

# Celebrity Endorsers and Non-profits: A Source Model Examination

## Current Situation

- Large body of research on Celebrity endorsers and brands and products.
- More brands and Non-profits are linking themselves with celebrities.
- Currently few studies examine the effectiveness of pairing a non-profit with a celebrity endorser.



## Celebrity Endorsers



### POSSIBLE BENEFITS

- Celebrities garner attention more than non celebrities
- Celebrities can polish up a tarnished image
- Celebrities can give a non-profit a more interesting image than they possess alone.
- Celebrities can serve as a powerful voice for a cause.

### POSSIBLE RISKS

- Celebrities can misbehave and tarnish the image of the non-profit they are associated with.
- Celebrities can be financially costly.
- When celebrities are tied to a cause over time their image may be more powerful than the image of the non-profit.

## The Case of Mark McGwire (Brown, Basil and Bocarnea, 2003)



- Broke home run record in 1998
- Spokesperson for many products but also did PSA on child abuse.
- Viewers that thought of him as role model (high identification) were more aware of child abuse and steroid and desire to use the steroid.

## Source Models

- Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, Hovland)
  - Trustworthiness
  - Expertise, Fit
  - Attractiveness
- Source Attractiveness Model (Kahle & Homer, Kamins)
  - Attractiveness
  - Likeability
  - Familiarity

## Past Research would indicate

- The best spokespersons for non-profits would be those who are somehow tied to the organization.
- Aren't likely to tarnish the image of the non-profit.
- Aren't more familiar than the non-profit.
- Are able to bolster the image of the non-profit.

## Source Credibility Hypotheses

- H1: Higher levels of perceived trustworthiness and expertise of the celebrity endorser will be positively related to the likelihood of donating to a non-profit organization.



## Source Attractiveness Model

- H2: Higher levels of perceived attractiveness, likeability, and familiarity of the celebrity endorser will be positively related to the likelihood of donating to a non-profit organization.



## Admiration and Celebrity Endorsement

- H3: Higher levels of admiration of the celebrity endorser will be positively related to the likelihood of donating to a non-profit organization.

## Respondents

- 227 subjects completed online questionnaires
- 47 percent of the sample was female.
- Average age of the respondents was 44 years
- Most of the respondents had completed some college.

## Subjects and Materials

I'm **Angelina Jolie**.  
Won't you join me in helping to save orphans like my adopted daughter from the war ravaged Darfur region of Sudan?



I'm **Julia Roberts**.  
Won't you join me in helping to save orphans from the war ravaged Darfur region of Sudan?



I'm **Rosie O'Donnell**.  
Won't you join me in helping to save orphans from the war ravaged Darfur region of Sudan?



The current tragedy in Darfur has been labeled by the UN as the 'world's worst humanitarian crisis'. The estimated number of people driven from their homes is in the millions - thousands more are also said to have died mainly due to the effects of displacement like hunger, lack of safe drinking water and disease. Often there is no one to care for children who have been orphaned by the tragedy unfolding in Darfur. The Darfurian Orphan Rescue Society was established to help these defenseless children. We want to provide safe homes and a bright future for these children.

[www.dors.org](http://www.dors.org)

Randomly assigned to one of three celebrity conditions (Julia Roberts  $n = 63$ , Angelina Jolie  $n = 81$ , Rosie O'Donnell  $n = 83$ ).

Chosen for various ratings on independent variables. Expertise manipulated.

A fictitious advertisement for the Darfur Orphan Rescue Society (DORS)

## Instruments

- Ohanian's (1991) scales for Source Credibility (trustworthiness .985, expertise .970 and attractiveness .968).
- Source Attractiveness was measured using previously published scales (likeability .972, familiarity .75).
- Admiration was measured using a four item semantic differential scale (.964).

## Results Source Credibility

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
Trust	.062	.031	3.996	1	*.046
Expert	.154	.060	6.670	1	*.010
Celeb			1.943	2	.379
Celeb(1)	.172	.405	.181	1	.671
GEN(1)	-.176	.306	.331	1	.565
AGES	-.003	.010	.089	1	.766
Constant	-1.833	.630	8.474	1	.004
Nagelkerke R Square of .251					

## Results Source Attractiveness

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
Attractive	.053	.048	1.223	1	.269
Familiar	.068	.070	.926	1	.336
Likeable	.134	.065	4.270	1	*.039
Celeb			1.272	2	.529
Celeb(1)	-.361	.466	.599	1	.439
AGES	-.001	.010	.005	1	.261
GEN(1)	.058	.300	.037	1	.945
Constant	-1.685	.674	6.246	1	.847
Nagelkerke R Square of .204					

## Results Admiration

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sign.
Admire	.187	.033	31.642	1	*.000
Celeb			.732	2	.694
Celeb(1)	-.144	.418	.119	1	.730
GEN(1)	-.040	.303	.018	1	.396
AGES	.002	.010	.022	1	.894
Constant	-2.023	.646	9.803	1	.882
Nagelkerke R Square of .246					

## Final Model only Significant Variables

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.
Likeable	-.036	.078	.209	1	.647
Trust	.000	.045	.000	1	.996
Expertise	.129	.061	4.477	1	*.034
Admire	.144	.074	3.817	1	*.050
Celeb			1.820	2	.402
Celeb(1)	.020	.450	.002	1	.964
Celeb(2)	-.441	.392	1.264	1	.261
Constant	-2.226	.446	24.888	1	.000
Likeable	-.036	.078	.209	1	.647

## Discussion

- The most effective celebrity endorsers are those who have a natural connection to the cause or non-profit. This is also the case for product and brand endorsements.
  - Finding fits well into literature on “match up” , “fit” “connection”.
  - Expertise tends to be a key indicator of match up as opposed to trustworthiness or attractiveness.

## Discussion

- Admiration was an important celebrity characteristic for non-profits.
  - Non-profits may be better served by an endorser that is viewed as being an inspirational and commendable person.
  - Research has shown that endorsers for products don't necessarily have to be trustworthy but just popular and good at what they do.
  - Even spokespersons who have fallen from grace can eventually get endorsements again if they perform well.

## Discussion

- Donors may have higher ethical standards for non-profit endorsers than for-profit endorsers.
- The image of the non-profit is their greatest asset.



## Future Research & Limitations

- Direct measures of differences between for profit and non-for-profit celebrity characteristics and effectiveness with regards to donation or purchase.
- What does a celebrity really get from associating themselves with a non-profit?
- Long term effects of pairing a celebrity and non-profit over time.
- A quantitative analysis of the actual financial benefits non-profits receive given the costs incurred.