

# **Celebrity endorsement on the Internet across different channels and advertising formats**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Celebrity endorsement is defined as the use of any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer product or brand by appearing with it in a marketing campaign (McCracken, 1989). The use of celebrities in advertising represents one of the most common marketing tactics employed in about 25 to 30 percent of the marketing campaigns across the world (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995; Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Schimmelpfennig, 2018). The underlying assumption behind this massive use of celebrities in advertising is related to marketers' conviction that celebrities would attract consumer attention, transfer positive attributes to the promoted brand, and influence consumers' purchase intention (Chung & Cho, 2017).

In the last fifty years, a plethora of studies have examined the nature and effects of celebrity endorsement on consumers. Most of these research pieces fall within the category of what has been labeled as 'celebrity persuasion research' (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016), which includes various studies devoted to investigating either the psychological processes and the effect on audience's brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase intention (Atkin & Block, 1983; Miller & Laczniak, 2011; Chung & Cho, 2014). Moreover, these studies have included the examination of the elements that may mediate or moderate these effects on consumer's brand responses. Here it is possible to find variables such as the characteristics of the celebrity (e.g., credibility, attractiveness, liking), situational elements (e.g., fitness between the celebrity and the sponsored brand), and attributes of the audience (e.g., age, sex, level of involvement) (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Knoll & Matthes, 2017).

Despite this vast amount of research on celebrity endorsement, the interest in understanding its critical factors and effectiveness remains relatively intact, particularly in the case of the use of celebrities in the online context. This steady interest on the topic is partially explained by the development of new media channels and advertising formats on

the Web in which celebrity endorsement may be carried out. In terms of media channels, the development and consolidation of the Web 2.0 -social media- in the last decade have caused the adaptation and emergence of new advertising formats in which celebrities may endorse branded products. The use of Web 1.0 -which represents a linear media channel- has been complemented during the last decade by social media platforms (Web 2.0) characterized by a movement from information sharing to customer interaction, the development of one-directional to bidirectional communication, a connection based on information to connecting people, and company functions to participating formats and group communities (Sykora, 2017; Hiremath & Kenchakkanavar, 2016). Regarding message formats, traditional problems of advertising such as ad avoidance and negative consumer attitudes toward traditional ad have motivated marketers and media owners to find new ways to reach customers. In this line, conventional advertisements on webpages or social media are complemented by non-traditional forms of advertising such as advertorials/PR actions, brand placements (on video, print or videogames), brand- and user-generated content, and so on, which represent a 'more natural' (and embedded) way to present brands, particularly in contrast with the explicit commercial intent of traditional advertising formats (Tutaj & Van Reijmersdal, 2012; Dahlen & Edenius, 2007). As a result, when advertisers are planning a celebrity-based campaign to promote their brands on the Web, they have to choose among diverse activities and channels. These actions include ad executions ranging from traditional forms of promotion such as conventional advertisements or public relations actions displayed on online media websites such as msn.com or nytimes.com to brand-related content or ads on Instagram or Facebook. In this context, advertisers face complex online advertising campaign decisions because of the variety of ad formats and insufficient knowledge about their effectiveness (Rosenkrans, 2009; Burns & Lutz 2006).

The vast majority of studies in the field of online celebrity endorsement have followed the tradition of examining the effectiveness and underlying mechanisms of this marketing technique (see, for example, Schimmelpfennig, 2018; Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Chung & Cho, 2017; Bergkvist et al., 2016; McCormick, 2016; Brison et al., 2016; Preedanorawut et al., 2011). Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, no studies have comparatively evaluated the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in the context of different online channels -such as websites vs. social media (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016).

Moreover, only scant efforts have been made to comparatively examine the effectiveness of celebrity actions across diverse advertising formats on the web (Russell & Rasolofoarison, 2017).

