

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### INTRODUCTION

Throughout history key persons have been elevated to celebrity status. However, it is only in the twentieth century that the celebrity phenomenon has really permeated our society, media and culture. This can perhaps be attributed to factors such as the `secularization of western society, the human need for transcendence as well as the internationalization of sport and popular culture (Meenaghan 1988). Through their public manifestations, celebrities hold certain meanings in the eyes of the receiving audience. Marketing has sought to use the varied meanings personified by celebrities to assist the achievement of specific communication objectives. Underpinning the usage of celebrities in a communications context is the belief that the profile and attributes of the celebrity both draw attention to the messages they deliver and, through a rub-off effect, transfer image values in those messages.

Seeking to intrude into consumers' consciousness and to deliver particular image-laden messages, advertisers find the usage of celebrities in their communications campaigns to be highly effective. Such campaigns are used in a marketing communications context to attract customers, to promote political and social causes and to sell diverse products/services. The usage of a `celebrity' in an advertising context is commonly as a celebrity endorser who can be defined as:

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)

## Research Hypotheses

Many studies have focus on the attitudes towards celebrity endorsements as an advertising techniques (O'Mahony & Meenaghan 1997/1998) and research findings shows that the overall attitude towards celebrity endorsements was a favorable one, eliciting a mean of 3.41 (where 1 = very unfavorable, 5 = very favorable). Respondents were most in agreement with the statement that celebrity endorsements were attention gaining, and were also perceived to be entertaining, likeable, and impactful. Hence the hypothesis:

H1a Teenagers will buy and try at least one product endorsed by celebrity endorser

H1b Teenagers will buy and try all products endorsed by celebrity endorser

### Source Effects:

Social psychology and mass communications theory and the application in marketing of the concepts emerging from these fields provide the necessary conceptual framework for theorizing about celebrity endorser effects in advertising. Source effect as a theory is based on the belief that various characteristics of the perceived source of the communication have a beneficial effect on message receptivity (Meenaghan 1995). The source effect phenomenon strongly suggests that various characteristics of the source, as perceived by the receiver, will influence the persuasiveness of the source's message.

Two basic models, the source attractiveness model (McGuire 1985) and the source credibility model (Hovland and Weiss 1951) discuss the various source attributes collectively.

## Source Attractiveness.

Society throughout the ages has determined that particular features of persons are attractive. It is therefore to be expected that physical attractiveness as a source attribute would affect the receptivity of the message. Indeed, there is considerable research evidence, which attests to the positive consequences of employing attractive spokespersons based on the principle that receivers make more favourable evaluations of the advertisement and the product when attractive models are used in the advertisement. (Joseph 1982, Kahle and Home 1985, Chaiken 1979).

There is, however, some contrary evidence (Maddux and Rogers 1980, Ohanian 1991), which suggests that physical attractiveness may not be especially significant. Generally researchers also recognized two other discrete elements of source attractiveness, namely likeability and similarity.

Likeability refers to the presence or absence of feelings that the receiver of a message would have towards a source of information. Likeability as a phenomenon is obviously related to attractiveness, as attractive people are generally looked upon more favorably than unattractive ones. A comparative study regarding the likeability of celebrities vs. consumers as spokespersons showed that celebrities were rated best for the criterion 'likeable spokesperson' (Frieden 1984).

A further source characteristic deemed to be effective is the extent to which the presenter is perceived to be similar to the target audience. The more in common the receiver perceives he has with the source, the greater the persuasiveness of the message delivered by the source. A source that is presented as being similar to the audience in terms of attitudes, opinions, activities, background, social status or lifestyle could achieve both liking and identification (Aaker 1992). Several studies have shown that customers who

perceive a sales person as similar to themselves are more likely to be influenced by his or her message (Woodside and Davenport 1974, Busch and Willson 1976).

#### Source Credibility.

Source credibility is the extent to which the recipient perceives the source as having relevant knowledge and/or experience and therefore trusts the source to give unbiased information. This definition clearly indicates that source credibility encompasses two distinct components, namely trustworthiness and expertise, which affect message believability and persuasiveness (Hovland and Weiss 1951).

Trustworthiness is defined as the receiver's belief that the source is willing to make valid assertions (Hovland and Weiss 1951). Generally speaking, trustworthiness is a supportive attribute underlying source credibility. Without it, other attributes possessed by the communicator are unlikely to be effective in producing attitude change. Research conducted by Atkin and Block (1983) found that celebrity characters are perceived as being significantly more trustworthy than non-celebrities in research conducted across all respondent age-groups. However, while trustworthiness is unquestionably an important element of message receptivity, research conducted by Ohanian (1991) found it is not necessarily an important element in specifically affecting product purchase intentions.

