

**To Use the Obvious Choice: Investigating the Relative Effectiveness of an
Overexposed Celebrity AUTHOR:**

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ABSTRACT:

The present study aimed to investigate whether having an overexposed celebrity in an endorsement would have a more positive impact on consumer attitudes than an underexposed celebrity. The study had drawn theoretical inputs from celebrity endorsement literature and satiation theory and achieved study objectives through multiple experiments in controlled set up. Major results suggested that an overexposed celebrity was not more effective than an underexposed celebrity. Also, a congruent celebrity product combination was found to create more favorable outcomes in terms of consumer attitudes. Lastly, the study findings also suggested that the perceived credibility of a celebrity diminished with overexposure through endorsements. The research findings puts forth a doubt to the marketers who are using overexposed celebrities (and incurring more expenses) in product endorsements.

KEY WORDS: Celebrity Endorsements, Celebrity Overexposure, Experimental Design, India.

The practice of using celebrity endorsements in advertising to promote products dates back to more than a hundred years. According to McCracken (1989), a celebrity endorser can be defined as, *...any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement* (p. 310). Recent research on celebrity endorsement suggests that the percentage of celebrity advertisements out of the total number of ads aired is as high as 25-30% in western countries (Shimp 2000) and around 60% in India (Shashidhar 2008). With this in mind, it's not surprising that the celebrity endorsement phenomenon has attracted increasing attention from practitioners and academics over the last three decades. In India however, multiple endorsements by celebrities is a common phenomenon (Patro and Dutta 2010). The popular celebrities may get more than 10 brand endorsements in a single year and this trend is common across Asian countries like India (Shashidhar 2008) and China (Hung et al. 2011). For example, Indian cricketer M.S. Dhoni has more than 25 brand endorsements while actor Shah Rukh Khan has 21. On the other hand there are celebrities with fewer endorsements like actor John Abraham (such Clinic Shampoo and Garnier) and chess grandmaster Vishwanathan Anand (such as NIIT and AMD). The obvious implication would be that a celebrity with more number of endorsements (The term overexposed celebrity is used in the paper for a celebrity with a high number of product endorsements), would be in demand and would charge a higher fee than a celebrity with lesser number of endorsements. However, the question which could be asked is whether the overexposed celebrity would generate a more favorable impact on the consumers. In this regard, early work by Tripp et al. (1994) suggested that multiple endorsements by a celebrity would have a negative impact on the consumers' perception of the celebrity credibility and would adversely affect attitude toward the advertisement. More recently, Ilicic and Webster (2011) have supported similar views when they found multiple endorsements by a celebrity to negatively affect consumer attitudes. In such a scenario, it would be interesting to see whether having an overexposed celebrity would have a differential impact on consumer attitudes in the Indian context. Moreover, a well researched phenomenon in celebrity endorsements suggest that celebrity product congruence is important for achieving positive consumer attitudes in the context of celebrity endorsements (Friedman and Friedman 1979; Kamins and Gupta 1994; Mittelstaedt et al. 2000). The present study thus aims to investigate the relative effectiveness of an overexposed celebrity vis-à-vis the same for an underexposed celebrity in presence of Celebrity-product congruence/incongruence. The study would also explore the possible

reasons behind the observations gained from the former objectives. Given that the celebrity endorsement business in India is worth INR 850 crores, the study intends to help the Indian marketers plan efficiently for celebrity endorsements. The rest of the paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the literature on celebrity endorsements and identifies the gap which has been addressed in the study. The section succeeding the literature review would establish the study objectives and the hypothesis to be tested. Section 3 explains the methodology and section 4, the major findings. The last section discusses the major theoretical and practical implications and concludes the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity Endorsement Literature

The last decade has experienced an increase in the number of advertisements featuring celebrities as marketers tried to stand out in the high advertisement clutter. Celebrities from different walks of life such as film, sports, politics and the corporate world have been used by advertisers to promote their products. The practitioners, namely the Advertising and Public Relation agencies were found to be more interested in the factors contributing to celebrity selection (Charbonneau and Garland 2005; Erdogan, Baker and Tagg 2001; Miciak and Shanklin 1994). Most studies have indicated that the most important reason which drives the firms to go for celebrity endorsements is to stand out in the clutter. Though there are a number of benefits of celebrity endorsements such as increased attention, image polishing and brand repositioning, there may be potential hazards such as overshadowing of the brand by the celebrity, loss of brand image due to public controversy of the celebrity, overexposure etc. (Kaikati, 1987; Tantiseneepong et al. 2012).

Previous academic research have delved into various issues relevant to celebrity endorsements in areas of psychology and consumer behavior (e.g., Cronley et al. 1999; Kirmani and Shiv 1998; Mowen 1980; Marshall 2008; Tantiseneepong 2012), sociology (McCracken 1989), and advertising and brand management (Friedman et al. 1976; Mowen and Brown 1981; Kamins 1990; Till and Busler 1998; Stafford et al. 2002; Ogunsiji 2012).

The entire literature on celebrity endorsements however, could be classified into two categories.

The first one is the category of Source Credibility based studies. Most of the research on celebrity endorsements has concentrated on the source effects (i.e. the celebrity being the source of a communication and the consumer being the receiver) of celebrity endorsements on the consumers. Researchers, such as Ohanian (1990), have identified three dimensions of source credibility; which are Trustworthiness, Expertise and Attractiveness (all grounded in previous literature) and have constructed a reliable and valid scale to measure source credibility. However, literature has contradictory evidence about the impact of the credibility dimensions on consumer attitudes. While some studies found out trustworthiness to be the most important dimension of source credibility (Atkin and Block 1983; Kamins 1989; McGinnis and Ward 1980), there were studies in support of Expertise (Maddux and Rogers 1980; Ohanian 1991; Swartz 1984) and in support of Attractiveness (Baker and Churchill 1977; Caballero, Lumpkin, and Madden 1989; Kahle and Homer 1985; Silvera and Austad 2004). The concept of source credibility in multiple product endorsements by the same celebrity has been sparsely studied in literature. Some early studies by Mowen and Brown (1981) and Mowen et al. (1979) suggested that simply knowledge about a celebrity with multiple product endorsements could erode consumers' perceptions of the celebrity's credibility and at the same time negatively affect brand and ad evaluations. In their empirical study, Tripp et al. (1994) found multiple endorsements by the same celebrity to negatively influences consumers' perceptions of his/her credibility and likability, as well as attitude toward the ad. Tripp et al. (1994) also found that the number of exposures (of the consumers) to the celebrity endorser had a negative impact on consumer attitudes independent of whether the celebrity was endorsing single or multiple products.