Consequently, this paper seeks to examine the effect of online celebrity endorsement across different channels and formats on consumer's brand responses. In particular, this piece of research evaluates the differences between (a) using celebrities on a social media platform (Instagram) compared to using them on a digital edition of a print media on the web; and (b) using explicit (traditional advertising) and embedded formats of celebrity endorsement (celebrity post and PR action), in which the latter encompasses one of the main characteristics of contemporary campaigns (van Reijmersdal & Rozendaal, 2020; Naderer et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2019). In this paper, we contribute to the literature by providing evidence on the power of social media (a Web 2.0 channel) as an advertising context that effectively delivers messages making use of celebrity endorsements. We show its differential and positive effect on the attitudes toward the ad, brand attitude and purchase intention. These effects are superior when compared to Web 1.0 channels. This work helps to bridge the knowledge gap on how different types of channels currently available on the Web (i.e., Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 platforms) can affect the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement tactics.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a) Effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on the Internet**

Regardless of the medium, there is a long tradition of research providing evidence about the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in improving consumer brand responses (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016). With few exceptions (e.g., Costanzo & Goodnight, 2006), prior studies have confirmed that celebrity endorsement has a positive effect on consumers responses such as ad attitude, brand attitude, and purchase intention (Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Till et al., 2008; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Till & Busler, 2000; Erdogan, 1999; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Lynch & Schuler, 1994; Misra & Beatty, 1990; Kamins, 1990).

Studies examining the specific case of celebrity endorsement on the Web have mainly focused on social media (rather than on Web 1.0). As research on celebrity endorsement in general, these pieces of research have also confirmed that the use of celebrities is effective in improving consumer responses (Yang, 2018). For instance, Lee et al. (2017) examined the case of Web-1.0 advertising actions, specifically the use of celebrity endorsers in ad banners. They found that participants exposed to banners using celebrities responded with a more positive ad attitude than those participants exposed to banners without celebrities. Nevertheless, they did not detect a direct effect of using celebrity endorsers on brand attitude and purchase intention, but a mediated one by ad attitude in the former case and by ad and brand attitude in the latter one (Pangellu et al., 2014). Similarly, studies using social media also corroborated the significant effect of celebrity endorsement on improving consumer responses. Ahmad et al. (2019) examined the impact of celebrity endorsements on social media advertisements and brand image on the brand responses of young consumers. Their results showed a significant positive influence of celebrity promotional actions on brand image, which was also found to be an antecedent for the purchase intentions. These results are consistent with findings reported on several social media platforms, including celebrity endorsement on Facebook and Instagram in which a significant mediation of ad attitude on brand attitude has been also reported (e.g., Herjanto et al., 2020; Loureiro & Sarmiento, 2019; Chung & Cho, 2017; Um, 2016).

#### **b) Celebrity endorsement across different media channels on the Web**

The study of the interaction between media channels and source persuasiveness has a 50-years tradition in communication research, examining and providing evidence of the changes in persuasion effects when the same stimulus is presented in different media such as print vs. TV (see, for example, Chaiken & Eagly, 1976; Worchel et al., 1975). Concerning the specific case of Internet, it has been proposed that the technological features of new media may increase persuasiveness, as some key elements including credibility, enjoyment, and authority can be sounder perceived in the context of digital media (e.g., Metzger et al., 2003). In this vein, the technological features of the Web should impact consumer persuasiveness when offline and online media are compared, but also when Web 1.0 and social media

platforms are contrasted. In the latter case, this change represents a significant variation in terms of how brands interested in deploying a celebrity endorsement may promote their good or services (Ha, 2008). These changes are mainly related to the consumer experience, in which audiences face a message developed in a richer media environment characterized by interactivity and potential higher customer engagement, which should lead to improving consumer brand responses (Tankosic et al., 2016; Lileker et al., 2011).

This assumption that a similar action placed in a richer media channel may improve consumer ad reception and brand responses has been tested only in the context of the change from traditional media to Internet advertising, but neither between the Web 1.0 and social media nor in the context of celebrity endorsement. Kimelfeld and Watt (2001) compared the effects of advertising in a traditional printed medium and on the Web. They reported a significant effect of the medium itself in producing promotional acceptance behavior and purchase intention, in which online media had a stronger effect than traditional media in producing these behavioral responses. These results are in the same line of what media research has proposed in terms of the role of enriched media: there is a positive relationship between the degree of interactivity of an advertisement, attitudes toward the ad and the brand, as well as purchase intention (Kiss & Esch, 2006; Fortin et al., 2005).

