



What's in a face?

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Eric Meijer

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The use and effects
of types of endorsers
with types of products

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De Paranimfen:

Martin Meijer
Tel 038 454 1677
krelisje@hotmail.com

Margriet Wubs
Tel 038 454 0062
m.wubs@windesheim.nl

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**WHAT'S IN A FACE?
THE USE AND EFFECTS OF TYPES OF ENDORSERS WITH
TYPES OF PRODUCTS**

PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Twente,
op gezag van de rector magnificus,
prof. dr. H. Brinkma
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
in het openbaar te verdedigen
op donderdag 14 januari 2010 om 16.45 uur

door

Eric Meijer

geboren op 31 december 1974

te Zwolle

Dit proefschrift is goedgekeurd door de promotoren, prof. dr. A. Th. H. Pruyn en prof. dr. E.R. Seydel en de assistent promotor, dr. H. Boer.

Promotiecommissie:

Prof. dr. E.G. Smit, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Prof. dr. M.F. Steehouder, Universiteit Twente

Prof. dr. ir. P.P.C.C. Verbeek, Universiteit Twente

Prof. dr. C.P.M. Wilderom, Universiteit Twente

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Voorwoord

Het is de laatste week van de Tour de France 2009, vier dagen voor de finish op de Parijse Champs-Élysées. De renners rijden vandaag (22 juli 2009) de zeventiende etappe. Deze etappe is niet lang, zo'n 170 kilometer, maar op het programma staan wel een Alpencol van de tweede categorie en maar liefst vier cols van de eerste categorie. In de Tour van dit jaar rijdt een man mee die inmiddels in Nederland (maar ook buiten onze landsgrenzen) een cultstatus heeft bereikt. Veel mensen hebben het over Kenny van Hummel, een renner in dienst van wielerploeg Skil-Shimano. Die ploeg kreeg een wildcard voor deelname aan de Ronde van Frankrijk dit jaar. In de vlakke etappes van deze Tour heeft Kenny tot nu toe goed mee gekoerst. Alleen in de bergetappes heeft hij grote moeite, vooral met het op tijd finishen. In vier etappes, vooral die met beklimmingen, was hij de renner die als laatste finishte. Een toonaangevende Franse krant heeft Kenny inmiddels uitgeroepen tot 'de slechtste klimmer ooit' in de Ronde van Frankrijk. Volgens die krant is het nog nooit voorgekomen dat steeds dezelfde renner als laatste finishte in de bergetappes van één ronde. Ook vandaag zal de bergachtige etappe voor Kenny van Hummel een strijd tegen de klok worden. Op tijd binnenkomen en niet hoeven afstappen zal voor hem het doel voor vandaag zijn. Dat het een strijd tegen de klok is geworden, is inmiddels duidelijk: Kenny's achterstand op de staart van het peloton bedraagt op het moment van schrijven al 26 minuten.

Op de dag van Kenny's strijd in deze etappe schrijf ik dit voorwoord. Het is een van de laatste etappes van mijn promotietraject: een traject dat in maar liefst drie decennia heeft plaatsgevonden en dat zelfs een millenniumwisseling heeft gekend. Een limiet voor het op tijd finishen met promoveren heb ik al lang overschreden.

In 1998 studeerde ik af aan de UT voor de opleiding Toegepaste CommunicatieWetenschap (TCW). Op de UT had ik het als student en als student-assistent bijzonder naar mijn zin. Ik was dan ook blij dat ik de kans kreeg mijn verblijf in Enschede met een paar jaar te verlengen. Ik kreeg de mogelijkheid te beginnen als Assistent in Opleiding. Die mogelijkheid benutte ik en bijna twaalf jaar later is de eindstreep bijna in zicht.

Ik wil een aantal mensen bedanken die ervoor hebben gezorgd dat ik de finish van mijn Ronde heb kunnen halen. Allereerst Ad Pruyn, mijn eerste promotor, die heel open en helder in zijn begeleiding was. Ad, in de eerste plaats dank voor het vertrouwen in mij. Verder dank voor de inspiratie, motivatie, advies en de samenwerking. Ook Erwin Seydel, co-promotor, dank ik voor zijn begeleiding, hulp, betrokkenheid en enthousiasme. Henk Boer, assistent-promotor en de persoonlijke chauffeur van mijn bezemwagen, wil ik danken voor de intensieve begeleiding de afgelopen jaren. Hij gaf steeds die zetjes in de rug die ik nodig had om niet af te stappen. Je grote betrokkenheid bij de totstandkoming van dit alles heb ik als zeer bijzonder ervaren. Ad, Henk en Erwin: dank voor deze leerzame periode. Voor de vertaling en redactie van hoofdstukken uit dit proefschrift ben ik Diane Ricketts dank verschuldigd. Door haar hulp is de kwaliteit van dit boekwerk enorm verbeterd en is het een leesbaar Engelstalig boek geworden.

Verder wil Ratna en Tamara Toering bedanken. Zonder hen was de inhoudsanalyse van ruim 4000 tijdschriftadvertenties nog altijd niet klaar geweest. Judith Blenke dank ik voor de steun bij het classificatieonderzoek van aanbevelers en producten. De afname van vele online vragenlijsten zou niet mogelijk zijn geweest zonder de hulp van Neil van der Veer en Tim van de Rijdt van onderzoeksbureau Newcom Research & Consultancy. O ja, zonder respondenten zou er helemaal geen proefschrift zijn geweest.

Ook dank aan de mensen die mij de afgelopen jaren moreel hebben ondersteund. Speciale dank aan mijn ouders en familie, mijn broertje Martin, zijn Monique en hun Samm. Zij hebben me door dik en dun bijgestaan. Zonder jullie steun, interesse en vertrouwen was dit boekje nooit verschenen. Broertje, leuk dat je paranimf wil zijn!

Daarnaast dank ik Ratna, Dominique en Jelleke voor hun geduld, inspiratie en steun. Muziekvrienden Carlo, Maaïke, Gerard, Jennifer noem ik hier eveneens met veel plezier en dan mag ik radio- en muziekvriend Martijn natuurlijk niet vergeten. Met hem maakte ik altijd in het weekend een radioprogramma bij de lokale omroep. Die momenten in de studio zorgden voor de beste uitlaatklep die maar bestond. Muziek en radio...een betere combinatie lijkt er niet te bestaan. Ook de huidige collega's en studenten op Windesheim dank ik voor de belangstelling en de mentale opstokers. Vanaf januari ben ik met mijn hoofd volledig bij jullie!

Drie Windesheim-collega's wil ik graag expliciet noemen: Niels, hij was me precies een jaar voor met promoveren en had zeer nuttige tips en trucs in de laatste fase van mijn promotietraject. Margriet, dank je voor alle steun en voor het paranimf willen zijn. Alexandra, de cover van dit proefschrift was er niet geweest zonder jouw 'inhoudelijke' hulp.

Op dit moment is er een bizarre ontwikkeling in de zeventiende etappe van de Ronde van Frankrijk; Kenny van Hummel heeft door een val in een gladde bocht moeten afstappen. Hij zal de eindstreep in Parijs over een paar dagen jammer genoeg niet halen.

Met nog een flinke beklimming in het vooruitzicht (de promotieplechtigheid) hoop ik mijn eindstreep straks wel te halen, ook al is het peloton al geruime tijd binnen.

Eric Meijer

Zwolle, juli 2009

General introduction

1.1 Endorsers in advertisements

In international literature, persons who explicitly or implicitly recommend products or services in advertisements are often called 'endorsers'. Using endorsers in advertisements has enjoyed a long tradition: even in the nineteenth century, it was actually Queen Victoria who endorsed Cadbury's cocoa (Erdogan, 1999; Sherman, 1985). There are several reasons why endorsers are used in advertisements. Studies have shown how effective endorsers are in drawing attention, and that on the basis of their recommendation, consumers are more inclined to opt for that product or service (Feick & Higie, 1992; Erdogan, 1999; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

From the classic *endorser* literature it appears that the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements particularly depends on two factors: the *type* of endorser (Freiden, 1984) and the *type* of product (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Usually, three *types* of endorser are distinguished: celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts (Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976; Freiden, 1984).

To date, research into the effects of (*types of*) endorsers has not only been fragmentary but has also yielded divergent effects. A common finding, however, is that all *types* of endorser can be deployed effectively in advertisements, albeit that the conditions for effectiveness are specific ones. For example, using a 'regular' consumer as an endorser is particularly effective when the receiver can recognize him-/herself in the model (Feick & Higie, 1992). Celebrities, on the other hand, are the most effective when their strong characteristics (good looks, humour or sportsmanship) correspond with the products they are endorsing (Kamins & Gupta, 1994).

Whereas research has shown that the *type* of product is also of influence on the effectiveness of endorsers, studies have so far revealed little theoretical underpinning through their comparison of different kinds of products, such as technical versus beauty products (Friedman & Friedman, 1979) or male versus female products (Kanungo & Pang, 1973). Not only was it problematic to interpret the effects of endorsers with such a diversity of products, but these studies did not really allow for a mutual comparison between (the effectiveness of) endorsers with different kinds of products either. Without some theoretical backing, it is difficult to draw any conclusions or pass judgement on the effectiveness of endorsers.

On the basis of product classifications that *are* theoretically underpinned, this thesis addresses and explains the effects and the actual deployment of (*types of*) endorsers. First, a content analysis was conducted of magazine advertisements in order to determine the deployment of (*types of*) endorsers and to select a set of classification requirements which could be used in the experiments that followed. The choice was made for a theoretical anchor in two product classifications: 1) the product classification of Nelson (1970; 1974) in terms of *search*, *experience* and *credence* (SEC) products, and 2) the product classification in informative, affective, habit and pleasure products on the basis of the - widely used in the world of advertising - Foote, Cone and Belding grid (FCB Grid; Vaughn, 1986). This grid classifies products according to the degree of 'feeling' and the consumer's degree of involvement with the product.

1.2 Design of the studies

Through content analysis and experimental research, the studies in this thesis address the actual deployment and effectiveness of various *types of* endorser for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products and for those products stipulated in the FCB grid. The content analysis not only addressed the prevalence of various *types of* endorser (celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts) in advertisements in Dutch magazines, but also which *type of* endorser was deployed the most often for various *types of* products.

The experimental research focused on the effects of endorsers in advertisements and to this end, advertisements were designed with different *types of* endorser (celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts) in combination with different *types of* product, such as

search, *experience* and *credence* products and those from the FCB grid (informative, affective, habit and pleasure products).

1.3 Content of this thesis

Chapter 2 discusses the characteristics of various *types* of endorser and offers theoretical depth for the differentiation between *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. An important conclusion is that the need for product information increases the more *credence* characteristics a product has. This information can be provided by the advertisement's endorser. Chapter 2 also examines the product classification in the Foote, Cone and Belding grid. A noteworthy conclusion here is the increased importance of endorsers for products with a low involvement.

Chapter 3 addresses a content analysis of advertisements in Dutch magazines, whereby the prevalence of different *types* of endorser was more closely studied. This chapter also focuses on the question whether endorsers figure more often in advertisements for *credence* products than in those for *search* and *experience* products. This appeared to be the case. Finally, to the question whether endorsers figure more often with low as opposed to high involvement products, this appeared not to be the case.

Chapter 4 discusses the classification of various *types* of endorser, such as celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts, on the basis of 'cues', such as a photo and a caption with e.g. the endorser's name and profession. Having been asked to classify the presented endorsers as either a celebrity, expert or as a 'regular' consumer, test subjects showed they were able to distinguish the celebrities and the 'regular' consumers correctly, but also the experts were often classified as 'regular' consumers. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on the classification of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products on the basis of a photo and a short explanation of the product. Test subjects were asked to classify the presented products as either *search*, *experience* or *credence* product. *Experience* products were sufficiently classified as such, but this was not the case for *search* and *credence* products. Chapter 4 also addresses the classification of products in the FCB grid, whereby test subjects had to classify the presented products as informative, affective, habit or pleasure products. Whereas the informative products were generally classified correctly, this was much less convincing with the affective products (only one in four affective

products was actually classified as such). More successful was the three out of four correctly classified habit products. Of the pleasure products half was classified correctly.

Chapter 5 addresses the experimental research into the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements for a *search* product (glasses), an *experience* product (biscuits) and a *credence* product (vitamin pills). Indicators used were: advertisement attitude, product attitude, perceived product quality, perceived persuasive power (of the advertisement), purchase intention and information search behaviour. The purchase intention and perceived persuasive power were significantly higher with *experience* products when a 'regular' consumer acted as endorser. What was remarkable was that consumers had a far more positive attitude to advertisements without endorsers, which means that the deployment of endorsers does not necessarily contribute to increasing an advertisement's effectiveness.

Chapter 6 focuses on the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements for products from the Foote, Cone and Belding quadrants, such as an informative product (contact lenses), an affective product (perfume), a habit product (bleach) and a pleasure product (savoury biscuits). The results of this study show no interaction effects for the presence of an endorser in the advertisement and the type of FCB product on the dependent variables. Salient here is that personal purchase intention and product endorsement are the highest when a 'regular' consumer figures as endorser in an advertisement for habit products. Also with pleasure products this *type* of endorser effects a high personal purchase intention and product endorsement.

Chapter 7 concludes this thesis with several findings and topics for discussion. This chapter also confronts the deployment of endorsers in day-to-day advertising practice with experimental research into the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements.

2

Endorsers and types of products

2.1 Characteristics of endorsers

Although endorsers figure in advertisements as a source of information, their persuasive power nevertheless depends on those characteristics which consumers judge them to have. A number of theories have been developed on the question which characteristics actually determine the endorsers' persuasive power. According to the *Source Credibility Model* (Hovland & Weiss, 1951), particularly the endorser's *credibility* influences the power of persuasion, and this is determined by two of the endorser's characteristics: the *perceived expertise* and the *perceived trustworthiness*. With expertise it depends on whether receivers perceive the endorser as an expert and are of the opinion that the endorser is capable of passing valid judgement on the product. With trustworthiness the question is whether receivers feel that the endorser is actually capable of passing valid judgement (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). In recent decades, much research has been conducted on the effects of the endorser's credibility with regard to the persuasive power of the message (see e.g. Umeh & Stanley, 2005). An overview concluded that the perceived credibility of the endorser indeed has a positive influence on the persuasive power of the message (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

According to the *Source Attractiveness Model* (McGuire, 1985), the persuasive power of an advertisement is particularly influenced by the perceived attractiveness of the endorser, and this is supported by three of his/her characteristics: *familiarity*, *likeability* and *similarity*. Initial studies carried out on the basis of the *Source Attractiveness Model* indeed showed that the perceived attractiveness of the endorser does have a positive influence on the persuasive power of advertisements (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990). More recent research, however, disclosed that the effects of the endorser's attractiveness on the

persuasive power of the advertisement were not as common as originally believed (Bower & Landreth, 2001). It appeared that particularly amongst women, very attractive endorsers in advertisements can evoke a negative affective reaction, which in turn has a negative effect on the persuasive power of the endorser (Bower, 2001).

Other recent studies of the effects of endorsers in advertisements applied the *Source Model Theory* (Bower & Landreth, 2001; Biswas, Biswas & Das, 2006), which is a combination of the *Source Credibility Model* and the *Source Attractiveness Model*. The *Source Model Theory* maintains that it is particularly the perceived credibility (often measured as perceived expertise and trustworthiness) and perceived attractiveness (often measured as familiarity, likeability and similarity) that determine the persuasive power of endorsers in advertisements. Applying the *Source Model Theory* to study the effects of endorsers in advertisements revealed that their impact also depends on the product being advertised. This shows how important it is that the endorser matches the product (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990), and how influential the endorser's attractiveness is on products that are related to attractiveness (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Peterson & Kerin, 1977). Experts, however, are predominantly effective with products related to technology (Biswas et al., 2006). The *product match-up* hypothesis (Forkan, 1980; Kamins, 1990) thus argues how important it is – in the event of endorsers being used in advertisements – to choose models that fit or match the product.

2.2 Types of endorser

The literature distinguishes three types of endorser: 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities (Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976). The difference between these types of endorser is based on distinguishing characteristics. 'Regular' consumers, if well cast, particularly have the characteristic 'similarity' (Simons, Berkowitz & Moyer, 1970). As endorsers, 'regular' consumers do not require any special knowledge of the products being advertised, other than the knowledge gained through general use of the products (Tobin, 1972; Freiden, 1984). Using 'regular' consumers as endorsers means their name and profession is often included in the advertisement (Freiden, 1984). The effects of 'regular' consumers as endorsers are chiefly based on the fact that on account of the perceived similarities, consumers feel an affinity with the endorser.

As endorsers, experts, as their name suggests, have much expertise (a component of the characteristic 'credibility'). Characteristic of experts is that they have a superior knowledge of the product, often gained through experience, study or training (Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976). The knowledge of experts about products has an added value as opposed to that of 'regular' consumers as product endorsers (Tobin, 1975). Using experts as endorsers in advertisements generally includes a mention of his/her profession, sometimes in combination with the expert's name (Freiden, 1984).

As endorsers, celebrities score high on the characteristic 'familiarity' (a component of the characteristic 'attractiveness'), and often they became well known for achievements in an area other than the advertised (class of) product (Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976; Stout and Moon, 1990). According to Kaikati (1987), various types of celebrities can be distinguished. There are the 'real' celebrities, such as pop, film and TV stars, but the category can also include sportsmen/-women, politicians, artists, writers and scientists. Then there are the *lookalike* celebrities, i.e. those whose appearance closely resembles a real celebrity. In advertisements companies sometimes use such lookalikes for financial reasons.

Celebrities can figure as endorsers in advertisements in a number of roles: as spokesperson, as actor/actress and in the form of a testimony (Erdogan, 1999). All of these roles, McCracken (1989) believes, suit the celebrity as endorser: "*Any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement*". In this thesis we follow McCracken's view.

2.3 Effects of endorsers in advertisements

Research into the effects of celebrities in advertisements has so far yielded varying results (Kaikati, 1987). In a number of studies, celebrities had a positive effect on consumers. When Atkin and Block (1983) had young people appraise fictitious whisky advertisements with both famous and non-famous men, they assessed the advertisements with celebrities more positively with regard to advertisement attitude, credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness and product attitude, than compared to the advertisements with men who were not famous. Kamins (1990) also had young people judge advertisements with celebrities and non-celebrities, and although they assessed the advertisement with the celebrity higher on familiarity and likeability, they appeared to have neither a more positive attitude towards the product nor a higher intention to purchase. In his review article based on scientific research

and corporate reports, Erdogan (1999) came to the conclusion that celebrities, as opposed to the non famous, are more effective in generating the desired outcome of advertisements, such as attitude, purchase intention and actual acquisition. A precondition thereby is that the celebrity must match both the product in the advertisement and the target group. Moreover, a celebrity must not have endorsed such a product before. Croft et al. (1996) found positive effects of celebrities particularly with regard to increased attention to the advertisement and its recall. Kamins and Gupta (1994) and Kotler (1997) concluded that celebrities have a positive effect both on their personal credibility and on that of the advertiser, albeit that the celebrity must comply with the condition that (s)he matches the product. According to Mathur et al. (1997), using celebrities has a positive effect on company results, such as the 2% increase in the global market share of Pepsi Cola after the Spice Girls' endorsement in advertisements.

Other studies revealed that including celebrities in advertisements did not show positive effects. Mehta (1994), for example, found that the celebrity did not score significantly higher on advertisement attitude and the brand, nor was there a difference in purchase intention between the famous and the non-famous. There was a difference, however, in the cognitive reactions of respondents. In the situation in which the advertisement used a non-celebrity, the respondents paid more attention to the brand and its characteristics. When a celebrity was used, respondents paid more attention to the endorser. Also negative effects of using celebrities were found, such as in a recent British study that revealed that celebrity endorsement actually implied a waste of the advertiser's money. The consumers' buying behaviour would appear to be influenced more by family and friends talking about the product and by the text on the packaging than by celebrity endorsement (Derbyshire, 2006). The contradictory findings with regard to the effectiveness of celebrities could be explained by the general character of the studies described, where the focus was constantly on the comparison between celebrities and non-celebrities. The distinguishing characteristic of celebrities, i.e. attractiveness, might well play a far more important role in the effectiveness of this type of endorser.

A number of studies focused specifically on the effects of attractive celebrities in advertisements. In an experimental study, Kahle and Homer (1985) manipulated the attractiveness of a celebrity in an advertisement to determine the attitude and intention to purchase the product (razor blades). Participants who saw the advertisement with the attractive endorser had a more positive attitude to the product and a greater intention to

purchase than participants who had seen the less attractive celebrity. Also in other research (not just with celebrities as endorsers), it was found that attractive people in advertisements generate positive effects on the attitude to both the advertisement and the product (Caballero & Pride, 1984). However, other studies (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Maddux & Rogers, 1980), were unable to demonstrate a significant effect of the endorser's attractiveness on the attitude to either advertisement or product.

The match of attractive celebrities with the product in the advertisement appears to be a decisive factor in the potentially positive communicative effects. This is expressed in the 'match-up hypothesis', which presupposes that the image of an attractive celebrity must fit well with the image of the product if it is to have a positive effect (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Forkan, 1980; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Kamins, 1990). In an experimental study, Kamins and Gupta (1994) showed that a sound congruence between endorser and product is an essential prerequisite for positive effects.

The conclusion may thus be drawn that there is still great uncertainty about the communicative effects of including celebrities in advertisements. Although a number of studies have reported positive effects of celebrities, these would seem to be predominantly limited to attractive celebrities, whereby he/she must match the *type* of product in the advertisement.

With experts, particularly credibility and expertise are important. Research shows that endorsers regarded as credible or as an expert effect a greater change in attitude than those who are not regarded as such (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Pornpitakpan, 2004).

An important characteristic of 'regular' consumers as endorsers is the affinity or similarity with the consumer (Simons, Berkowitz & Moyer, 1970; Woodside & Davenport, 1974). In determining either of these, consumers can apply a number of the endorser's characteristics, such as age, gender and lifestyle. With 'regular' consumers as endorsers their respective similarity also provides information about the way the ordinary consumer might use the product (Freiden, 1984; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976). Whereas the aforementioned studies revealed that 'regular' consumers as endorsers were more effective with products that concern consumers less (such as biscuits), than with products that imply a greater involvement, such as television sets and jewellery, other research has demonstrated that endorsers with whom consumers feel more affinity have a greater influence on attitudes and opinions than endorsers with whom one feels less.

