

CAN CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT PREVENT THE VAMPIRE EFFECT?

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Abstract. So far, the study of celebrity endorsers has explored the positive side of celebrity. But the use of celebrity as an endorser also has the potential to have a negative impact, or what is known as the vampire effect. This study aims to further analyze the existence of vampire effects with moderation so that the results can provide important insights on how to avoid the effects of the vampire. The study was conducted in the form of experimental research that examined how the influence of brands supported by celebrity endorser and unknown endorser on brand recall by moderating consumer involvement variables. The results of the first phase of the study indicate that the vampire effect actually did occur and the results of the second phase of the research show that consumer involvement can prevent the vampire effect from occurring.

Keywords: vampire effect, celebrity endorser, unknown endorser, consumer involvement, brand recall.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising has a very large role in the strategy of communicating products to the target market. Companies use advertisements to create new sales by reviving consumer awareness and interest in other brands, stimulating consumers to conduct purchase experiments, and helping facilitate the development of repeat buying habits (Ehrenberg, 2000). The importance of the role of advertising can be seen from the amount of advertising spending that the company expends each year and experiences an increasing tendency. Television ad spending in 2018 reached Rp 110.46 trillion, grew by 13.35% compared to the 2017 period (Widowati, H; 2019; Growing 13%, Television Advertising Expenditures Translucent Rp 110 Trillion in 2018; <https://katadata.co.id/news/2019/01/11/growing-13-shopping-advertising-television-translucent-rp-110-trillion-year-2018>, accessed on January 11, 2019).

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One approach to marketing communication commonly used in the practical world is the use of endorsers that can be celebrity, non-celebrity, athletes, and other famous people (eg, Dean & Biswas, 2001; Frizzell, 2011; Pease & Brewer, 2008 ; Wheeler 2009; Wei & Lu 2013). Among various types of endorsers, celebrity endorsers are one of the research topics that attract the attention of many researchers (eg Wei & Lu, 2013; McCormick 2016, Tzoumaka et al, 2016, Wang et al, 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016, Albert et al, 2017, Kim et al, 2018; Ferguson & Mohan, 2019). The use of celebrity endorsers is seen as being able to have a significant sales impact (i.e., Goldsmith et al., 2000; Ohanian, 1990). So far, the study of celebrity endorsers has explored the positive side of celebrity use (e.g., Wei & Lu, 2013, McCormick 2016; Wang et al, 2016; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016; Kim et al, 2018). But the use of celebrity as an endorser also has the potential to have a negative impact, or known as the vampire effect (Erfgen et al, 2015). Theoretically, this is consistent with the opinion of previous research which states that many brand managers seem confident in the effectiveness of advertising celebrities, but others raise particular concerns in the suitability of return on investment from the use of celebrities (eg, Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Erdogan & Baker, 2000; Erdogan, Baker, & Tagg, 2001). At least in some conditions, celebrities might even weaken the memory of the advertised brand, so consumers only remember celebrities not brands (Belch & Belch, 2013; Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Erfgen et al (2015) examined more about the vampire effect because there was no clear agreement among previous studies about whether celebrity could significantly weaken the brand's memory. The results of the study provide important insights on how to avoid the vampire effect, namely by creating appropriate conditions such as brand congruence with high endorsers and strong cognitive relationships between celebrities and brands. The results of the study also stated that the brand familiarity had no significant effect in preventing the vampire effect. This is contrary to some of the opinions of other research results, some of which are: Kent and Allen (1994) who argue that advertising can weaken the brand's memory due to a lack of brand familiarity; Luzi & Rosengarten, 2017 argues that brand familiarity is a very significant moderator between influencer endorsements and brand recall (Influencers here are micro-celebrities); Negi et al, 2018 argues that once good brand familiarity is developed, the brand's memory will instantly increase. Previous research also uses well-known brands in their experimental research (eg. Erfgen et al., 2015), so that in this study the author intends to improvise using a fictitious brand so that the results of the study can be closer to internal validity. Based on various results of previous studies that are still inconsistent in how to prevent the occurrence of vampire effects and the use of well-known brands in previous studies, the authors intend to expand previous research by testing the consumer involvement variable which is predicted to moderate the relationship between endorsers and brands using fictitious brands. The consideration of researchers examining the moderating effect of consumer involvement is in accordance with what was suggested by previous research in Erfgen et al (2015). Exploration and empirical testing of various variables that have the potential to be moderating is important because it can expand the theoretical aspects. This study aims to further analyze the existence of vampire effects with moderation so that the results can provide important insights on how to avoid the effects of these vampires. The study was conducted in the form of experimental research that examines how the effects of endorsers (both celebrity and unknown) on brand recall by moderating consumer involvement variables. Based on the description in the background of the above problems, the focus of this study is to examine the moderating effect of consumer involvement in the relationship between endorsers and brand recall with the use of fictitious brands in experimental research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Celebrity Endorsement