Thus, bringing such findings into the endorsement in the Internet context, it is possible to postulate that celebrity endorsement placed on social media, as a Web 2.0 channel, should have a stronger direct and indirect effect on consumer responses (ad attitude, brand attitude, and purchase intention) than the use of celebrity endorsement on Web 1.0 websites (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The first set of hypotheses are posited in the following hypotheses:

*H1: Celebrity endorsement on Web 2.0 channels (social media) leads to a more favorable ad attitude than endorsement on Web 1.0 channels (digital edition of a newspaper).*

*H2: Celebrity endorsement on Web 2.0 channels leads to (a) a more favorable brand attitude than endorsement on Web 1.0 channels, (b) through an increase of ad attitude.*

*H3: Celebrity endorsement on Web 2.0 channels leads to (a) a higher purchase intention than endorsement on Web 1.0 channels, (b) through an increase of ad attitude, which subsequently increases purchase intention.*

### **c) Explicit and subtle celebrity endorsement**

Advertising messages may be executed in different ad formats, including forms of advertising with an explicit persuasive intent (traditional advertising) and other with an embedded or subtle commercial message (non-traditional advertising). The latter form of advertising depicts persuasive contents in a hidden way, using more ‘real-life’ (meaning less-forced) formats, by means of advergames, product placements, advertorial, paid-celebrity posts on social media, and so on. It has been reported that these ‘more-natural’ executions tend to increase the message’s effectiveness on consumers (Davtyan & Cunningham, 2017; Uribe, 2015). In the particular case of celebrity endorsement, Russell and Rasolofoarison (2017) provided evidence of a superior effect of these embedded actions on consumer responses, which include ad attitude, brand attitude and purchase intention; as well as other celebrity measures, including overall credibility (trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise) and attitude toward the celebrity.

Literature has pointed-out that the increased persuasiveness of these embedded advertising executions is mainly due to the difficulty of audiences to develop critical processing strategies to cope with the persuasive intent of ads when the commercial attempt of the message is not explicit (Buijzen et al., 2010; Panic et al., 2013). As a result, embedded forms of endorsement, in general, should produce greater involvement between the audience and the celebrity, improving consumer brand responses (van Reijmersdal et al., 2005). Then, it is expected that embedded celebrity endorsement increases the brand responses of consumers, which is expressed in the following hypothesis:

*H4: Embedded formats (non-traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement lead to a more favorable ad attitude than explicit forms (traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement.*

*H5: Embedded formats (non-traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement lead to (a) a more favorable brand attitude than explicit forms (traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement, (b) through an increase of ad attitude.*

*H6: Embedded formats (non-traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement lead to (a) a higher purchase intention than explicit forms (traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement, (b) through an increase of ad attitude, which subsequently increases purchase intention.*

**[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]**

### **3. METHODS**

#### **a) Experiment design and participants**

We conducted a 2 (Web 1.0: *digital edition* vs Web 2.0: social media) x 2 (explicit vs embedded celebrity endorsement) between-subjects experiment, in which participants were exposed to a fictitious piece of online branded content using celebrity endorsement. Four experimental treatments were generated, as we manipulated the *channel*, with one ‘*digital Web edition*’ condition and one ‘social media’ condition, and the *explicitness of the celebrity endorsement ad piece*, with one ‘explicit’ condition and one ‘embedded’ message condition.

This study used a sample of graduate business students from a large public Chilean university via e-mail invitations containing a link to the online questionnaire. Participants ( $n = 165$ ) ranged in age from 24 to 31 years old ( $M_{\text{age}} = 23.4$ ,  $SD = 2.12$ ) and 47.3% were females. TABLE 1 shows the respondent allocation to each experimental condition. The study was conducted in this age group because they are considered the heaviest users of online platforms, including social media (Statista, 2017).

