

**USE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT IN ADVERTISING:  
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CHILEAN GRAPHIC MEDIA**

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## USE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT IN ADVERTISING:

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#### ABSTRACT

*This study explores how advertising messages deployed in printed graphic media use celebrity endorsers as part of their communication strategy, in a Latin American country. Based on prior work developed by Belch and Belch (2013), this paper explores celebrity endorsers usage in both newspapers and magazines in the Chilean market. Similar to previous reports in USA, it was revealed that 8.9% percentage of ads placed in print media used a celebrity endorser. Differences in the use of this strategy were observed over different product/services categories. Other results linked to the gender, type and attributes of the celebrity endorser are reported.*

#### **Introduction**

Although advertising has been a marketing tool in permanent change, the use of celebrity endorsers has remained as a common practice since the 1920s. Since then, companies around the world have recognized the value of associating their brands with renowned and popular people, as a way to both develop positioning attributes and draw people attention to deliver their commercial messages (Belch & Belch, 2013). Benefits of using celebrity endorsement includes the enhancement of ad recall, product desirability, and perceived glamour (Spielman, 1981). Also, it is an effective strategy for gaining and holding attention (Atkin & Block, 1983). Its positive impact over brand attitudes enhances the purchase likelihood (Friedman & Friedman, 1979), while it fosters brand loyalty, and positively impacts word-of-mouth (Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004).

As one of the most wide used advertising strategies around the world by the marketing industry (White, 2004), celebrity endorsement has attracted the attention of scholars in different countries like USA, South Korea, Turkey, Japan, Ireland, United Kingdom and China (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Erdogan, Baker, & Tagg, 2001; Mukherjee, 2009; O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997; Schaefer, Parker, & Kent, 2010; Şimşek, 2014; Son, 2001; Yoon & Chae, 2004). Around the world, clients are exposed to media advertising using *celebrity endorsement* every day, mainly placed in consumer magazines, newspapers, websites, radio and television (Mukherjee, 2009; Solomon, 2009). However, scarce research has been developed in the context of emerging economies like those placed in the South America region, in which the prevalence in the use of celebrities remains unknown.

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Taking into account the Chilean context, this study seeks to assess the usage frequency of this strategy in the local market, to identify the product or service categories where is mostly used and to recognize the kind of celebrities preferred by the brands. This piece of research takes into consideration both newspapers and magazines in order to raise differences between the two media, over the size of the ads, the most common location to post an ad piece, and some product-related differences; looking for variations related to different product categories, gender and other attributes of celebrity endorser.

## **Literature Review**

As an advertising strategy, endorsement entails the backing, support or approval from a third party (a spokesperson). The celebrity endorser is related to the product either using the good or service, or with his or her appearance in the product ad campaign (Canning & West, 2006). Three different models try to explain the way a celebrity endorser affects the message delivered to consumers: 1) the *meaning transfer* model, where the celebrity represents a set of meanings to consumers, then these meanings get transferred to the product from the celebrity through an endorsement (McCracken, 1989); 2) the *source attractiveness* model, related to the celebrity endorser perceived degree of attractiveness for the customers buying the brand, product or service (McGuire, 1985) and 3) the *source credibility* model, which analyses the generated credibility from the celebrity endorser over the brand, product or service (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953).

The attributes of celebrities generally have a relationship with aspects that drive the purchase in each product category. For example, in product categories where functionality and performance are important aspects that drive the purchase, the recommendation based in the opinion of an *expert* celebrity may be more effective. Also, for the categories where the emotional aspects as brand image or brand identification are important to boost the purchase, it is likely that celebrities are used by its *attractiveness*. Finally, in categories where products require altruism and voluntary participation by the people to perform a contribution or participate in the community (which is a bit different from a purchase because they are mainly related to donations to humanitarian or governmental organizations), it is likely that celebrities with ability to convey feelings, through the use of *testimonials* or another type of *empathy* drive appealing, it can encourage people to be more involved with the cause and because of this, generate momentum for people to donate money (West & Orman, 2003).