In a recent study, Ilicic and Webster (2011) have tried to investigate the effects of multiple product endorsements by the same celebrity coupled with consumer celebrity attachment on the consumer attitudes. However, their findings somewhat contradicted traditional notions since they found attitude towards the ad to be stronger in case of celebrity with multiple endorsements.

The second category of studies in celebrity endorsements belong to the congruence or match-up theory. Researchers have tried to address the issue of congruence between the

celebrity and the product endorsed (e.g., Friedman and Friedman 1979; Kamins and Gupta 1994; Mittelstaedt et al. 2000; etc.) and its impact on the consumers. In most cases it has been found that the congruence of the product with the celebrity creates a more favorable impact on the consumer attitudes than that of an incongruent celebrity-product combination. Since 1990, researchers have used various theories such as associative network theory (Misra and Beatty 1990), elaboration likelihood model (Kirmani and Shiv 1998) and theory of correspondent inferences (Cronley et al. 1999; Silvera and Austad 2004) to explain the congruence theory of celebrity endorsements. The match-up studies have their share of contradictory findings as well. A content analysis of advertisements published in Sports Illustrated featuring athlete endorsers by Jones and Schumann (2000) had findings which go against the match-up hypothesis. Because of the lack of explanatory power of the source credibility models, McCracken (1989) proposed the meaning transfer model of celebrity endorsements which could be considered as a special case of congruence hypothesis. McCracken (1989) postulated that a celebrity personified a set of meanings to the consumer. Those meanings get transferred to the product from the celebrity through an endorsement. McCracken (1989) suggested that consumers consumed the set of meanings associated with the product rather than the actual product or service. Thus the objective of celebrity endorsement should be to transfer the set of meanings which the marketer wants the consumer to perceive and consume. The meaning transfer phenomenon was later tested by researchers such as Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) through a case study. To summarize, the congruence theory or match-up literature suggests that higher perceived similarity between the celebrity and the product endorsed (in terms of meanings or otherwise) would imply more favorable impact on the consumer.

Satiation Theory in Advertising

According to Coombs and Avrunin (1977), satiation is defined as ‘the state beyond which consumers no longer enjoy consumption of a product’. The early proponents of the concept related the phenomenon of satiation primarily to physiological stimuli such as food (Rolls, van Duijvenvoorde and Rolls 1984) and sexual intercourse (O’Donohue and Geer 1983). However, later researchers extended the concept to include non-physiological stimuli such as music (Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman 1999), television programs (Nelson, Meyvis, and Gaiak 2009), art (Berlyne 1971), cars (Frank 1999) etc. The underlying logic behind satiation is that satisfaction related to consumption tends to fade with repetition (Brickman and

Campbell 1971) irrespective of how satisfying a stimulus might be to a consumer at the initiation of consumption.

A review by McSweeney and Swindell (1999) suggests that satiation can also result from psychological processes such as habituation or adaptation, even though traditionally it is equated with reaching a physiological limit (e.g., feeling full in stomach). If generalized, it can explain why too much of anything is bad for consumers, be it having food or watching television advertisements. The same logic gave rise to the field of literature related to the satiation effects of advertisements on consumers, more popularly known as advertising wear-out. Even though there were studies to conceptualize wear-out (Calder and Sternthal 1980; Craig et al. 1976; Greenberg and Suttoni 1973) in the early eighties, one of the early studies to use the word satiation were Grass and Wallace (1986). Investigating the satiation effects of TV commercials Grass and Wallace (1986) observed that the attention paid by viewers to an advertisement increase for repeated exposures up to a certain point but stabilize from that point onwards even when the exposure is repeated. Their study was validated in a natural world setting after that was tested in a laboratory set up.

Attribution Theory in Advertising

Attribution theory (Kelley 1973) in the context of celebrity endorsements suggests that trait inferences may result in consumers' evaluating celebrities with a large number of product endorsements less favorably than those with one or few. According to Kelley (1967, 1973), observers perceive an actor's action to be '*distinctive*' (or unique) when it occurs in the presence of (or is associated with) an entity and does not occur in its absence. For example, a celebrity endorsing a single product (even with multiple viewing) would be perceived as distinctive by the consumers and the consumers might be positively affected. On the other hand, a celebrity appearing in multiple product endorsements would be considered as non-distinctive because the brand endorsements would generalize across the products with the celebrity being constant. This nondistinctiveness may in turn result in consumers to introspect/speculate the nature of the spokesperson behind agreeing to such endorsements. As a result, the consumers may tend to create trait inferences about the celebrity (endorsements are for money making) as the reason for the endorsement. Such attributions about the celebrity endorser are in turn expected to affect consumer attitudes and the perceived credibility of the celebrity (Weiner 1985). Recently, researchers have investigated

the joint effects of attribution and congruence (Kim and Park 2011) and found that greater effects of celebrity-product congruence were evidenced only when the motive of celebrity endorsement was internally attributed. However, the researchers have not investigated the joint effects of congruence and exposure in the same study.

Hypotheses formulation

Researchers and practitioners have found celebrity endorsement to be a costly affair (Erdogan 1999; Kaikati 1987) and companies employing celebrity endorsers are at risk of losing money, as well as the reputation of their brands. This increases the need for the advertisers and marketer to use the right celebrity who would generate the maximum favorable response from the consumers. Researchers such as Kaikati (1987) identified overexposure of a celebrity as a disadvantage of celebrity endorsements. A fact that the audience may have a more favorable attitude towards a celebrity with fewer numbers of endorsements to the one with multiple endorsements was empirically validated by Mowen and Brown (1981).