Expertise is defined as the perceived ability of the source to make valid assertions (Hovland and Weiss 1951). Spokespersons are often chosen because of their knowledge, experience and expertise in a particular product or service area and research undertaken on this dimension of source effectiveness

indicates that expertise has the greatest impact on respondents' reactions to celebrity endorsements (Ohanian 1991).

The research paper examine teens acceptance on which celebrity attributes as reason of purchase intentions. Thus, the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis:

H2 the more attractive the celebrity, the higher the purchase intentions

H3 the more trustworthy the celebrity, the higher the purchase intentions

H4 the more the celebrity expertise, the higher the purchase intentions

Previous research indicates that for consumers with a given ethnic background, similar shopping behaviors are likely to emerge, such as using the same information sources, selecting similar options to satisfy their particular needs, and patronizing the same type of stores (Delener & Neelankavil 1990, Herche & Balasubramanian 1994). Further studies have also focus on the relationship between ethnicity and consumer behavior ( Choe 1984, Hirschman 1981, Lee & Um 1992). Hirschman (1981) research findings, clearly indicated that ethnicity is a variable of potential influence on marketing and consumption. Hirschman also concluded that marketers who desire to understand consumers in a more predictive and comprehensive manners might find it useful to view ethnicity as determinant of consumption patterns.

Similarly, research findings on teen's consumer has indicated that vicarious role models, such as television or movie stars/celebrities, and athletes, are likely to be selected as role models based on specific characteristics with which the adolescent can identify. The adolescent also chooses vicarious role models that are similar to himself or herself. This tendency leads adolescent to select vicarious role models of a similar race and sex (Basow and Howe 1980, Dates 1980, King and Multon 1996, Nicholas 1971).

Hence, the hypothesis:

H5<sup>a</sup> Acceptance of celebrity endorser in terms of different source characteristics differs between ethnicity of respondents

H5<sup>b</sup> Acceptance of celebrity endorser in terms of different source characteristics differs between age groups of respondents

## Summary

According to McCracken 1989, the usage of a 'celebrity' in an advertising context 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. Research studies by O'Mahony and Meenaghan 1997/98, has shown that the overall attitude towards celebrity endorsements as favorable and accepted.

To test the celebrity phenomenon two basic models, the source attractiveness model (McGuire 1985) and the source credibility model (Hovland and Weiss 1951) was used to find out which source attributes have the impact on the endorser. It is interesting to note that research by Maddux and Rogers (1980)

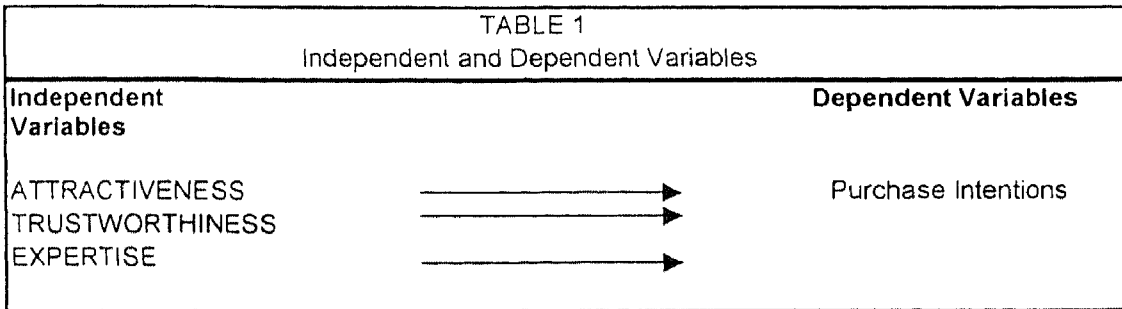
and Ohanian (1991) had found that physical attractiveness might not be especially significant. However, Atkin and Block (1983) found that celebrity characters are perceived as being significant more trustworthy than non-celebrities; and Ohanian (1991) that expertise has the greatest impact on respondent's reactions to celebrity endorsements.

On the study of ethnicity and teenage consumption patterns, research by Hirschman (1981), Choe (1984), Lee & Um (1112), Bason and Howe (1980), Dates (1980), King and Multon (1996) and Nicholas (1971) has shown that adolescent consumer chooses vicarious role models that are similar to themselves, race and sex.