2.4 Effects of endorsers with different types of products

As stated before, many researchers have concluded that the effectiveness of the endorsement depends on there being a match between the endorser and the product in the advertisement. According to the generally received 'product match-up hypothesis' (Forkan, 1980; Kamins, 1990), it is important in advertisements to use suitable people as endorsers who match not only the product but also the future buyers of that product: the consumers. Forkan (1980) and Kamins (1990) found that this was particularly the case with celebrities. Just how important this match is appears from the example of Bill Cosby, whom we know from the popular comedy series *The Cosby Show*. Although he proved to be an effective endorser of products such as Kodak and Coca Cola, Cosby was not very successful as an endorser for E.F. Hutton's investment services (Marshall, 1987). There the match appeared to be missing. Shoebridge (1993) reported that, specifically for celebrities: *'The number one rule of celebrity endorsements is that the fit between the celebrity and the product he or she is promoting must be right'*.

In order to investigate the effectiveness of types of endorser for certain products, the research literature employs various product categorizations, many of which have already addressed the effectiveness of (types of) endorsers. Examples of such classifications are those into product gender (Kanungo & Pang, 1973) or type of risk (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). A problem with the product categorizations used in earlier research is that they are not based on theory that enables a taxonomy of types of products vis-à-vis different types of endorser.

In the following paragraphs, two classification criteria are presented which aim to make a useful connection between the type of endorser (a 'regular' consumer, a celebrity or an expert) and the type of product to be advertised. Starting point here was the question which dimensions of the product bear relevance to the function of a certain type of endorser: identification or information. The persuasiveness of an expert (or a 'regular' consumer), for example, as endorser of a product whereby the 'prospect' can immediately see whether it meets the need (even without having first tried the product), will probably differ strongly from the persuasiveness with a product that requires explanation or that only experienced users can judge. The influence of the type of endorser will likewise differ with products that particularly lean on emotional *appeal* or where indeed the cognitive processing of the information plays an important role.

2.5 Search, experience and credence products

In research into consumers' information demands, a differentiation is often made between *search*, *experience* and *credence* (SEC) products. The basis of this classification is formed by the 'homo economicus': the person who makes rational decisions on the basis of full information. Nelson's *Theory of Information Economics* (1970, 1974; but see also Darby & Karni, 1973; Ekelund, Mixon & Ressler, 1995), starts from an information asymmetry between manufacturers (or advertisers) and consumers of products. Consumers have limited information about the product: the actual price and quality of the product is unknown to them, but usually manufacturers are well informed. This information asymmetry makes consumers feel uncertain, and it is in this situation that, by scrutinizing products, consumers try to obtain more information about the price-quality ratio. On the basis of more extensive knowledge which will enable them to make a more rational decision on whether or not to purchase a product, consumers thus attempt to assuage the information asymmetry.

Products whereby consumers can successfully estimate both the actual price and the quality before purchase, are defined in the *Theory of Information Economics* as 'search goods' (in this dissertation: *search* products). *Search* products have quality indicators which consumers can verify quite easily before purchase, for example, by inspecting the goods on the basis of earlier knowledge and experience (Ford, Smith & Swasy, 1990). With *search* products, consumers can even check before purchase or use whether the advertiser's promises about the product will be fulfilled. Consumers often have quite a lot of experience with *search* products, because many of them are relatively low in price and because they buy them regularly (Ekelund et al., 1995). Examples of *search* products are: clothing and accessories, shoes, glasses, cooking utensils, gardening tools and bicycles (Nelson, 1970; Ekelund et al., 1995).

Products that consumers cannot satisfactorily examine for price and quality before purchase are defined as 'experience goods' in Nelson's *Theory of Information Economics* (1970). In this dissertation we refer to these as *experience* products. With *experience* products, consumers cannot verify the quality indicators until they have used the product (Nelson, 1970; LaBand, 1986; Ford et al., 1990). So, with *experience* products, consumers will only be able to ascertain after purchase and use whether the advertiser's promise has been fulfilled. *Experience* products are generally more expensive and are not purchased as

frequently as *search* products (Ekelund et al, 1995). According to Nelson (1970), examples of *experience* products are: television sets, household goods and spirits. Ekelund et al. (1995), on the other hand, name men's clothing and carpet cleaners.

Darby and Karni (1973) distinguish a third type of product: *credence* products. With these products, consumers are unable to determine the quality of the product, not even after purchase and use. Moreover, they are unable to gauge whether the advertiser's promises about the product have been fulfilled. Possible reasons for this are that consumers have insufficient technical know-how or because the cost of verification of the quality indicators of *credence* products is higher than the expected usefulness of the information, i.e. it takes the consumer too much time and trouble to verify the sales *claims*, or to have them verified (Darby & Karni, 1973; Ford et al., 1990; Ekelund et al., 1995; Karstens & Belz, 2006). In reducing uncertainty about the quality of *credence* products, consumers are forced to trust the information supplied by the manufacturer or the (more preferred, independent) third party. Consumers often base their opinion of the quality of *credence* products on the brand name (Srinivasan & Till, 2002) or on a quality label (Karstens & Belz, 2006). Examples of *credence* products are: a home alarm system or hand and foot care products (Ekelund et al, 1995).

The difference between *search*, *experience* and *credence* products is relative, because a product can have *search*, *experience* and *credence* characteristics simultaneously (Darby & Karni, 1973). Along these lines, Wright and Lynch (1995) argued that the chocolate bar, which they used in their study, actually had simultaneous *search*, *experience* and *credence* indicators. *Search* characteristics of a chocolate bar, for example, are the price, the weight and the number of calories. The taste of the bar, however, is an *experience* characteristic. The influence of the chocolate bar on one's health is a *credence* characteristic, because this influence cannot be perceived by the consumer. Srinivasan and Till (2002) named a fruit cocktail as an example of a product with simultaneous *search*, *experience* and *credence* characteristics. The colour of the fruit cocktail is a *search* characteristic, the taste of the cocktail: an *experience* characteristic, and the amount of energy the cocktail gives: a *credence* characteristic.

2.6 FCB products

According to Vaughn (1986), products can also be classed in the quadrants of the so-called Foote, Cone and Belding grid (hence the name FCB products). This grid was developed by Richard Vaughn, vice-chairman of the large advertising agency, Foote, Cone & Belding, and is often used in current advertising practice. As it sheds light on consumer behaviour with regard to different products, some agencies use the grid to illustrate their creative strategy.

In this grid, products are classed on the basis of two categories. In the first, products are classed according to the **degree of 'feeling'**. With products that score high on the degree of 'feeling', (i.e. the 'feeling' products), emotions and personal experience play an important role. Consumers will buy the product if it makes them feel good. Products that score low on the degree of 'feeling', i.e. the 'thinking' products, will sooner stimulate the consumers' cognitive and intrinsic processing of product information, which means, for example, that consumers will weigh up the pros and cons before buying it.

The second category refers to products for which consumers experience a high or low degree of **involvement** before purchase. High involvement concerns products that mean a lot to the consumer and for whom the decision to purchase is not taken lightly, whereas low involvement implies the decision to buy is easier, i.e. these products mean less to the consumer. On the basis of the FCB grid, four products are distinguished that vary in the degree of 'feeling' and involvement and are classified in the grid's four quadrants (see Figure 2.1).

		Degree of 'feeling'	
		Low (thinking products)	High (feeling products)
Involvement	High	Informative products	Affective products
	Low	Habit products	Pleasure products

Figure 2.1: Product classification in the FCB grid (according to Vaughn, 1986).

Informative products (top left in the grid) are, according to Vaughn (1986), products that stimulate the thought process of consumers. Often this relates to technical products or products that consumers buy rationally. The products score low on 'feeling' yet have a high involvement. Examples of informative products are cars and furniture.

Habit products (below left in the grid) are also products that have little to do with 'feeling'. Moreover they have a low involvement. Household goods are examples of habit products.

Products that evoke a high degree of both 'feeling' and involvement, Vaughn (1986) calls affective products (top right in the grid). Consumers often buy these affective products in order to meet ego-related and subconscious impulses. Often their decision to purchase affective products is more likely to be based on feelings and emotions than on information in the advertisement. Examples of affective products are cosmetics and fashion.

Feeling products with a low involvement are classed by Vaughn as pleasure products (below right in the grid). With pleasure products, the consumers' experience with them after having purchased them the first time results in repeat buying. Pleasure products are also called '*life's little pleasures*' (Vaughn, 1986). Examples: beer, cigarettes, confectionery and ice cream.

The subsequent part of this thesis will address the prevalence of different *types* of endorser (celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts) in advertisements for the aforementioned product classification (SEC and FCB products). Furthermore, on the basis of experimental research, the effects of endorsers in advertisements for FCB products will be examined.

3

Using endorsers for advertisements in Dutch magazines

3.1 Introduction

Advertisers were already using endorsers in the second half of the nineteenth century. Originally, they particularly deployed celebrities or dignitaries. Since the 1970s, using endorsers has increased exponentially (Kaikati, 1987). Stout and Moon (1990) researched the presence of endorsers in American magazines in 1980 and 1986 and found that they appeared in 44% of the advertisements they studied: the majority were celebrities (51%), followed by 'regular' consumers (24%), company directors (14%) and experts (11%). According to more recent estimates, the percentage of celebrities in American advertisements was considerably lower: 20% (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). Little is still known, however, on the prevalence of endorsers in advertisements in Dutch magazines.

The objective of this first study was thus to examine to what degree different types of endorsers, such as celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts, are used in Dutch magazines. This study moreover examined the prevalence of different types of endorsers for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products, i.e. SEC products, as distinguished in the literature (Nelson, 1970; 1974; Darby & Karni, 1973, and Ekelund, Mixon & Ressler, 1995). Also investigated was whether different types of endorsers were used for the products in the FCB grid (Vaughn, 1986).

3.2 Expected prevalence of endorsers in advertisements for SEC products

The expectation was that the prevalence of endorsers would depend on the type of SEC product in the advertisement. According to Nelson (1970, 1974), consumers can obtain useful information with regard to *search* products by visually inspecting the product being advertised, e.g. by the accompanying image. It was our expectation, therefore, that using endorsers in advertisements for *search* products would offer little surplus value.

With *experience* products, consumers would only be able to judge the quality and the characteristics of the product after buying and/or using it. Hence a greater need here for extra information than with *search* products. Former users of the product can communicate this information via the advertisement. Endorsers of an *experience* product can be seen as former users, i.e. they have used it before they recommend it. According to Ekelund Jr. et al. (1995), an endorser of *experience* products is an additional source of information.

With *credence* products it is difficult to determine the quality and the characteristics of the product, even after purchase and/or use. As consumers are extremely uncertain about the quality of products with *credence* characteristics, there is an urgent need for more information - which endorsers can provide. In such cases, one turns to knowledgeable endorsers, such as experts. 'Regular' consumers and celebrities might know the product from having used it, but the know-how of the experts is greater.

On the basis of the above, the following expectations can be formulated:

- Endorsers in advertisements for *search* products are less prevalent than in advertisements for *experience* and *credence* products;
- Endorsers will be used more often in advertisements for *experience* products than in advertisements for *search* products;
- Experts will be used more often in advertisements for *credence* products than in advertisements for *search* and *experience* products.

3.3 Expected prevalence of endorsers in advertisements for FCB products

The expectation was that the deployment of endorsers would cohere with the type of FCB product in the advertisement. FCB products are distinguished on the basis of involvement with the product and the degree to which the product has to do with 'feeling'.

The importance of product involvement with FCB products as regards the effect of endorsers is explained by the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (henceforth ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). This model alleges that the use of peripheral cues, such as endorsers, is more effective for products with a low involvement than for products with a high involvement. The principle of the ELM is namely that consumers can process magazine advertisements in two ways: via the central or the peripheral route (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). With the central route, consumers pay particular attention to the content of the advertisement, whereas with the peripheral route, they are much more inclined to focus on the ad's peripheral element, such as an endorser. Processing the advertisement then occurs according to simple rules of thumb, or heuristics, such as 'the endorser is an expert in this field, so what he says is probably true'. Also the attractiveness of the endorser or the number of arguments mentioned can serve as heuristics.

The degree of 'feeling' of FCB products has bearing on the processes of identification and internalization (Kelman, 1961). Identification implies that consumers wish to feel and be the same as the endorser in the advertisement. According to Kelman, this process of identification works via social standards and seems to be particularly important with feeling products. With a strong identification, consumers conform to the endorser on the basis of the desire to be just like him/her. The endorser's attractiveness has a positive influence on the process of identification (Cohen & Golden, 1972). Particularly celebrities stimulate consumer identification. Consumers want to feel and be just like the celebrity in the advertisement.

Internalization implies that consumers want to think the same as the endorser in the advertisement. Again according to Kelman (1961), this process works by influencing the attitude. Moreover it would appear particularly important with thinking products: through the internalization process the receiver adopts the endorser's attitude (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). One can speak of internalization when an individual strongly associates him-/herself with another individual and easily conforms to the other's attitude or behaviour, i.e. the individual wants to *think* exactly the same as, for example, the endorser. This internalization process has a greater chance of success if the endorser is regarded as honest, sincere and an expert. The endorser's credibility stimulates the internalization process (Erdogan, 1999). Experts, in particular, stimulate consumer internalization owing to their expertise and the fact that they are experienced in communicating this.

Finally, through simultaneous processes of internalization and identification, an endorser can influence both the social standard and the attitude. This occurs predominantly with endorsers with whom consumers feel an affinity, such as other (prototypical) consumers. Through this similarity, internalization is stimulated because consumers can identify with the endorser's opinions/beliefs. Identification is influenced because consumers (want to) *feel* just like the person in the advertisement. Owing to their similarity with consumers, 'regular' consumers stimulate both the identification and the internalization process. Experts, however, appear to stimulate the internalization process more intensely than 'regular' consumers, just as celebrities do with the process of identification.

The following expectations were formulated:

- Endorsers appear more often in advertisements for products with a low involvement than in advertisements for products with a high involvement;
- Celebrities are more prevalent in advertisements for feeling products than in advertisements for thinking products;
- Experts appear more often in advertisements for thinking products than in advertisements for feeling products.

Expectations were also formulated for the deployment of *types* of endorser in advertisements for individual FCB products:

- Experts appear the most often in advertisements for habit products (thinking products with a low involvement);
- Celebrities appear the most often in advertisements for pleasure products (feeling products with a low involvement).

3.4 Method

Survey

The survey contained advertisements from 25 Dutch weekly and monthly magazines for men and women that had the highest circulation figures in the period April-September 1999. Table 3.1 is an overview of the magazines used for this content analysis.

Table 3.1: Overview of the 25 weekly and monthly men's and women's magazines used for the content analysis

Type of magazine	Name magazine	Number of editions
Weekly		
Men's	Panorama	21
	Nieuwe Revu	21
	Elsevier	21
	HP/de Tijd	21
Women's	Story	20
	Party	21
	Yes	20
	Viva	21
	Libelle	21
	Margriet	21
	Weekend	21
	Privé	21
Monthly		
Men's	Men's Health	3
	Man	4
	Bld	4
	Esquire	3
Women's	Avant Garde	5
	Beau Monde	5
	Cosmopolitan	5
	Elle	5
	Elegance	4
	Marie Claire	5
	Opzij	4
	Plus	4
	Nouveau	5

A total of 306 editions of these 25 magazines were included in the study. Only advertisements that were at least one A4 in size were analysed (as smaller advertisements tend not to use endorsers owing to the limited space).

Procedure

For the classification, two reviewers used the computer program Authorware (Macromedia, 1991), which categorizes the presence or absence of an endorser, the *type* of endorser and the *type* of product. The reviewers entered a code for the category concerned following which Authorware rendered the categories as answer alternatives. The program corrected wrong or missing answers, and with some answers also checked for different sequences of questions. Authorware then saved the categorizations, which were immediately available for statistical analyses. As each advertisement was evaluated by both reviewers, any discrepancy between their evaluations became immediately obvious. In such a case, they discussed this and with the help of a third, independent reviewer, they strove to harmonize the categorization of those parts of the advertisement.

Evaluation Instrument

The advertisements were judged on the following characteristics: the presence in the advertisement of an endorser, the *type* of endorser and the *type* of product. One could speak of an endorser if the product was recommended by a actual person. The evaluation criteria were: 0) endorser absent, or 1) endorser present. To evaluate the presence of an endorser, the 'interjudge reliability coefficient' was calculated (Perreault and Leigh, 1989; Carlson, Grove, and Kangun, 1993; Kolbe and Burnett, 1991). This coefficient with 0.82 was above the set minimum of 0.80 (Kassarjian, 1977). Despite this, the coefficient was lower than expected, the reason being that the reviewers sometimes disagreed on the (adequate) recognizability of the people in the advertisements.

The *type* of endorser was determined on the basis of Friedman, Termini and Washington's endorser classification (1976), i.e. 'regular' consumer, expert or celebrity. An endorser was categorized as: 1) a 'regular' consumer, when the person was unknown and an accompanying text in the advertisement stated name and/or profession and/or included a quote. The name and quote of this endorser had to make it clear that this was a 'regular' consumer, and in the event of his/her profession being stipulated, this had to bear no relation to the product being recommended. An endorser was categorized as: 2) an expert, when it could be expected that the person in the advertisement would be recognized and acknowledged as such by the specific target group for the advertised product. The condition

was that any textual mention of the endorser's name and/or quote and/or profession had to make it clear that this was someone with (expert) knowledge of the product being advertised. Also the actual portrayal of the endorser helped to demonstrate that one was dealing here with an expert (wearing some attribute related to his/her expertise, such as glasses, a white coat or a stethoscope). An endorser was categorized as: 3) a celebrity, when it could be expected that he/she would be recognized by the Dutch public at large. Any accompanying text in the ad that revealed name and/or profession and/or a quote could contribute to the general public's recognition, as could also any visual portrayal. In advertisements with several endorsers, their *type* was not specified individually; in such cases, one was dealing with group endorsement, and individual recommendation by different *types* of endorser was no longer the issue. Such group endorsements were thus not included in the analysis of the *type* of endorser. The reliability of the categorization of the *type* of endorser in the advertisement was high and the 'interjudge reliability coefficient' was calculated. This coefficient with 0.86 was above the set minimum of 0.80.

The products in the advertisements were categorized according to *search*, *experience* and *credence*. On the basis of articles by Nelson (1970, 1974), Darby and Karni (1973) and Ekelund, Mixon and Ressler (1995), a list was compiled of possible *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. With this list, the 4153 products in the ads were then put into one of the three aforementioned categories. As a number of products (77, or 2%) did not appear on the list, these were submitted to an expert panel of two, who then categorized them as either *search*, *experience* or *credence* product. The product was a *search product* if it had characteristics that could be verified by the consumer before purchase, an *experience product* if it had characteristics that could be verified by the consumer after purchase, and a *credence product* if it bore characteristics that could not be verified by the consumer, not even after purchase (for such products one requires the knowledge of an expert). A third party had to be called in for 27 products before a definite categorization could be made.

The 4153 products in the ads were also categorized according to whether they were informative, affective, habit or pleasure products, on the basis of a list derived from an article by Vaughn (1986). A number of products in the ads (59 products, or 1%) did not appear on the list and were submitted to an expert panel of two who had to categorize them as informative, affective, habit or pleasure products. The product was *informative* if consumers showed an high involvement and it primarily dealt with thought/thinking, such as products with a technical aspect and/or bought rationally. The product was classified as *affective* if

consumers showed a high involvement and it particularly evoked emotion/feeling, such as products that could offer the consumer a psychological advantage. The product was a *habit product* if consumers showed a low involvement and it primarily dealt with thinking, such as those things consumers only research when purchasing the first time (whether or not extensively) before lapsing into relatively automatic repeat buying. The product was classified as *pleasure* if consumers showed a low involvement and it particularly evoked emotion/feeling, such as with '*life's little pleasures*'. There was agreement on 46 of the 59 products with regard to their classification, but a third panel member was called on to help with the 13 remaining products.

3.5 Results

A total of 4153 advertisements were analysed, 1714 of them from magazines targeting a male audience and 2439 from magazines targeting a female audience (1537 ads from monthlies were analysed, and 2616 from weeklies).

In 74% of the 4153 analysed advertisements an *experience* product was recommended, in just over 18% a *search* product, and in almost 8% a *credence* product. In 1445 advertisements an affective product, i.e. a feeling product with a high involvement, was portrayed (35%), in 989 advertisements an informative product, i.e. a thinking product with a high involvement (24%), and in 881 advertisements a pleasure product, i.e. a feeling product with a low involvement (21%). The remaining 838 ads showed a habit product, i.e. a thinking product with a low involvement (20%).

In total, endorsers were used in 755 advertisements, i.e. in 18% of all the ads analysed. In 40 advertisements one could speak of group recommendations, i.e. the product was endorsed by more than one person. In 715 advertisements a single endorser was deployed. Subsequently it was determined whether the endorser in each of these 715 ads was a 'regular' consumer, an expert or a celebrity. In 440 ads a celebrity was used (62% of the number of ads with an endorser). In 154 ads an expert was deployed (22% of the number of ads with an endorser), and in 121 ads the endorser was a 'regular' consumer (17% of the number of ads with an endorser).

Prevalence of endorsers in advertisements for SEC products

Table 3.2 shows the deployment of endorsers for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products.

Table 3.2: Using endorsers for search, experience and credence products (N=4153)

	Search		Experience		Credence		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
With endorser	92	12.0	570	18.6	93	28.4	755	18.2
Without endorser	673	88.0	2490	81.4	235	71.6	3398	81.8
Total	765	100.0	3060	100.0	328	100.0	4153	100.0

There is a significant relation between the deployment of endorsers and the type of SEC product ($\chi^2(2, N=4153)= 42.71, p<.001$). Endorsers were used the least often in advertisements for *search* products (12%). This result is in agreement with the expectation that the deployment of endorsers in advertisements for *search* products has no added value. Endorsers were used more often in ads for *experience* products (18.6%) than in ads for *search* products (12%). Also this result is in line with the expectation. As former users, endorsers of *experience* products are well-suited to providing 'ignorant' consumers with information about the product. Endorsers were deployed relatively often in ads for *credence* products (28.4%). One explanation for this result is that the uncertainty about *credence* products can be assuaged by deploying an endorser.