**[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]**

## **b) Variables and materials**

The independent variable *channel* was operationalized with two levels, a Web 1.0 ‘magazine digital edition’ (digital replica) and a Web 2.0 social media (Instagram). These two channels allow the use of graphical stimulus, including still images and text. In other words, comparable stimuli can be created using them as the context for the ad pieces. Besides, Instagram was selected as it is one of the most popular social media platforms among young adults between 18 and 24, while 90% of their users are under 35 years old (Pew Research Center, 2018). Also, over 70% of companies use Instagram in the US, and more than 1 million brands employ this social media platform around the globe (Lister, 2018).

The other independent variable was the format of the message, in which we used the explicitness of the celebrity endorsement ad piece as the central feature (explicit vs. embedded). Consequently, ‘explicit celebrity endorsement’ was operationalized as either the use of a traditional piece of advertising with a celebrity endorsement (for the Web 1.0 digital magazine) or the use of an Instagram advertisement with a celebrity endorsement (for the Web 2.0 social media) with the same main picture, but using the social media account of the brand, and including an advertising cue. On the other hand, ‘embedded celebrity endorsement’ was operationalized in terms of ad formats in which the persuasive intent was not explicit. In this case, a brand-sponsored content was incorporated as either a news article featuring the celebrity (for the Web 1.0 digital magazine), or a celebrity post on his own Instagram account (for the Web 2.0 social media). In all the cases, it was used a similar appeal, the same call to action and main picture to produce comparability of the results. Figure 2 shows the stimulus used in the four conditions.

The dependent variables were (1) ad attitude, (2) brand attitude and (3) purchase intention. In the case of ad attitude, it was measured using the scale proposed by McKenzie et al. (1986). On the other hand, brand attitude and purchase intention were examined using the scale proposed by Pears and Singh (2004). All of the scales were measured using 5-items and 5-point semantic differential scales. In the final test, these three scales were examined regarding their psychometric properties. In terms of dimensionality, principal component

analysis showed that -as expected- they were grouped in three different factors. In addition, reliability was examined using Cronbach's alphas, which showed values over 0.7, which is the minimum acceptable: 0.85, 0.94, and 0.91 respectively (Hair et al., 2010; Janssens et al., 2008).

In addition, two covariates were measured in this study: attitude toward advertising (traditional or non-traditional) in general, and attitude toward the celebrity. In the case of the former, several studies have shown that attitude toward the advertising actions may depend on attitudes toward advertising in general (Mehta, 2000; McKenzie & Lutz, 1989). Since we included different types of advertising actions, we used an adapted scale proposed by Lutz & MacKenzie (1989). In the case of the latter, it was considered because attitude toward the celebrity may significantly affect the performance of the ad (Bergkvist et al., 2016). It was measured using the dimension of celebrity trustworthiness defined by Ohanian (1990) as it has been used by other studies (Min et al., 2019; Um, 2018; Klaus & Bailey, 2008).

### **c) Pre-test**

In order to select the celebrity used in this study, we pre-selected a group of the three local celebrities with more social media followers on Instagram. They all were football players: Alexis Sánchez<sup>1</sup>, Claudio Bravo<sup>2</sup> y Arturo Vidal<sup>3</sup> (4.8, 4.6 and 2.6 million followers respectively, at the beginning of 2019). Then a pre-test was carried out using Ohanian's scale (1990) examining attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise to evaluate the source credibility of them. Besides, participants were also inquired about two product categories (sports equipment and telecom) to determine the most suitable category for the study. Also, people were asked about what brands they associate to these celebrities to avoid prior associations that biased the result of the study. In this pre-test, Claudio Bravo, who was sponsored by a sports brand, was finally selected, as he obtained the highest score in all the scales of source credibility. Also, he was the only evaluated celebrity that was not associated

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis\\_S%C3%A1nchez](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_S%C3%A1nchez)

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudio\\_Bravo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudio_Bravo)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arturo\\_Vidal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arturo_Vidal)

with any sports equipment brand (in the telecom category, all the celebrities were matched with a brand).