Hence the literature leads to the development of the following hypotheses:

- H1a Teenagers will buy and try at least one product endorsed by celebrity endorser
- H1b Teenagers will buy and try all products endorsed by celebrity endorser
- H2 The more attractive the celebrity, the higher the purchase intentions
- H3 The more trustworthy the celebrity, the higher the purchase intentions
- H4 The more the celebrity expertise, the higher the purchase intentions
- H5a Acceptance of celebrity endorser in terms of different source characteristics differs between ethnicity of respondents
- H5b Acceptance of celebrity endorser in terms of different source characteristics differs between age groups of respondents

TABLE 1 contains the model on the variables to be considered for this study.



### Research Instrument

To examine the ethnicity and celebrity endorsement phenomenon and investigate specified research questions, a structured questionnaire (as shown in Appendix A) was developed and administered to a selected sample of teen students among government secondary schools and private colleges of higher learning. These categories of teens are chosen with beliefs that they are able to reflect the view of teenagers' acceptance on celebrity endorsement and which source characteristics have the impact on teen's intention to purchase and as well the ethnicity of endorsers.

### Convenience Sampling

A non-probability sampling where the schools and respondents were conveniently selected through a list of name of participating schools and tertiary institutions in an Educational Roadshow held in mid-July, 2001. Each day one



school/tertiary institution was visited according to the schedule fixed on the list. The school authority through the counselor will select and decides on which classes of form Four and Five to attend the seminar. After the seminar permission were obtained from the counselor to conduct the survey. From the attending students forty (40) sets of questionnaire were given out at random without considering equal gender representation. As time constraint was a factor of concerned the respondents only has fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire and collected immediately when finished. The process was repeated with different school until 300 sets of questionnaire was given out, answered and returned

#### Research Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of three sections and the questions as shown in Appendix A were adapted from Lawrence Feick and Robin A. Higie 1992.

Section (Part) One measured respondents' perceptions on a famous local teen singer – Siti Nurhaliza along the following source attributes: attractiveness, similarity, likeability, trustworthiness, and expertise.

Section (Part) Two measured the respondents' intention of purchase on products endorsed by local teen singer – Siti Nurhaliza, the important of source attributes and teen's own ethnicity and acceptance of ethnicity of endorsers.

The final section consisted of questionnaire on demographic.

Initially, the survey was intended on teens between the ages of 13 to 20 years old. However, after a pre-test on fifty conveniently selected respondents, it

was found that certain changes like simplifying and adding of extra questionnaires, and an older age groups was needed. Problems like respondents' immaturity and lack of language proficiency, was faced during the pre-test. Leading to respondents' inability to understand and to answer the questionnaire correctly, especially among respondents of 14 years and below.

The final decision was to survey on respondents of age groups above 14 years old to maximum age of 19 years old to overcome the mentioned problems.

### Sampling Design

In total, 300 teenagers ( $n = 300$ ) were asked to answer the questionnaire. The convenience selection of school and respondents were based on the participating schools and tertiary institutions in an Education Roadshow held in mid-July, 2001. The convenience selections of respondents from the tertiary institutions were based on walk-in students attending the roadshow and seminars. The selection of sample from the government school was mainly respondents from the form Four and Five classes.

### Data Collection Procedure

The method used to collect the data was through a survey. Primary data were obtained by using convenience sampling through having the questionnaire being circulated to the respondents attending educational workshops and seminars. Originally, the research was with the intention to ensure representational of teens from major states in the country. However, due to time and cost constraints and the problem of getting permission from certain school

authorities to conduct the survey, most of the data collected are non-representational and only centered in Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan. The completed questionnaires were mainly from the 16 to 19 years old age groups and the survey ended on 28th of July 2001.

### Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process involved editing, coding, carrying out consistency checks and finally summarizing the findings. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 10.0 for Windows) program was used in data analysis.

The first part of the analysis provides a summary of the general demographic characteristics of the respondents - frequency counts and percentage.

Subsequently, the analysis on whether respondent's ethnicity and age groups are factors of concerned was tested using the Independent T-Tests methods.

The next area of interest in the analysis is the measurement of influence of three factors on buy and try: if attractive, if have expertise and if trustworthy. The Pearson Correlations, Regression and Multiple Comparisons (Scheffe) methods were used to arrive at the results findings.

Finally, the analysis on frequency counts and Chi-Square Tests was used to test whether respondents will buy and try one product and buy and try all products were analyzed. The level of significance was set at  $P < 0.05$  and  $P < 0.01$