived Brand Credibility:

The brand has the ability to deliver what it promises.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The brand has a name to trust.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The brand's product claims are believable.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither disagree nor agree

4. Agree   5. Strongly agree

Overtime, my experiences with the brand led me to expect it to keep its promise.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

The brand is credible.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

Consumers' Attitude towards the brand being endorsed

Please indicate your overall opinion about the brand endorsed by the celebrity.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	
1. Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	Favorable
2. Unlikeable	1	2	3	4	5	Likeable
3. Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	Appealing
4. Bad	1	2	3	4	5	Good
5. Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	Pleasant

Intention to choose the brand being endorsed

Please indicate your overall intention regarding the brand endorsed by the celebrity you like.

I would like to try the brand.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

I would actively seek out the brand.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

I would like to buy the brand.

1. Strongly Disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neither agree nor disagree

4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

Demographic Questions

Gender:

A. Female   B. Male   C. Prefer not to answer

Age:

A. 18-21   B. 22-24   C. 25-27   D. 28-30   E. 31-33

F. 34 and older

Employment status:

A. Part-time employed   B. Full-time employed   C. Currently unemployed

Please select your highest level of education completed:

A. Graduated from high school   B. 1st year of college   C. 2nd year of college
D. 3rd year of college   E. Graduated from college   F. Some graduate school

G. Prefer not to answer

Please select your annual income range:

A. $0-$15,000   B. $15,001-$20,000   C. $20,001-$25,000

D. $25,001-$30,000   E. $30,001 and over   F. Prefer not to answer