Celebrity Spokesperson and Brand Congruence
An Assessment of Recall and Affect

Shekhar Misra
California State University, Chico

Sharon E. Beatty
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

Conventional wisdom regarding the matching of spokesperson and brand in advertising is empirically tested. Within the theoretical framework of social cognition, celebrity-brand congruence is found to enhance effectiveness of advertising. a) Recall is found to be enhanced when the celebrity and brand are matched, as predicted by the filtering model. b) Transfer of affect from spokesperson to brand is found to be facilitated when the two are matched. c) Affect toward the brand is also found to be higher when brand and spokesperson are matched. The usefulness and importance of schemas in information processing of advertising are discussed.

Introduction

The use of spokespersons in advertising continues to receive attention from academicians (Atkin and Block, 1983; DeSarbo and Harshman, 1985; McCracken, 1989; Misra, 1986; Petty et al., 1983) and practitioners (Forkan, 1980; King, 1989; Marshall, 1987; Motavalli, 1988; Rockney and Greene, 1979). Of particular interest is the effect of celebrity spokespersons. Although celebrities are widely used in advertising today, little research has been devoted to learning why and when celebrity endorsements work. It is an important question, particularly since the use of celebrities in commercials is estimated to range from one in five (Motavalli, 1988) to one in six (Howard, 1979).

A number of claims have been made about the advantages of celebrity sources. They potentially affect credibility of the advertiser's claims, get attention and better memorability for the ad, and may provide positive affect that could be generalized to the brand (Cooper, 1984; Plapler, 1974). Although the potential benefits of using celebrity spokespersons are significant, so are the costs and risk. For example,

Michael Jackson was paid $10 million to promote Pepsi-Cola (Freiden, 1984), while Pepsi's ad using Madonna drew fire from some groups that found her music video "Like a Prayer" offensive (Watkins, 1989). The senior vice-president in charge of marketing for Seven-Up, Klein, was quoted as saying "celebrities are an unnecessary risk unless they are very logically related to the product" (Watkins, 1989).

The study of celebrity endorsers has focused mostly on source characteristics and source credibility. Source credibility issues center around expertise and trustworthiness. Source characteristics include familiarity, similarity, liking, and physical attractiveness (Maddux and Rogers, 1980). Findings in the area vary depending on, among other factors, the topic of communication or the product advertised, and on the desired outcome, e.g., recall versus positive affect (Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Maddux and Rogers, 1980). Furthermore, celebrities may be better for awareness or recall goals, while experts may do better at relaying trust and positive affect (Freiden, 1984).

Obtaining greater attention does not, however, always ensure greater memorability, especially when the focus of recall is on brand information. Practitioners of advertising have pointed out the importance of having a match-up between the personality or attributes of the spokesperson and the theme of the campaign or the brand attributes to improve advertising effectiveness (Cooper, 1984; Forkan, 1980; Marshall, 1987). This match-up may result in better recall of brand information as well as a positive transfer of affect from the spokesperson to the brand, as has been reported in one study of 300 commercials using celebrities (Rockney and Greene, 1979).

Given the many alternative criteria advertisers have on which to base their choices of endorsers, more research is needed on the effectiveness of celebrity spokespersons, and why and when they work best. As one recent study has pointed out, the use of source credibility and attractiveness may be too limiting in furthering our understanding of the effectiveness of celebrities (McCracken, 1989). He has suggested that researchers focus on the "meaning" associated with each celebrity, rather than just the surface characteristics. An appropriate match-up between the celebrity and the brand is offered in this article as an underresearched alternative, which makes sense for advertisers, and which provides greater direction than other alternatives, such as choosing endorsers based on popularity with the target audience. One unpublished industry study that analyzed actual television commercials concluded that better matching could lead to not only greater attention, but also to greater attitude change (Rockney and Green, 1979). We present a theoretical perspective on when and why celebrity spokespersons work in terms of brand congruence. First, we discuss the match-up hypothesis. Then brand and celebrity congruence is examined from a schema-based expectancy theory perspective. Finally, the design and results of an experiment testing several predictions are reported and discussed, along with the study's implications.

The Match-up Hypothesis

Mowen and colleagues (Mowen and Brown, 1981; Mowen et al., 1979) have lamented the continued lack of research investigating the relationship between the endorser and the product. They used balance theory and attribution theory to explain the brand–spokesperson link. Using three well-known celebrities as spokes-

persons, they manipulated the dimensions of distinctiveness and consensus. However, in the two empirical studies, they failed to find support for their predictions.