The results of several previous studies, celebrity endorsement is often described as a promotional technique in marketing and communication activities that can improve the integration of brands, products, and messages, so that the expenditure and investment associated with it is something that is permissible (eg Belch & Belch, 2013; Charbonneau & Garland, 2005; Choi, Lee & Kim, 2005; Kim & Na, 2007). In general, celebrity endorsers can be defined as "every individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition in the name of consumer products by appearing with him in an advertisement" (McCracken, 1989). Non celebrity is usually used by companies because it has a character that matches the brand and target consumers. Besides that, non celebrity can also be controlled by the company. This is different from the celebrity endorser where the public personality has been created by them from time to time and therefore, the company will be more difficult in controlling them (Tom et al, 1992). The benefits of celebrity endorsement according to some researchers are very diverse. (e.g. Tom et al, 1992; Mehta, 1994) The use of non celebrity endorsers is supported because of the strong link between them and the brand, because it is unique, and consumers focus more on brands rather than endorsers on these advertisements. In contrast, other researchers found that celebrity endorsers supported more positive attitudes toward advertising and greater purchase intentions than non-celebrities (Atkin & Block, 1983; Petty et al, 1983). In addition, the Study of Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) and Mathur, Mathur and Rangan (1997) regarding the use of celebrity endorsers are supported by the impact of celebrity endorsers on the profitability of companies. However, the targeted audience and approved products must be in accordance with the general personality of the celebrity (Erdogan, 1999) and involve important characteristics such as being credible, attractive, liked and trustworthy, and able to represent someone with what the consumer wants to identify himself (eg Erdogan, 1999; Evans, 1988; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Langmeyer & Walker, 1991a, 1991b; McCracken, 1989; McGuire, 1985; Misra & Beatty, 1990). Negative effects such as vampire effects can occur if this is not fulfilled (Erfgen et al, 2015).

Brand Recall and Vampire Effect

Brand recall is a powerful mechanism and serves as a basis for testing vampires effect when using influencers as a sales tool (Till, 1998). Brand recall is a part of Customer-Based Brand Equity which refers to the value of the Keller's brand (2006). Their response to brand marketing activities is influenced by consumer knowledge about the brand. In this context, brand awareness is very important because it can increase the probability recognized by consumers (Keller, 2006; Kapferer, 2012). Brand recognition only measures the potential memory of brands through a single brand element, while brand recall measures consumers' ability to identify brands in various circumstances (Keller, 2006). Brand memory is measured in two forms, namely without assistance which is a spontaneous brand and assisted withdrawal that refers to a series of brands to choose from (Keller, 2006; Kapferer, 2012). Brand recall that is without help (spontaneous) is very important for new brand communication while assisted with recall measured in relation to competitors in the market (Kapferer, 2012). From a managerial point of view, it is important to analyze the brand without help and assistance to ensure that the weakening of brand recall is minimal when using endorsers. Evans (1988) argues that the vampire effect occurs if there is no relationship between celebrities and brands and therefore the audience only remembers the celebrity. Erfgen et al. (2015) defines the existence of vampire effects in celebrity endorsers as a decline in brand recall in advertisements using celebrity endorsers compared to the same advertising stimulus but by using unknown but equally attractive endorsers. In the context of

this study, we also tested whether brand recall is also negatively affected by the use of celebrity endorsers with the first hypothesis:

H1: Brand recall is lower when advertisements use celebrity endorsers than when they use people who are equally attractive but non celebrity endorsers.