Drawing analogy from both satiation theory and attribution theory it could be postulated that a celebrity who is overexposed (in this context means has a lot of endorsements) should create psychological satiation and may results in negative trait attribution. This would in turn affect the consumer attitudes towards the endorsement. Thus an overexposed celebrity may not be as effective as another celebrity who is equally credible but is underexposed (or has fewer endorsements) in terms of generating favorable consumer responses. Given the fact that a popular celebrity in India may get up to 30 unique brand endorsements, it increases the chance of satiation and negative trait attribution. However, the literature review on celebrity endorsements in the last thirty five years has rarely addressed this issue. Moreover, according to the author's knowledge, there has not been a study which has tried to address the issue of overexposure coupled with the congruence hypothesis. Thus there is a gap in the literature which needs to be addressed using the proper research question and methodology. This leads to the study objectives.

The study has two main objectives. Firstly, the study would investigate whether a relatively overexposed celebrity would have a positive impact on the consumer attitudes than an underexposed celebrity. Secondly the study would also explore the effect of fit of the celebrity with the product brand endorsed and whether there is any interaction effect. The effect of multiple exposure of the same endorsement is not considered since it has already been addressed by Tripp et al. (1994).

The first hypothesis is generated from the discussion on the satiation effects and attribution theory. The satiation theory implies that an overexposed celebrity will not create a high positive impact on the consumers since the consumers are habituated to watch him/her in every other commercial (a point discussed as a disadvantage of celebrity endorsements by Kaikati in 1987). Moreover, because of media influence the consumers are aware of the endorsement deals signed by a celebrity and the amount of money gained in course. This point was not so evident in the early studies (Tripp et al. 1994) where it was observed that consumers were not aware of multiple endorsements by the same celebrity. The earlier studies (Tripp et al. 1994; Ilicic and Webster 2011) did also have a few questions left unanswered. Tripp et al. (1994) did not test the ad conditions for complex ad stimuli of celebrity endorser types such as the implicit (where the celebrity communicates the endorsement either physically or verbally in an ad), explicit (where celebrity overtly declares the product endorsement) and imperative (where the celebrity suggests the viewers to use the product endorsed) modes as enumerated by McCracken (1989). In reality most celebrity endorsement ads in India are in the category of Implicit or Imperative mode (Jain et al. 2010). Thus testing the effectiveness when a celebrity is implicitly suggesting the consumers to use/buy a product becomes relevant. Tripp et al. (1994) also suggested further investigation effects when celebrities were endorsing different number of products “*do credibility perceptions fall or level off when more than four products are endorsed?*”. Lastly, the study by Tripp et al. (1994) used known brands which could lead to responses laden with prior learning about the brands. Thus they suggested, “*When exposed to unknown brands, multiple product endorsement effects should be observed and should possibly be stronger than found in the present study since subjects could rely only on peripheral cues in order to report attitude toward the brand and purchase intention*” (Tripp et al. 1994 p. 545). Based on the discussion, the first hypothesis thus is stated as:

- H1:** An overexposed celebrity would generate less favorable consumer attitudes (namely Attitude Towards the Advertisement or AAD, Attitude Towards the Brand or AB and Purchase Intention or PI) than an underexposed celebrity with the same level of credibility.

The second hypothesis is generated from the congruence or match up hypothesis. Since the match up hypothesis postulates that the match between the celebrity and the product would generate a more favorable impact on the consumer, it leads to the second hypothesis. The concept of congruence between the celebrity and the product has been studied in literature (Friedman and Friedman 1979; Kamins and Gupta 1994; Mittelstaedt et al. 2000). Till date there has been no study which has tried to address celebrity overexposure and congruency in the same study. The need for such research was highlighted by Tripp et al. (1994) in their study where they mention,

“.....image congruence is an issue. Since incongruence between the celebrity endorser and the product endorsed seems to diminish the persuasiveness of the celebrity (e.g., Friedman and Friedman 1979), future research could attempt to replicate the image congruence hypothesis in a multiple product endorsement context” (Tripp et al. 1994, p. 545)

The later study by Ilicic and Webster (2011) also did not investigate the issue of celebrity product congruence. Thus the second hypothesis is stated as:

- H2:** A congruent celebrity-product pair would generate more favorable consumer attitudes (namely AAD, AB and PI) than an incongruent celebrity-product pair (irrespective of celebrity endorsement exposure).

It would be interesting to find out how the consumer attitudes are modified (if at all) depending on the levels of celebrity endorsement exposure and celebrity-product fit. Tripp et al. (1994) hinted on this issue as a future research direction and Ilicic and Webster (2011) controlled for congruence but discussed about the same possibility. Thus the third hypothesis is stated as:

- H3:** The overexposed celebrity would cause a more negative impact on the consumer attitudes (namely AAD, AB and PI) than the underexposed celebrity under the incongruent celebrity-product condition.

According to the concept of celebrity-product congruence, the same celebrity may not be considered to be fit for all products. However, the two reasons cited by Tripp et al. (1994) to increase generalizability of their study were use of natural setting and new brands. It would be difficult to manipulate the celebrity-product congruence for the same product with two different celebrities, since each celebrity stands for a unique set of meanings in the consumer's mind (McCracken 1989). This implies that there is a likely possibility that if two real celebrities are considered, they may end up being congruent with two different products and incongruent with two more different products. To resolve any confounding with it would be necessary to find out which celebrity (overexposed or underexposed) would generate more favorable impact if both endorse the same product. But this has to be in a separate study with its own design. However from the same logic which generated hypothesis 1, it could be postulated that the overexposed celebrity would create less favorable consumer attitudes than the underexposed even when they are endorsing the same product. The third hypothesis is thus stated as:

- H4:** Given the same product, the overexposed celebrity would generate less favorable consumer attitudes (namely AAD, AB and PI) than an underexposed celebrity.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Experimental Design was selected as the methodology in this case because of its ability to test theoretical relations (Bagozzi and Yi 1989). Three separate studies were conducted.