In a recent study, Kahle and Homer (1985) examined physical attractiveness and likability of celebrities. Although not tested, they hypothesized that a congruent match-up between the spokesperson and the brand in terms of perceived attributes of both might play an important role in enhancing spokesperson effectiveness. Similarly, others have implied the potential importance of this connection (Bernstein, 1984; Forkan, 1980; Hawkins et al., 1989; Marshall, 1987). For example, Cooper (1984), quoting a top advertising agency executive, stated that John Houseman's first commercial for Smith Barney was "the perfect embodiment of the firm" (p. 65). In other words, *the match-up between the spokesperson and the brand is an important dimension,* and it should lead to better memorability and a possible transfer of affect from the spokesperson to the brand.

Match-up or spokesperson–brand congruence implies that the highly relevant characteristics of the spokesperson are consistent with the highly relevant attributes of the brand. For example, John Houseman was seen as being congruent with Smith Barney but incongruent with McDonald's (Marshall, 1987). It should be noted that although adjectives provide a convenient way of operationalizing match-up, it is also important to assess how the consumer rates the "appropriateness" at an overall level.

Celebrity	**Brands**
John Houseman (wily, sagacious, sophisticated, accomplished)	Smith Barney (congruent)
	McDonald's (incongruent)

This issue is now examined from a theoretical perspective, using a social cognition framework.

Schema-Based Expectancy Theories

A schema is an abstract, cognitive structure that represents some stimulus domain, e.g., a person, place, event, or thing (Taylor and Crocker, 1981). It is organized through experience and consists of a knowledge structure (i.e., a representation of the attributes of the stimulus domain). Not only do schemas lend structure to experience, they can also determine what information will be encoded or retrieved from memory. Schemas are involved in encoding, interpretation, retention, and retrieval of information. They can influence perceptual cognitive activities through the generation of *expectancies.* For example, when new information is received, individuals will tend to use *existing* schemas to process the relevancy or congruency of this information (i.e., the fit with the existing schema). Although the processing of information based on schemas provides for efficiency and reduces the possibilities of information overload, it can also result in miscommunication (Taylor and Crocker, 1981).

In the case of well-known celebrities, individuals would typically have person-relevant schemas (person schemas), acquired over time. This cognitive representation of the person, in terms of the person's abilities, physical appearance, public characterization, etc., is then a set of abstracted attributes that might be used to describe this person (Hamilton, 1981).

When a celebrity endorses a brand, the characteristics of that celebrity may be compared with the advertised attributes of the brand by the audience for congruence or fit with their available person-schema. The degree of congruence between the new information (the brand attributes) and the existing information (the celebrity's characteristics) may then influence the level of recall of the new information. Several studies in social cognition have found that generally congruent information is remembered better than information incongruent or irrelevant with existing schemas (Cantor and Mischel, 1979; Cohen, 1981; Taylor and Crocker, 1981). Yet other studies have had contrary findings. Three models from the social cognition literature, with competing predictions, are now discussed.

The Filtering Model

This model proposes that schema facilitate the initial encoding of schema-related information by structuring the information in a meaningful way (Taylor and Crocker, 1981). Thus, when an individual receives new information on a brand, any information that is incongruent with or irrelevant to the celebrity's characteristics (existing schema) may be filtered out, while congruent information will be more readily encoded, thus leading to subsequent recall superiority for the congruent information (i.e., brand attributes). This better recall should occur immediately after exposure and also at a later time. A number of studies have confirmed this general finding in a variety of contexts (c.f. Taylor and Crocker, 1981).

People often have existing schemas for celebrities. When an audience is exposed to an ad featuring a celebrity, the schema relating to the celebrity is likely to be evoked. This may not happen if the spokesperson is not conspicuous, but when celebrities are used, they are almost always featured prominently. According to the filtering model, when the consumer reads the brand information, any information incongruent with, or irrelevant to, the evoked celebrity schema would not be encoded as well as the congruent information. Thus, information congruent with the celebrity schema should have higher recall in subsequent measurements. Ultimately, the brand information linked to the celebrity schema would be integrated with the product category schema. Many of the schemas can be interlinked. Thus, although most persons would have a schema for Michael J. Fox, part of this would be "linked" with the schema for Pepsi-Cola, which in turn would be linked with the schema for softdrinks.