Finally, the final questionnaire and stimuli were applied to a group of 15 respondent with the same sociodemographic characteristics of the final sample. This final part of the pretest was developed to guarantee an accurate understanding of the questions, to correct any confusion regarding the wording or other formal aspect of the study, and to detect difficulties that participants may encounter with instrument items or stimulus (Presser et al., 2004)

**[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]**

#### **d) Main study procedure**

The questionnaire containing the stimuli was applied online using Qualtrics. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Once they were exposed to the stimulus (see FIGURE 2), respondents were asked about some personal preferences and socio-demographic information, to avoid priming effects in the measure of dependent variables. Finally, they were required to answer the items of the research scales.

## **4. RESULTS**

#### **a) Randomization check**

Firstly, we evaluated possible differences across the treatment groups. ANOVA and  $\chi^2$  analyses showed no significant differences across the treatments in terms of age ( $F(161) = 1.304, p = 0.275$ ), sex ( $\chi^2(3) = 5.225, p = 0.156$ ), attitude toward advertising (traditional or non-traditional) in general ( $F(161) = 0.404, p = 0.751$ ), and attitude toward the celebrity ( $F(161) = 1.120, p = 0.343$ ).

## b) Effects of celebrity endorsement

The proposed model (FIGURE 1) with two serial mediators was assessed using PROCESS macro, with 5000 bootstraps (Hayes, 2015). This macro adds a script to SPSS, which provides a formal test of both direct and indirect effects. Since in this study there were four different treatments, two different serial multiple mediations were run using each independent variable as dummy variables (Web 1.0 channel vs. Web. 2.0 -social media-actions, and explicit vs. subtle celebrity advertising actions). Importantly, when a serial mediation is developed with dummy variables, significant paths represent significant differences across the levels of the variable (Hair et al., 2010).

Regarding the differential effect of celebrity endorsement across Web-1.0 channel vs Web 2.0. social media, the serial mediation model coefficients show a significant direct and mediating effect of exposure to celebrity endorsement on purchase. First of all, the model significantly explained 25% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.259$ ,  $F(162) = 3.350$ ,  $p = 0.0375$ ). As it is shown in Figure 3, compared to a Web 1.0 website, celebrity endorsement on social media resulted in a higher level of purchase intention as direct effect ( $\beta = 0.46$ ,  $SE=0.18$ ,  $CI= [0.09, 0.83]$ ) as well as an indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.07$ ,  $SE=0.04$ ,  $CI= [0.09, 0.16]$ ), through the significant paths linked to ad attitude ( $\beta = 0.71$ ) and brand attitude ( $\beta = 0.46$ ). In addition, the paths between both endorsement exposure and brand attitude ( $\beta = -0.32$ ,  $SE=0.23$ ,  $CI= [-0.77, 0.13]$ ) and ad attitude and purchase intention ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $SE=0.07$ ,  $CI= [-0.22, 0.05]$ ) were not significant. Consequently, H1, H2b, H3a and H3b were supported (see TABLE 2 for a summary of the hypotheses).

**[INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]**

In terms of the differential effect of celebrity endorsement using explicit and subtle (non-explicit) forms of advertising, the serial mediation model was also significant, but explained the variance in a lesser extent than the previous one ( $R^2 = 0.168$ ,  $F(163) = 4.758$ ,  $p = 0.0306$ ). With respect the path coefficients, subtle celebrity endorsement executions

produced a significant change on purchase intention only via an indirect effect. In fact, as FIGURE 4 shows, there was a significant increase on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.04$ ,  $SE=0.02$ ,  $CI= [0.01, 0.12]$ ), through the significant paths linked to ad attitude ( $\beta = 0.57$ ) and brand attitude ( $\beta = 0.19$ ), which provide support to the H4, H5b and H6b. Differently, the exposure to a celebrity endorsement either with an explicit or embedded commercial intent did not cause a significant direct effect on brand attitude ( $\beta = -0.29$ ,  $SE=0.22$ ,  $CI= [-0.74, 0.15]$ ) and purchase intention ( $\beta = -0.36$ ,  $SE=0.18$ ,  $CI= [-0.72, 0.01]$ ), which allow to reject H5a and H6a (TABLE 2). Moreover, the path between ad attitude and purchase intention was not significant either ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $SE=0.06$ ,  $CI= [-0.14, 0.12]$ ).