Study 1

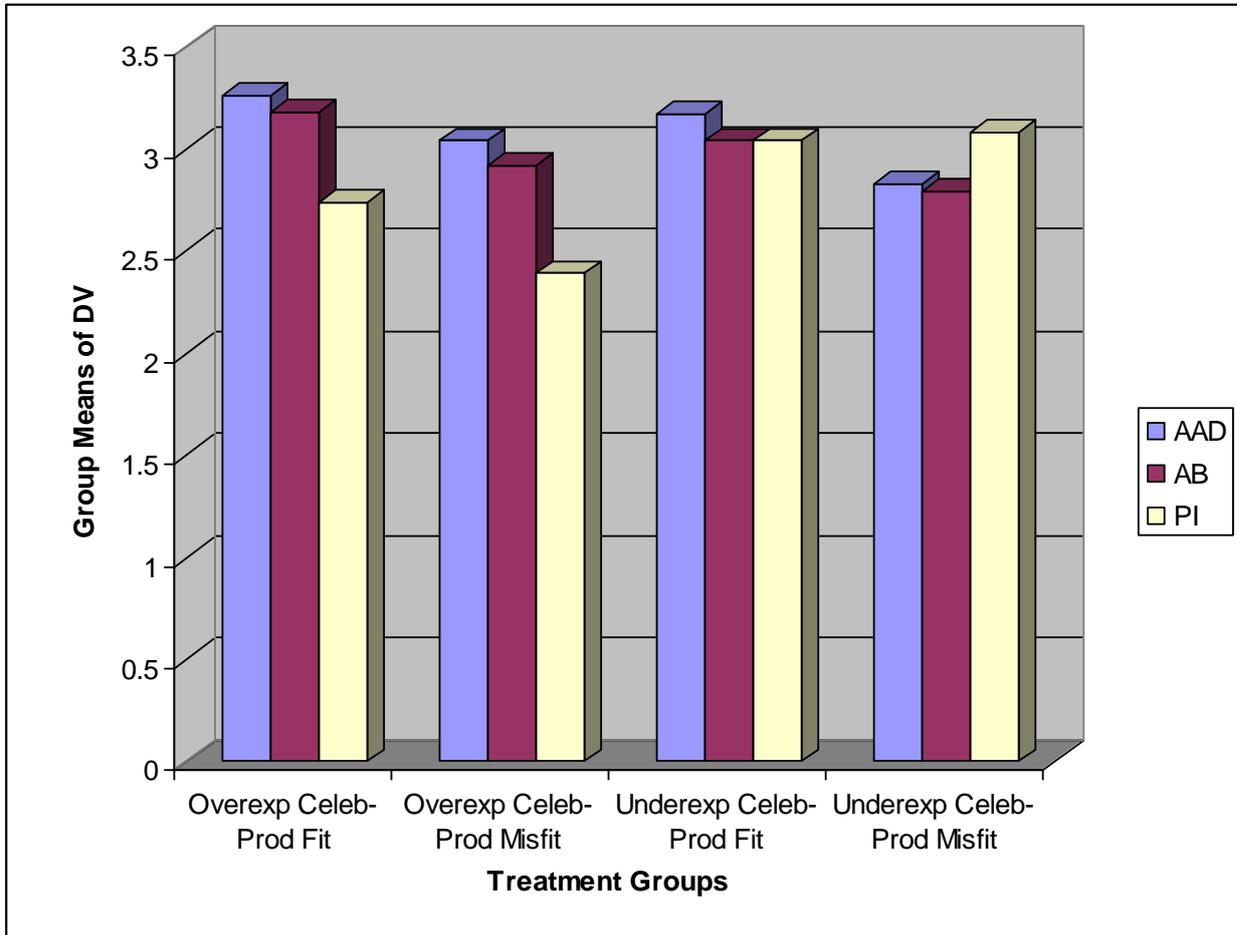
Study 1 was conducted to test Hypotheses 1-3. The study had the celebrity endorsement exposure and the celebrity-product fit as independent variables. The dependent variables were Attitude Towards the Ad (AAD), Attitude Towards the Brand (AB) and Purchase

Intention (PI). All the three dependent variables have been collected from literature and were measured using multiple item (three for each AD, AB and PI) 5 point semantic differential scales. The celebrities were chosen from information on their current endorsements (this was a digression from Tripp et al. 1994). The overexposed celebrity selected was cricketer M. S. Dhoni who had more than 15 endorsements and the underexposed celebrity selected was grandmaster Vishwanthan Anand who had less than 5 endorsements. The objective of the study was to check for effect of overexposure and thus Dhoni was considered to be relatively more overexposed than Anand. Since the authors wanted to test the effects on new brand endorsements (so that learning effect does not arise) a pre-test was conducted to select the Celebrity–Product combinations. A set of sixty post graduate students in a MBA program in a Business School in central India were selected for the pre-test. The students were given a brief about a celebrity management firm who has signed endorsement deals with the celebrities selected for the study. They were asked to identify the products they thought were matching or mismatching with the given celebrities. The results (frequency count) of the pre-test suggested an energy drink to be the product congruent with Dhoni and an educational institution to be incongruent. Similarly for Anand, the congruent and incongruent products were an educational institution and a cola drink. The design used here was a 2X2 (Celebrity: Overexposed/Underexposed) X (Product: Fit/Misfit) full factorial design. Fictitious ads with fictitious brand names (A4 sized, colour) were created for each treatment (Sample ads are available from the authors on request and have not been included because of possible copyright issues) and the experiment was conducted at a premier business school in South India. The brand names used in the ads were verified for applicability by two independent ad industry professionals through personal communication who replied in affirmative. The treatment groups had approximately 30 respondents. The respondents were initially asked to go through a brief before the ad which discussed the objective of the exercise as a test of ad and subsequent attitudes by a reputed celebrity management group. The next page had the print ad following which there were questions related to AAD, AB and PI. This was followed by one question on perceived congruence of the celebrity with the brand and another on perceived exposure (over/under) of the celebrity. Both the last two questions were used for manipulation checks and were measured using 5 point semantic differential (eg. High Fit.....High Misfit) scales. This was followed by demographic information about the respondent. The entire experiment lasted for around 15 minutes for each group.