Associative Network Model

This model suggests that information inconsistent with an individual's schema may be quite salient and informative and, therefore, be attended to more closely and be processed more deeply (cf. Craik and Lockhart 1972). Therefore, this information would be conceptually linked to a larger number of items in the memory, compared to a piece of information that is consistent with the schema. Thus, incongruent information will be processed more extensively and remembered better than congruent information (Srull et al., 1985). This should occur in both immediate and delayed recall conditions.

Table 1. Predictions of the Three Models

Type of Measurement	Type of Information with Highest Recall as Predicted by		
	Associative Network Model	Schema-Pointer + Tag Model	Filtering Model
Immediate recall	Incongruent	Incongruent	Congruent
Delayed recall	Incongruent	Congruent	Congruent

Schema-Pointer + Tag Model

This model proposes that consistent or typical items are encoded in terms of a "pointer" to a generic schema that contains the typical components and relationships for that particular knowledge domain. The atypical or incongruent items are, on the other hand, encoded with a rather distinctive "tag" and stored as a unique, separate unit. This leads to higher memorability for incongruent items than for typical items. The item "tag," however, tends to decay over time, such that after a week or two, the item may not be readily accessible in memory. Thus, incongruent information will be recalled better under immediate recall conditions, but congruent information will be remembered better under delayed recall conditions (Graesser, 1981).

It should be noted that all three models agree in predicting that information that is irrelevant to the person schema associated with the celebrity will be less memorable. The differences in prediction pertaining to whether congruent or incongruent information will be remembered better under immediate and delayed recall are summarized in Table 1.

Hypotheses

Based on the earlier discussion, the filtering model appears to be consistent with our proposed match-up hypothesis and with prevailing beliefs of practitioners, while the other two models make contradictory predictions. Whether a brand and spokesperson are congruent or incongruent is determined by the degree of perceived fit between the brand's image (made up of brand name and specific attributes) and the celebrity's image (i.e., relevant characteristics, as seen by consumers.) In this study, the match-up hypothesis is tested as follows:

> H1(a): (Filtering Model) Recall of brand information will be higher in the spokesperson–brand *congruent* condition, compared to the spokesperson–brand incongruent and irrelevant conditions, for *both* immediate and delayed measures.

Alternatively, the predictions of one of the other two competing models could be supported:

> H1(b): (Associative Network Model) Recall of brand information will be higher in the spokesperson–brand *incongruent* condition, compared to the spokesperson–brand congruent and irrelevant conditions, for *both* immediate and delayed conditions.

> H1(c): (Schema-Pointer + Tag Model) Recall of brand information will be higher in the spokesperson–brand incongruent condition compared to congruent and irrelevant conditions for immediate recall, *but* for delayed measures the highest recall will be under spokesperson–brand congruent condition.

Affect

Consideration has also been given to the question of whether or not schemas elicit affect. Fiske and Linville (1980) note that although not all schemas require an affective component, "some schemas, *particularly social ones, must link with affect*" (p. 552, emphasis added). That is, the origins of affective as well as cognitive reactions to people, information, or objects lie in that individual's accumulated prior experiences.

Fiske (1982) proposed a model that predicts that *schematic match-up* determines the affective responses. If an item is congruent with an existing schema, *it will receive the affect linked to that schema.* With irrelevant and incongruent items, where a match does not occur, this transfer of affect does not take place. Fiske also reports results that support this model.

When brand information is congruent with the celebrity spokesperson, it could thus receive the affect linked with the spokesperson. That is, the brand affect would be correlated with the celebrity affect. But when the information is incongruent or irrelevant, the resulting brand affect would not be correlated with the celebrity affect. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> H2: There will be a positive association between affect linked with a spokesperson and brand affect only under congruent conditions.

Design and Methodology

A 3 × 2 factorial design with immediate and delayed measures was used to test the hypotheses. In addition to the congruent and incongruent conditions, an "irrelevant" condition, wherein the spokesperson and brand *were neither congruent nor incongruent,* was included to serve as a baseline control.