Prevalence of types of endorser in ads for SEC products

Table 3.3 shows the deployment of 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products.

Table 3.3: Using 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities for search, experience and credence products (N=715)

	Search		Experience		Credence		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
'Regular' consumer	18	19.6	98	18.2	5	5.9	121	16.9
Expert	18	19.6	118	21.9	18	21.2	154	21.5
Celebrity	56	60.8	322	59.9	62	72.9	440	61.5
Total	92	100.0	538	100.0	85	100.0	715	100.0

There is a marginal relation between the type of endorser and the type of SEC product ($\chi^2(4, N=715) = 9.30, p=.054$). 'Regular' consumers were deployed the least frequently as endorsers of credence products (5.9%). The use of 'regular' consumers barely differed when ads were compared for search products (19.6%) and experience products (18.2%). The deployment of experts barely differed when ads were compared for the various SEC products (search products: 19.6%, experience products: 21.9% and credence products: 21.2%). This result does not concur with the expectation that experts are more prevalent in ads for credence products. They are, after all, the experts in this field and are well-suited to remedying the consumers' ignorance about these products. Table 3.3 shows that celebrities have taken over the role of the experts and that they are the greatest endorsers of credence products (72.9%). The use of celebrities barely differed when ads were compared for search products and ads for experience products (60.8% and 59.9% respectively).

Prevalence of endorsers in advertisements for FCB products

First there had to be insight into whether and how the deployment of endorsers is related to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products. In this way we could also determine whether using endorsers alters when feeling products are compared with thinking products. Table 3.4 shows the relation between using endorsers and the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products.

Table 3.4: Using endorsers for thinking and feeling products (N=4153)

	Thinking products		Feeling products		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
With endorser	357	19.5	398	17.1	755	18.2
Without endorser	1470	80.5	1928	82.9	3398	81.8
Total	1827	100.0	2326	100.0	4153	100.0

There is a significant relation between using endorsers and the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products ($\chi^2(1, N=4153) = 41.21, p < .05$). Endorsers were more often used in ads for thinking products than in ads for feeling products (19.5% and 17.1% respectively). The difference, however, is small.

Second, also the degree of involvement with these products required scrutiny and its possible connection to the deployment of endorsers. In this manner, we could determine if using endorsers differs when comparing low involvement with high involvement products (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Using endorsers for FCB products with high and low involvement (N=4153)

	Low involvement		High involvement		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
With endorser	255	14.8	500	20.5	755	18.2
Without endorser	1464	85.2	1934	79.5	3398	81.8
Total	1719	100.0	2434	100.0	4153	100.0

Using endorsers is related to the involvement with FCB products ($\chi^2(1, N=4153) = 22.07, p < .001$). Endorsers were used significantly more often in ads for high involvement products than in ads for low involvement products (20.5% and 14.8% respectively). This result contradicts the expectation that endorsers are primarily used in ads with a low involvement, because according to the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986;), they are seen as peripheral cues. It appears that Dutch advertising firms do not always follow this theory.

Table 3.6 shows the use of endorsers for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products individually.

Table 3.6: Using endorsers for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products (N=4153)

	Informative		Affective		Habit		Pleasure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
With endorser	198	20.0	302	20.9	159	19.0	96	10.9	755	18.2
Without endorser	791	80.0	1143	79.1	679	81.0	785	89.1	3398	81.8
Total	989	100.0	1445	100.0	838	100.0	881	100.0	4153	100.0

There is a significant relation between using endorsers and the type of FCB product ($\chi^2(3, N=4153)= 41.21, p<.001$). Endorsers were used the least frequently in ads for pleasure products, i.e. feeling products with a low involvement (10.9%). This low deployment may be due to the rules that have been laid down with regard to using endorsers for pleasure products such as cigarettes (www.consumentenweb.nl). Another explanation might be that endorsers do not wish to be associated with the side-effects of these products, as with cigarettes. In the other categories (informative, affective and habit), endorsers were used to approximately the same degree (about 20%).

Prevalence of types of endorsers in ads for FCB products

With regard to the types of endorsers, we also needed to gain insight into whether and how their deployment is connected to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products. In this way it could be determined whether using types of endorsers differs when feeling and thinking products are compared. Table 3.7 shows the effect of types of endorsers on the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products.

Table 3.7: Using 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities for thinking and feeling products (N=715)

	Thinking		Feeling		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
'Regular' consumer	36	10.8	85	22.3	121	16.9
Expert	93	27.8	61	16.0	154	21.5
Celebrity	205	61.4	235	61.7	440	61.5
Total	334	100.0	381	100.0	715	100.0

Using 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities is related to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products ($\chi^2(2, N=715)= 25.56, p<.001$). Table 3.7 shows that 'regular' consumers were used more often in ads for feeling products than in ads for thinking products (22.3% and 10.8% respectively). This result contradicts the implicit expectation that 'regular' consumers figure as often in ads for thinking products as they do in ads for feeling products. After all, 'regular' consumers stimulate the identification and internalization process owing to their similarity with consumers. In ads for thinking products, experts were more prevalent than they were in ads for feeling products (27.8% and 16.0% respectively). This result corresponds with the expectation that experts are used the most often for thinking products. With regard to celebrities, the expectation was that they would be used more often in ads for feeling than for thinking products, but the results of this content analysis did not support this. In fact, the difference between using celebrities in ads for thinking or feeling products was negligible (61.4% and 61.7% respectively).

Table 3.8 shows the deployment of 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities for products with both a low and a high involvement.

Table 3.8: Using 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities for products with a low and high involvement (N=715)

	Low involvement		High involvement		Total	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
'Regular' consumer	35	14.8	86	18.0	121	16.9
Expert	63	26.6	91	19.0	154	21.5
Celebrity	139	58.6	301	63.0	440	61.5
Total	237	100.0	478	100.0	715	100.0

The relation between using 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities and the involvement of FCB products is only marginally significant ($\chi^2(2, N=715)= 5.64, p=.06$). The findings of the content analysis show that particularly experts were deployed as endorsers for low involvement products (26.6%).

Table 3.9 shows the deployment of ‘regular’ consumers, experts and celebrities for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products.

Table 3.9: Using ‘regular’ consumers, experts and celebrities for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products (N=715)

	Informative		Affective		Habit		Pleasure		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
‘Regular’ consumer	11	5.7	75	26.3	25	17.7	10	10.4	121	16.9
Expert	39	20.2	52	18.2	54	38.3	9	9.4	154	21.5
Celebrity	143	74.1	158	55.4	62	44.0	77	80.2	440	61.5
Total	193	100.0	285	100.0	141	100.0	96	100.0	715	100.0

There is a significant relation between the type of endorser and the type of FCB product ($\chi^2(6, N=715)= 77.43, p<.001$). What is noticeable is that ‘regular’ consumers are hardly ever deployed as endorsers in ads for informative products (5.7%). Also using ‘regular’ consumers in ads for pleasure products (10.4%) was lower than their average deployment in magazine ads (16.9%). ‘Regular’ consumers were, however, used quite frequently as endorsers in ads for affective products (26.3%). In daily advertising practice, experts were particularly deployed in ads for habit products (38.3%). This result concurs with the expectation that experts will be predominantly used in ads for low involvement thinking products. Like the ‘regular’ consumers, experts were seldom used in ads for pleasure products (9.4%). Celebrities were the least prevalent in ads for habit products (44.0%), but the most prevalent in ads for pleasure products (80.2%). This result concurs with the expectation that celebrities would particularly endorse feeling products with a low involvement. Also using celebrities in ads for informative products was higher (74.1%) than their average deployment in magazine ads (61.5%).

3.6 Discussion

The object of this content analysis was to gain insight into the prevalence of (types of) endorsers for SEC and FCB products in Dutch magazines. With this in mind, 4153 advertisements were analysed whereby three types of endorser were distinguished: the ‘regular’ consumer, the expert and the celebrity.

The findings show that almost two out of ten of the Dutch magazine advertisements analysed for this study used an endorser (regardless of the *type*). This percentage is considerably lower than that found by Stout and Moon (1990) in their study into the prevalence of *types* of endorser in American magazine ads (44%). The discrepancy between these percentages can be explained by the fact that for this research the people figuring in the ads had to be sufficiently visible before they could be categorized as endorsers. Maybe this requirement was not applicable in Stout and Moon's study, but their method description does not enlighten us.

Of all the *types* of endorser, a celebrity was deployed the most often (62%), one in five endorsers appeared to be an expert (22%), and a 'regular' consumer figured the least often (17%). In Stout and Moon's study, the majority of the endorsers were also celebrities (51%), followed by 'regular' consumers (24%). In their research, experts were used the least (11%). The deployment of celebrities in our content analysis was higher, though, than in Agrawal and Kamakura's study (1995): they estimated that a celebrity figured in almost 20% of American ads. A possible explanation for this difference might be that celebrities in the Netherlands are more affordable than in the USA, which is why they are deployed more often.

In the advertisements analysed, *experience* products appeared the most frequently (74%), followed by *search* (18%) and *credence* products (8%). Endorsers were used the least often in ads for *search* products (12%). This result concurs with the expectation that the deployment of endorsers has no added value in ads for *search* products (when the consumer can gain practical information by even just looking at the illustration or photograph). Endorsers are suited to endorsing *experience* products, because as former users, they are regarded as a reliable source of information. The results of this content analysis showed that in ads for *experience* products endorsers are used more often than they are in ads for *search* products (19% and 12% respectively). This result concurs with the expectation. Endorsers were the most prevalent in ads for *credence* products (28%); as stated before, with their knowledge they are able to counteract any uncertainty that consumers might have. The greater knowledge of experts is particularly convenient when endorsing *credence* products, which is why it was expected that they would be the main endorser. After all, users of a *credence* product are uncertain about how it works, its quality and other aspects, even after having used it. In fact, with this kind of product the information asymmetry is the highest. However, when the ads were compared for the different SEC products, the deployment of

experts showed hardly any difference (*search* products: 20%; *experience* products: 22% and *credence* products: 21%). It was notably celebrities who were the most prevalent in ads for *credence* products (73%). Examples of *credence* products in the advertisements analysed were slimming pills, sun creams, vitamin pills, and in each case they were endorsed by celebrities. 'Regular' consumers were the least prevalent in ads for *credence* products yet they endorsed *search* products the most often (6% and 20% respectively).

Of the FCB products in the ads we analysed, affective products were advertised the most often (35%), followed by informative products (24%), pleasure products (21%) and habit products (20%). The FCB products can be categorized according to the degree to which they have to do with 'feeling' and to the degree to which consumers are involved with the product. On the basis of the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), the expectation was that endorsers would be particularly used as peripheral cues for products with a low involvement. Our content analysis shows, however, that endorsers were used more often in ads for products with a high involvement than they were for products with a low involvement (21% and 15% respectively). This result demonstrates that those in advertising seldom, if at all, seem to base their actual practice on the principles of the *Elaboration Likelihood Model*. Maybe endorsers do play a less peripheral role than was originally believed. After all, high involvement products encourage consumers to examine the intrinsic arguments thoroughly. On the other hand, they might view the presence of an endorser in the ad as sufficiently important an argument, which would mean that the endorser's role leans more towards the central than the peripheral route of the *Elaboration Likelihood Model*.

The degree of 'feeling' of FCB products is linked to the use of endorsers, albeit only marginal. Endorsers are deployed more often in ads for thinking products than they are in ads for feeling products (20% and 17% respectively). This result can be substantiated on the basis of the *Theory of Information Economics* (see also Darby & Karni, 1973; Ekelund, Mixon & Ressler, 1995), which was used for the deployment of (types of) endorsers in advertisement for SEC products. The basic principle was that consumers attempt to remedy the information asymmetry of products by seeking information about the product. Endorsers could be these sources of information. It is possible that FCB thinking products involve a high information asymmetry. Particularly with these products, the desire for an endorser as a source of information will be great, hence the expectation that they would indeed be deployed. The results of this content analysis confirm this expectation. Endorsers were the

least prevalent in ads for pleasure products, i.e. 'feeling' products with a low involvement (11%). A possible explanation for this result could be that endorsers would rather not be associated with the side-effects of pleasure products. Even if they are often called 'life's little pleasures', they could - in the short or the long term - have a negative or even harmful effect on the consumer (consider the health risks, for example, of cigarettes or alcohol). Moreover, the limited deployment of endorsers for these products might be the consequence of rules that have been laid down with regard to endorsing certain pleasure products.

Using different *types* of endorsers is connected, albeit marginally, to the involvement with FCB products. What is remarkable is that experts are particularly used for low involvement products (27%). The expectation was that each *type* of endorser ('regular' consumer, expert and celebrity) would be much more frequently deployed for low involvement products than in ads for high involvement products. We only see this with the experts. Maybe with these advertisements the ad agencies consciously chose experts because of the apparent credibility of this *type* of endorser. This credibility thus acts as a peripheral cue; a cue that is particularly important with low involvement products.

Also the *type* of endorser is linked to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products. Experts were primarily expected to be endorsers of thinking products owing to the fact that they encourage or stimulate the process of internalization. In advertisements for thinking products, experts were more frequently deployed as endorser than in advertisements for feeling products (28% and 16% respectively). The expectation was thus supported by the figures from everyday advertising practice.

Celebrities are regarded as being the most suitable endorsers of feeling products because they are thought to stimulate the process of identification deemed important for these products. Consumers want these products to make them feel like the celebrity in the ad. Using a celebrity, however, shows no difference when ads for thinking and feeling products were compared (61% and 62% respectively).

The results of the content analysis show that in advertising practice 'regular' consumers seem to have taken over the role of celebrities as regards identification. It is the 'regular' consumer who now figures more often in ads for feeling products than in ads for thinking products (22% and 11% respectively). It might well be that the advertising world thought that the identification with 'regular' consumers was stronger than with celebrities, i.e. that they thought that with feeling products one would feel a greater kinship or similarity

with 'regular' consumers than with celebrities. 'Regular' consumers are rarely used as endorsers in ads for informative products (6%), but they are used often for affective products (26%).

On the basis of the combination of product involvement and the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products, the expectation was formulated that in advertisements for habit products (thinking products with a low involvement), experts would be deployed the most frequently. Indeed, this was the case (38%). Experts are, after all, considered as being able to stimulate the process of internalization which particularly plays a role with thinking products. Receivers of ad messages are thought to want to think just like the experts in the advertisement, because of their product expertise. Moreover, as peripheral cues, experts would particularly have an added value with low involvement products, such as habit products. Celebrities were primarily deployed in ads for pleasure products (80%). This result concurs with the expectation. After all, celebrities are considered as being able to stimulate the process of identification, which is important with these products. Pleasure products are those which particularly apply to feeling.

The results of this content analysis reveal that when creating advertisements, advertising agencies rarely draw on the theoretical expectations of the prevalence of (*types of*) endorsers for certain kinds of product. A possible explanation may be that they are ignorant about these expectations or that they are of the opinion that what the theories and models 'prescribe' will not work in practice at all. Hence it might be the case that what the theories predict for magazine advertisements about the most suitable combination of *type of endorser* and *type of product* will not lead to an increase in, for example, the intention to purchase the product. However, also the opposite might occur: an endorser-product combination that might seem theoretically unsuitable but which in practice is effective. This is why it is interesting to also consider the effects of *types of endorsers* for products. Chapters 5 and 6 will thus address the effects of endorsers for SEC and FCB product categories respectively. With this in mind, chapter 4 will give insight into how consumers classify the different *types of endorsers* (celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts), on the basis of a photograph and a caption with name and profession. We will also determine how consumers classify SEC and FCB products on the basis of, for example, a photograph with a caption naming the product. The findings of this chapter will also be used for the development and interpretation of the stimulus advertisements, as used in the experimental research in chapters 5 and 6.

4

Classification of *types* of endorsers and *types* of products

4.1 Introduction

With the previous chapter having addressed the prevalence of different *types* of endorsers (celebrities, ‘regular’ consumers and experts) in advertisements in Dutch magazines, it appeared that in everyday practice advertising firms often use endorsers without full consideration of the theoretical principles of, for example, either the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* or de *Theory of Information Economics*. So, as chapter 3 did not offer insight into the possible effects of *types* of endorsers for SEC and FCB products, this will be addressed in the following chapters. Chapter 5 will study the effects of *types* of endorsers for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products and chapter 6 will investigate the effects of *types* of endorsers for FCB products (informative, affective, habit and pleasure products).

Before elaborating on these experimental studies, we must first answer the question how consumers classify *types* of endorsers and *types* of products. This chapter specifies how consumers classify the *types* of endorsers (‘regular’ consumers, experts and celebrities) on the basis of a photograph and a caption including the endorser’s name and profession. The question will also be answered how consumers classify *search*, *experience* and *credence* products on the basis of cues, such as a photograph and a short description of the product. Attention will moreover be focused on the classification of the four FCB products.

The findings of the research in this chapter were used to develop the stimulus advertisements for the two experimental studies in chapters 5 and 6. After all, when designing such ads it is imperative that one has suitable endorsers and suitable products.

4.1 Research I: Classification of types of endorsers

The first study addressed the classification of *types* of endorsers. To this end, test subjects judged photographs of people who could presumably be classified as ‘regular’ consumer, expert or celebrity. The question whether these *types* of endorsers would actually be classified correctly by the test subjects will be answered first.

4.2 Method

Stimulus material

Two researchers (one male, one female) selected photographs of people on the Internet (www.google.com) with the aim to use these in the questionnaire. Three photos were chosen of people whom the researchers assumed would be classified as celebrities. They also selected three photos of people whom they thought would be classified as experts, and another three photos of people whom the researchers presumed would be seen as ‘regular’ consumers.

To help them in their choice of photographs, the researchers formulated a number of selection criteria: 1) as great a resemblance as possible between the photos, 2) equal attractiveness of the people portrayed, 3) equal age of the people in the photos, 4) the person in the photo is portrayed solely with head and shoulders, and 5) the person in the photo is female. The decision was made for a head and shoulder portrait (full frontal), because it would seem people are then sooner judged as competent than when their entire body is visible (Schwarz & Kurz, 1989). A second reason for choosing such a portrait was that the content analysis of endorsers in advertisements (see chapter 3) revealed that endorsers were usually portrayed this way. The rationale behind choosing photographs solely of women also lies in the findings of the content analysis when the analysis of the advertisements revealed that predominantly female endorsers were deployed.

A caption including the name and profession of the person was attached to the photograph (for the experts and the ‘regular’ consumers these were fictitious), because for both of the aforementioned, a photo alone would not have made it sufficiently clear what the difference was between them. After all, the aim was as great a resemblance as possible. With celebrities, their real name and profession were given: Wendy van Dijk, TV presenter;

Trijntje Oosterhuis, singer; and Frouckje de Both, actress. With the experts, the following fictitious details were given: Kim de Haan, chemist; Sabine Kamping, dietician; and Lisette Becker, employee Consumers' Association; and for the 'regular' consumers: Charlotte Zomer, domestic help; Ellen Dijkma, part-time student; and Melanie Bosschaart, housewife. See Figure 4.1 for the images used.

'Regular' consumers



Charlotte Zomer
domestic help



Ellen Dijkma
part-time student



Melanie Bosschaart
housewife

Experts



Kim de Haan
chemist



Sabine Kamping
dietician



Lisette Becker
employee Consumers' Association

Celebrities



Wendy van Dijk
tv presenter



Trijntje Oosterhuis
singer



Frouckje de Both
actress

Figure 4.1: Images of potential endorsers

Questionnaire

The test subjects were presented with a questionnaire that enquired after the photographs of the various women. The questionnaire consisted of three classification propositions and one classification question per photo. The classification of the person as a celebrity was

measured by means of the proposition: 'The person in the photograph is a celebrity' (1 = totally disagree ... 7 = totally agree). The *classification of the person as an expert* was measured by means of the proposition: 'The person in the photograph is a expert' (1 = totally disagree ... 7 = totally agree), and the *classification of the person as a 'regular' consumer* was measured by means of the proposition: 'The person in the photograph is a 'regular' consumer' (1 = totally disagree ... 7 = totally agree). Test subjects were moreover asked to *classify the person* presented as celebrity, expert or 'regular' consumer (1 = 'regular' consumer; 2 = expert; 3 = celebrity). The questionnaire ended with two more questions about the gender and age of the test subject.

Test subjects and procedure

Taking part in the research into the classification of *types* of endorsers were 24 test subjects (12 women, 12 men). Four men and four women were between 20 and 35, four men and four women were between 36 and 50, and four men and four women were older than 50. The mean age of the test subjects was 44 years ($SD = 15.49$). The test subjects had to judge the photographs of the potential endorsers, whereby the sequence of the photos changed per test subject. Having looked at the photograph, the test subjects had to answer questions about the endorser.

4.3 Results

Table 4.1 shows the classification of the endorsers used in the research and also shows whether the persons whom one presumed would be classified as a 'regular' consumer, expert or celebrity were actually classified as such by the test subjects.

Table 4.1: Mean classification scores of the persons presented in the preliminary study (N=24)

	Classification propositions*			Classification question**
	Celebrity	Expert	Consumer	
<i>Celebrities</i>				
Wendy van Dijk, TV presenter	6.1	3.5	3.2	87%
Trijntje Oosterhuis, singer	6.0	3.7	2.8	96%
Frouckje de Both, actress	6.0	3.0	2.8	91%
<i>Experts</i>				
Kim de Haan, chemist	1.5	6.0	4.1	83%
Sabine Kamping, dietician	1.5	5.8	4.4	74%
Lisette Becker, employee Consumers' Association	1.9	5.1	4.7	65%
<i>'Regular' consumers</i>				
Charlotte Zomer, domestic help	2.0	2.8	4.8	70%
Ellen Dijkma, part-time student	1.5	2.8	5.3	83%
Melanie Bosschaart, housewife	1.2	3.0	6.0	96%

* minimum score for the propositions = 1 (totally disagree), maximum score = 7 (totally agree)

** percentage of the test subjects that actually classified the presumed celebrities (/experts/ 'regular' consumers) correctly.