Study 1: Results

The manipulation checks in study 1 displayed that the overexposed celebrity and the underexposed celebrity had a significant difference in the perceptions about their exposure. Secondly, the difference in perceived congruence was also significant at $p = 0.05$. The descriptive statistics for group means of the dependent variables are displayed in Figure 1. The data from Study 1 was analyzed using MANOVA. All the multivariate tests were found to have a significant F value for the Celebrity ($F_{(3, 125)} = 22.841, p = .000$) and the Product ($F_{(3, 125)} = 5.993, p = .001$). The two-way interaction terms of Celebrity X Product ($F_{(3, 125)} = 2.909, p = .037$) was also found to be significant at 5% level. The MANOVA tests for between subject effects of the independent variables on individual dependent variables indicated the presence of a significant main effect of the celebrity endorsement exposure on only PI at 5% level of significance ($F = 37.425, p = 0.000$) but not for AAD ($F = 4.136, p = 0.054$) or AB ($F = 2.201, p = 0.140$). Thus Hypothesis 1 was partially supported. Celebrity-product fit was found to have a significant effect on AAD ($F = 13.442, p = 0.000$) and AB ($F = 8.674, p = 0.004$) at 5% level of significance and marginally on PI ($F = 3.908, p = 0.050$). Thus Hypothesis 2 (celebrity-product congruence would significantly affect consumer attitudes) was supported. The Celebrity Endorsement Exposure * Celebrity Product Fit interaction term was significant only for PI at 5% level ($F = 6.050, p = 0.015$) but not for AAD ($F = 0.567, p = 0.453$) or AB ($F = 0.021, p = 0.982$). Post Hoc tests (Bonferroni) showed that in case of PI, Anand (underexposed celebrity) was creating a higher PI than Dhoni (overexposed celebrity). In case of the Product fit, the congruent (where the celebrity and the product were fitting with each other) state had a significantly higher mean for AAD and AB than the incongruent pairs. From the descriptive statistics it also came out that an overexposed celebrity in an incongruent condition was creating less favorable PI than the underexposed in the same condition on congruency. Thus Hypothesis 3 was also partially supported.

Figure 1. Study 1: Group Means of Dependent Variables



Note: All standard deviations were in the range 0.75 to 0.81.

Study 2

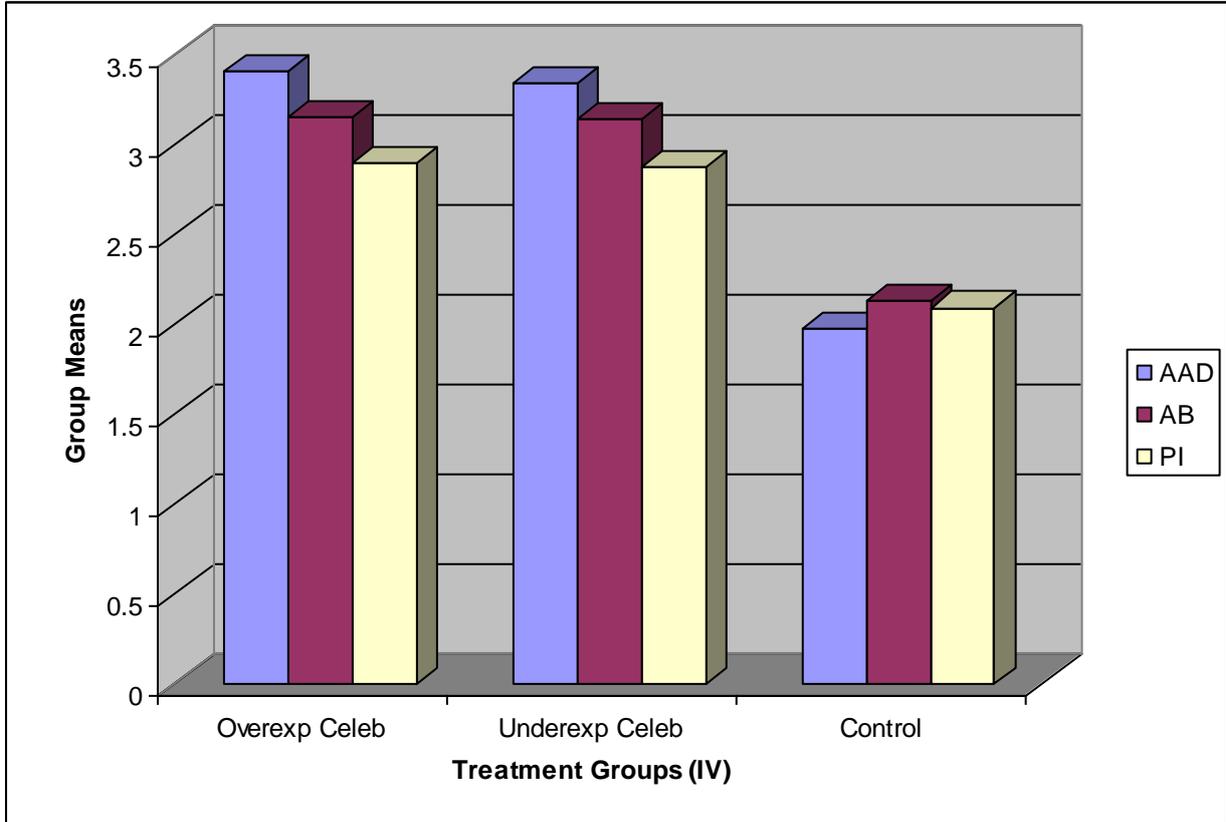
Study 2 was conducted to test Hypothesis 4. A small pretest was conducted among 30 post graduate students in an MBA program in a central Indian Business School to select the best possible common product which would be fit with both Anand and Dhoni. The pretest results suggested (frequency count) Health Drink to be the best possible common congruent product for both the celebrities. The second study had only the celebrity endorsement exposure as the independent variable since the product was common across all the categories. The design was a 3 (Dhoni/Anand/Control) X 1 factorial and fictitious ads (A4 size, colored) were created. A control group was added where only the product name (fictitious) was mentioned (Energex). The dependent variables were the same as study 1. Study 2 also used fictitious ads for each treatment and the experiment and was conducted at

the same business school but with a different group of respondents. The sample size was approximately 30 per group. Similar experimental procedures as study 1 were followed.