To obtain the three levels of the relationship between spokesperson and brand, two celebrities and three fictitious new brands were used (Set A). The fictitious brands were created such that one brand was congruent (i.e., highly appropriate fit) with the first celebrity but incongruent (i.e., inappropriate fit) with the other. Brand two was congruent with the second celebrity but incongruent with the first. Brand three was neither congruent nor incongruent with the two celebrities. The operationalization is summarized as follows:

Type of Ad	Spokesperson 1	Spokesperson 2
Brand 1	Congruent	Incongruent
Brand 2	Incongruent	Congruent
Brand 3	Irrelevant spokesperson	Irrelevant spokesperson

Each of the three brands had two advertisements, one featuring the first spokesperson and the other featuring the second spokesperson. The balance of the content was identical.

A complete replication of the experiment was carried out using a *second set* of six ads (Set B) constructed similarly. The only difference was that it used a different pair of celebrities, and a different set of brands from different product categories.

There were two sets of subjects. In the first group, subjects saw one of the six

ads from Set A. In a separate experiment, the second group saw one of the six ads from Set B. There was one set of immediate measures, which was repeated after an interval of 1 week (delayed recall).

Dependent Variables

Recall. As recommended by Srull (1984), recall was scored as the number of items of brand information (including brand name) correctly recalled.

Affect. Brand affect was measured as the mean of four 5-point evaluative scales: good–bad, dislike very much–like very much, pleasant–unpleasant, and poor quality–high quality (cf. Edell and Staelin, 1983; Gardner, 1985; Mitchell and Olson, 1981). Coefficient alpha for this set of measures averaged 0.92. Similarly, spokesperson affect was measured as the mean of four 5-point scales: good–bad, like–dislike, pleasant–unpleasant, and nice–awful. Coefficient alpha was .95.

Stimulus Construction

A comprehensive nine-step procedure was used to construct the stimulus advertisements. An initial list of names of 32 celebrities was generated so as to include celebrities well known to the student population, which would be utilized in this study. A group of subjects (n = 33) rated each of the celebrities on familiarity. Celebrities who received a mean familiarity rating of less than 7.0 on a 9-point scale were dropped.

In a "free-association" format, student subjects (n = 40) listed the attributes and images conjured up by each of the nine remaining celebrities (cf. Asch, 1946). The responses were then coded and analyzed to identify major characteristics (e.g., tough and rugged, for Clint Eastwood). This resulted in the identification of two to four commonly perceived attributes per celebrity.

For the four selected celebrities (two independent pairs), six product categories and brands were selected. There were three brands for each of the two sets. They were chosen such that the brand name and attributes of one (Unitough jeans) might be seen as being congruent with the characteristics of one celebrity (Clint Eastwood) but incongruent with the second (Carol Burnett). The attributes of a second brand (a board game for two called Funnybone) were chosen to be congruent with the characteristics of the second celebrity (Carol Burnett) but incongruent with the first (Clint Eastwood). Finally, the attributes of a third brand were chosen such that they were irrelevant (i.e., neither congruent nor incongruent), to the characteristics of the two celebrities (Aroma coffee).

| | Spokesperson | |
Brand	Carol Burnett	Clint Eastwood
Funnybone	Congruent	Incongruent
Unitough	Incongruent	Congruent
Aroma	Irrelevant	Irrelevant

The procedure was repeated for the second pair of celebrities. Thus a classy new wine called Ambrosia (congruent with Joan Collins), a milk-additive energy drink

called Boost (congruent with Mary Lou Retton), and a crispy snack food Crispos (irrelevant) were the selected brands with corresponding levels of congruency.

	Spokesperson	
Brand	**Joan Collins**	**MaryLou Retton**
Ambrosia	Congruent	Incongruent
Boost	Incongruent	Congruent
Crispos	Irrelevant	Irrelevant

Brand names and salient brand attributes were carefully chosen to provide high consistency or agreement with the celebrities' schemas in the congruent conditions. Another group of 38 students rated the holistic "matching" of celebrities and brands (brand names along with a description of brand attributes) on a 7-point scale from very appropriate match to very inappropriate match ($+3$ to -3). The matching was successful, with congruent conditions receiving mean scores above 1.5, and incongruent conditions receiving mean scores below -1.5. Irrelevant conditions were between -1 and $+1$, as planned.

The ads were constructed to look as similar as possible in terms of layout, typeface used, and amount of copy. The verbal content of each ad was balanced such that there were seven bits of brand information in each ad. This was confirmed when two judges rated them. Four judges then rated the stimulus ads to determine whether the were adequately congruent, incongruent, or irrelevant with the celebrities' images. The judges were unanimous in rating the spokesperson–brand degree of congruence as they were intended.