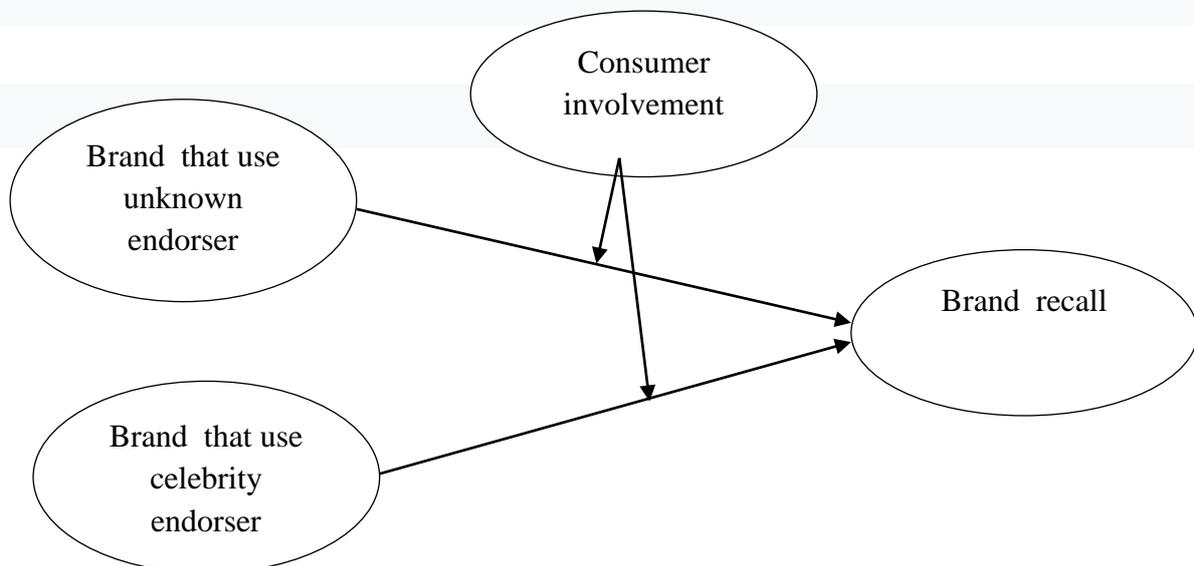
Consumer Involvement

Involvement can be interpreted as individuals who feel the level of personal relationships that influence decision making concerning basic values, goals and understanding of the product (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Involvement can also be defined as the personal relationship of consumers or consumer perceptions of an object, event, or activity experienced (Peter & Olson, 2008). Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the notion of consumer involvement is an individual who feels a personal interest and / or stimulus that arouses interest in a specific situation that influences decision making.

Some moderation factors such as the level of involvement can increase the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers (Erdogan, 1999). On the basis of this, the researcher wants to examine whether consumer involvement can moderate the relationship between endorsers and brands (consumer involvement in the product category).

H2: The negative effects of celebrity endorsers on brand recall will be greater (less) in low (high) consumer involvement conditions

Research Model (Experimental Research Study)



3. RESEARCH METHOD

Study 1

For the first phase of the study, researchers used posttest-only control design to test for the existence of the vampire (H1) effect in an experimental study. For the treatment level researchers

chose Syahrini as a celebrity endorser and female model as unknown endorsers. The product studied was a smartphone with a fictitious brand, Andromagic. Researchers use the services of designers to make two types of advertisements (celebrity versus unknown).

The target of the study was undergraduate students at Jenderal Sudirman University Purwokerto. There are two groups that will be examined, namely the experimental group and the control group. The population of each group is 30 students. Participants from the control group will be given an advertisement image with unknown endorser and the experimental group will be given an advertisement image with a celebrity endorser. Each group will be given an advertisement image that has been designed to be observed for 10 seconds. Furthermore, the participants will be given 5 psychotest questions as a distraction to divert participants' attention to advertising. The next step, the researcher gives a question of the brand of the product being advertised. Then the researcher repeated the question by giving 10 choices of answers to the participants. Finally, the researcher conducted a manipulation check by asking who was the name of the endorser in the advertisement, this was done to find out whether the participants really knew the endorser in the advertisement or not. For the control variable, researchers used an attractiveness measure using a 7-point Likert taken from Ohanian (1991) which contained: interesting, classy, beautiful, graceful, and sexy.