The appropriate selection of the celebrity endorser represents a key decision. A successful endorser is a relevant one, based on the consumers' values and cultural norms. A celebrity endorser is any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. (McCracken, 1989). This public recognition comes from his or her physical attractiveness, athletic or business achievements, being an entertainer, etcetera. In fact, there is evidence that shows attractiveness, expertise and reliability

are to most influential attributes over brand attitude and behavioural intention (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008; Erdogan et al., 2001).

In this context, it is interesting to mention the work of Belch and Belch (2013), which presents a detailed content analysis examining the use of celebrity endorsers in graphic media. Only a 10% of prevalence in the use of this kind of endorsers was informed, which is much lower than estimates of their use often reported in the media. Also, their findings show the use of celebrities varies by magazine types and product/services categories. The type of celebrity utilised, such as athletes, actors/actresses, entertainers or supermodels also varies. Finally, it was showed the use of celebrities was based primarily on the source characteristics of popularity/likeability, followed by physical attractiveness.

With prior information, and taking the Chilean market as scenario, three research questions are posited

- *RQ<sub>1</sub>: How often do Chilean print advertisements display celebrities as endorsers?*
- *RQ<sub>2</sub>: How often do Chilean print advertisements use celebrities across different products and services categories?*
- *RQ<sub>3</sub>: What type and / or attributes of a celebrity endorsement are more frequently used in newspaper and magazine ads in Chile?*

## **Methodology**

In order to respond to the research questions, a sample of Chilean newspapers and magazines was used: At newspapers level, from eight (8) nationwide newspapers circulating in Chile, it was averaged their lectureship level and reported ad spending. Five (5) newspapers (those with the largest circulations and advertising share) were selected to build three (3) constructed weeks, from a daily random sample procedure (Lacy, Robinson, & Riffe, 1995). In the same way, at magazines level, from 33 magazines in circulation, it was averaged their lectureship and number of ad pieces. A final sample of 10 magazines where selected -5 monthly published and 5 bi-weekly published- (Uribe & Manzur, 2012). In the selected newspapers and magazines, all the ads published were incorporated in the final sample of the study. It is notable that a large scope of different kinds of magazines and newspapers was finally selected, reflecting the heterogeneity of the target groups these advertising vehicles are intended to reach.

Using this sample, it was necessary to code each advertising appearing in the different newspaper and magazines, looking to represent different characteristics present in each piece (*size, page placement, number of brands presented, country of origin, product / service category, use of a celebrity as endorser, type of celebrity and main celebrity attribute*). In this ad classifying process, three judges coded a sub-sample of 259 ad pieces (5% of total sample).

Proportional Reduction in Loss (PRL) measure was used (Rust & Cool, 1994), in order to assess the reliability of 18 questions of a specially developed survey. All results showed a reliability measure of 91%.

## Main Results

Looking to answer  $RQ_1$ , the number of ads using any type of human models (persons) as part of their communication was evaluated. A number of 3,008 advertising pieces uses a model as part of their design, representing a 56.4% of the total sample of ads. Deeping on this, 62.8% of ads placed on magazines used at least one model, compared to a 45.1% of ads placed on newspapers with this characteristic ( $\chi^2 (1) = 154.662, p < 0.001$ ). This finding could be related to the kind of product categories that use magazines as their main communication vehicle.

As a second finding, the total number of ads using celebrities as endorsers was 473 over the total 5330 pieces (8.9% of the sample) using models. This result are consistent with the report of Belch and Belch (2013) study, which uses a larger sample of magazines and newspapers. On the other hand, these results are different from those reported in Asia, which detected a higher use of celebrity endorsements in ads placed in newspapers and magazines (Paek, 2005). For this sample, the use of celebrity endorsers is larger in ads placed in magazines (10.5%) compared to those placed in newspapers (5.9%) ( $\chi^2 (1) = 31.548, p < 0.001$ ).