Administration and Control

The influence of source characteristics like physical attractiveness and credibility was controlled by using the same spokespersons and brands across subjects. *One stimulus ad* was presented in a booklet to each subject, along with four filler ads. The four filler ads were adapted from ads for two existing products (AT&T Long Distance, Rolex watches) and two fictitious brands. They were reconstructed so as to look similar to the stimulus ads. Furthermore, two of these filler ads used celebrities (Cliff Robertson for AT&T, Arnold Palmer for Rolex), and two did not. Since these ads preceded the actual stimulus ads, the stimulus ads were not "unexpected" in terms of layout and finish.

Business students in several classes were told that they were being asked to evaluate some new ads being considered. They were first given adequate time to examine the ad booklet fully. Then they filled out a second booklet, which included the dependent measures. Subjects were randomly assigned to treatment conditions.

Although they were not expecting a second measure, subjects were retested 1 week later. At the end of the retest booklet, additional variables were measured, as well as the manipulation check measures, discussed later. A total of 123 subjects completed evaluation of Set A ads, while 125 subjects completed evaluation of ads from Set B. Two subjects from Set A and one from Set B had to be dropped because the postexperimental questionnaire revealed that hypothesis guessing had occurred. Thus, the sample sizes for analysis were 121 and 124, respectively.

Results

Manipulation Checks

Manipulation checks were carried out to ensure that subjects perceived the spokespersons appropriately. The familiarity of the subjects with the four celebrities used was high, with average scores for each celebrity ranging from 6.1 to 6.6 on a 7-point scale. To check the manipulation of level of congruence between the brand and spokesperson, subjects were asked to rate the appropriateness of the match between the brand and the spokesperson in the postexperimental questionnaire. The matching was found to be as desired. Measured on a 7-point scale where $+3$ = very appropriate and -3 = very inappropriate, the mean for both sets for the four congruent conditions was $+2.2$ (range = 2.1–2.3). The four incongruent conditions had a mean rating of -2.3 (range = -2.5 to -2.1), while the "irrelevant" conditions had a mean rating of $+0.2$ (range = -0.2 to $+0.4$).

Confounding by source characteristics, including perceived expertise or trustworthiness, could provide rival hypotheses. Therefore, measures on both these were analyzed. Differences in the ratings of these variables for different levels of congruence were found to be statistically insignificant ($p > 0.10$).

Hypothesis 1: Recall

The first hypothesis stated that the spokesperson – brand congruence will result in higher levels of brand information recall than will incongruence. In other words, one would expect interaction effects in the three brands by two spokespersons matrix. This was tested using a 2-way, repeated measures analysis of variance (MANOVA), with time between the first and second (delayed) measure providing the within subject factor. Box's M was used to test for homogeneity of variance ($p > 0.70$).

The brand by spokesperson interaction effect (between subjects) was significant ($p < 0.01$), for both sets A and B (Table 2). Analysis of the *within-subject* factor revealed that, as might be expected, time had a significant effect on recall for both sets A and B ($p < 0.01$). Yet, the two-way and three-way interactions of time with brand and spokesperson were not significant ($p > 0.10$) for neither set. That is, the pattern of responses was not different between the immediate and delayed measures.

The mean cellwise recall of brand information for the sets as well as significant mean contrasts across cells are presented in Table 3. *In all cases*, recall was higher when the celebrity spokesperson and the brand were congruent than when they were incongruent. Recall was significantly higher for the congruent conditions ($p < 0.01$), for immediate as well as delayed measures for both sets of data. Also, recall was higher for the congruent condition when compared to the irrelevant condition in both time periods ($p < 0.01$). The findings support H1(a) and predictions of the filtering model, while they do not support H1(b) and H1(c).