Table 4.1 shows that Wendy van Dijk scored the highest on the classification proposition for celebrities (6.1). Many test subjects also classified her as a celebrity in the classification question (87%). As a presumed expert, the chemist, Kim de Haan, scored the highest on the classification proposition for experts (6.0). For the two other presumed experts, the scores for this proposition were lower (Sabine Kamping: 5.8 and Lisette Becker: 5.1). Moreover, for Lisette Becker there was hardly any difference between the score for the classification proposition for experts and the score for the classification proposition for 'regular' consumers (5.1 and 4.7 respectively). Kim de Haan also had the highest score for the classification question; more than 8 out of 10 test subjects classified her as an expert (83%). The classification of Melanie Bosschaart (housewife) as a 'regular' consumer was convincing. She had by far the highest score for the classification question, with almost all test subjects classifying her as a 'regular' consumer (96%).

The results of this (preliminary) study were used to develop the stimulus advertisements for the main, experimental research into the effects of (types of) endorsers for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. Hence Wendy van Dijk, TV presenter, was used

in the stimulus ad as a celebrity. Owing to the quality of the photo and the classification scores, Sabine Kamping, dietician, was selected as an expert, whereas, again on the basis of the classification scores, Melanie Bosschaart, housewife, appeared to be the most suitable 'regular' consumer.

4.4 Research 2: Classification search, experience and credence products

In the research into the classification of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products, the test subjects were presented with different products which they had to classify according to their degree of *search*, *experience* or *credence* characteristics. The products used here were derived from the articles of Nelson (1970, 1974) and Ekelund et al. (1995), in which the authors named them as examples of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products respectively. Our question was whether these products would also be classified as such by the test subjects.

4.5 Method

Stimulus material

As stated above, the selection of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products for this research were based on overviews of these products as described by Nelson and Ekelund et al. From this list of examples, four products were selected per type of SEC product. We then selected - per type - the four products from the list that we deemed the best. To this end, we used the criterion that these products would be mainly bought by women. This criterion was formulated because in the stimulus advertisements of the main, experimental research, women would act as endorsers. This choice was based on the results of the content analysis, which revealed that predominantly women were deployed as endorsers. Kanungo and Pang (1973) declared that for a suitable match the 'gender' of the product must fit the gender of the endorser. For this reason, the *search*, *experience* and *credence* products to be selected must be bought primarily by women. Moreover, the products picked from the list had to be concrete enough to inquire after in this study, as well as be easy to illustrate in the stimulus advertisements in the main, experimental research. The product 'hardware', for example, as

a *search* product is too general to determine the characteristics in this study and to ultimately illustrate it in the stimulus advertisements.

On the basis of the abovementioned criteria, the products (and representatives thereof) were selected from the published overviews of examples of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products by Nelson (1970, 1974) and Ekelund et al. (1995). As *search* products were chosen: shoes (with climbing boots as representative), sports equipment (with a tennis racket as representative), women's wear (with a pair of jeans as representative), and glasses. As *experience* products were chosen: spirits (with liqueur as representative), tobacco (with cigarettes as representative), food (with biscuits as representative), and telephones (with a mobile phone as representative). It was not possible to select suitable *credence* products from the list compiled by Ekelund et al. (1995), as it mainly comprised services. The researchers thus conferred on suitable *credence* products before deciding on vitamin pills, motor oil, sun cream and slimming tablets.

Images of the selected products were found on the Internet (www.google.com) and with the aid of Adobe Photoshop were stripped of any trade name. Hence the only visible text was the generic name of the product (see Figure 4.2).

Search products



climbing boots



tennis racket



jeans



glasses

Experience products



liqueur



cigarettes



biscuits



mobile phone

Credence products



vitamin pills



motor oil



sun cream



slimming tablets

Figure 4.2: Images of search, experience and credence products

Questionnaire

The test subjects were asked to judge the product examples from Nelson's articles on the presence of *search*, *experience* and *credence* characteristics. In order to determine whether a product had *characteristics of a search product*, the questionnaire also included two items with a 7-point scale (1 = totally disagree ... 7 = totally agree). The first item, derived from Srinivasan and Till (2002), was: 'With product X I can even check before purchase or use whether the advertiser's promises about this product will be fulfilled'; the second item was 'Product X is a *search product*'. The total score of the two items was calculated per product, with the minimum score being 2 and the maximum being 14. A higher total score reflects

that a product predominantly has characteristics of a *search* product. The degree to which a product had *characteristics of an experience product* was determined by the items: 'With product X I can only check after purchase or use whether the advertiser's promises about this product will be fulfilled' and 'Product X is an *experience* product'. In a similar way as with the *search* characteristics, a total score of the two items was calculated per product (minimum = 2, maximum = 14). A higher score reflects that a product predominantly has characteristics of an *experience* product.

The degree to which a product had *characteristics of a credence product* was determined by two items: 'With product X I cannot even check after purchase or use whether the advertiser's promises about this product will be fulfilled' and 'Product X is a *credence* product'. The total score of the two items was calculated per product.

Test subjects and procedure

Taking part in the research into the classification of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products were 49 test subjects (35 women and 14 men). The mean age of the test subjects was 23 years ($SD = 2.3$). The test subjects classified the four selected *search* products, the four selected *experience* products and the four selected *credence* products. In order to combat any saturation effect from filling in the questionnaires, the test subjects did not have to classify all twelve products but only six. Questionnaire A contained two *search* products (climbing boots, tennis racket), two *experience* products (liqueur, cigarettes) and two *credence* products (vitamin pills, motor oil). Questionnaire B also contained two *search* products (jeans, glasses), two *experience* products (biscuits, mobile phone) and two *credence* products (sun cream, slimming tablets). Of the in total 49 test subjects, 26 filled in questionnaire A and 23 questionnaire B. Preceding the research, the test subjects were orally instructed on the basis of a Powerpoint presentation on the difference between *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. A description of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products was moreover attached to the questionnaire which the test subjects could consult whilst filling in their answers. After looking at a photograph of a product, the test subjects answered questions about it.

4.6 Results

Table 4.2 shows the scores of the products presented with regard to their *search*, *experience* and *credence* characteristics.

Table 4.2: Mean scores of SEC products on search, experience and credence characteristics¹

	Search characteristics	Experience characteristics	Credence characteristics
<i>Search products</i>			
Glasses	10.7	9.4	3.4
Jeans	10.1	11.2	3.3
Tennis racket	8.9	11.6	4.6
Climbing boots	8.3	11.8	5.6
<i>Experience products</i>			
Biscuits	4.4	13.4	3.4
Liqueur	3.8	12.4	6.1
Mobile phone	6.0	12.0	6.4
Cigarettes	4.6	11.8	5.8
<i>Credence products</i>			
Vitamin pills	3.8	9.1	11.3
Motor oil	3.8	9.9	10.4
Slimming tablets	2.6	10.2	9.7
Sun cream	3.7	11.3	8.5

¹ minimum score = 2, maximum score = 14

Of all the SEC products presented, glasses scored the highest on *search* characteristics. The score of the presented *search* products was not only high on *search* characteristics but also on *experience* characteristics. With the exception of glasses, these products even scored higher on *experience* than they did on *search* characteristics. Biscuits scored the highest on *experience* characteristics. All the *experience* products presented scored solely high on these characteristics. Table 4.2 shows that vitamin pills have the highest score for *credence* characteristics. In fact, the *credence* products in this research do not only score high on *credence* but also on *experience* characteristics. Slimming tablets and sun cream scored even higher on *experience* than they did on *credence* characteristics.

The findings of this study were used to develop the stimulus advertisements for the main, experimental research into the effects of (types of) endorsers with *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. Glasses were thus chosen as a *search* product, biscuits as an *experience* product and the vitamin pills as a *credence* product.

4.7 Research 3: Classification of informative, affective, habit and pleasure products

In the research into the classification of informative, affective, habit and pleasure products, the test subjects were presented with different products which they had to judge, both according to the degree to which they had anything to do with ‘feeling’ and to the degree of product involvement, two important elements of FCB products (Ratchford, 1987). The products presented to the test subjects during the research were derived from an article by Ratchford, whereby the question was whether the informative, affective, habit and pleasure products would also be classified by them as such.

4.8 Method

Stimulus material

For the selection of suitable FCB products for this preliminary study, we drew on Ratchford’s article (1987) which shows a figure with over 60 products. On the basis of the score for ‘feeling’ and product involvement, these products can be found in one of the four quadrants of the FCB grid. Each quadrant corresponds to a type of FCB product, i.e. informative products, affective products, habit products and pleasure products.

For this study, four products were selected per FCB product type (informative, affective, habit and pleasure) that scored highest within a quadrant of Ratchford’s figure. To this end, a line with a 45 degree angle from the zero point was drawn in each quadrant. The perpendicular of each product in a quadrant on this line represents the score of the product within its type of product. In each quadrant the four products with the highest score were selected for this research.

The four products with the highest score on the line in the first quadrant were selected as informative products. These were: a life insurance, a camera, contact lenses and a

credit card. The four products with the highest score on the line in the second quadrant were selected as affective products, i.e. perfume, wallpaper, wine and a pair of glasses. The four products with the highest score on the line in the third quadrant were selected as habit products, namely kitchen paper, bleach, insect repellent and shampoo. Finally, the four products with the highest scores on the line in the fourth quadrant were selected as pleasure products: savoury biscuits, soft drinks, doughnuts and hand soap.

Images of the sixteen products selected were found on the Internet (www.google.com) and stripped of any trade name with the help of Adobe Photoshop. A short description of the product accompanied each photograph (see Figure 4.3).

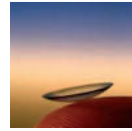
Informative products



life insurance



credit card



contact lenses



camera

Affective products



wallpaper



perfume



glasses



wine

Habit products



insect repellent



bleach



kitchen paper



shampoo

Pleasure products



hand soap



doughnuts



soft drinks



savoury biscuits

Figure 4.3: Images of informative, affective, habit and pleasure products

Questionnaire

The test subjects were asked to judge the products in the questionnaire according to the degree to which these had anything to do with 'feeling' and to the degree of product involvement.

The assessment of a product according to its *degree of 'feeling'* was determined by the Dutch translation of five items of Ratchford (1987):

- 1) 'Decision is not mainly logical or objective | 2 3 4 5 6 7 Decision is mainly logical or objective';
- 2) 'Decision is based mainly on functional facts | 2 3 4 5 6 7 Decision is not mainly based on functional facts';
- 3) 'Decision expresses one's personality | 2 3 4 5 6 7 Decision doesn't express one's personality';
- 4) 'Decision is based on a lot of feeling | 2 3 4 5 6 7 Decision is based on little feeling' and
- 5) 'Decision is based on looks, taste, touch, smell or sound | 2 3 4 5 6 7 Decision is not based on looks, taste, touch, smell or sound'.

The test subjects judged the items on a 7-point scale, and the score for the *degree of 'feeling'* was calculated on the basis of the following formula:

Degree of 'feeling' =

$$\frac{\text{scores item 3} + \text{item 4} + \text{item 5}}{3} - \frac{\text{recoded scores item 1} + \text{item 2}}{2}$$

Following Ratchford (1987), the minimum score for the degree of 'feeling' was -6 and the maximum score +6. With a score of -6, the product exclusively has to do with 'thinking', whereas with a score of +6, the product has solely to do with 'feeling'.

The *involvement with a product* was determined on the basis of the Dutch translation of three 7-point items, also borrowed from Ratchford (1987):

- 1) 'The decision to buy this product is very unimportant | 2 3 4 5 6 7 The decision to buy this product is very important';
- 2) 'The decision to buy this product requires little thought | 2 3 4 5 6 7 The decision to buy this product requires a lot of thought' and
- 3) 'A lot to lose if you choose the wrong brand | 2 3 4 5 6 7 A little to lose if you choose the wrong brand'.

The minimum score for product involvement was 3 (= low involvement) and the maximum score was 21 (= high involvement).

Test subjects and procedure

Participating in the research were 24 test subjects (12 women, 12 men). Four men and four women were between the ages of 20 and 35, four men and four women were between 36 and 50, and four men and four women were older than 50. The mean age of the test subjects was 44 years ($SD = 15.5$).

The test subjects classified the four selected informative products, the four selected affective products, the four selected habit products and the four selected pleasure products. The photographs of the 16 products were presented to the test subjects, whereby the sequence of products differed for each. Having looked at a photo, the test subjects answered questions about that product.

4.9 Results

Table 4.3 shows the average scores of the selected FCB products on degree of 'feeling' and product involvement according to Ratchford.

Table 4.3: Mean scores of the informative, affective, habit and pleasure products on degree of 'feeling' and product involvement

	Degree of 'feeling' ¹	Product involvement ²
<i>Informative products</i>		
Life insurance	-2.5	18.7
Camera	-1.0	17.6
Contact lenses	-1.3	17.5
Credit card	-3.2	16.1
<i>Affective products</i>		
Perfume	2.8	15.0
Wallpaper	0.4	13.3
Wine	0.7	12.0
Glasses	-0.2	15.9
<i>Habit products</i>		
Kitchen paper	-2.8	6.7
Bleach	-4.0	6.6
Insect repellent	-3.1	8.7
Shampoo	-1.0	12.6
<i>Pleasure products</i>		
Savoury biscuits	1.3	5.9
Soft drinks	-0.1	9.1
Doughnut	1.3	5.2
Hand soap	-1.3	8.6

¹ minimum score = -6 (thinking), maximum score = +6 (feeling)

² minimum score = 3 , maximum score = 21

Table 4.3 reveals that of the informative products presented, the life insurance and the credit card are more strongly classified as thinking products than the camera and the contact lenses. These products scored low on the degree of 'feeling' and high on product involvement, which concurs with the criteria of informative products. As regards the scores for product involvement, there was hardly any difference between the informative products presented. Either the life insurance or the credit card could serve as a sound representative of informative products in the stimulus advertisements of the experimental research. On second thoughts, however, there was a problem, namely that both 'products' were too abstract to portray in a stimulus advertisement. For this reason, we decided to select

contact lenses as the most suitable informative product, because they had a relatively low score for the degree of 'feeling' and a high score for product involvement.

As regards the score for the degree of 'feeling', perfume was classified higher as a pleasure product than the other selected affective products (wallpaper, wine and the glasses). These products scored neutral for the degree of 'feeling'. The glasses even had more characteristics of a 'thinking' than a 'feeling' product. Wallpaper and wine scored lower on involvement than the perfume and the glasses. The product involvement of wine was even average. In short, perfume was the best representative for affective products, owing to its high scores for the degree of both 'feeling' and product involvement.

Of the habit products presented, bleach scored lowest when it came to 'feeling'. Also its low score for involvement concurs with the criteria for habit products. The kitchen paper, the bleach and the insect repellent are also products that have more to do with feeling than thinking. Of the habit products, shampoo was judged as one with a more neutral score for the degree of 'feeling'. As far as product involvement was concerned, shampoo scored clearly higher on this than the other habit products. Bleach ultimately represented the category 'habit products' best, owing to its low scores for both the degree of 'feeling' and product involvement.

Doughnuts scored the highest of all the pleasure products presented for the degree of 'feeling'. Their low score for product involvement also met the criteria of pleasure products. Savoury biscuits are likewise products that have more to do with feeling than thinking (high score for degree of 'feeling' yet also low for product involvement). Of the pleasure products, hand soap appeared to have more to do with thinking than feeling. The product involvement of this product was, just like that of soft drinks, higher than the product involvement of savoury biscuits and doughnuts. Ultimately, savoury biscuits were selected, not only because they are more neutral a product than doughnuts (a typically American product), but also because doughnuts are less known to people in the Netherlands.

The findings of this study were used to develop the stimulus advertisements for the main, experimental research into the effects of (*types of*) endorsers for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products. Hence contact lenses were chosen as an informative product, perfume as an affective product, bleach as a habit product and savoury biscuits as a pleasure product.

4.10 Summing-up and looking ahead

The objective of this study was to gain insight into the degree to which *types* of endorsers and the types of SEC and FCB products are actually classified as such. The findings show that the classification of the presented 'regular' consumers and celebrities were in line with the expectation. The same applies to the experts, albeit that this classification is not convincing. Some of the experts used for this study also appeared to be classified as 'regular' consumers. This was particularly the case with Lisette Becker, who was portrayed as an employee of the Consumers' Association.

Of the SEC products only the presented *experience* products were actually classified correctly. The *search* products were not classified as purely *search* products but sooner as combination products with both *search* and *experience* characteristics. Also the *credence* products were combination products, only now they bore a mixture of *credence* and *experience* characteristics.

With the FCB products, the presented informative products appeared to be more or less classified as such. With the affective products, only one (perfume) turned out to be a good representative of this type of FCB product. On product involvement and degree of 'feeling', the other products (wine, glasses and wallpaper) scored less convincingly. Of the habit products, three (kitchen paper, bleach and insect repellent) were good representatives of this product category; they scored low on the degree of both 'feeling' and product involvement as opposed to the fourth product in this category, shampoo, which scored higher on both counts. Of the presumed pleasure products, half of them (doughnuts, savoury biscuits) met the criteria of pleasure products. Both of these products scored high on degree of 'feeling' and low on product involvement.

Chapter 5 will address the effects of 'regular' consumers, expert and celebrities on *search* products (glasses), *experience* products (biscuits) and *credence* products (vitamin pills), whereas chapter 6 will examine the effects of these endorsers with informative products (contact lenses), affective products (perfume), habit products (bleach) and pleasure products (savory biscuits).

5

Effects of endorsers with *search*, *experience* and *credence* products

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 we found that - in day to day practice, when developing magazine ads - the advertising industry rarely follows the basic principles of theories and models concerning the function of endorsers. A possible explanation might be that those in advertising are of the opinion that these principles are in practice ineffective. That is why this chapter will focus on the effects of *types* of endorsers for SEC products, just as chapter 6 will for the FCB product classification. The objective of this research is to examine what influence (*types* of) endorsers have with *search*, *experience* and *credence* products on a number of dependent variables, such as product attitude, quality assessment and purchase intention.

In an experimental study, which was carried out online, participants were exposed to advertisements for a *search* product (glasses), an *experience* product (biscuits) and a *credence* product (vitamin pills). Whereas the ads in the control condition did not have an endorser, the ads in the experimental condition included one of three *types* of endorser (a 'regular' consumer, an expert or a celebrity). In total, there were twelve conditions, three without endorser and nine with endorsers (three products x three endorsers).

For this research the effects were studied on two levels: the effects of endorsers in general (regardless of the *type* of endorser), and the effects of the different *types* of endorsers ('regular' consumers, experts and celebrities). The use of endorsers in general would seem to have no added value for *search* products. The expectation was that using endorsers for *search* products is less effective. After all, consumers can get all the

information they need by just looking at the product (Nelson, 1970,1974); they are able to check before purchase or use whether the advertiser's promises will be fulfilled, even by simply looking, for example, at the image of the *search* product in the advertisement.

The quality and characteristics of *experience* products, on the other hand, only become evident after use or purchase of that product. Only then can consumers verify whether the promises of the advertiser about that product will be fulfilled. With these products, the need for information is greater than with *search* products. Earlier users could be an extra source of information for the consumers (Ekelund Jr. et al., 1995). All three types of endorsers could function as earlier users of the product and hence be equally effective endorsers of this type of product. We thus had no reason to expect any differences here.

Consumers are not or barely able to determine the quality and characteristics of *credence* products, often not even after use or purchase. With *credence* products consumers cannot even verify after purchase or use whether the advertiser's promises have been fulfilled. So, for these products the need for information would appear to be great. Endorsers with substantial specialist know-how about the product or its class can provide this information, which consumers can then use to assess the quality. Experts seem to be the most suitable endorsers of *credence* products as their knowledge and expertise is superior to the knowledge of the 'regular' consumer and the celebrity.

On the basis of the aforementioned, the following expectations were formulated:

- Advertisements for *search* products with endorsers are equally effective as advertisements for *search* products without endorsers;
- There is no difference in effectiveness when 'regular' consumers, experts or celebrities are used in advertisements to endorse *experience* products;
- Experts are more effective endorsers than 'regular' consumers and celebrities in advertisements for *credence* products.

5.2 Method

Design

The study had twelve conditions, with ads for a *search* product (glasses), an *experience* product (biscuits) or a *credence* product (vitamin pills), in each case in combination with either 1) no endorser, 2) a 'regular' consumer, 3) an expert or 4) a celebrity. Some of the

respondents were allocated a product advertisement with an endorser, whereas others were given an advertisement without. The research design with the actual distribution of the respondents among the conditions is illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Research design with the actual distribution of the respondents among the twelve conditions

	Consumer	Expert	Celebrity	None
Search products	32	28	26	27
Experience products	24	23	26	29
Credence products	23	31	31	24

The sample ($N = 324$) consisted of 162 men (52%) and 150 women (48%). For twelve respondents the gender was unknown. The mean age of the respondents was 41,1 years ($SD = 13.2$). There were no significant differences between the conditions as regards gender (type of endorser, including no endorser: $\chi^2(3, N = 312) = 1.72$, ns; type of product: $\chi^2(2, N = 312) = .94$, ns) and average age (type of endorser, including no endorser: $F(3, 312) < 1$; type of product: $F(2, 312) < 1$).

Procedure

Respondents ($N=480$) were recruited by telephone throughout the Netherlands for the online research via the Internet. Preceding the research, colour photos in A4 format of the two advertisements about which the respondents would be questioned were sent to their home address. This was to prevent any difference in display resolution that might influence the assessment of the ads. The study was conducted in collaboration with a bureau specialized in online research and a login code ensured that the correct advertisements were coupled to the correct respondents. Of the 480 respondents, 364 (76%) started to fill in the questionnaire and 324 respondents (nearly 68%) filled it in completely.

After receiving the colour photos, the respondents were sent an email – on a previously arranged date – with a link and a login code for a web page where they would find a questionnaire on the two advertisements they had all received. After instruction, the first advertisement (A) was shown on the Internet page, whereby respondents were asked to look at the advertisement A sent to them by post and to answer the questions. Advertisement A was constantly visible during this time. Then the second advertisement (B)

was shown, and again respondents were asked to look at advertisement B they had received in the post and to answer the questions.