It also represents a small fraction (15,7%) of the ads using a person (3,008 pieces) as part of their communication strategy. The use of celebrity endorsers, over the ads using human models, is larger in ads placed in magazines (16.8%) compared to those placed in newspapers (13.1%) ( $\chi^2 (1) = 5.599, p < 0.05$ ). Also, could be related to the nature of newspapers communications, which could avoid the use of celebrities in the advertising strategy deployed from some type of brands.

Category	N° of ads	N° with model	% with model	N° with celebrity	% with celebrity	% with model using celebrity
<b>Newspapers</b>						
<i>El Mercurio</i>	296	144	48.6%	17	5.7%	11.8%
<i>La Tercera</i>	335	125	37.3%	13	3.9%	10.4%
<i>Publimetro</i>	562	275	48.9%	31	5.5%	11.3%
<i>LUN</i>	491	208	42.4%	40	8.1%	19.2%
<i>La Cuarta</i>	225	109	48.4%	12	5.3%	11.0%
<b>Total: Newspapers</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>45.1%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>
<b>Magazines</b>						
<i>Cosas</i>	619	414	66.9%	69	11.1%	16.7%
<i>Caras</i>	622	408	65.6%	86	13.8%	21.1%
<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	174	136	78.2%	30	17.2%	22.1%
<i>Vanidades</i>	296	236	79.7%	50	16.9%	21.2%
<i>Paula</i>	511	363	71.0%	66	12.9%	18.2%
<i>Buena Salud</i>	121	91	75.2%	16	13.2%	17.6%
<i>ED</i>	284	139	48.9%	13	4.6%	9.4%
<i>Capital</i>	510	190	37.3%	14	2.7%	7.4%
<i>America Economía</i>	158	79	50.0%	3	1.9%	3.8%
<i>Miss 17</i>	126	91	72.2%	13	10.3%	14.3%
<b>Total: Magazines</b>	<b>3421</b>	<b>2147</b>	<b>62.8%</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>16.8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5330</b>	<b>3008</b>	<b>56.4%</b>	<b>473</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>15.7%</b>

Table 1: Use of models and celebrities by newspapers and magazines

Regarding to answer  $RQ_2$ , Table 2 shows the number and percentage of ads with celebrities in each product/service category. The categories with the highest percentage of celebrities in their ads are *cosmetics/personal care*, *food products* and *retail stores* (21.2%, 16.3% and 15.3%, respectively). This result reflects a larger advertising budget, compared to other product categories. It is plausible that firms participating in these categories have the support needed to invest in a contract with celebrities, looking to be distinguished in the context of a more saturated advertising scenario. Nevertheless, there is others product and service categories which definitively does not use celebrity endorsement like *Fast food and restaurants* and *Consumer electronics and hardware*, reporting no use of this type of advertising appeal. Other categories appearing with minimal proportions (under 2%) of ads using celebrity endorsement are *Alcoholic drinks*, *Business and education products and services*, *Media and entertainment*, *Non-Alcoholic drinks*, *Automobiles and car accessories* and *Public services*. A possible explanation to this may be founded in the fact these categories are related to ‘functional products’ which have measurable or directly observed attributes, leaving in a second place the use of appealing strategies based on image, status and / or style.

Also, at general level it is shown a very interesting and significant difference in the use of female (82.9%) over male celebrities (20.4%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 364.942, p < 0.001$ ). This preference in female celebrities is replicated in the two larger categories, those with the greater number of advertising pieces. The results exhibit a strong and significant preference in the use of female celebrities, with a presence of 94.1% in ads belonging to *Cosmetics/personal care* product category ( $\chi^2(1) = 324.814, p < 0.001$ ) and a presence of 84.0% in ads placed for *Fashion, jewellery and accessories care* product category ( $\chi^2(1) = 94.727, p < 0.001$ ).