Hypothesis 2: Affect

The second hypothesis predicted a positive transfer of affect in the congruent condition only. Least-squares regression was used to assess the level of correlation

Table 2. Brand x Spokesperson Interaction Effect on Recall (MANOVA): Between-subjects Factors[a]

Source	SS	df	F	Sig.
Set A				
Constant[b]	1414.15	1	5449.25	.000
Brand	20.84	2	40.14	.000
Person	.02	1	.05	.827
Brand x Person	33.65	2	64.84	.000
Model	54.50	5	42.00	.000
Within cells	29.84	115		
Total (corrected)	84.35	120		
Set B				
Constant[b]	1195.49	1	3606.63	.000
Brand	16.81	2	20.27	.000
Person	.12	1	.30	.586
Brand x Person	34.15	2	41.18	.000
Model	51.08	5	24.64	.000
Within cells	48.93	118		
Total (corrected)	100.01	123		

[a] Averaged tests of significance.
[b] Reflects effect of within subject variable, time.

between affect toward the spokesperson and the brand affect. As anticipated, the correlation in the congruent condition was found to be significant in the immediate *and* delayed measures for both sets A and B ($p < 0.01$), while the correlations in the incongruent and irrelevant conditions were not significant ($p > 0.10$). The R-squared and significance values are presented in Table 4. Thus, the evidence supports H2.

Although no predictions had been made regarding affect levels under differing levels of congruence, post hoc analyses revealed that there was a significant interaction effect between brand and spokesperson ($p < 0.01$) for the measure of brand affect (Table 5). Similar to the findings for recall, pairwise comparisons revealed

Table 3. Mean Recall for Each Brand x Spokesperson Combination[a]

Immediate recall (Set A)	*Carol Burnett*	*Clint Eastwood*
FunnyBone	3.29	2.35[b]
Unitough	2.40	3.20[b]
Aroma	2.20	2.25
Delayed recall (Set A)	*Carol Burnett*	*Clint Eastwood*
FunnyBone	2.91	1.95[b]
Unitough	1.96	2.90[b]
Aroma	1.75	1.80
Immediate recall (Set B)	*Joan Collins*	*MaryLou Retton*
Ambrosia	3.23	2.42[b]
Boost	2.57	3.30[b]
Crispos	2.38	2.30
Delayed recall (Set B)	*Joan Collins*	*MaryLou Retton*
Ambrosia	2.95	1.91[b]
Boost	1.86	2.90[b]
Crispos	1.85	1.80

[a] The recall for congruent conditions (celebrity and brand matched) are underscored for convenience.
[b] Significantly different at $p < 0.01$

Table 4. Correlation of Brand Affect with Spokesperson Affect[a]

	When Matching Between Spokesperson and Brand is		
	Congruent	Incongruent	Irrelevant
Set A			
Immediate measure	.416 (.00)	.010 (.68)	.121 (.15)
Delayed measure	.438 (.00)	.081 (.34)	.032 (.55)
Set B			
Immediate measure	.472 (.00)	.065 (.22)	.079 (.25)
Delayed measure	.461 (.00)	.035 (.42)	.025 (.54)

[a] R-squared (significance) values.

that brand affect was significantly more positive in congruent conditions than in the incongruent and irrelevant conditions ($p < 0.01$). This was found to be true under immediate as well as delayed measurement for both sets (Table 6). Thus, matching of spokesperson with brand results not only in higher recall but also in more positive brand affect.

Conclusions and Implications

The congruence, or matching, of a celebrity spokesperson and the advertised brand has frequently been suggested as an important factor in effective advertising. Yet, this has never been studied in a theoretically justified experimental setting. The present study has viewed the situation from a theoretical perspective and reached definite conclusions.

Table 5. Brand x Spokesperson Interaction Effect on Brand Affect (MANOVA): Between-subjects Factors[a]

Source	SS	df	F	Sig.
Set A				
Constant[b]	3952.41	1	3464.01	.000
Brand	16.28	2	7.13	.001
Person	0.96	1	0.84	.360
Brand x Person	126.38	2	55.38	.000
Model	143.62	5	25.38	.000
Within cells	131.21	115		
Total (corrected)	274.84	120		
Set B				
Constant[b]	4188.99	1	5820.12	.000
Brand	7.36	2	5.11	.007
Person	3.18	1	4.42	.038
Brand x Person	139.81	2	97.13	.000
Model	150.36	5	41.78	.000
Within cells	84.93	118		
Total (corrected)	235.29	123		

[a] Averaged tests of significance.
[b] Reflects effect of within subject variable, time.

