Endorsers in Food Advertising

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Outline

› What endorsers are?
› Theories that explain the choice of an endorser
› Endorsers in (healthy) food advertising
› Empirical study
Endorsers in advertising

Positive effect of endorsers on advertising effectiveness and response toward the brand (e.g. Amos et al., 2008; Kaikati, 1987; Goldsmith et al., 2000)
Characteristics of an endorser

› Endorser’s credibility *(Ohanian, 1991)*
  › Attractiveness
  › Expertise
  › Trustworthiness
Which endorser is more effective?

› Match up hypothesis *(Till and Busler, 2000)*
  › Endorsers are more effective when a perceptual fit exists between the endorser and the endorsed product

› Identification theory *(Kelman, 2006)*
  › Individuals are more willing to accept influence by another individual that identify themselves with
Endorsers in (healthy) food advertising

Do obese/overweight consumers identify themselves with these endorsers?
Could a less attractive endorser be equally effective and for whom?

Does this ring any bell??
Breaking down the stereotypes

☐ fat?
☐ fit?

Does true beauty only squeeze into size 8? Join the beauty debate.

campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk  Dove

☐ wrinkled?
☐ wonderful?

Will society ever accept "old" can be beautiful? Join the beauty debate.

campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk  Dove
Empirical study

“Too fat to be a model? The role of body image in advertising effectiveness of healthy food products”
Is communication tailored to less health conscious consumers?

“Health conscious consumers are a sought-after market segment by manufacturers and retailers alike” (Prasad et al., 2008)

Can the choice of an overweight endorser have a favorable impact on consumer response toward healthy foods?
Study objective

› Explore the effect of..
  › perceived endorsers’ body image,
  › perceived product healthiness, and
  › consumers’ body weight

› ... on advertising effectiveness
Study design

› 2 (endorser weight: normal vs. overweight) x 2 (product type: healthy vs. non-healthy) within-subjects design
› BMI groups as between-subjects factor
Measures and sampling

› **Dependent variables** (Likert; 7 point-scale)
  › Brand response (healthiness, tastiness, liking; \(\alpha=0.85\))
  › Purchase intention

› **Moderating variables**
  › Body Mass Index (Underweight = 4.2%; Normal weight = 64.9%; Overweight = 19.4%; Obese = 11.5%)

› **Sample**
  › \(N = 288\)
  › 59% females
Manipulation check

- Product healthiness
- Perceived endorser's weight
- Perceived endorser's attractiveness
- Perceived endorser's healthiness

- p = .05
- p < .00

Sausage
Milk
Normal
Overweight
Main effects of endorser’s weight and product type

- Weight of Endorser
  - Overweight
  - Normal

- Product Type
  - Milk
  - Sausage

- Brand Response
- Purchase Intention

- Statistical Significance
  - $p < .00$
  - $p = .07$
Interaction between product type and endorser’s weight

Brand response ($p=0.01$)

Purchase intention ($p=0.60$)
Interaction between BMI groups and endorser’s weight

Purchase intention ($p=0.03$)
Interaction between product, endorser’s weight and BMI groups

Purchase intention ($p=0.07$)
Summary of findings

› Normal weight endorsers are generally more effective than overweight endorsers
› Match-up hypothesis confirmed
  › Endorsers’ effectiveness depends on perceived product healthiness
› Identification takes place
  › Overweight endorsers are more effective among obese consumers, although still less effective than normal weight endorsers
› Overweight endorsers could equally be effective among obese consumers, irrespective of product type
Too fat to be a model?

› Overweight endorsers may have a potential to communicate better toward obese consumers
› Should such a communication strategy be adopted?
› Issues need to be considered
  › Social marketing/public policy aspects
  › Perceptual issues - controversy
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