Study 2: Results

Findings from study 2 were also interesting. Study 2 had used three separate One Way ANOVA tests (one each for AAD, AB and PI). The F statistics were significant in each case ($F_{AAD} = 27.023$, $p = 0.000$; $F_{AB} = 11.877$, $p = 0.000$; $F_{PI} = 5.70$, $p = 0.005$). The ANOVA results suggested that the celebrity (both Dhoni and Anand) had created a more favorable impact on the consumer attitudes than the control. The descriptive statistics (Refer to Figure 2) suggested further investigation since the dependent variables means for both the celebrities were very close for AAD (μ_{AAD} Dhoni = 3.40; μ_{AAD} Anand = 3.34; μ_{AAD} Control = 1.97); AB (μ_{AB} Dhoni = 3.15; μ_{AB} Anand = 3.14; μ_{AB} Control = 2.13), and PI (μ_{PI} Dhoni = 2.89; μ_{PI} Anand = 2.87; μ_{PI} Control = 2.09). However, the Post Hoc (Bonferroni) tests suggested that there was no significant difference between the means of Dhoni and Anand across all the dependent variables (Table 1) and the differences were only with the control group. Thus Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Figure 2. Study 2: Group Means of Dependent Variables



Note: There is no perceptible difference between the overexposed and the underexposed celebrity in terms of the Dependent Variables.

Table 1. Study 2: Post Hoc Test Results

Dependent Variable	(I) CELEB	(J) CELEB	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
AAD	Dhoni	Anand	.056	.215	1.000
	Control	Dhoni	-1.429(*)	.224	.000
		Anand	-1.373(*)	.214	.000
AB	Dhoni	Anand	.010	.237	1.000
	Control	Dhoni	-1.026(*)	.247	.000
		Anand	-1.015(*)	.235	.000
PI	Dhoni	Anand	.024	.263	1.000
	Control	Dhoni	-.799(*)	.274	.013
		Anand	-.775(*)	.261	.011

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Study 3

The findings from study 1 and 2 raised questions on the factors that were leading to the main effects which were observed from both. More specifically, the authors wanted to identify the mediating variables which may have been causing this effect. The proposed mediator according to authors was Source Credibility of the celebrity. According to McCroskey and Young (1981) source credibility is dynamic, i.e. it is dependent on the perceived characteristics of the source at a given point of time which may change later on. Thus it is possible that a credible source, here a celebrity, may lose his/her credibility due to repeat exposures (supported by Tripp et al. 1994). The simple phenomenon which takes place in the mind of the consumer is the formation of a belief that a celebrity is endorsing a product only for money. This phenomenon is called the effect of correspondent inferences (an information/belief about a particular object) which may be also due to attribution effects. A study by Cronley et al., (1999) found the consumer attitudes to be significantly correlated with correspondent inference in an experimental study. The belief that the celebrity endorsed for money led to unfavorable consumer attitude towards the brand endorsed. If this leads to decrease of credibility of the endorser, a natural result would be a negative effect on the

consumer attitudes since it has been already established that credibility and consumer attitudes are positively related (Ohanian 1991; La Ferle and Choi 2005). Thus it is expected that the credibility of an overexposed celebrity would be much lesser (more negative) than an underexposed celebrity when they are endorsing the same product. Thus we formulate the last hypothesis as:

- H5:** Given the same product, the overexposed celebrity would end up with lower credibility than an underexposed celebrity post exposure of the ad.

There was only one problem in testing this hypothesis. As it has been mentioned earlier, source credibility is dynamic. It may have so happened that the over exposed celebrity had high credibility before he/she started endorsing multiple brands. This time effect would not be possible to test. Thus for this experiment, the sample selected consisted of students of a business school in India, who are staying on a campus and have limited exposure to television. This group was again different from the subjects who participated in the last two experiments. The criteria for selecting a student in the experiment was only when the student said that he/she has not viewed television for the last six months. The assumption behind this was, given the low exposure to television, the audience would not have formed a correspondence bias towards any celebrity. The sample of approximately 60 students thus obtained were divided into two groups and made to sit separately. Each group was given the name of a celebrity (either of the two celebrities used in study 1 and 2 i.e. Dhoni and Anand) and asked to indicate the credibility of the same on Ohanian's (1990) Source Credibility Scale. The Source Credibility Scale (Ohanian 1990) has fifteen items (bipolar adjectives) measured using a five point semantic differential scale. The scale measures all three dimensions of credibility viz. Trustworthiness, Expertise and Attractiveness and thus takes care of measuring likability separately (as done by Tripp et al. 1994). The completed questions were collected from the students. Following this, the same groups were given a filler about the experiment and handed over the test booklet which contained an ad with either Dhoni or Anand coupled with the same product as in Study 2. The booklet which had Dhoni (the overexposed celebrity) as an endorser had a note on the number of endorsements Dhoni was involved in (20) and this was a new endorsement. The booklet with Anand had a note that Anand had only 4 other brand endorsements and that he was choosy about endorsing products. The subjects were asked to study the ad for a minute and

then answer the questions given overleaf. The next page had the Source Credibility Scale of Ohanian (1990). The following page had questions on AAD, AB and PI.