Table 6. Mean Brand Affect for Each Brand x Spokesperson Combination[a]

Immediate recall (Set A)	Carol Burnett	Clint Eastwood
FunnyBone	5.37	3.59[b]
Unitough	2.83	5.06[b]
Aroma	3.92	4.05
Delayed recall (Set A)	Carol Burnett	Clint Eastwood
FunnyBone	5.04	3.46[b]
Unitough	3.26	4.73[b]
Aroma	3.35	3.72
Immediate recall (Set B)	Joan Collins	MaryLou Retton
Ambrosia	5.34	3.19[b]
Boost	3.61	4.91[b]
Crispos	3.76	4.02
Delayed recall (Set B)	Joan Collins	MaryLou Retton
Ambrosia	5.36	3.10[b]
Boost	3.44	4.95[b]
Crispos	3.81	3.87

[a] The brand affect for congruent conditions (celebrity and brand matched) are underscored for convenience. Brand affect scores are on a 7-point scale, where 7 = very positive.
[b] Significantly different, $p < 0.01$

Recall

The results indicate that recall of brand information is significantly higher when the spokesperson is congruent with the brand. This is true for recall measured immediately after exposure to the stimulus ads, as well as for recall measured after a 1-week delay. This is consistent with predictions derived from the filtering model of schematic information processing (Taylor and Crocker, 1981). Two other models, the associative network model and the schema-pointer + tag model, were not supported in the present study. These models were developed in the area of social cognition, and have found empirical support in areas not directly related to marketing or advertising. The findings of the present study do not imply that the other two models are not valid. From the findings, it can only be concluded that in the present context, i.e., celebrity spokespersons used in advertising, predictions based on the filtering model only are supported.

Affect

The results also indicate that when the celebrity spokesperson is congruent with the brand, a transfer of affect takes place. But when the spokesperson is incongruent, or irrelevant, the transfer of affect does not appear to take place. In addition, brand affect was found to be significantly more positive in the congruent condition than in the incongruent and irrelevant conditions.

From an applications standpoint, if the advertising objective in a given situation is the recall of brand attributes or the transfer of positive affect, it can be concluded that it would be worthwhile to select a spokesperson whose characteristics are congruent with the brand's relevant attributes. Although this point seems fairly obvious, it would seem that many advertisers do not carefully evaluate their choice of celebrities to ensure that the spokesperson's image matches the desired brand image. Instead, they may make the selection on some other basis, e.g., popularity. However, a spokesperson may be popular and well liked, but may still not be

appropriate for the brand's image. For example, although John Houseman may have been less popular than Bill Cosby, he was a more appropriate spokesperson for Smith Barney than Cosby was for E. F. Hutton. Thus, this article has established one important but sometimes overlooked aspect—the brand–spokesperson match-up.

Future Directions

Although several important variables (e.g., effect of source characteristics) were controlled for in the experimental design, there are limitations to this study. The brands used in the ads were fictitious, so subjects had no prior brand information or brand usage. Moreover, the experiment resulted in a forced exposure condition, ensuring attention. Therefore, all conclusions assume equal attention-getting ability on the part of the spokesperson. Since celebrities are often used merely to get attention, and since most of them do obtain relatively high levels, this is not a major concern. What happens after attention is obtained is of greater importance. However, further studies are needed across other populations and other contexts (e.g., television ads and nonforced exposure settings) in order to assess the generality of these findings. Furthermore, since these results and the theoretical perspective relate primarily to new brands, extension of these ideas to established brands will be useful. Based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model, it is possible that celebrity effects may be more influential under peripheral processing than under central processing.

In this study we attempted to specify the relevant existing schemas (of spokespersons) and the incoming information (new brands). However, another relevant schema may be that of the already existing product category schema. The fit of the new brand with this existing product schema in the respondent's mind was not assessed, but it could have played a role in our results. Schema theory would suggest that since spokespersons are usually portrayed quite prominently, as they were in this study, the first schema to be activated would relate to the celebrity, and the incoming brand information would be evaluated in the context of this schema. Subsequently, after the information was processed, the new information would also be linked to the product category schema. Over time, the linkage of the brand schema to the category schema might be equally strong (if not stronger) than the linkage with the celebrity schema. In any case, this aspect should be considered in future studies.

Most of the conventional approaches in information processing assume that processing takes place in an objective fashion, in a kind of vacuum. Schematic information processing emphasizes, in contrast, the *context* in which the processing takes place, and how existing knowledge structures (schemas) can significantly influence how incoming information is processed. Schematic information-processing concepts and theories can be helpful in enhancing our understanding of the processing of marketing communications, and it is hoped that increasing numbers of researchers will find these ideas to be useful.

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