Product Category	N° of ads	N° with male celebrity	N° with female celebrity	% with celebrity	% with male celebrity	% with female celebrity
Telecomm. services and electronic products	210	9	3	4.3%	100.0%	33.3%
Automobiles and car accessories	719	7	7	1.9%	50.0%	50.0%
Financial services	242	4	12	6.6%	25.0%	75.0%
Cosmetics/personal care	1038	18	207	21.2%	8.2%	94.1%
Travel/tourism	158	3	3	2.5%	75.0%	75.0%
Retail stores	248	19	24	15.3%	50.0%	63.2%
Consumer electronics and hardware	36	0	0	0.0%	--	--
Fashion, jewellery and accessories	908	18	89	11.7%	17.0%	84.0%
Athletic products, equipment and services	55	3	3	10.9%	50.0%	50.0%
Fast food and restaurants	24	0	0	0.0%	--	--
Alcoholic drinks	230	1	1	0.9%	50.0%	50.0%
Non-Alcoholic drinks	70	0	1	1.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Media and entertainment	467	2	4	1.3%	33.3%	66.7%
Decoration and home improvement	263	0	24	9.1%	0.0%	100.0%
Business and education products and services	341	2	2	1.2%	50.0%	50.0%
Food products	98	6	10	16.3%	37.5%	62.5%
Cigarettes	0	0	0	--	--	--
Public services	42	0	1	2.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Non-profit and social organizations (NGOs)	31	1	3	12.9%	25.0%	75.0%
Other	150	4	0	2.7%	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5330</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>82.9%</b>

Table 2: Use of celebrities by product category

Addressing  $RQ_3$ , Table 3 presents the type and attributes of a celebrity endorsement which are more frequently used in newspaper and magazine ads. This table is based in the number of celebrities appearing in newspapers and magazines, with the possibility that a specific ad piece uses more than one celebrity in their design. It is notable the employment of actor / actresses (41.3%) and models (25.0%) as the preferred types of celebrity endorsement. This result could be explained because this type of celebrities has a constant and prolonged media exposure in other complementary media (e.g. television, radio and / or several public events). Because of this, the use of actors / actress and models can achieve a higher level of recognition, familiarity and proximity to the public through the representations of characters that are generally representative of the population and therefore achieving a high identification level.

Examining the possible differences in the use of certain type of celebrity across media, there is remarkable difference in the employ of models in magazines ( $\chi^2(1) = 20.069$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) and entertainment celebrities ( $\chi^2(1) = 17.868$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) in newspapers. There is no evidence of differences in the usage proportion of actor / actress, athletes and other celebrity types regarding newspapers or magazines.

Type of celebrity	Number of celebrities			Percentage of celebrities			P-value
	Newspapers	Magazines	Total	Newspapers	Magazines	Total	
Actor / Actress	55	166	221	38.7%	42.2%	41.3%	0.4065
Athlete	18	37	55	12.7%	9.4%	10.3%	0.3031
Model	16	118	134	11.3%	30.0%	25.0%	0.0001
Entertainment	44	57	101	31.0%	14.5%	18.9%	0.0001
Other	9	15	24	6.3%	3.8%	4.5%	0.1092
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Table 3: Celebrities types used by newspapers and magazines

Analysing the preferred celebrity attributes and their use across newspapers and magazines, Table 4 presents the distribution of these characteristics. It is observed totalizing both kinds of media that celebrities are mainly used based in their attractiveness level (94.0%). The expertise degree of the celebrity appears just as a secondary attribute (3.9%).

Looking into the use of the attractiveness attribute, there are differences about its usage with a larger proportion of reported use over magazines (95.7%) compared to its use in newspapers (89,4%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 17.868$ ,  $p = 0.0136$ ). In the other hand, the use of the expertise attribute is greater over newspapers (8.5%) compare to its use in magazines (2.3%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 10.822$ ,  $p = 0.0010$ ).

It follows that the attractiveness is the main feature related to celebrities when brands are looking for an endorser, maybe because this attribute is easier to express to the public through a visual and static image. Instead, the possibility of communicate expertise or testimony is more complicated in visual media (such as newspapers or magazines) as they do not have the space, time and the dynamism necessary to successfully expose knowledge or expert statements.