**[INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]**

As an additional analysis, a MANCOVA test was run to examine the potential effect of the interaction between the channel and format of celebrity endorsement on the mediating and dependent variables. Results showed that neither in the case of ad attitude ( $F(1) = 0.819$ ,  $p = 0.367$ ), brand attitude ( $F(1) = 0.048$ ,  $p = 0.826$ ), nor purchase intention ( $F(1) = 2.221$ ,  $p = 0.138$ ) a significant interaction was observed.

**[INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]**

## **5. DISCUSSION**

In the design of a web campaign, advertisers usually face a complex decision when they have to select among a variety of channels and ad formats to develop celebrity-based actions. These marketing actions range from traditional ads to brand-related content endorsed by consumers' favorite celebrities. Moreover, advertisers also have to decide between delivering explicit commercial messages or embedded presentations of them. For that reason, this study

examined the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in subtle and explicit advertising in the context of traditional Web channels (Web 1.0) and social media (Web 2.0). The most important result of this study is that the power of using celebrity endorsement on the Web can be improved by the use of either social media platforms or embedded message formats. In both cases, there was a significant increase in the direct effect on advertising attitude and indirectly on brand attitude and purchase intention.

Regarding media channels, this study reported the superiority of social media over traditional Web-1.0 celebrity endorsement as producing a direct and an indirect effect on purchase intention (via ad attitude and, subsequently, brand attitude). These findings provide support to those authors asserting that newer channels, characterized by a richer media environment, tend to increase the effectiveness of promotional actions (Boateng et al., 2015). As part of what the previous literature has asserted, the use of advertising media in which consumers may interact (without overload information processing), can improve the consumer experience and involvement, providing better ad effectiveness in terms of recall, attitude and behaviors (Shareef et al., 2019; Alalwan et al., 2017; Pavlou & Stewart, 2000). In the context of celebrity endorsement, an enriched media environment seems to potentiate its effect, in which a more interactive and/or more involving experience would increase the consumer relationship developed with the celebrity as a critical antecedent of advertising effectiveness of this technique (Chung & Cho, 2017; Yuan et al., 2016). Social media (because of its rich interactive character) would decrease the perception of message mediation, fostering a closer, deeper and more meaningful relationships between consumers and celebrities, which could be transferred to the brand (Chung & Cho, 2017; Kim & Song, 2016; Yuan et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2015).

Concerning message formats, this study also observed the superiority of subtle (e.g., embedded) over explicit forms of celebrity-endorsed messages. Results showed that subtle messages demonstrated to be more effective in promoting behavioral effects. This result may be explained regarding that those non-traditional forms of advertising characterized by a hidden commercial intent tend to decrease the probability of consumer's activation of defense mechanisms compared to explicit forms of advertising (Daems, 2018). Since PR actions, as well as brand-related posts, are advertising forms in which the persuasive intent is not

explicit, it is unlikely that audiences detect it and develop critical processing, which potentially increases the cognitive, affective behavioral effect of advertising messages (Panic et al., 2013; Buijzen et al., 2010). Moreover, it has been observed that subtle forms of advertising produce greater involvement and enjoyment among audiences, which could be enhanced by celebrities, facilitating attitudinal and behavioral change (Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Evans et al., 2017; Gillespie & Joireman, 2016). In this line, the results of this study also provide evidence recent regulations in terms of enforcement celebrity disclosure should act in the desired direction, limiting those brand effects of celebrity endorsement related to the hidden persuasive intent (de Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Casale, 2019).