Material

The advertisements were designed with professional software for editing digital photos. On the basis of the 3 x 4 factorial research design with the factor 'type of product' (*search*, *experience* and *credence*) and the factor 'type of endorser' (none, celebrity, 'regular' consumer, expert), twelve variants of the advertisement were designed. The basic format of the ads was the same in all conditions: a logo in combination with a slogan of a fictitious company ("Majestik [name of product]: my choice"). At the bottom of the ads were the company's phone number and the Internet address. To prevent any chance of being unintentionally influenced by the trade name, both the logo and the Internet address were blacked out. The background of all the advertisements was blue.

In the advertisements, the *type* of product was manipulated by a photo and the name of a *search* product (glasses), an *experience* product (biscuits) and a *credence* product (vitamin pills). In the preliminary study, these three products were established as complying with the characteristics of a *search*, an *experience* and a *credence* product respectively (see chapter 4).

Also the *type* of endorser was manipulated by a photo and caption stating the profession of a celebrity, an expert and a 'regular' consumer. The celebrity was Wendy van Dijk (TV presenter), the expert was Sabine Kamping (employee Consumers' Association), and the 'regular' consumer was Melanie Bosschaart (housewife). The advertisements incorporated a photo of the endorser and the complementary slogan: "The choice of [name of endorser]". The choice of these three endorsers and the accompanying photos was based on a preliminary study which revealed that they were good representatives of the different *types* of endorsers (see chapter 4). For an example of a stimulus advertisement used in this experimental research, see Figure 5.1.



Melanie Bosschaart
huisvrouw



"**[redacted]** koekjes: mijn keuze!"

Voor meer informatie: [www.j\[redacted\].nl](http://www.j[redacted].nl)
of telefoonnummer: 0900-2930

Figure 5.1: Example of stimulus advertisement ('regular' consumer as endorser of an experience product)

Questionnaire

Product manipulation check

As a check, the products were assessed on 7-point scales (1 = totally disagree ... 7 = totally agree). As a check, the perception of the type of product was established by asking respondents whether one could already verify before purchase or use that the advertiser's promises were fulfilled (*search product*), or that one could only do this after purchase or use (*experience product*) or that even after purchase or use one could not still not verify this (*credence product*).

Endorser manipulation check

The perceived characteristics of the endorsers were assessed on 7-point scales.

Familiarity was determined by two items (McGuire, 1985) with a high inter-item correlation ($r = .88$, $p < .001$). These items were: '[Name of person] is a celebrity' (totally disagree ... totally agree) and 'How famous is [name of person] for you?' (not at all famous ... very famous).

Attractiveness was measured by the five bipolar items of Ohanian (1990). These items constituted a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). Example: 'What do you think of [name of person] as portrayed in the advertisement?' (unattractive – attractive).

Likeability was determined by two items based on McGuire (1985). These items were: 'What do you think of [name of person] as portrayed in the advertisement?' (very unfriendly – very friendly and very unkind – very kind). These items had a high inter-item correlation ($r = .84$, $p < .001$).

Similarity was measured with two items derived from Aaker and Myers (1992). These items had a sufficiently high inter-item correlation ($r = .42$, $p < .001$). These items were: 'I see many similarities between [name of person] as she is portrayed here and myself' (totally disagree – totally agree) and '[Name of person] has approximately the same status as me' (totally disagree – totally agree).

Expertise was determined by five items (Ohanian, 1990). These had a sound internal consistency ($\alpha = .95$). Example: 'As endorser of this [name of product], [name of person] is ...' (no expert – an expert).

Trustworthiness was measured by five items (Ohanian, 1990), with a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$). Example: 'What do you think of [name of person] as portrayed in the advertisement?' (dishonest – honest).

Product match was determined by three items (derived from Kamins & Gupta, 1994) with good internal consistency ($\alpha = .85$). Example: 'What do you think of [name of person] as portrayed in the advertisement?' (unsuitable – suitable).

Dependent variables

Unless otherwise stipulated, the dependent variables were determined by 7-point scales. Advertisement attitude was determined by ten items (Atkin & Block, 1983) with a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .91$). Example: 'What do you think of the advertisement?' (unpleasant – pleasant).

Product attitude was measured by six items (Atkin & Block, 1983) with a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$). Example: 'What do you think of [name of product] in the advertisement?' (of really poor quality – of really good quality).

Perceived product quality was determined by two items with a high inter-item correlation ($r = .57$, $p < .001$). These items were: 'I am certain that [name of product] in the advertisement is of good quality' and 'I am certain that [name of product] in the advertisement is the best in its kind'. Both propositions could be scored on a 7-point scale (totally disagree ... totally agree).

Personal purchase intention was determined by three items based on Bearden, Lichtenstein and Teel (1984) and Srinivasan and Till (2002). Example: 'Imagine that you have in principle enough money to buy [name of product]. How likely is it that you will buy [name of product] within the next two months?' Answer: 'The chance that I will buy [name of product] within the next two months is ...' (very small – very big). The items had a high reliability ($\alpha = .96$).

Perceived persuasive power was determined by the question what percentage of the Dutch would buy this product after having seen the advertisement. The respondents were free to fill in a percentage.

Word of mouth was determined by three questions on the degree to which one might recommend this product to others ($\alpha = .96$). Example: 'How likely is it that you will

recommend [name of product] to others?' Answer: 'The chance I will recommend [name of product] to others is ...'(very small – very big).

Information search behaviour, the tendency of the respondents to seek further information, was determined by two items ($r = .65$, $p < .001$). These were: 'I will first look for more information on [name of product] before I buy [name of product]' and 'I will compare [name of product] with other similar [name of product] before I buy [name of product].' Both propositions could be scored on a 7-point scale (totally disagree ... totally agree).

Finally, the respondent was asked to fill in *name* and *gender*.

Statistical analysis

The mean scores were calculated for all scales. Univariate analysis of variance was used to test the equal distribution of the respondents among the conditions for age. A χ^2 -test was used to test the equal gender division among the conditions.

The objective of the data analysis was to test the main effects and the interaction effects of *type* of product and *type* of endorser on the evaluation of the endorsers and the independent variables. Univariate analyses of variance were used to test the effects of *type* of product and *type* of endorser on the evaluation of the endorsers and the dependent variables. The statistical significance level was the p -value $< .05$.

5.3 Results

Product manipulation check

In order to establish whether the manipulation of the type of SEC product was successful, the score for the glasses, the biscuits and the vitamin pills was examined for *search*, *experience* and *credence* characteristics. Respondents assessed the used *search* product (glasses) significantly more often as a product with *search* characteristics ($M = 2.89$) than the biscuits ($M = 2.38$) and the vitamin pills ($M = 2.30$), $F(2, 315) = 4.13$, $p < .05$). This means that the presumed *search* product was also assessed as *search* product. The used *experience* product (biscuits) was evaluated significantly higher as a product with *experience* characteristics ($M = 5.63$) than glasses ($M = 5.06$) and vitamin pills ($M = 5.05$), $F(2, 315) = 3.95$, $p < .05$). The presumed *experience* product was also assessed as such. The used

credence product (vitamin pills) was assessed significantly higher as a product with *credence* characteristics ($M = 4.44$) than the glasses ($M = 3.46$) and the biscuits ($M = 3.27$), $F(2, 315) = 12.02$, $p < .01$). Hence the presumed *credence* product was also assessed as *credence* product. We can conclude from the manipulation check of the sort of SEC products that all product manipulations were successful.

Endorser manipulation check

In order to determine whether the manipulation of the *type* of endorser was successful, the scores of Wendy van Dijk (celebrity), Sabine Kamping (expert) and Melanie Bosschaart ('regular' consumer) were examined for the most important characteristics of these *types* of endorsers (familiarity, expertise and similarity). The celebrity scored on average significantly higher on familiarity ($M = 5.57$) than the 'regular' consumer ($M = 1.60$) and the expert ($M = 1.37$), $F(2, 238) = 377.73$, $p < .001$. This means that Wendy van Dijk (TV presenter) was judged as a celebrity. The expert scored on average significantly higher on expertise ($M = 3.70$) than the celebrity ($M = 2.64$) and the 'regular' consumer ($M = 3.02$), $F(2, 238) = 12.50$, $p < .001$. This means that Sabine Kamping (product expert, employee of the Consumers' Association) was evaluated as an expert. The scores of the different *types* of endorsers on similarity did not significantly differ. The 'regular' consumer did score the highest on this characteristic ($M = 2.13$), though, compared with the celebrity ($M = 1.84$) and the expert ($M = 1.88$), $F(2, 238) = 1.84$, ns.

Effects of the presence of endorsers

Table 5.2 shows the average scores of the dependent variables for the SEC product advertisements with and without endorsers (irrespective of *type*).

Table 5.2: Mean scores of the dependent variables in the conditions with and without an endorser for search, experience and credence products

Product type	Search		Experience		Credence		Main effects		Inter-action	
	Endorser	Without a	With b	Without c	With d	Without e	With f	Endorser F(1, 324)		Product F(2, 324)
Advertisement attitude		3.4	2.8	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.7	8.0*	1.7	<1
Product attitude		3.5	3.1	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.1	2.5	3.7*	<1
Perceived product quality		2.3	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.3	<1	2.3	<1
Personal purchase intention		1.8	1.5	2.2	2.5	2.0	1.7	<1	6.7**	1.6
Perceived persuasive power		14.5	13.1	25.6	21.2	20.0	14.4	2.8	7.4**	<1
Information search behaviour		4.9	4.6	3.0	3.6	5.1	5.5	<1	18.0***	<1
Word of mouth		1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.5	<1	4.8**	<1

Note: ^an = 21, ^bn = 77, ^cn = 27, ^dn = 66, ^en = 23, ^fn = 75.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Table 5.2 shows that there was no significant interaction of the type of endorser and the type of SEC product with any dependent variable. This result concurs with the expectation that using endorsers for *search* products would hardly have any persuasive effects, if at all. Our findings did not support the expectation that endorsers of *experience* products could be an added source of information about that product. The presence of endorsers did, however, have a significant main effect on the advertisement attitude, with a higher average for ads without than for ads with endorsers. Advertisements without an endorser were assessed more positively than ads with an endorser. With the other dependent variables there was no significant difference between advertisements with and without endorsers. The type of product had a significant main effect on product attitude, personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power and word of mouth, with a higher average being measured in all cases for the *experience* product. As far as information search behaviour was concerned, consumers were the least inclined to seek information on *experience* products.

Effects of types of endorsers

Table 5.3 shows the average scores of the dependent variables for the SEC product advertisements with different *types* of endorsers.

Table 5.3: Mean scores of the dependent variables when using different types of endorser ('regular' consumer (C), expert (E), celebrity (B)) for search , experience and credence products

Product type	Search			Experience			Credence			Main effects	Inter- action	
Endorser	C ^a	E ^b	B ^c	C ^d	E ^e	B ^f	C ^g	E ^h	B ⁱ	Endorser	Product	
										F(2, 244)	F(2, 244)	F(4, 244)
Advertisement attitude	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.2	2.7	2.8	2.4	2.7	2.9	<1	1.4	2.2
Product attitude	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.6	2.5	3.1	3.2	1.7	4.9**	1.8
Perceived product quality	2.2	2.8	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.7	2.2	2.5	5.3	2.0	3.2*	<1
Personal purchase intention	1.3	1.6	1.6	3.0	2.6	2.1	1.4	1.7	1.7	<1	20.3***	2.5*
Perceived persuasive power	7.5	14.2	19.3	26.7	18.3	18.6	15.3	12.8	15.3	<1	6.2**	3.5**
Information search behaviour	5.1	4.0	4.4	3.8	3.3	3.6	5.4	5.1	5.9	3.0****	21.5***	<1
Word of mouth	1.4	1.6	1.4	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.2	1.6	1.5	<1	9.8***	2.2

Note: ^an = 32, ^bn = 28, ^cn = 26, ^dn = 24, ^en = 23, ^fn = 26, ^gn = 23, ^hn = 31, ⁱn = 31.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power.: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; **** p = .05

The question whether a certain endorser in combination with a certain product has a specific persuasive effect is shown by the interaction effects. There is a significant interaction between the *type* of product and the *type* of endorser with personal purchase intention and perceived persuasive power. A closer consideration of Table 5.3 clearly shows that with both the personal purchase intention and the perceived persuasive power, a 'regular' consumer combined with the *experience* product results in higher mean scores. For *experience* products there was no reason to expect any differences between the *types* of endorsers, because all three *types* could function as former product users. Contrary to the expectation, the expert's endorsement of the *credence* product did not result in significant interaction effects on the dependent variables. The *type* of endorser did have a significant main effect on information search behaviour. Less information was sought when an expert

endorsed the product in the ad. As regards the effects of the *type* of product, Table 5.3 shows results that are comparable with those in Table 5.2, although now it also has an effect on perceived product quality.

5.4 Conclusion

The objective of this experimental study was to examine what influence (*types* of) endorsers had with *search*, *experience* and *credence* products on dependent variables. The results show that there was no significant interaction effect of the presence of endorsers and types of SEC products with any dependent variable. The results do show, however, that the absence of endorsers positively influences the attitude to the advertisement. Advertisements for SEC products without an endorser are found to be better, more interesting and more pleasant than ads that do have an endorser. This outcome is in line with the expectation that endorsers do not add extra value to *search* products. After all, consumers can acquire sufficient information by just looking at the image of the product.

The *experience* products produced the highest scores on the dependent variables, such as product attitude, personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power and information search behaviour. Particularly the high score for information search behaviour with these products was remarkable. The highest score was namely expected for the *credence* products, because of the great uncertainty about their quality. It is this uncertainty that makes consumers sooner inclined to actively seek information about these products.

It appeared that there was a significant interaction between the *type* of product and the *type* of endorser. The findings show that a 'regular' consumer as endorser of *experience* products resulted in the highest scores for personal purchase intention and perceives persuasive power. This result is contrary to the expectation that with *experience* products there would be no difference in the scores for the dependent variables when the *types* of endorsers were compared with one another. The three *types* are notably former product users who particularly with *experience* products could function as an added source of information.

The expectation that the experts' endorsement of *credence* products would result in the highest scores for the dependent variables was not supported by the findings. Experts are presumed to be the most suitable endorsers of *credence* products as they have a wealth of relevant information. Of all the SEC products, it was particularly the *credence* products for which consumers required an extra source of information in the shape of, for example, an

endorser. Although the expert would be able to perform this role, the findings show that this place has been taken by the 'regular' consumer.

Furthermore, the *type* of endorser would appear to influence information search behaviour. The least information is sought when the endorser in the ad is an expert. Consumers seem to trust the expert's above average product knowledge and expertise.

Chapter 6 will examine the effects of *types* of endorsers for products according to the FCB categorization, i.e. informative products, affective products, habit products and pleasure products.

6

Effects of endorsers with informative, affective, habit and pleasure products

6.1 Introduction

Whereas in chapter 5 we focused on the effects of *types* of endorsers for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products, this chapter will do the same for the FCB product categorization. The objective of this research is to examine what influence (*types* of) endorsers have with informative, affective, habit and pleasure products on dependent variables such as product attitude, quality assessment and purchase intention.

In this study, respondents were presented with advertisements for an informative product (contact lenses), an affective product (perfume), a habit product (bleach) and a pleasure product (savoury biscuits). The advertisements in the control condition did not have an endorser, whereas the ads in the experimental conditions portrayed a 'regular' consumer, an expert or a celebrity. There were sixteen conditions in this investigation: four without an endorser and twelve conditions with endorsers.

Also we studied the effects of endorsers in general (irrespective of the *type*) and the effects of the different *types* of endorsers ('regular' consumers, experts and celebrities).

According to the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), using peripheral cues, like endorsers, is particularly effective for products with a low involvement. This implies that using endorsers in ads for habit and pleasure products (products with a low involvement) has more positive effects on the dependent variables than when *not* using an endorser.

Informative and habit products are thinking products. For these products, using endorsers seems to be especially effective when they stimulate the process of internalization.

Internalization implies that consumers want to *think* just like the endorser. Owing to his/her knowledge and expertise, an expert is able to stimulate this process of internalization, but also a 'regular' consumer can have this effect on the receiver of the message (Kelman, 1961). This is due to the similarity between the receiver and the endorser. In this case, the similarity refers to knowledge about the product, which the 'regular' consumer has acquired through using it. However, the product knowledge of the expert surpasses that of a 'regular' consumer's endorsement.

For feeling products (affective and pleasure products), using endorsers seems to be especially effective when they stimulate the process of identification. Identification implies that consumers want to *be* just like the endorser. A celebrity is able to stimulate this process (Kelman, 1961). Celebrities can proficiently convey the meaning of products to consumers (McCracken, 1989). Such meanings relate, for example, to the image of the celebrity and emphasize the feeling aspect of the product. According to Kelman (1961), also 'regular' consumers stimulate the consumer's process of identification, owing to their similarity with the receiver of the message. Deploying consumers would thus also be effective for feeling products. However, the identification with a celebrity seems stronger than when a product is endorsed by a 'regular' consumer.

The combination of product involvement and the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products influences the effectiveness of (*types of*) endorsers. On the basis of the above, the following expectations were formulated for this study:

- Using endorsers in advertisements for low involvement FCB products has more positive effects on the dependent variables than *not* using an endorser;
- The expert is the most effective *type* of endorser in advertisements for thinking products;
- The celebrity is the most effective *type* of endorser in advertisements for feeling products;
- The celebrity is the most effective *type* of endorser in advertisements for pleasure products;
- The expert is the most effective *type* of endorser in advertisements for habit products.

6.2 Method

Design

This study had sixteen conditions, with advertisements for an informative product (contact lenses), an affective product (perfume), a habit product (bleach) or a pleasure product (savory biscuits), in each case in combination with 1) no endorser, 2) a 'regular' consumer, 3) an expert or 4) a celebrity.

Some of the respondents were allocated a product advertisement with an endorser, whereas others were given an advertisement without. The research design with the actual distribution of the respondents among the conditions is illustrated in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Research design with the actual distribution of the respondents among the sixteen conditions

	Consumer	Expert	Celebrity	Without
Informative products	16	17	16	16
Affective products	18	18	14	17
Habit products	18	18	15	15
Pleasure products	15	16	17	18

The sample ($N = 264$) consisted of 124 men (48%) and 134 women (52%). With six respondents the gender was unknown. The mean age of the respondents was 42 years ($SD = 14.2$). There were no significant differences between the conditions as regards gender and age. As regards gender, the respondents who participated in this study were equally distributed among the various conditions (without an endorser: $\chi^2_{(3, 65)} = .57, p = .90$; 'regular' consumer: $\chi^2_{(3, 66)} = .58, p = .90$; expert: $\chi^2_{(3, 66)} = 4.14, p = .25$; celebrity: $\chi^2_{(3, 61)} = 3.90, p = .27$). The respondents were also equally distributed among the conditions with regard to age (*type* of endorser: $F_{(3, 258)} = .19, p = .90$; *type* of product: $F_{(3, 258)} = .19, p = .91$; interaction: $F_{(9, 258)} = .80, p = .62$).

Procedure

The respondents ($N=480$) for this study were recruited in the same way as for the study in chapter 5. Also the procedure is identical. Almost 300 respondents ($n=290$; 60%) started to fill in the questionnaire and 264 respondents (55%) filled it in completely.

Material

The manner in which the stimulus material for this study was designed corresponds with the way in which the advertisements were designed for the study in chapter 5. However, for this research not twelve but sixteen stimulus advertisements were designed. Moreover they included images of representatives of informative (contact lenses), affective (perfume), habit (bleach) and pleasure products (savoury biscuits). In the preliminary study, these four products were established as complying with the characteristics of an informative, an affective, a habit and a pleasure product respectively (see chapter 4). See Figure 6.1 for an example of a stimulus advertisement from this experimental research.



Wendy van Dijk
TV-presentatrice

PERFUME

"[redacted] parfum: mijn keuze!"

Meer informatie? Kijk op onze website: [www.\[redacted\].nl](http://www.[redacted].nl)
of bel met 0900-2324

The advertisement features a portrait of Wendy van Dijk, a TV presenter, with her hand to her chin, set against a blue gradient background. Below her is a clear glass perfume bottle with a silver cap and a black label. The word 'PERFUME' is printed in red on the bottle. At the bottom, there is a quote and contact information for the brand, with some text redacted.

Figure 6.1: Example stimulus advertisement (celebrity as endorser of an affective product)

Questionnaire

Product manipulation check

The products were assessed on the degree to which they had to do with 'feeling' and on the degree of consumer involvement with the product. Both degree of 'feeling' and product involvement were assessed on 7-point scales (Ratchford, 1987; 1 = totally disagree ... 7 = totally agree). The degree of 'feeling' was measured with two propositions, which formed the 'thinking scale': 1) 'The consideration to buy this product is (not) logical or objective' and 2) 'The consideration to buy this product is (not) based on functional characteristics'. For the degree of 'feeling', three propositions were also used, which formed the 'feeling' scale: 1) 'The consideration to buy this product does (not) depend on someone's personality', 2) 'When considering to buy this product, feelings do not or hardly play a role (of any importance)' and 3) 'The consideration to buy this product is (not) based on what the product looks like, how it tastes, how it feels, how it smells or how it sounds'. Insight into the degree of involvement was gained by three propositions: 1) 'The consideration to buy this product is (very) unimportant', 2) 'The consideration to buy this product requires a lot of (/little) thought' and 3) 'If I were to buy a wrong brand of this product, I would have little (/a lot) to lose'.

Endorser manipulation check

The characteristics of the endorsers were assessed in the same way as in the study of the effects of *types* of endorsers for SEC products (see chapter 5). Also the dependent variables were measured in an identical fashion. Table 6.2 shows the reliability of the scales and the inter-item correlations of the items.

Table 6.2: Scale reliability and inter-item correlations for effects of types of endorsers for FCB products

Characteristics of endorsers			
	Number of items	α	r
Familiarity	2		.95 ($p < .001$)
Attractiveness	5	.89	
Likeability	2		.90 ($p < .001$)
Similarity	2		.70 ($p < .001$)
Expertise	5	.95	
Trustworthiness	5	.92	
Product match	3	.87	
Dependent variables			
	Number of items	α	r
Advertisement attitude	10	.93	
Product attitude	10	.89	
Perceived product quality	2		.75 ($p < .001$)
Personal purchase intention	3	.98	
Word of mouth	3	.97	
Information search behaviour	2		.74 ($p < .001$)

Statistical analysis

The analyses in this study were conducted in an identical fashion to those in chapter 5.