Study 3: Results

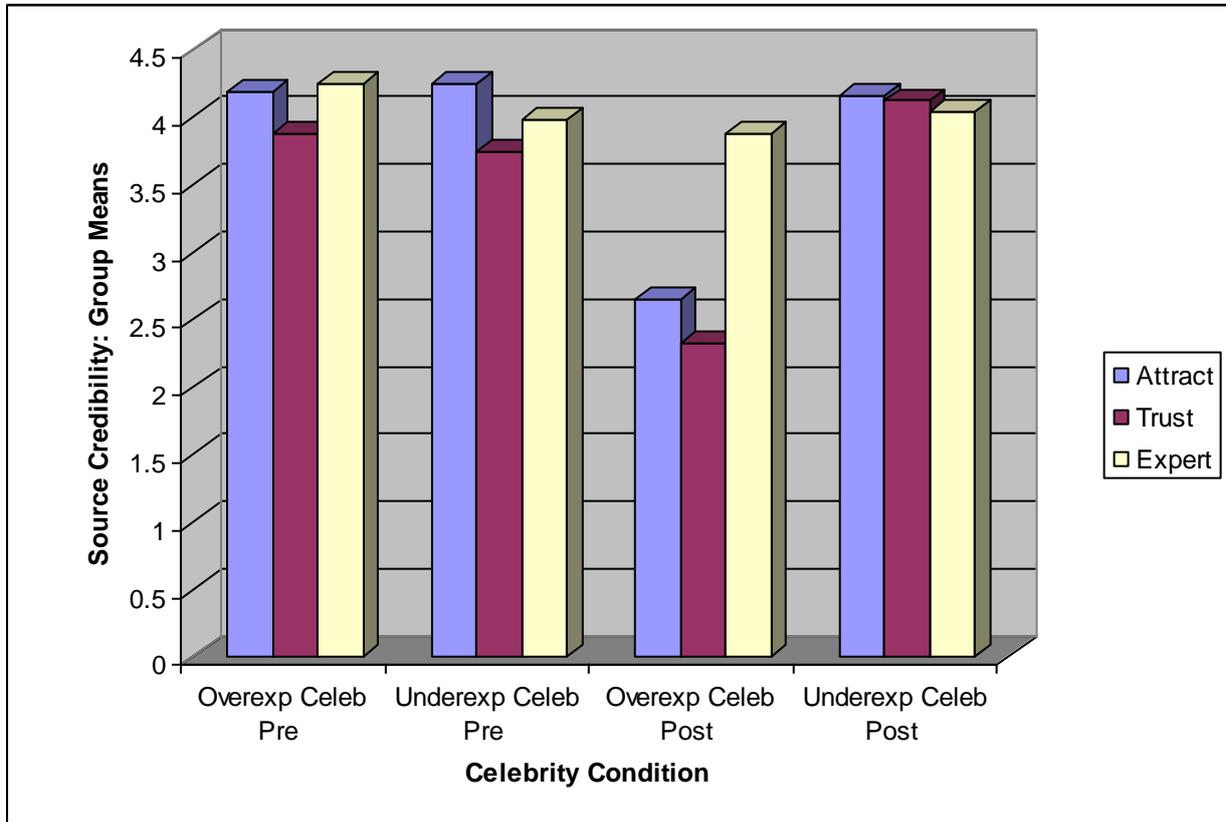
Findings from study three were divided into three parts. Initially the items under the respective credibility dimensions (viz. Trustworthiness, Expertise, and Attractiveness) were added and mean scores per dimension were obtained for each respondent. Next, a simple mean difference test (t Test) was performed to identify the difference in perceived credibility of Dhoni vs. Anand pre-treatment. The results suggested that there was no significant difference in perceived credibility across all the three dimensions of credibility i.e.

Attractiveness¹: [$\mu_{\text{Attractiveness Dhoni}} = 4.19 (0.234)$; $\mu_{\text{Attractiveness Anand}} = 4.25 (0.215)$; $t_{df=57} = 0.189$, $p = 0.318$]; Trustworthiness: [$\mu_{\text{Trustworthiness Dhoni}} = 3.87 (0.204)$; $\mu_{\text{Trustworthiness Anand}} = 3.74 (0.199)$; $t_{df=57} = 0.455$, $p = 0.651$]; and Expertise: [$\mu_{\text{Expertise Dhoni}} = 4.24 (0.228)$; $\mu_{\text{Expertise Anand}} = 3.98 (0.243)$; $t_{df=57} = 0.779$, $p = 0.439$] between Dhoni and Anand.

However, when the post treatment mean differences of the source credibility dimensions were compared, the underexposed celebrity was found to have significantly higher perceptions on Attractiveness [$\mu_{\text{Attractiveness Dhoni}} = 2.65 (0.191)$; $\mu_{\text{Attractiveness Anand}} = 4.16 (0.163)$; $t_{df=57} = 6.026$, $p = 0.000$] and Trustworthiness [$\mu_{\text{Trustworthiness Dhoni}} = 2.33 (0.155)$; $\mu_{\text{Trustworthiness Anand}} = 4.12 (0.179)$; $t_{df=57} = 7.5379$, $p = 0.002$] at 5% level of significance (Refer to Figure 3 for a graphical representation of the same). In fact, it was observed that the mean credibility for the overexposed celebrity decreased significantly post exposure (or post information about multiple endorsements) for the Attractiveness and Trustworthiness dimensions. Interestingly, the perceived trustworthiness of the underexposed celebrity (Anand) increased post exposure from 3.74 to 4.12. The difference in perceived expertise however, was not statistically significant at 5% level [$\mu_{\text{Expertise Dhoni}} = 3.87 (0.225)$; $\mu_{\text{Expertise Anand}} = 4.04 (0.232)$; $t_{df=57} = 0.526$, $p = 0.601$]. Thus Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

¹ Figures in parentheses indicate standard error. Higher values signify positive direction.

Figure 3. Study 3: Mean Credibility Scores Pre and Post Treatment



The next set of tests was independent t tests to check for the difference in consumer attitudes namely, AAD, AB and PI across the two celebrities. For AAD and AB, the mean difference was not found to be significant at 5% level of significance thereby reinforcing the findings from study 2 (Refer to Table 2). However, the mean PI for the underexposed celebrity (Anand) was found to be significantly higher than that of the overexposed celebrity (Dhoni) at 5% level. This supported findings from study 1.