All in all, these results show that new developments of celebrity endorsement (in social media and non-traditional formats) tend to produce more effective results. These general results are in line with the assumption that new media/formats allow consumers (particularly young people) to be more active (engage) in their usage of the medium (Ha & McCann, 2008; Bergemann & Bonatti, 2011; Rodgers & Thorson, 2000). Indeed, online users could involve themselves in experiences correlated to personal and social-interactive engagement behaviors, as specific activities on particular media contexts that result in increased advertising effectiveness (Calder et al., 2009). In this way, the use of celebrity endorsing posts (as an embedded form in a new channel) may be a more effective technique to promote brands in the current media scenario (Chung & Cho, 2017; McCormick, 2016).

Limitations of this research are related to the particular formats and platforms used in this study. As it has mentioned by some authors, social media represent a group of platforms with diverse nature, particularly regarding what they allow users to do (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Thus, Instagram (a platform in which users share their interest, creativity and their hobbies), may have different commercial performance as another like Facebook (more centered in communication and developing relationships), and consequently, they might be associated with dissimilar uses and gratifications (Alhabash; 2017; Buzeta et al., 2020). Also, mediating or moderating variables, like persuasion knowledge, parasocial relationship, or social media use intensity were not included as part of the structural model. Their inclusion may help to provide potential explanations to the effects of formats and media. In this case, the potential explanations are tentative in the absence of the measure of the mechanism involved in the

effects reported in this study. In this regard, further studies should incorporate them as a means to provide more conclusive results. Finally, this study used a sample with a limited age range (undergraduate and postgraduate university students). Although they represent a group of native digital users, the influence of the Internet in general and Instagram in particular is more pervasive in our society. Thus, results main reflect the perception and habits of young adults and no other segments of the adult population, in which the effects of social media and new formats may vary.

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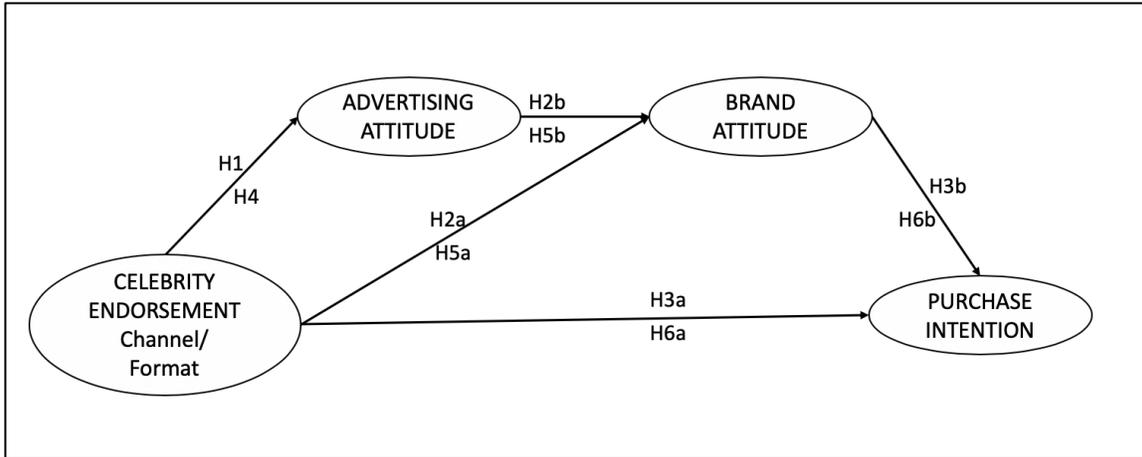
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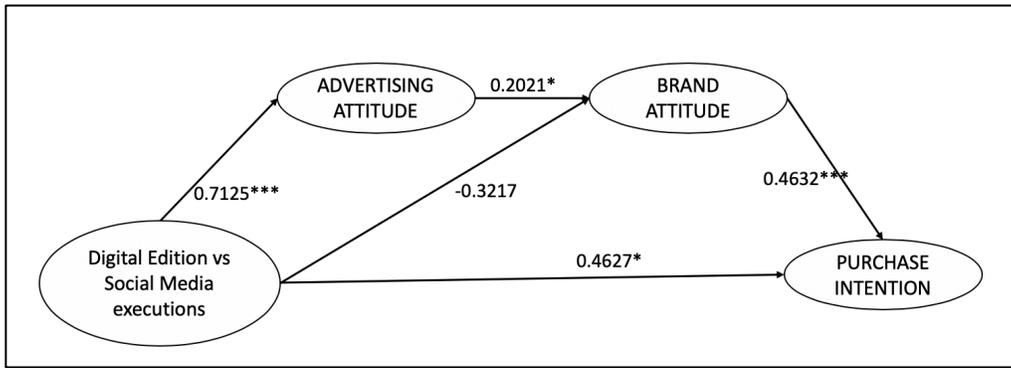
# FIGURES