6.3 Results

Product manipulation check

In order to establish whether the manipulation of the *type* of FCB product was successful, the score for the contact lenses, perfume, bleach and savoury biscuits were examined for the degree of 'feeling' and the degree of product involvement. Table 6.3 shows the scores of the informative, affective, habit and pleasure product with regard to the degree of both 'feeling' and product involvement according to Ratchford (1987).

Table 6.3: Scores of the informative, affective, habit and pleasure products with regard to the degree of 'feeling' and product involvement

Products	Informative	Affective	Habit	Pleasure	F(3, 258)
Scores					
Degree of 'feeling'	-1.1	1.9	-2.7	1.0	99.3*
Degree of product involvement	5.2	4.0	2.6	2.2	81.6*

Degree of 'feeling': minimum score -6; maximum score +6. Degree of product involvement: minimum score 1; maximum score 7.

* $p < .001$

The presumed thinking products (informative and habit) scored significantly lower for the degree of 'feeling' than the presumed feeling products (affective and pleasure). Table 6.3 also shows that the presumed high involvement products (informative and affective) scored significantly higher on involvement than the presumed low involvement products (4.6 en 2.4 respectively). The manipulation of the *type* of product can thus be regarded as successful.

Endorser manipulation check

In order to determine whether the manipulation of the *type* of endorser was successful, this study also examined the score of Wendy van Dijk (celebrity), Sabine Kamping (expert) and Melanie Bosschaart ('regular' consumer) for the most important characteristics of these *types* of endorsers (familiarity, expertise and similarity). On average, the celebrity scored significantly higher on familiarity ($M = 5.90$) than the 'regular' consumer ($M = 1.33$) and the expert ($M = 1.43$), $F(2, 195) = 447.20$, $p < .001$. This means that Wendy van Dijk (TV presenter) was judged as a celebrity. On average, the expert scored significantly higher on expertise ($M = 4.14$) than the celebrity ($M = 3.15$) and the 'regular' consumer ($M = 3.12$), $F(2, 195) = 12.26$, $p < .001$. This means that Sabine Kamping (product expert, employee of the Consumers' Association) was evaluated as an expert. The scores of the different *types* of endorsers on similarity did not significantly differ. However, the 'regular' consumer did score the highest on this characteristic ($M = 2.36$), compared with the celebrity ($M = 1.93$) and the expert ($M = 2.29$), $F(2, 195) = 2.12$, ns.

Effects of the presence of endorsers in advertisements for FCB products

The effects of the advertisements with and without endorsers on the dependent variables were each compared for the *types* of FCB product (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Mean score of the dependent variables in the conditions with and without endorsers for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products

Product type	Informative		Affective		Habit		Pleasure		Main effects		Interaction
	Endorser	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With	Without	With	Endorser	
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h		F(1, 264)	F(3, 264)
Advertisement attitude	3.3	3.3	2.6	3.1	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	1.0	<1	<1
Product attitude	3.5	3.1	3.1	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.8	3.5	<1	1.9	1.2
Perceived product quality	2.8	2.4	2.4	2.6	3.8	3.1	2.9	3.1	<1	4.2**	1.3
Personal purchase intention	1.8	1.6	2.0	2.2	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	<1	12.8*	<1
Perceived persuasive power	17.5	15.7	13.2	17.6	31.2	28.7	21.2	30.1	<1	6.5*	<1
Information search behaviour	6.0	5.9	5.6	5.2	4.3	3.3	4.0	3.1	7.1**	26.9*	<1
Word of mouth	2.2	1.5	1.6	2.0	1.9	2.3	1.9	2.5	<1	1.3	2.0

Note: ^a n = 16, ^b n = 49, ^c n = 17, ^d n = 50, ^e n = 15, ^f n = 51, ^g n = 18, ^h n = 48.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* p < .001

** p < .01

Table 6.4 shows that there are no interaction effects of the presence of an endorser and the type of product on the dependent variables. Table 6.4 does show, however, that there are main effects of an endorser's presence in an advertisement on information search behaviour. That is to say, a consumer is sooner inclined to seek information when an endorser is absent in an advertisement than when one is present (5.0 and 4.4 respectively). By figuring in an advertisement, an endorser can help the consumer to remedy the information asymmetry of a product. Other main effects of product type were: perceived product quality, personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power and information search behaviour. The perceived quality of habit products was the highest (3.5) and might be the reason for consumers to continue buying them. The perceived quality of affective products was the lowest (2.5). The personal purchase intention was the highest for pleasure and habit products (3.5 and 3.4 respectively). This intention measure was the lowest for informative products (1.7). The perceived persuasive power of the advertisement was the highest for habit products and the lowest for affective products (30.0 and 15.4 respectively).

Effects of types of endorsers in advertisements for FCB products

Table 6.5 illustrates whether certain types of endorsers in combination with certain types of FCB products have a specific persuasive effect.

Table 6.5: Mean scores of the dependent variables when using 'regular' consumers (C), experts (E) and celebrities (B) for informative, affective, habit and pleasure products

Product type	Informative			Affective			Habit			Pleasure			Main effects		Interaction		
	Endorser	C ^a	E ^b	B ^c	C ^d	E ^e	B ^f	C ^g	E ^h	B ⁱ	C ^j	E ^k	B ^l	Endorser	Product	F(2, 198)	F(6, 198)
Advertisement attitude		2.9	3.7	3.3	2.7	3.4	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.2	1.7	2.1		1.2
Product attitude		2.9	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.7	3.4	3.5	3.5	2.8	3.8	3.6	3.3	1.6	1.7		0.9
Perceived product quality		1.9	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.3	3.0	3.1	3.4	2.7	3.4	2.8	3.0	0.1	2.6		1.5
Personal purchase intention		1.5	1.5	1.9	2.0	1.8	3.0	4.2	3.0	2.8	3.8	3.6	2.7	1.2	13.8*		2.4***
Perceived persuasive power		11.4	14.7	20.7	18.2	15.3	19.8	31.9	28.3	25.5	41.2	23.0	27.2	1.4	8.0*		1.5
Information search behaviour		6.5	5.4	5.8	5.2	5.4	4.8	3.3	3.8	2.7	3.1	3.0	3.1	1.0	37.4*		1.1
Word of mouth		1.2	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.5	2.8	2.4	1.8	2.7	2.7	2.0	0.2	5.1**		2.3***

Note: ^an = 16, ^bn = 17, ^cn = 16, ^dn = 18, ^en = 18, ^fn = 14, ^gn = 18, ^hn = 18, ⁱn = 15, ^jn = 15, ^kn = 16, ^ln = 17.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* p < .001

** p < .01

*** p < .05

Table 6.5 shows that there are interaction effects of the *type* of endorser in the advertisement and the type of FCB product on the personal purchase intention and word of mouth. These dependent variables were the highest when a 'regular' consumer was deployed in ads for habit products (personal purchase intention: 4.2 and word of mouth: 2.8). The expectation was, however, that the expert would be the most effective *type* of endorser in such ads. Habit products are, after all, low involvement thinking products for which experts are deemed suitable owing to the internalization this *type* of endorser stimulates. As stated before, internalization plays a role with thinking products. The other expectation, namely that celebrities would be the most effective *type* of endorser in advertisements for pleasure products, was not supported by the findings in Table 6.5. This product-endorser combination even had the lowest scores on both dependent variables (personal purchase intention: 2.7 and word of mouth: 2.0). Furthermore, Table 6.5 shows that the personal purchase intention was the lowest when informative products were endorsed by an expert and a 'regular' consumer (in both cases: 1.5). Word of mouth was the lowest when a 'regular' consumer endorsed an informative product (1.2). Main effects were found of *type* of product on personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power, word of mouth and information search behaviour. The personal purchase intention was high for both pleasure and habit products (3.4 and 3.3 respectively). The personal purchase intention was lowest with informative products (1.6). Perceived persuasive power and word of mouth were the highest with pleasure products (30.5 and 2.5 respectively). These dependent variables were the lowest with informative products (perceived persuasive power: 15.6 and word of mouth: 1.5). Consumers tend to seek information the most often with informative products (5.9). Information search behaviour was the lowest with pleasure products (3.1).

The question may be asked whether the effects of the (*types* of) endorsers are different if we look separately at the degree of involvement and the degree of 'feeling' of these products. First we will focus on the degree of involvement of the products and whether using endorsers influences the dependent variables (Table 6.6). Then for the degree of product involvement we will address the effects of the different *types* of endorsers on these variables (Table 6.7).

Table 6.6: Mean scores of the dependent variables in the conditions with and without endorsers for products with a high or low involvement

Product type	Low involvement		High involvement		Main effects		Inter-action	
	Endorser	Without	With	Without	With	Endorser	Product	
		a	b	c	d	$F(1,264)$	$F(1,264)$	
Advertisement attitude		2.9	2.9	2.9	3.2	1.0	1.6	0.8
Product attitude		3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	0.1	0.9	0.1
Perceived product quality		3.3	3.1	2.6	2.5	0.8	9.0**	0.1
Personal purchase intention		3.4	3.4	1.9	1.9	0.0	37.4*	0.1
Perceived persuasive power		25.5	29.3	15.4	16.6	0.9	17.6*	0.2
Information search behaviour		4.1	3.2	5.8	5.5	7.0**	76.3*	2.0
Word of mouth		1.9	2.4	1.9	1.7	0.7	3.6	2.3

Note: ^a $n = 33$, ^b $n = 99$, ^c $n = 33$, ^d $n = 99$.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

Table 6.6 shows that there are no interaction effects of the presence of endorsers in the advertisement and the involvement of FCB products on the dependent variables. Although the expectation was that endorsers in ads for low involvement FCB products would have more a positive effect on the dependent variables than advertisements without endorsers, the findings of this study do not support this. Table 6.6 does however show main effects of the *type* of product on perceived product quality, personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power and information search behaviour. Low involvement products produced the highest perceived product quality (3.2), the highest personal purchase intention (3.4) and the highest perceived persuasive power (27.4). Logically, respondents are sooner inclined to seek information for high involvement products (5.7), and they will use that product information as an argument for purchase (orientation). There were also main effects of the presence of endorsers on information search behaviour, which was the highest when there was no endorser in the advertisement (5.0).

Table 6.7: Mean scores of the dependent variables when using different types of endorsers for products with a low or high involvement

Product type	Low involvement			High involvement			Main effects		Inter- action	
	Endorser	C ^a	E ^b	B ^c	C ^d	E ^e	B ^f	Endorser	Product	ExP
								F(2,198)	F(1,198)	F(2,198)
Advertisement attitude		2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.5	3.3	1.7	5.2***	2.4
Product attitude		3.6	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.3	1.6	0.5	2.1
Perceived product quality		3.3	3.1	2.9	2.3	2.4	2.9	0.1	7.2**	2.0
Personal purchase intention		4.0	3.3	2.8	1.8	1.6	2.4	1.4	37.7*	5.5**
Perceived persuasive power		35.9	25.8	26.3	15.0	15.0	20.3	1.3	23.1*	2.7
Information search behaviour		3.2	3.4	2.9	5.8	5.4	5.4	0.8	102.9*	0.5
Word of mouth		2.8	2.5	1.9	1.6	1.6	2.1	0.3	11.8****	5.3**

Note: ^an = 33, ^bn = 34, ^cn = 32, ^dn = 34, ^en = 35, ^fn = 30.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* p<.001

** p<.01

*** p<.05

**** p=.001

Table 6.7 shows that there are interaction effects of the type of endorser in the advertisement and the type of involvement product on personal purchase intention and word of mouth. Both personal purchase intention and word of mouth were the highest when a consumer endorsed low involvement products (4.0 and 2.8 respectively). Consequently, an expert as endorser of high involvement products had the lowest score on these dependent variables (1.6). Table 6.7 also illustrates that there are main effects of the type of involvement product on all variables with the exception of product attitude, which was higher with high involvement products (3.2). After all, respondents are more inclined to seek information with high involvement products (5.5). With regard to the other variables, perceived product quality, personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power and word of mouth, the highest scores could be found with the low involvement products (3.1, 3.4, 29.3 and 2.4 respectively).

The effectiveness of (*types of*) endorsers can also be defined for the degree of ‘feeling’ of FCB products. To this end, we will first illustrate whether using endorsers influences the independent variables with regard to the degree of ‘feeling’ of such products (Table 6.8), and then we will address the effects (for the degree of ‘feeling’) of the different *types* of endorsers on these variables (Table 6.9).

Table 6.8: Mean scores of the dependent variables in the conditions without and with endorsers for the degree of ‘feeling’ of FCB products

Product type	Thinking products		Feeling products		Main effects		Inter-action
	Endorser Without ^a	With ^b	Without ^c	With ^d	Endorser <i>F</i> (1,264)	Prod. <i>F</i> (1,264)	Exp <i>F</i> (1,264)
Advertisement attitude	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.0	0.9	1.2	0.4
Product attitude	3.3	3.2	3.5	3.5	0.0	2.5	0.2
Product quality	3.3	2.8	2.7	2.8	0.9	2.2	3.0
Personal purchase intention	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.8	0.0	0.6	0.0
Perceived persuasive power	23.8	22.5	17.6	23.5	0.6	0.8	1.6
Information search behaviour	5.2	4.5	4.8	4.2	4.9*	2.0	0.0
Word of mouth	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.2	0.6	0.0	1.9

Note: ^a*n* = 31, ^b*n* = 100, ^c*n* = 35, ^d*n* = 98.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* *p* < .05

Table 6.8 shows no interaction effects of the presence of endorsers in advertisements and the degree of ‘feeling’ of FCB products on the dependent variables. Nor are there any main effects of the type of ‘feeling product’ on the dependent variables. Table 6.8 does, however, show a main effect of the presence of endorsers on information search behaviour – which was the highest when an endorser in an advertisement was absent.

Table 6.9: Mean scores of the dependent variables when using different types of endorsers for thinking and feeling products

Product type	Thinking products						Feeling products			Main effects		Inter-action
	Endorser		C ^a	E ^b	B ^c	C ^d	E ^e	B ^f	Endorser	Product	ExP	
												F(2,198)
Advertisement attitude	3.0	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.1	3.2	1.7	0.2	0.9			
Product attitude	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.5	3.6	3.3	1.7	4.1*	0.1			
Perceived product quality	2.6	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.5	3.0	0.1	0.1	2.2			
Personal purchase intention	3.0	2.2	2.4	2.9	2.7	2.8	1.1	1.0	0.6			
Perceived persuasive power	22.7	21.7	23.1	28.5	18.9	23.6	1.2	0.2	0.8			
Information search behaviour	4.7	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.3	3.9	0.7	1.9	0.1			
Word of mouth	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.3	2.1	2.3	0.3	1.8	0.3			

Note: ^an = 34, ^bn = 35, ^cn = 31, ^dn = 33, ^en = 34, ^fn = 31.

all variables: min. score = 1, max. score = 7; perceived persuasive power: min. score = 0, max. score = 100.

* p < .05

Table 6.9 shows no interaction effects for the *type* of endorser and the degree of ‘feeling’ of FCB products on the dependent variables. This result contradicts the expectations: with the expert, the expectation was that (s)he would be the most effective *type* of endorser in ads for thinking products, whereas with the celebrity it was expected that (s)he would be the most effective in ads for feeling products. It becomes apparent from Table 6.9 that there are no main effects for the *type* of endorser. There is, on the other hand, a main effect for the degree of ‘feeling’ of FCB products on product attitude. Feeling products are assessed higher than thinking products.

6.4 Conclusion

The objective of the aforementioned experimental study was to investigate what influence (*types* of) endorsers have with informative, affective, habit and pleasure products on dependent variables.

There appeared to be no interaction effects of the presence of an endorser and the different types of FCB products on the dependent variables. The presence of an endorser in an advertisement did appear to influence the information search behaviour though. When there is no endorser, consumers are sooner inclined to seek information about the product. So, deploying an endorser remedies this inclination, because (s)he can be regarded as an extra source of information about the product being advertised. Furthermore, habit products

appeared to be those with the highest perceived product quality and the highest perceived persuasive power. Apparently, consumers do not doubt the quality of these products.

Interaction effects of the *type* of endorser in the ad and the *type* of product appeared on personal purchase intention and word of mouth, with the highest score being achieved by a 'regular' consumer as endorser of habit products. For these products the expectation was that it would be the expert who had the strongest effects, because this *type* of endorser was presumed to stimulate the process of internalization with habit products. As stated before, internalization particularly plays a role with thinking products, of which habit products are an example. The consumer appears to have taken over the role of expert here; his/her expertise with regard to habit products would appear to surpass that of the expert. A possible explanation for this result lies in the fact that 'regular' consumers are also well-suited for stimulating the process of internalization owing to the similarity they bear with the receiver of the message (Kelman, 1961). Another expectation, namely that celebrities would be the most effective *type* of endorsers in ads for pleasure products, was not supported by our findings. This product-endorser combination even led to the lowest scores for personal purchase intention and word of mouth. The expectation was that a celebrity would be able to stimulate the process of identification (Kelman, 1961); a process that is of particular importance with feeling products. Pleasure products are low involvement feeling products. Personal purchase intention was the lowest when informative products were endorsed by an expert or a 'regular' consumer. Word of mouth was the lowest when a 'regular' consumer endorsed informative products.

The *type* of product appeared to influence personal purchase intention, perceived persuasive power, word of mouth and information search behaviour. Pleasure products and habit products both scored high on personal purchase intention. Pleasure products scored the highest on perceived persuasive power and word of mouth. Informative products scored the lowest on these dependent variables. As the description of this *type* of product already suggests, informative products are those about which one is the most inclined to seek information. This inclination is the lowest with pleasure products.

Furthermore we investigated whether the effects of (*types* of) endorsers differed when each was separately studied for the degree of 'feeling' and the degree of involvement with FCB products. With regard to the degree of product involvement, there appeared to be no interaction effects of the presence of endorsers and the *type* of involvement product on the dependent variables. This result does thus not support the expectation that using

endorsers would have a particularly positive effect in advertisements for low involvement products. As peripheral cues, endorsers are assumed to play a role notably with low involvement products. Interaction effects did appear with the type of endorser in the advertisement and the type of involvement product on personal purchase intention and word of mouth. These were the highest when a consumer endorsed low involvement products, and the lowest when an expert endorsed high involvement products. The latter result is in part remarkable, because consumers base their purchase of high involvement products on a sound deliberation of arguments. In an advertisement one might expect such arguments to be presented by a credible source, such as an expert. However, with high involvement products, endorsers (experts included), play a less important role in the persuasion process. With regard to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products, there appeared to be no interaction effects of the (types of) endorsers and the type of feeling product on the dependent variables. The expectation was, however, that the expert would be the most effective endorser in advertisements for thinking products. After all it was assumed that experts would be the best suited to stimulate the process of internalization with thinking products. Consumers want to think just like the experts. Celebrities were deemed the best suited to endorse feeling products, because they encourage the process of identification. As stated before, identification particularly plays a role with feeling products and consumers, moreover, want to be and to feel just like the celebrity.

The presence of endorsers influences information search behaviour. When there is no endorser, consumers are sooner inclined to seek information about the product being recommended. When endorsers *are* used, they function as an added source of information and respondents tend to less avidly seek additional information about the product. Consumers are also sooner inclined to seek information about a product being advertised when it involves a high involvement product. With these products, consumers base their purchase on a sound deliberation of arguments, hence their searching further. In this study, it was the low involvement products that drew the highest perceived product quality, the highest personal purchase intention and the highest perceived persuasive power, whereas advertisements were judged better when high involvement products were endorsed, just as feeling products were judged better than thinking products.

7

Conclusion and Discussion

7.1 Endorsers in advertisements

As those who implicitly or explicitly recommend a product in an advertisement are often called 'endorsers', this is the term we abided by in this thesis. Using endorsers in advertisements can be traced as far back as to the nineteenth century, when Queen Victoria endorsed cocoa. Generally speaking, there are three *types* of endorser: 'regular' consumers, experts and celebrities. Whereas 'regular' consumers have no special knowledge of the products they endorse, experts have acquired their knowledge through experience, study or training. Also celebrities often lack special knowledge of the products and are invariably people who rose to fame through achievements in a field other than connected with the product (Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976; Stout & Moon, 1990).

In recent decades, much research has been conducted on the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements, with one of the outcomes being that this strongly depends on the match between the *type* of endorser and the *type* of product (Freiden, 1984; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Forkan, 1980). However, studies of the effectiveness of *types* of endorser with *types* of product have lacked a certain theoretical profundity owing to their focus on miscellaneous product types, such as technical versus beauty products (Friedman & Friedman, 1979), or male versus female products (Kanungo & Pang, 1973). It is therefore almost impossible to make any general remarks on the most effective combination between *types* of endorser and *types* of product.

This thesis addressed the effectiveness of *types* of endorser for products classed on theoretical consideration. There were two product classifications, the first of which was based on the difference between *search*, *experience* and *credence* products (Nelson, 1970; Nelson, 1974). According to Nelson (1970, 1974), products can be categorized on the basis

of the information asymmetry between manufacturers (or advertisers) and consumers. Whereas advertisers are usually well (if not fully) informed about the products they are pitching, the knowledge of the consumers is not optimal as they lack know-how, for example, on the characteristics and the quality of the product. The asymmetry is thus the difference in information between manufacturers and consumers. In the SEC classification, Nelson distinguishes three *types* of product that differ in the degree of information asymmetry: *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. With *search* products the asymmetry is low. Consumers can already ascertain before purchase or use of the product what its quality is and whether the advertiser's promises will be fulfilled. With *search* products the consumer feels little need to seek further information. With *experience* products the consumer can only verify the characteristics of the product after use. With *credence* products consumers are unable to determine the quality and characteristics of the product, even after purchase and use. For this consumers require further knowledge. With *credence* products the information asymmetry is the highest. This is why we not only expected that advertisers predominantly deploy experts to endorse *credence* products but also that experts are the most effective endorser owing to their extensive knowledge of these products. With *experience* products we did not expect any difference in prevalence and effectiveness of the *type* of endorser being deployed. We did, however, expect that in advertisements for *experience* products endorsers would figure more often than not and that such ads with an endorser would be more effective than ads without one. Finally, we expected endorsers of *search* products to be less prevalent and less effective than in advertisements for *experience* and *credence* products. *Search* products, after all, appear to sell themselves.