Table 2. Study 3: Mean Difference Tests for Dependent Variables

Descriptive Statistics					t-test for Equality of Means			
Dependent Variable	Mean (Dhoni)	Std. Error Mean	Mean (Anand)	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference (Dhoni–Anand)	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
AAD	3.56	0.194	3.38	0.186	0.180	0.670	57	0.505
AB	3.22	0.182	3.28	0.201	-0.060	0.221	57	0.826
PI	2.88	0.193	3.52	0.241	-0.640	2.064	57	0.042

Theoretical implications

Both the findings from study 1 and study 2 suggested that an underexposed celebrity may be equally effective in generating favorable consumer attitudes as an overexposed one (Hypotheses 1 and 4). Moreover, the very fact that Hypothesis 4 was not supported suggests that an underexposed celebrity may be equally (if not more) effective than an overexposed one. Thus the study findings support the satiation effects of celebrity endorsements on consumers. In fact, study 1 pointed out that the underexposed celebrity generated more favorable consumer PI than the overexposed one. Thus the major findings from the study support earlier research (Tripp et al. 1994; Ilicic and Webster 2011). The phenomenon may be attributed to the result of habituation (McSweeney and Swindell 1999) or attribution to actions such as money making. The significant interaction from study 1 (Hypothesis 3) on the PI also has marketing implications. In case the celebrity is an overexposed one, the misfit causes more negative PI whereas in case of an underexposed celebrity, the misfit does not cause the PI to decline, rather it increases. The reason behind this may be the theory of correspondent inference. Even though the advertisement (over exposed celebrity-misfit product) speaks well about the product, the consumers are well aware that the celebrity is getting a big amount of money for the endorsement. Thus the perceptions become more unfavorable which supports the findings by Cronley et al. (1999).

Moreover, researchers have identified that celebrity endorsement strategy has an impact on overall brand performance and equity of the endorsed brand (Spry et al. 2011; Ogunsiji 2012). Thus in case the celebrity is negatively perceived, it may have an impact on the brand equity. The findings from study 1 support the congruence hypothesis (Hypothesis 2). In case of all the dependent variables measuring consumer attitudes, the congruent celebrity product combination was found to create more favorable outcomes. This supported the findings of congruence or match-up researchers such as Friedman and Friedman (1979), Kamins and Gupta (1994) and Mittelstaedt et al. (2000). The findings from study 3 emphasize on the conclusions drawn from study 1 and 2. Moreover, it supports the theory of correspondent inferences (Cronley et al. 1999). The very fact that a celebrity is endorsing multiple brands or is repeatedly exposed is sending a signal to the consumer that he/she is doing this for money. Thus the credibility of the celebrity is going down which was evident from the credibility values obtained in the post treatment findings. So, the overexposed celebrity, even though popular, is not able to generate more favorable consumer attitudes than the underexposed one. One more interesting finding came out from study 3. There was no significant difference in perceived expertise for the overexposed and the underexposed celebrity pre and post information about number of endorsements. This implies that the perceived expertise of the celebrity is not dependent on the number of endorsements but is derived from his/her achievements in the respective field. This could be a future research direction where more in depth study could generate the reasons and the effects of such phenomenon. Lastly, the attractiveness of the overexposed celebrity was found to decrease with information on number of endorsements. Thus it contradicts the traditional notions of attractiveness of a celebrity being only related to his/her physical appearance (Ohanian 1991; Silvera and Austad 2004). This phenomenon can also be related to the satiation effect which is more of habituation (McSweeney and Swindell 1999). It's like watching the same face over and over again reduces its attractiveness. From the academic point of view, the study partly supports findings by Mowen and Brown (1981), Tripp et al. (1994), Ilicic and Webster (2011) and also emphasizes on the problems of celebrity overexposure raised by Kaikati (1987).

Managerial implications

Two key findings have emerged from this research. The most important implication of the study is a question which could be raised to the advertiser who is using the same celebrity for multiple brands. Celebrity endorsements are costly affairs and the celebrity who is getting a lot of endorsements is obviously a popular celebrity. In India, a popular celebrity like Dhoni or Shah Rukh Khan could earn up to INR 50 millions (1 INR or Indian Rupees = 0.02 USD approx) from an endorsement deal. The study findings question effectiveness of such expenditure. The findings also suggest that whatever be the level of exposure of the celebrity, it is always a safer option to go for a congruent celebrity product endorsement than an incongruent one. Thus the marketer should carefully select those celebrities who are perceived to be matching with the endorsed products. Study 2 findings also suggested that using a celebrity may be a better option than using no celebrity, thus it encourages the marketers to opt for a celebrity endorsement strategy. The very fact that a celebrity is endorsing multiple brands or is repeatedly exposed is sending a signal to the consumer that he/she is doing this for money. This in the long run can erode the credibility of the celebrity and may not be able to evoke the expected response from the consumers. Thus a marketer should try and use different less exposed celebrities at different points of time rather than opting for an already popular celebrity.

Limitations and scope for future research

The study has addressed an area of celebrity endorsements which has not been addressed before by the researchers. The study findings indicated that paying a hefty fee for a popular celebrity who is already into multiple endorsements may not be an effective strategy for product promotion and may actually lead to a decrease in overall credibility of the celebrity. One of the limitations of the study was the use of student sample, which could be addressed in future research by expanding the study to a more general audience. Secondly, because of the experimental nature of the study, the brand was fictitious. Future studies could consider real brands and whether the existing brand knowledge creates any difference in consumer attitudes. One more extension of the study could be exploring the comparative effects of an overexposed/underexposed celebrity with new brand/established brand. Since brand

familiarity has already been found to have a moderating impact in celebrity endorsements, such an extension would be valuable. The study findings should foster more research since celebrity overexposure has become a common phenomenon in the marketplace in the last five years.

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