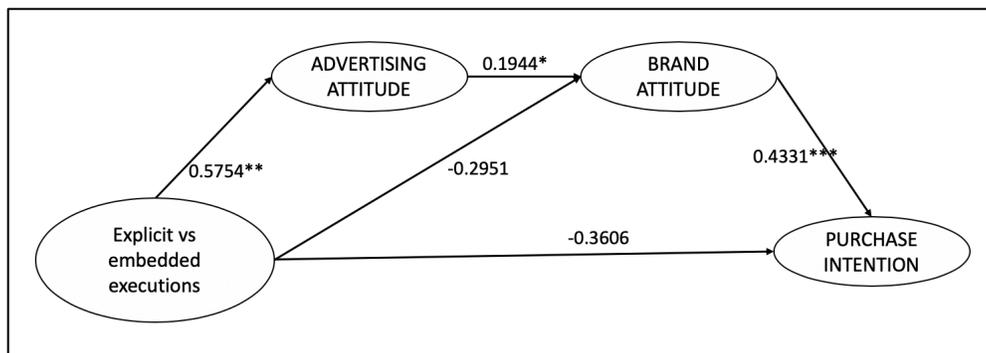
**FIGURE 1:** Proposed serial multiple mediation model: Effect of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention via ad attitude and brand attitude (Hypotheses 1 to 3 refer to the channel use and hypotheses 4 to 6 refer to the format of the message).

	Digital Edition	Social Media
Explicit		
Embedded		

**FIGURE 2.** Images of the experimental stimulus



**FIGURE 3:** Mediation model of celebrity endorsement across different Web media channel. Numeric values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \* $p < 0.05$ .



**FIGURE 4:** Mediation model of celebrity endorsement across explicit and embedded executions. Numeric values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ .

## TABLES

	Digital Edition	Social Media	Total
<b>Explicit</b>	40	42	82
<b>Subtle</b>	41	42	83
<b>Total</b>	81	84	165

**TABLE 1.** Study sample

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<i>H1: Celebrity endorsement on Web 2.0 channels (social media) leads to a more favorable ad attitude than endorsement on Web 1.0 channels (digital edition of a newspaper).</i>	Accepted
<i>H2: Celebrity endorsement on Web 2.0 channels (social media) leads to (a) a more favorable brand attitude than endorsement on Web 1.0 channels. (b) through an increase of ad attitude.</i>	Rejected Accepted
<i>H3: Celebrity endorsement on Web 2.0 channels (social media) leads to (a) a higher purchase intention than endorsement on Web 1.0 channels (b) through an increase of ad attitude, which subsequently increases purchase intention.</i>	Accepted Accepted
<i>H4: Embedded formats (non-traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement lead to a more favorable ad attitude than explicit forms (traditional ads) of endorsement.</i>	Accepted
<i>H5: Embedded formats (non-traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement lead to (a) a more favorable brand attitude than explicit forms (traditional ads) of endorsement, (b) through an increase of ad attitude.</i>	Rejected Accepted
<i>H6: Embedded formats (non-traditional ads) of celebrity endorsement lead to (a) a higher purchase intention than explicit forms (traditional ads) of endorsement, (b) through an increase of ad attitude, which subsequently increases purchase intention.</i>	Rejected Accepted

**TABLE 2.** Hypotheses of this study and their results