The second product classification was based on the Foote, Cone and Belding grid (FCB grid), which is widely used in current advertising practice. In this grid products are categorized according to two dimensions: the degree of product involvement and the degree of feeling. Products that mean a lot to a consumer, and whereby the decision to purchase them is only made after serious consideration, have a high involvement. Products which are bought nonchalantly, on the other hand, have a low involvement. With feeling products emotions and personal experience play an important role, whereas those that score low on the degree of feeling, i.e. the thinking products, sooner stimulate a cognitive and intrinsic processing of product information.

On the basis of the FCB grid, four products are distinguished that vary in the degree of both involvement and feeling. Informative products have a high involvement but score

relatively low on feeling. Habit products, such as household goods, score relatively low on involvement and also quite low on feeling. Products with which consumers are highly involved and that also score high on feeling are called affective products. Vaughn (1986) denotes feeling products with a low involvement as pleasure products, or 'life's little pleasures', such as confectionery and ice cream.

The expectation was formulated that endorsers figure the most often and are the most effective in advertisements for low-involvement FCB products. For thinking products it would be the expert who was deployed most often and who had the greatest positive effect on the dependent variables. This expectation also held for feeling products with regard to celebrities. For the combination of both FCB dimensions (involvement and feeling), the following expectations were formulated: the celebrity is the most effective *type* of endorser in ads for pleasure products and the expert is the most effective *type* of endorser in ads for habit products.

Through content analysis and experimental research the aim of this thesis was to gain insight into the optimal combination of certain *types* of endorsers and certain *types* of products. The content analysis focused on the question to what degree (or how often) different *types* of endorser are actually used in magazine advertisements. We also investigated if a certain *type* of endorser was used significantly more often for certain *types* of product. In a more controlled situation, the experimental research addressed which effects certain *types* of endorser have and whether their effectiveness depends on the *type* of product.

7.2 Endorsers for search, experience and credence products

The content analysis focused on a closer investigation of *type* of endorser and *type* of product in 4153 advertisements in Dutch magazines. An endorser figured in 755 ads (18%), which is relatively seldom in comparison with the findings of earlier American research whereby 44% of the magazine ads actually used an endorser (Stout & Moon, 1990). In the Dutch advertisements a celebrity appeared the most often (62%), followed by an expert (22%) and a 'regular' consumer (17%). In comparable American research, particularly the deployment of celebrities as endorsers was lower. Stout and Moon (1990) reported, for example, that 51% of the endorsers was a celebrity, whereas Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) stated that it was 20%. A possible explanation for this difference might be that using

celebrities in America is much more expensive, which means that the chance of their being deployed in ads decreases.

The findings of our experimental research showed that consumers are sooner inclined to seek information about a product when there is no endorser in the ad. In the absence of endorsers, as a source of information, the asymmetry is high. In order to find information about the products, consumers seek it themselves. Information asymmetry plays an important role with the classification of *search*, *experience* and *credence* products. With *search* products the information asymmetry is low, whereas with *credence* products it is relatively high. High information asymmetry results in consumers feeling uncertain, and this uncertainty about a product's characteristics and quality might lead to their decision not to purchase it. In order to assuage this, consumers can also seek information about the product. As using endorsers in advertisements is one way to reduce the information asymmetry, we expected that they would figure the most often in ads for products with a high information asymmetry, such as *credence* products. The findings of our content analysis indeed show that this was the case. As sources of information, endorsers can help to remove the insecurity consumers might feel about *credence* products. The content analysis also revealed that for products with the lowest information asymmetry, *search* products, endorsers were deployed the least often. We can therefore conclude that using endorsers in advertisements plays an important role in reducing information asymmetry. The connection between using certain types of endorsers for certain types of SEC products was only marginally significant. On average 62% of the ads with endorsers use a celebrity. With ads for *credence* products the percentage of using celebrities was clearly higher at 73%. Our experimental research moreover revealed that celebrities are indeed effective endorsers of *credence* products. Particularly the combination celebrity-*credence* product in an ad scored high on personal purchase intention. In contrast to the expectation, no connection was found in the content analysis between the degree of information asymmetry and the use of experts in advertisements. With *search* products an expert was used as endorser in 20% of the examples, whereas with *credence* products this was 21%. However, the experimental research showed that experts are just as successful as celebrities in promoting personal purchase intention with *credence* products.

The findings of the experimental research demonstrate that current advertising practice is mistaken in that it does not deploy experts often enough to counteract the information asymmetry with, in particular, *credence* products. We had, after all, assumed that

experts would be effective endorsers of *credence* products. In the experimental research the combination of an expert with a *credence* product resulted in a high purchase intention. With *credence* products particularly the deployment and effectiveness of experts was expected. Especially experts would be able to use their more specialized knowledge to educate consumers about products with the highest information asymmetry. The findings of the experimental research consequently supported this expectation for personal purchase intention.

In the content analysis a clear connection was found between the degree of information asymmetry and the deployment of consumers as endorsers in ads. Particularly with *credence* products, current advertising practice makes little use of 'regular' consumers as endorsers (6%). In contrast, consumers are clearly used more often as endorsers of *search* products (20%) and *experience* products (18%). The experimental research indeed demonstrated that the deployment of consumers as endorsers of *credence* products has little effect. This resulted in the lowest personal purchase intention. 'Regular' consumers are best endorsing *experience* products. This combination resulted in the highest perceived persuasive power and personal purchase intention and in current advertising practice is used in two out of ten ads. The rare combination of 'regular' consumer-*search* product resulted in the lowest purchase intention but is persuasive nevertheless.

We may conclude that using endorsers in advertisements plays an important role in reducing information asymmetry. The findings of the content analysis demonstrate that there are more endorsers in ads for *credence* products (28%), than for *experience* products (19%) and *search* products (12%). In order to reduce the information asymmetry, advertisers predominantly opt for celebrities and preferably not for 'regular' consumers. Our experimental research shows that, with regard to personal purchase intention, this is a wise strategy. With *credence* products, using celebrities as endorsers results in a higher purchase intention than consumers.

Alas, however, it would seem that advertising practice makes too little use of experts to reduce information asymmetry with either *credence* or *experience* products. Despite their being quite effective, our experimental research reveals that experts are rarely deployed.

7.3 Endorsers for affective, informative, pleasure and habit products

This paragraph will address the most important findings with regard to use and effectiveness of (*types of*) endorsers in advertisements for affective, informative, pleasure and habit products as distinguished in the FCB grid.

Consumers are highly involved with *affective products*, which also score high on feeling. Our content analysis showed that the celebrity was deployed the most often in ads for these products (55%). Also our experimental research revealed that the celebrity was the most effective choice for affective products. When affective products are endorsed by a celebrity, personal purchase intention and product endorsement are the highest.

Informative products have a high involvement but score relatively low on feeling. Again our content analysis revealed that the celebrity was used the most frequently in ads for informative products (74%), and the experimental research likewise showed that the celebrity was the most effective choice. When informative products are endorsed by a celebrity, the personal purchase intention and product endorsement are the highest. It would seem that the consumer's involvement with the product is the most important predictor when it comes to using celebrities, irrespective of whether their deployment is for feeling or pleasure products.

Pleasure products have a high degree of feeling but a low involvement and our content analysis revealed that in ads for pleasure products, celebrities are deployed the most often (80%). This result concurs with the expectation. Celebrities are namely assumed to stimulate the process of identification, which is particularly important with these products. Findings of the experimental research, however, show that of all the *types of* endorser, the celebrity actually scored the lowest on personal purchase intention and product endorsement when he/she was deployed for pleasure products. One explanation for this might be that when celebrities are used in advertisements, consumers question the credibility of the endorsement. The consumer might think that celebrities are only endorsing the product because they are being paid for it. Like Atkin and Block remarked (1983), celebrities do not use the product themselves. This phenomenon appears to primarily occur with pleasure products. In ads for pleasure products, the advertising world would do better to deploy 'regular' consumers, because these endorsers effect the highest purchase intention. Together with the expert, the consumer also effects high scores on product endorsement.

Habit products, like household goods, score relatively low on involvement as well as on feeling (and thus high on thinking). Results of our content analysis show that whereas experts are particularly deployed to endorse habit products (38%), celebrities figure the most often (44%). The experimental research, however, revealed that - with regard to effectiveness - the combinations expert-habit product and celebrity-habit product are not the most effective. Actually, it is the 'regular' consumer as endorser of habit products that effects the highest score on personal purchase intention and product endorsement. For habit products the expectation was formulated that it would be the expert that had the most persuasive effect, because this *type* of endorser is assumed to encourage the process of internalization. After all, internalization particularly plays a role with thinking products, of which habit products are an example. The 'regular' consumer would appear to have taken over the role of expert here. The expertise of regular consumers with regard to habit products seems to surpass that of the expert. A possible explanation for this result might be that 'regular' consumers are also well able to foster the process of internalization, owing to their similarity with the receiver of the message.

We can conclude that in daily advertising practice celebrities are used the most often to endorse affective and informative products. This is an appropriate choice, because as our experimental research demonstrates, celebrities are the most effective with affective and informative products. Also for pleasure products, daily advertising practice deploys celebrities as endorsers the most frequently. This would not appear to be a wise strategy, however, because using 'regular' consumers for pleasure products is more effective. It is surprising that day-to-day advertising practice opt so often for experts to endorse habit products. Particularly in the light of our experimental research which showed that the combination expert-habit product is not the most effective. For habit products it would appear preferable to deploy more 'regular' consumers in advertisements.

There seems to be a definite dichotomy between the deployment and effectiveness of endorsers in combination with products from the FCB grid. With affective and informative products celebrities are the most effective, and this combination is already widely used in the world of advertising. With both pleasure and habit products 'regular' consumers are the most effective, but these combinations are seldom used in practice. With pleasure products advertisers are wont to using celebrities, whereas with habit products they often mistakenly opt for experts.

7.4 Endorsers and high versus low product involvement

The products in the FCB grid can also be analysed in another way, namely by homing in on the differences between products with a high versus low involvement. Products with a low involvement are those for which the decision to purchase was easier. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), endorsers will be particularly deployed and effective with products with a low involvement, because it is with this type of product that peripheral cues, such as endorsers, play an important role.

Our content analysis revealed that endorsers in Dutch magazines were mostly deployed to recommend products with a high involvement (21%). This result suggests that when designing magazine ads, the advertising practice does not follow the principles of the Elaboration Likelihood Model. According to this model, the deployment and effectiveness of peripheral cues can be particularly expected with low-involvement products. The findings of our content analysis show, however, that the role of endorsers is much less peripheral than was originally assumed. Maybe consumers regard the presence of an endorser in an advertisement as an important, intrinsic argument, which would mean that in such a case, the endorser's role was more central. The experimental research revealed that for effectiveness it does not matter if high-involvement products are or are not endorsed by someone, and this was also found to be the case with ads for low-involvement products.

Of the three types of endorser, the celebrity was used the most often in advertisements for high-involvement products (63%). The combination celebrity-high-involvement product was also the most effective one; personal purchase intention and product endorsement are namely the highest when a celebrity endorses high-involvement products. Also in ads for low-involvement products, celebrities were deployed the most frequently (59%). This combination did not appear to be the most effective one; personal purchase intention and product endorsement are the highest when a 'regular' consumer endorses low-involvement products. The more the involvement with a product increases, the more inclined consumers are to seek information about it. Consumers need this information to be able to base the purchase of a product on a thorough deliberation of arguments. Celebrities play an important role in helping to reduce this uncertainty.

We can conclude that the dimension 'product involvement' yields a clear contrast between practice and theory when using endorsers. In practice, endorsers are particularly used for products with a high involvement, whereas on theoretical consideration, one would

expect them to be deployed more for products with a low involvement. In practice, for products with a high degree of involvement, celebrities are used the most often. A wise choice, because our experimental research revealed that the combination celebrity-high-involvement product is indeed the most effective. In theory, one might expect experts to be used. The conclusion is evident. Practice clearly beats theory. It is advisable, particularly with high-involvement products, to use endorsers and opt for celebrities. The financial investment in the product most likely plays an important role in the contrast between theory and practice. As products with a high involvement are invariably more expensive, the consumer inclines of own accord towards a more central or intrinsic processing of information, a process stimulated by endorsers such as celebrities. So, it is clear that endorsers do not function here as peripheral cues, but as intrinsic elements of the message. One explanation might be that although celebrities in advertisements initially function as a peripheral cue, consumers are prompted by these cues to study the content of the advertisement with more scrutiny. In this way, endorsers stimulate central information processing.

7.5 Role of endorsers with degree of ‘feeling’

Yet another way to analyse the products in the FCB grid is to home in on the differences between products with a high versus low degree of feeling. With products that score high on the degree of ‘feeling’, emotions and personal experience are important. Consumers will only buy the product if it feels right. With products that score low on the degree of ‘feeling’, i.e. the ‘thinking’ products, on the other hand, attention is paid more to the cognitive and intrinsic processing of information about that product. A serious deliberation on pros and cons will precede purchase. With thinking products, one expects the deployment and effectiveness of endorsers to stimulate the process of internalization, i.e. that consumers want to *think* just like the endorser. Owing to their knowledge and expertise, experts are capable of stimulating this process (Kelman, 1961). With feeling products (affective and pleasure products), using endorsers is particularly effective if they stimulate the process of identification. Identification implies that consumers want to *be* just like the endorser. A celebrity is able to stimulate this process of identification (Kelman, 1961).

The results of the content analysis show that the more products have to do with feeling, the greater the role becomes of ‘regular’ consumers in advertisements. In ads for feeling products, predominantly ‘regular’ consumers are deployed (22%), whereas we

expected celebrities to be used more here. After all, was it not particularly with these feeling products, that celebrities stimulate the process of identification? Consumers appear to be able to identify more with 'regular' consumers than they do with celebrities.

The experimental research showed that with regard to effectiveness it did not matter what *type* of endorser was used in ads for feeling and thinking products. The expectation was, however, that the expert would be the most effective *type* of endorser in ads for thinking products, and that the celebrity would be the most effective *type* of endorser in ads for feeling products. This appeared not to be the case.

We can conclude that day-to-day advertising practice prefers to use 'regular' consumers to accentuate the feeling of products. The findings of our experimental research show that this strategy is not per definition wrong, but it is not per definition correct either. Celebrities and consumers are equally effective when it comes to communicating about feeling products. In view of the costs of recruiting celebrities for advertising purposes, it does not appear so unwise a strategy to opt for 'regular' consumers instead.

7.6 What *type* of endorser for which *type* of product?

The studies in this thesis focused on finding an answer to the question what *type* of endorser is the most effective with which *type* of product. To this end, we used the same theoretical product classifications as regularly employed in both economics and daily advertising practice. In economics, the concept of information asymmetry plays an important role when categorizing products. This research reveals that information asymmetry indeed offers sound leads for understanding the deployment of endorsers. In daily magazine advertising practice, the deployment of endorsers is the largest for products with a high information asymmetry (*credence* products). Hence the theoretical principles recur in practice.

As opposed to the expectation, experts were not the most frequently used endorser of products with the highest information asymmetry (*credence* products), but celebrities. The experimental research also shows that the combination celebrity-*credence* product is effective. A celebrity as endorser of *credence* products yielded high scores on both personal purchase intention and perceived persuasive power. With regard to the perceived persuasive power of an ad for *credence* products, it was the expert who had the lowest score on this variable, whereas for such products we had expected the expert to have the highest scores. In this case, advertising practice would clearly seem to beat theory.

Daily advertising practice often uses the FCB grid that distinguishes between four types of product on the basis of involvement and feeling. Making optimal use of endorsers in combination with products in the FCB grid, seems to reveal a definite dichotomy. With affective and informative products, celebrities are the most effective; a combination already widely employed in day-to-day advertising practice. Here, practice would seem to outstrip theory.

With both pleasure and habit products it is the 'regular' consumer who is highly effective, yet this combination is not used enough in daily advertising practice. Celebrities are used too often to endorse pleasure products, and experts are – mistakenly – deployed too often to endorse habit products. So here, theory would seem to beat practice.

Another remarkable finding of the research occurred on comparing the deployment of endorsers for products with either a high or low involvement. On the basis of theoretical consideration, we expected endorsers to be predominantly used for low-involvement products. The opposite appeared to be the case. The greater the product involvement, the more daily advertising practice tends to increase the deployment of endorsers, particularly celebrities. A wise choice, as our experimental research indeed showed that the celebrity is the most effective *type* of endorser when product involvement increases. With low-involvement products, it is the 'regular' consumer who is the most effective. Here, practice outstrips theory.

With regard to the degree of feeling of products, there is no difference in effectiveness whatever *type* of endorser is deployed. With feeling products, advertising practice shows a preference for 'regular' consumers in the ad. A sensible choice, because our experimental research showed that with regard to effectiveness it does not matter whether celebrities are used or 'regular' consumers.

7.7 Limitations of the studies

Selecting *search*, *experience* and *credence* products for the experimental studies proved tricky. Consumers have difficulty recognizing typical *search* and typical *credence* products. According to the respondents, the glasses that were selected as *search* products also appeared to have *experience* characteristics. True, it is possible to touch, look at and feel the glass in order to determine its quality before purchase (*search* characteristics), but the true quality of the product, such as how well it keeps its sheen after twenty rounds in the washing up machine

or how pleasant it is to drink from, can only be determined after purchase (*experience* characteristics). Also the vitamin pills, which were selected as *credence* products, were found by the respondents to have *experience* characteristics. So, one cannot speak of typical *search* and typical *credence* products.

The choice of FCB products for our content analysis and experimental studies was based on American research by Vaughn (1986). A large number of the products used in his research were typically American (like doughnuts, for example). Cultural differences might well influence the judgement of FCB products.

The focus of this research was the effect of endorsers in magazine advertisements. Conclusions can thus only be drawn for this type of ad. The findings do not necessarily hold good for advertising in other media, such as radio and television. A magazine has after all totally different characteristics than a medium such as radio or television as its readers will decide for themselves when and how they absorb the information. Moreover, print media, like magazines, are processed quite cognitively, which means that an advertisement is often remembered and understood better. As readers can re-visit a magazine ad, it makes it a suitable bearer of sophisticated messages. Furthermore, the medium determines what type of communication is feasible and which senses it requires. Actually, with magazine advertisements, only visual and textual communication is possible, which makes heavy demands on the creative competence of the advertiser. Radio only allows for audio communication, whereas with television both audio *and* visual communication are possible.

In a nutshell, in print media the receivers are active and involved and the medium is passive, whereas for radio and television it is sooner the opposite that holds true. The medium thus determines what degree of elaboration is *feasible* and influences the way in which receivers process a message. Future research in this area should therefore also address advertising on radio and TV (commercials) in order to ascertain whether the effect of endorsers via these media is indeed greater than via print media.

7.8 Comparing advertising practice and experimental research

This research confronted the deployment of endorsers in day-to-day advertising practice with experimental research into the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements. Current advertising practice is particularly wont to deploy endorsers in advertisements for products with a high information asymmetry, i.e. *credence* products in the SEC classification. Our

experimental research revealed, however, that ads for *credence* products with endorsers are not more effective than ads for *credence* products without endorsers. With *credence* products the world of advertising could thus cut down on financial expenditure by not contracting any endorser at all. The content analysis even showed that advertisers opt for the most expensive *type* of endorser for *credence* products, namely celebrities. We need to refine this: the experimental research revealed that, in the event of advertisers still choosing to deploy an endorser, they would do well to opt for the celebrity. After all, a celebrity endorser of *credence* products yields high scores on personal purchase intention and perceived persuasive power. The expert, originally deemed to be the most successful endorser of *credence* products, appeared to fail miserably when it came to persuasive power. The SEC classification does therefore explain the deployment and effectiveness of endorsers in general terms, but not of specific *types* of endorsers.

According to the FCB grid, four *types* of products are distinguished according to two underlying dimensions: involvement and 'degree' of feeling. Advertising practice predominantly deploys celebrities for affective and informative products. This deployment of celebrities has also proven effective for these products. According to the FCB classification, no theoretical expectations were formulated for affective and informative products, because endorsers were not deemed effective for products with a high involvement (of which informative and affective products are representatives). The FCB classification thus fails to offer any theoretical lead to explain the prevalence and effectiveness we found.

Habit and pleasure products are those with a low involvement. Surprisingly, 'regular' consumers appeared to be the most successful endorser here, despite advertisers rarely deploying them for these products. For pleasure products they are far more inclined to use celebrities, in the same way as they choose experts for habit products. With these products the advertisers seem in practice to be more in line with the theoretical expectations on the deployment of endorsers, namely: experts are effective for habit products and celebrities are effective for pleasure products. The FCB classification would thus appear to offer theoretical leads for explaining the prevalence, but does not explain the ascertained effectiveness of (in this case) the 'regular' consumer.

On scrutinizing the umbrella dimension of involvement of FCB products, we found that when product involvement increases, daily advertising practice will sooner deploy endorsers (the majority being celebrities). The experimental research revealed that when product involvement increases, it does not make any difference for the effectiveness if an ad

uses an endorser or not. If the advertiser still chooses to deploy an endorser, then the celebrity is the best option. The theoretical expectation, however, was that endorsers would be predominantly prevalent and effective for products with a low involvement. Incidentally, with low-involvement products, the 'regular' consumer is the most effective *type* of endorser, whereas the advertisers still opt for the celebrity. With regard to the degree of involvement, the FCB classification offers no theoretical leads for the explanation of the prevalence and effectiveness we found here.

As for the degree of feeling, it makes no difference in effectiveness what *type* of endorser is used in the advertisement. With feeling products, advertising practice shows a preference for deploying 'regular' consumers. A sensible choice, because our experimental research revealed that it does not matter whether one uses either celebrities or 'regular' consumers. The expectations that were formulated on the basis of the FCB grid assumed that the expert would be the most prevalent and the most effective in ads for thinking products, just as the celebrity would appear the most often and be the most effective in ads for feeling products. The FCB classification with regard to the degree of feeling thus fails to offer any theoretical lead for the explanation of the prevalence and effectiveness we found here.