Study 2

In phase 2 research we used factorial design to assess the occurrence of the vampire effect (H1) and the impact of the moderation of consumer involvement (H2). For level treatment we chose Daniel Mananta as a celebrity endorser and male model as an unknown endorser. For the products we selected there are two, namely laptops with the brand Galaxia (fictitious brands) as products with high consumer involvement and soap with the Joyful brand (fictitious brands) as products with low consumer involvement. There were two groups in this study, each group consisting of 40 undergraduate students from Jenderal Sudirman University Purwokerto. In the first group, students will be given an advertisement image that uses unknown endorsers that advertise high involvement (laptop) products as many as 20 people and low involvement (bath soap) as many as 20 people, then for other groups students will be given advertising images using celebrity endorsers who advertise high involvement product (laptop) as many as 20 people and low involvement (bath soap) as many as 20 people. The sequence of research is done the same as the research step in the first stage. At the end of the second phase of the research, the researcher carried out a manipulation check, namely by asking who was the name of the endorser in the ad. For control variables, researchers used a consumer involvement measurement tool based on a 7-point Likert taken from consumer involvement profile revised from Laurent & Kapferer (1985).

4. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Study 1

With the number of respondents (N) 60, where 40 people are female students and 20 male students, with a minimum age of 17 years and the maximum age is 26 years. The average age of respondents is 19.50 years. Recall levels are confirmed, as we predicted in H1, that celebrity use damages brand recall, compared to the use of unknown endorsers that are equally attractive. Brand recall is significantly lower for ad groups that use celebrities (27.34% true) than for ad groups that use unknown endorsers (29.51% correct; $\chi^2(1, N = 30) = 3.60, p = .03, \phi = .06$). We found support for H1. Thus, the results of phase 1 research offer confidence in the existence of vampire effects, using fictitious advertising contexts. This is in accordance with the theory of previous research which states that the existence of vampire effects on celebrity endorsers as a decline in brand recall in advertisements using celebrity endorsers compared to the same advertising stimulus but by using unknown but equally attractive endorsers (Erfgen et al, 2015).

Study 2

With the number of respondents (N) 80, of which 50 were female students and 30 were male students, with a minimum age of 17 years and a maximum age of 26 years. The average age of the respondent is 19.73 years. In Model 2, we add moderation to consumer involvement and find a moderating relationship with support for supporting H2. Brand name memory is significantly the same for ad groups that use celebrities (58.13% correct) with ad groups using unknown endorsers (58.13% true; $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 3.60, p = .03, \phi = .06$). We found support for H2. As expected, the negative effects of celebrities on brand memory decline with stronger consumer involvement relationships. Thus H2 is accepted in our study. Consumer involvement functions as an influential moderator to prevent the occurrence of vampire effects. This is consistent with the theory of previous research which states that some moderating factors such as the level of involvement can increase the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers (Erdogan, 1999). We also find that for product categories with high involvement and low involvement both of them can strengthen the brand's memory from consumers.

5. CONCLUSION

Our findings have a number of important implications. First, the results of our study clearly show that the vampire effect is a real threat that can weaken the brand recall of a product advertisement. Second, the results of our study clearly show that with the existence of consumer involvement, vampire effect from advertisements that use celebrities can be prevented. Consumers with high or low involvement will tend to have a stronger brand recall, so vampire effect from advertisements using celebrity can be prevented.

6. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several limitations in our study. First, our study is only a laboratory experiment with advertisements printed so that external validity is limited. Secondly, in the process of filling out the questionnaire there were some participants who committed fraud such as copying the answers of friends next to them and not following the filling procedure in accordance with the protocol of our study.

Suggestions for future research should be carried out with a larger sample of research, while similar research can also be carried out using other potential moderations such as the number of exposures to a celebrity advertisement. We also suggest that similar studies can be used using other types of products that can be categorized as high involvement products and low involvement products

APPENDIX

Advertisements featuring Syahrini / unknown endorsers (study 1)



Advertisement featuring Daniel Mananta / unknown endorser (study 2)
High involvement



Low involvement



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