

Session: **Research for management and marketing I.**

Abstract nr: **EASM-0029**

**Qualitative methods in endorser-product fit research: trends and current issues in examples of athlete endorser**

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Articles concerning the match-up hypothesis of celebrity endorser were reviewed in 13 main marketing journals from 1999 to 2009. The initial attempt of this paper is to focus on one particular endorsement type that violates the traditional match-up hypothesis, and this is prominent in cases where firms employ athlete endorsers to promote non-sport-relevant products. There is necessity to gain greater understanding about the types of celebrities required for certain kinds of products. A recall of product information is stronger when the endorser is congruent with the products than it is not or irrelevant. However, in the real world, we often found cases with famous celebrity endorsers who endorse products that are apparently irrelative to their identity. If incongruence between the spokesperson and the product is more advantageous as an outcome of advertising, one possible explanation might be the degree of attractiveness of the endorsers.

In current studies there has been an increased attention on the effectiveness of athlete endorsers for sport and non-sport products. Not surprisingly, the results of those studies indicated that the image of the athlete endorsers may contribute significantly to the consumer's purchase intentions of the products. However, one particular type of endorsement is found with which athletes endorse sports-irrelevant products, this is clearly against the theoretical foundation of match-up hypothesis which maintains the effectiveness of the fit between endorser types and products. Although prior studies (Bower & Landreth, 2001; Fink et al., 2004; Koerign & Boyd, 2009) indicated that more attractive athlete endorsers can significantly influence consumers' purchase intention, no studies have ever questioned on the situation of the non-athlete endorser-sport product fit.

The first purpose of this review is to assess the role of athlete endorsers by collecting sample characteristics and product categories (i.e. sport or non-sport products) of the current literatures of endorser-product fit. The second purpose is to discuss about the impact of celebrity-product incongruence, particularly the non-athlete endorsers-sport product fit relationship. The methodologies adopted in this study were aimed to classify the empirical studies in terms of the characteristics of the research data and analytical information. This review depicts the tendency of studies in endorser-product fit from past to present. A total of 34 articles were derived from 13 main marketing journals. During the span of our research, 19 of these articles were empirical studies related to athlete endorser-product and celebrity endorser-sport product; 15 were unrelated to this topic. In addition, 6 of the 19 empirical studies have contended that the endorsers might or might not be effective for all products and brands in all the endorser-product fit, and companies have started to ask whether paying celebrities to endorse their product is most

effective use of company resources. It is obvious that the topic of nonathlete-sport product fit may be valuable for analyzing its impact with a consumer's behavioral intention to purchase.

By quantitatively integrating prior empirical results from a large number of studies, this review mentioned that a match-up effect found as an athlete and a sports product was more effective than celebrity endorser in consumers' attitude toward the brand. Although frequently used to endorse non-sport products, the situations under which a non-athlete endorser's effectiveness to endorse sport products have not been completely explored. Therefore, it is suggested that future research is encouraged to explore non-athlete-endorser and sport product fit on advertising effectiveness.