Attribute of celebrity	Number of celebrities			Percentage of celebrities			P-value
	Newspapers	Magazines	Total	Newspapers	Magazines	Total	
Attractiveness	127	376	503	89.4%	95.7%	94.0%	0.0136
Expertise	12	9	21	8.5%	2.3%	3.9%	0.0010
Testimonial or empathy	3	8	11	2.1%	2.0%	2.1%	1.0000

<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>%</b>
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*Table 4: Celebrities attribute used by newspapers and magazines*

Another reason to explain the use of the attractiveness as the main attribute for celebrity endorsement may be that as many endorsers are related to product categories linked to the beauty, personal care and fashion products. All of these product categories looks the audience to identify with an attractive character before their level of expertise or empathy.

## **Conclusions**

This study has mainly assessed the frequency in the use of celebrity endorsers in print graphic media in Chile. The product / service categories where this strategy is mostly used has also been identified. Moreover, the kind of celebrities preferred by the brands has been recognized. This piece of research has taken into consideration both newspapers and magazines exhibiting notable differences in the deployment of this strategy between the two type of media.

A significant proportion of advertising uses a human model as part of its communication strategy. In fact, almost 6 of every 10 ad pieces uses a person as part of the graphic content presented in ad piece for both newspapers or magazines, with a strong presence in this last type of printed media. As stated before, this finding could be related to the kind of product categories that use magazines as their main communication vehicle, considering that in this type of media the effectiveness of the use of graphic content is one of their major strengths.

Despite of this, the use of celebrity endorsers is relative low. In fact, just 9 of every 100 ad pieces uses a celebrity endorser. Even though this result is consisting with the findings previously reported in the USA (Belch & Belch, 2013), it is still striking the point that just a 15.7% of the pieces using persons prefers a celebrity as its endorser / human model. It is well known the ability of the celebrity endorsement strategy to attract more attention to a specific advertising piece, incrementing its awareness and recall and, because of this, elevating ad effectiveness (Erdogan, 1999). With all these features, it is quite showy this lower usage rate of the celebrity endorsement strategy.

Deeping in the differences of the usage of celebrities in advertisements in newspapers and magazines, it was found that its use is larger for magazines than the frequency observed for newspapers. This finding is very similar with result obtained in USA, regarding magazines. However, looking into the case of the newspapers, this result is below the numbers previously found in USA and Korea (Belch & Belch, 2013; Paek, 2005). One explanation for the above results may come from the evidence that this strategy is not commonly used across the different product / service categories,

but it is mainly use by brands related to beauty, personal care and fashion goods. These categories most often use people to make the good more attractive and, simultaneously, to create greater purchase persuasion. Other categories may not base their communication strategy in the use of celebrities because it is intended that the same product tries to persuade the consumer and, by itself, achieves the client attention.

Another explanation for the previously presented finding is related to the fact that the categories with more prevalence in the usage of celebrity endorsers are also the largest consumer good companies in Chile and, therefore, they have a greater ability to recruit celebrities for large sums of money, in order to represent their brands and endorse their products. They are also the most interested companies to use resources to achieve a leading and differentiated position, benefit granted by the use of celebrity endorser.

In general, and consistently with the idea that ad agencies use specific approaches to reach the brands' target audience, it was found that magazines have a preference for female celebrities before male ones. This, mainly because a large percentage of the readership magazine in Chile is given by women, compared to the type of consumption reported for newspapers, having very similar readership of men and women. It is also logical that products for men are represented by a male figure and products for women to be represented by a female figure, as it will best represent the image you want to project with the product. Regarding the mainly used celebrity type, it was observed the predominant usage of actors and actresses as preferred 'source' of notoriety, compared to the use of athletes or even entertainment figures. As for the attributes of celebs it was found that these are chosen mostly for its attractiveness level and, in a much smaller percentage, for their expertise or capacity to testimony and generate empathy.

This first study was intended to address a better understanding regarding to the use of celebrity endorsement in print media advertisements published in Chile. With no evidence from experimental studies or theoretical research previously developed in this part of the world, this report may contribute to clearly state the prevalence of the use of this strategy among the local market. Further research is needed to understand the match degree within the celebrity and the endorsed brand, and how some specific perceived attributes of both entities could adjust for a better advertising effectiveness.

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