Ultimately, the product categorizations used in this thesis only partially explain the prevalence and effectiveness of (*types of*) endorsers. Of the two, the SEC classification was the best. Future research into the effectiveness of (*types of*) endorsers could take this SEC classification as a starting point, whereby also the low involvement of products could be inspected. Involvement is an element of the other categorization used in this research, the FCB classification, which does explain the effectiveness of (*types of*) endorsers for low-involvement products.

The restrictive nature of the product classifications used in this thesis has shown that there is still a need for a product classification that more fruitfully explains the effectiveness of endorsers. Further research into a more optimal product classification is thus warmly 'endorsed'.

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Summary

General Introduction

In international literature, persons who recommend products or services in advertisements are often called 'endorsers'. Also apparent from the literature is that the effectiveness of endorsers in advertisements particularly depends on two factors: the *type* of endorser and the *type* of product. Usually, three *types* of endorser are distinguished: celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts.

To date, research into the effects of (*types of*) endorsers has not only been fragmentary but has also yielded divergent effects. It was problematic to interpret the effects of endorsers with such a diversity of products and the studies did not really allow for a mutual comparison between (the effectiveness of) endorsers with different kinds of products either. Without some theoretical backing, it is difficult to draw any conclusions or pass judgement on the effectiveness of endorsers. A common finding, however, is that all *types* of endorser can be deployed effectively in advertisements, albeit that the conditions for effectiveness are specific ones.

On the basis of product classifications that *are* theoretically underpinned, this thesis addresses and explains the effects and the actual deployment of (*types of*) endorsers. The choice was made for a theoretical anchor in two product classifications: 1) the product classification of Nelson (1970; 1974) in terms of *search*, *experience* and *credence* (SEC) products, and 2) the product classification in informative, affective, habit and pleasure products on the basis of the - widely used in the world of advertising - Foote, Cone and Belding grid (FCB Grid; Vaughn, 1986). This grid classifies products according to the degree of 'feeling' and the consumer's degree of involvement with the product.

Chapter 2

The SEC classification is derived from Nelson's *Theory of Information Economics*. This theory starts from an information asymmetry between manufacturers (or advertisers) and consumers of products. Whereas consumers have limited information about a product, manufacturers are usually well informed about its characteristics (such as price and quality). This information asymmetry makes consumers feel uncertain, and it is in this situation that by scrutinizing products, consumers try to obtain more information about the product, and thus attempt to assuage the information asymmetry.

Products whereby the information asymmetry is limited are defined as *search* products. Consumers can successfully estimate the characteristics of these products before purchase. Examples of *search* products are: clothing and accessories, shoes, glasses, cooking utensils, gardening tools and bicycles. It was our expectation that using endorsers in advertisements for *search* products would offer little surplus value. Products that consumers cannot satisfactorily examine for their characteristics before purchase are defined as *experience* products. Consumers cannot verify the quality indicators of these products until they have used them. Consumers thus have a greater need for extra information about *experience* products than they do about *search* products. Examples of *experience* products are: television sets, household goods and spirits. Former users of *experience* products can communicate product information via the advertisement. Therefore it was our expectation that endorsers would be used more often and be more effective in advertisements for *experience* products than in advertisements for *search* products. With *credence* products, consumers are unable to determine the characteristics of the product, not even after purchase and use. It takes the consumer too much time and trouble to verify this. In reducing uncertainty about the quality of *credence* products, consumers are obliged to trust the information supplied by the manufacturer or (preferably knowledgeable) endorsers. Experts are expected to be used more frequently and to have more positive effects in advertisements for *credence* products than in advertisements for *search* and *experience* products. Examples of *credence* products are: a home alarm system or hand and foot care products.

The four FCB products (informative, affective, habit and pleasure) are distinguished on the basis of involvement with the product and the degree to which the product has to do with 'feeling'. The importance of product involvement with FCB products as regards the effect of endorsers is explained by the *Elaboration Likelihood Model*. This model alleges that the use of peripheral cues, such as endorsers, is more effective for products with a low involvement than for products with a high involvement. Therefore it was our expectation that endorsers would appear more often and be more effective in advertisements for products with a low involvement than in advertisements for products with a high involvement. Informative and affective products are low involvement products. The degree of 'feeling' of FCB products has bearing on the processes of identification and internalization. Identification implies that consumers wish to feel and be the same as the endorser in the advertisement. Particularly celebrities stimulate consumer identification. That is why celebrities were expected to be more prevalent and more effective in advertisements for feeling products than in advertisements for thinking products. Affective and pleasure products are feeling products, just as informative and habit products are thinking products. Experts were expected to appear more often and be more effective in advertisements for thinking products than in advertisements for feeling products. Particularly experts stimulate the process of internalization. Consumers want to think the same as the expert. Expectations were also formulated for the deployment and effectiveness of *types* of endorser in advertisements for individual FCB products: experts were expected to be used more often and be more effective in advertisements for habit products (thinking products with a low involvement). Celebrities were expected to be used more often and be more effective in advertisements for pleasure products (feeling products with a low involvement).

Chapter 3

The objective of the content analysis was to examine to what degree different *types* of endorsers, such as celebrities, 'regular' consumers and experts, are used in Dutch magazines. This study moreover examined the prevalence of these *types* of endorsers for *search*, *experience* and *credence* products and for products in the FCB grid.

The findings show that almost two out of ten of the Dutch magazine advertisements analysed for this study used an endorser (regardless of the type). Of all the types of endorser, a celebrity was deployed the most often and a 'regular' consumer figured the least often. In the advertisements analysed, *experience* products appeared the most frequently, followed by *search* and *credence* products. Endorsers were used the least often in ads for *search* products. This result concurs with the expectation that the deployment of endorsers has no added value in ads for *search* products (when the consumer can gain practical information by even just looking at the illustration or photograph). Endorsers are suited to endorsing *experience* products, because as former users, they are regarded as a reliable source of information. The results of this content analysis showed that in ads for *experience* products endorsers are used more often than they are in ads for *search* products. This result concurs with the expectation. Endorsers were the most prevalent in ads for *credence* products. The greater knowledge of experts is particularly convenient when endorsing *credence* products. However, when the ads were compared for the different SEC products, the deployment of experts showed hardly any difference. It was notably celebrities who were the most prevalent in ads for *credence* products. 'Regular' consumers were the least prevalent in ads for *credence* products; they endorsed *search* products the most often.

Of the FCB products in the ads we analysed, affective products were advertised the most often, followed by informative products, pleasure products and habit products. On the basis of the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* the expectation was that endorsers would be particularly used as peripheral cues for products with a low involvement. Our content analysis shows, however, that endorsers were used more often in ads for products with a high involvement. The use of different types of endorsers is connected, albeit marginally, to the involvement with FCB products. Experts are particularly used for low involvement products. The expectation was that each type of endorser ('regular' consumer, expert and celebrity) would be far more frequently deployed for low involvement products than for high involvement products. The degree of 'feeling' of FCB products is linked to the use of endorsers, albeit only marginal. Endorsers are deployed more often in ads for thinking products than they are in ads for feeling products. Endorsers were the least prevalent in ads for pleasure products, i.e. feeling products with a low involvement. Also the type of endorser is linked to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products.

Experts were primarily expected to be endorsers of thinking products owing to the fact that they encourage or stimulate the process of internalization. This expectation was supported by the figures from everyday advertising practice. Celebrities are regarded as being the most suitable endorsers of feeling products because they are thought to stimulate the process of identification deemed important for these products. Using a celebrity, however, shows no difference when ads for thinking and feeling products were compared. The results of the content analysis show that in advertising practice ‘regular’ consumers seem to have taken over the role of celebrities as regards identification.

‘Regular’ consumers are rarely used as endorsers in ads for informative products, but they are used often for affective products. Experts are deployed the most often in advertisements for habit products (thinking products with a low involvement). This result concurred with our expectation. Celebrities were primarily deployed in ads for pleasure products, feeling products with a low involvement.

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the results of a study that has been done to gain insight into the degree to which *types* of endorsers and the types of SEC and FCB products are actually classified as such. The findings of this study were used to develop the stimulus advertisements for the two experimental studies (chapters 5 and 6).

The findings show that the classification of the presented ‘regular’ consumers and celebrities were in line with the expectation. The same applies to the experts, albeit that this classification is not convincing. Some of the experts used for this study also appeared to be classified as ‘regular’ consumers. Of the SEC products only the presented *experience* products were actually classified correctly. The *search* products were not classified as purely *search* products but sooner as combination products with both *search* and *experience* characteristics. Also the *credence* products were combination products, only now they bore a mixture of *credence* and *experience* characteristics.

With the FCB products, the presented informative products appeared to be more or less classified as such. With the affective products, only one product (perfume) turned out to be a good representative of this type of FCB product. On product involvement and degree of ‘feeling’, the other products (wine, glasses and wallpaper) scored less convincingly. Of the habit products, three (kitchen paper, bleach and insect repellent) were good representatives

of this product category; they scored low on the degree of both 'feeling' and product involvement as opposed to the fourth product in this category, shampoo, which scored higher on both counts. Of the presumed pleasure products, half of them (doughnuts, savoury biscuits) met the criteria of pleasure products. Both of these products scored high on degree of 'feeling' and low on product involvement.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 describes the results of an experimental study. The objective of this experimental study was to examine what influence (*types of*) endorsers had with *search*, *experience* and *credence* products on dependent variables. The results show that there was no significant interaction effect of the presence of endorsers and types of SEC products with any dependent variable. The results do show, however, that the absence of endorsers positively influences the attitude to the advertisement. Advertisements for SEC products without an endorser are found to be better, more interesting and more pleasant than ads that do have an endorser. This outcome is in line with the expectation that endorsers do not add extra value to *search* products. After all, consumers can acquire sufficient information by just looking at the image of the product.

It appeared that there was a significant interaction between the *type* of SEC product and the *type* of endorser. The findings show that a 'regular' consumer as endorser of *experience* products resulted in the highest scores for personal purchase intention and perceives persuasive power. This result is contrary to the expectation that with *experience* products there would be no difference in the scores for the dependent variables when the *types* of endorsers were compared with one another. The three *types* are notably former product users who particularly with *experience* products could function as an added source of information.

The expectation that the experts' endorsement of *credence* products would result in the highest scores for the dependent variables was not supported by the findings. Experts are presumed to be the most suitable endorsers of *credence* products as they have a wealth of relevant information. Although the expert would be able to perform this role, the findings show that this place has been taken by the 'regular' consumer.

Chapter 6

The objective of this experimental study was to investigate what influence (*types of*) endorsers have with FCB products (informative, affective, habit and pleasure products) on dependent variables.

There appeared to be no interaction effects of the presence of an endorser and the different types of FCB products on the dependent variables. Interaction effects of the *type of* endorser in the ad and the *type of* product appeared on personal purchase intention and product endorsement, with the highest score being achieved by a 'regular' consumer as endorser of habit products. For these products the expectation was that it would be the expert who had the strongest effects, because this *type of* endorser was presumed to stimulate the process of internalization with habit products. As stated before, internalization particularly plays a role with thinking products, of which habit products are an example. The consumer appears to have taken over the role of expert here; his/her expertise with regard to habit products would appear to surpass that of the expert. Another expectation, namely that celebrities would be the most effective *type of* endorsers in ads for pleasure products because of their stimulation of identification, was not supported by the findings. This product-endorser combination even led to the lowest scores for personal purchase intention and product endorsement. Personal purchase intention was the lowest when informative products were endorsed by an expert or a 'regular' consumer. Product endorsement was the lowest when a 'regular' consumer endorsed informative products.

Furthermore we investigated whether the effects of (*types of*) endorsers differed when each was separately studied for the degree of 'feeling' and the degree of involvement with FCB products. With regard to the degree of product involvement, there appeared to be no interaction effects of the presence of endorsers and the *type of* involvement product on the dependent variables. This result does thus not support the expectation that using endorsers would have a particularly positive effect in advertisements for low involvement products. As peripheral cues, endorsers are assumed to play a role notably with low involvement products. Interaction effects did however appear with the *type of* endorser in the advertisement and the *type of* involvement product on personal purchase intention and product endorsement. These were the highest when a consumer endorsed low involvement products, and the lowest when an expert endorsed high involvement products. The latter result is in part remarkable, because consumers base their purchase of high involvement

products on a sound deliberation of arguments. In an advertisement one might expect such arguments to be presented by a credible source, such as an expert. With regard to the degree of 'feeling' of FCB products, there appeared to be no interaction effects of the (*types of*) endorsers and the type of feeling product on the dependent variables. The expectation was, however, that the expert would be the most effective endorser in advertisements for thinking products and celebrities were deemed the best suited to endorse feeling products, because they encourage the process of identification.

Chapter 7

The studies in this thesis focused on finding an answer to the question what type of endorser is the most effective with which type of product. To this end, we used the same theoretical product classifications as regularly employed in both economics and daily advertising practice. In economics, the concept of information asymmetry plays an important role when categorizing products. This research reveals that information asymmetry indeed offers sound leads for understanding the deployment of endorsers. In daily magazine advertising practice, the deployment of endorsers is the largest for products with a high information asymmetry (*credence* products). Hence the theoretical principles recur in practice.

As opposed to the expectation, experts were not the most frequently used endorser of products with the highest information asymmetry (*credence* products), but celebrities. The experimental research also shows that the combination celebrity-*credence* product is effective. A celebrity as endorser of *credence* products yielded high scores on both personal purchase intention and perceived persuasive power. With regard to the perceived persuasive power of an ad for *credence* products, it was the expert who had the lowest score on this variable, whereas for such products we had expected the expert to have the highest scores. In this case, advertising practice would clearly seem to beat theory.

Daily advertising practice often uses the FCB grid that distinguishes between four *types of product* on the basis of involvement and feeling. Making optimal use of endorsers in combination with products in the FCB grid, seems to reveal a definite dichotomy. With affective and informative products, celebrities are the most effective; a combination already widely employed in day-to-day advertising practice. Here, practice would seem to outstrip theory.

With both pleasure and habit products it is the 'regular' consumer who is highly effective, yet this combination is not used enough in daily advertising practice. Celebrities are used too often to endorse pleasure products, and experts are – mistakenly – deployed too often to endorse habit products. So here, theory would seem to beat practice.

Another remarkable finding of the research occurred on comparing the deployment of endorsers for products with either a high or low involvement. On the basis of theoretical consideration, we expected endorsers to be predominantly used for low-involvement products. The opposite appeared to be the case. The greater the product involvement, the more daily advertising practice tends to increase the deployment of endorsers, particularly celebrities. A wise choice, as our experimental research indeed showed that the celebrity is the most effective type of endorser when product involvement increases. With low-involvement products, it is the 'regular' consumer who is the most effective. Here, practice outstrips theory.

With regard to the degree of feeling of products, there is no difference in effectiveness whatever type of endorser is deployed. With feeling products, advertising practice shows a preference for 'regular' consumers in the ad. A sensible choice, because our experimental research showed that with regard to effectiveness it does not matter whether celebrities are used or 'regular' consumers.

Samenvatting

Algemene inleiding

Personen in advertenties, die aanbevelingen doen over producten of diensten, duidt men in internationale literatuur vaak aan met de term 'endorsers'. Uit de literatuur blijkt dat de effectiviteit van aanbevelers in advertenties vooral afhangt van een tweetal factoren, het *soort* aanbeveler en het *soort* product. Meestal worden drie *soorten* aanbevelers onderscheiden: beroemdheden, 'doorsnee' consumenten en experts.

Het onderzoek naar de effecten van (*soorten*) aanbevelers is tot op heden fragmentarisch geweest en leverde verschillende effecten op. Een interpretatieprobleem bij het tot nu toe uitgevoerde onderzoek naar de effecten van aanbevelers is dat de onderzochte producten zeer divers waren. Bovendien staat het uitgevoerde onderzoek niet toe om de effectiviteit van aanbevelers bij verschillende soorten producten onderling te vergelijken. Dit maakt het moeilijk om -zonder spaarzame theorie- algemene uitspraken over de effectiviteit van aanbevelers te doen. Een algemene bevinding is wel dat alle *soorten* aanbevelers effectief in reclame-uitingen kunnen worden ingezet.

Aan de hand van productclassificaties die een theoretische basis hebben, wordt in dit proefschrift een verklaring gegeven voor effecten van (*soorten*) aanbevelers. Er is gekozen voor een theoretische verankering in twee productclassificaties: (1) de productclassificatie van Nelson (1970; 1974) in termen van *search*, *experience* en *credence* producten, en (2) de productclassificatie in informatieve, affectieve, gewoonte en genotsproducten op basis van de -in de reclamepraktijk veel gehanteerde- Foote, Cone en Belding-matrix (FCB-matrix; Vaughn, 1986).

De classificatie van producten volgens deze matrix vindt plaats op basis van de mate van 'gevoel' van het product en de mate van betrokkenheid van de consument bij het product.

Hoofdstuk 2

De SEC-productclassificatie is afgeleid van Nelson's *Theory of Information Economics*. Deze theorie gaat uit van een informatieasymmetrie tussen producenten (of adverteerders) en consumenten van producten. Consumenten beschikken over beperkte informatie over het product. De producenten zijn daarentegen goed geïnformeerd over de karakteristieken van het product (bijvoorbeeld prijs en de kwaliteit). De informatieasymmetrie brengt bij consumenten onzekerheid teweeg. In deze situatie van onzekerheid proberen consumenten door producten te inspecteren meer informatie te krijgen over het product. Zo proberen consumenten de informatieasymmetrie te verminderen..

Producten, waarbij de informatieasymmetrie beperkt is, zijn *search* producten. Consumenten kunnen de kenmerken van deze producten voor de aankoop gemakkelijk verifiëren. Voorbeelden van *search* producten zijn: kleding en accessoires, schoenen, glazen, kookgerei, tuingereedschap en fietsen. Het was onze verwachting dat het gebruik van aanbevelers in advertenties voor *search* producten weinig meerwaarde zou hebben. Producten, die consumenten voor de aankoop niet voldoende kunnen inspecteren op karakteristieken worden gedefinieerd als *experience* producten. Consumenten kunnen de kwaliteitskenmerken van deze producten pas verifiëren na het gebruik van het product. Consumenten hebben meer behoefte aan aanvullende informatie over *experience* producten dan over *search* producten. Voorbeelden van *experience* producten zijn: televisies, huishoudelijke apparaten en sterke drank. Eerdere gebruikers van *experience* producten kunnen informatie over het product via de advertentie communiceren. Daarom was het onze verwachting dat aanbevelers vaker worden gebruikt en ook effectiever zijn in advertenties voor *experience* producten dan in advertenties voor *search* producten. Bij *credence* producten zijn consumenten niet in staat om de karakteristieken van het product vast te stellen, zelfs niet na de koop en het gebruik ervan. Het kost consumenten teveel tijd en teveel moeite om de kwaliteit van deze producten te verifiëren. Consumenten zijn bij het reduceren van onzekerheid over de kwaliteit van *credence* producten gedwongen om te vertrouwen op informatie van de producent of op informatie van aanbevelers (bij voorkeur aanbevelers met veel expertise). De verwachting is dat experts vaker worden gebruikt en ook effectiever zijn in advertenties voor *credence* producten dan in advertenties voor *search* en *experience* producten. Voorbeelden van *credence* producten zijn: een alarmsysteem voor in huis of producten voor hand- en voetverzorging.

De vier FCB-producten (informatief, affectief, gewoonte en genot) worden onderscheiden op basis van de mate van betrokkenheid bij deze producten en de mate waarin de producten met 'gevoel' te maken hebben. Het belang van productbetrokkenheid van FCB-producten bij de effecten van aanbevelers kan worden uitgelegd aan de hand van het *Elaboration Likelihood Model*. Dit model stelt dat het gebruik van perifere cues, zoals aanbevelers, effectiever is voor producten met lage betrokkenheid dan voor producten met hoge betrokkenheid. Daarom was het onze verwachting dat aanbevelers vaker worden gebruikt en effectiever zijn in advertenties voor lage betrokkenheidsproducten dan in advertenties voor hoge betrokkenheidsproducten. Informatieve en affectieve producten zijn lage betrokkenheidsproducten. De mate van 'gevoel' van FCB-producten houdt verband met de processen van identificatie en internalisatie. Identificatie houdt in dat consumenten zich net zo willen voelen en net zo willen zijn als de aanbeveler uit de advertentie. Vooral beroemdheden stimuleren identificatie bij consumenten. Daarom is de verwachting dat beroemdheden prevalenter en ook effectiever in advertenties voor gevoelsproducten dan in advertenties voor denkproducten. Affectieve en genotsproducten zijn gevoelsproducten. Van experts wordt verwacht dat zij meer voorkomen en ook effectiever zijn in advertenties voor denkproducten dan in advertenties voor gevoelsproducten. Met name experts stimuleren het proces van internalisatie. Consumenten willen net zo denken als de expert in de advertentie. Informatieve en gewoonteproducten zijn denkproducten. Ook zijn er verwachtingen geformuleerd over de inzet en de effectiviteit van *soorten* aanbevelers in advertenties voor individuele FCB-producten: experts komen het vaakst voor en zijn het meest effectief in advertenties voor gewoonteproducten (denkproducten met lage betrokkenheid). Beroemdheden komen het vaakst voor en zijn het meest effectief in advertenties voor genotsproducten (gevoelsproducten met lage betrokkenheid).

Hoofdstuk 3

Het doel van de inhoudsanalyse was inzicht krijgen in de prevalentie van (*soorten*) aanbevelers voor SEC- en FCB-producten in Nederlandse tijdschriftadvertenties. De resultaten laten zien dat in bijna twee op de tien - voor dit onderzoek geanalyseerde - Nederlandse tijdschriftadvertenties een aanbeveler (ongeacht het *soort*) is gebruikt. Een beroemdheid is van alle *soorten* aanbevelers het meest ingezet, een consument werd het minst als aanbeveler gebruikt. *Experience* producten kwamen het meest frequent voor in de

geanalyseerde advertenties, gevolgd door *search* en *credence* producten. Aanbevelers werden het minst frequent gebruikt in advertenties met *search* producten. Dit resultaat is in overeenstemming met de verwachting dat de inzet van aanbevelers geen meerwaarde heeft in advertenties voor *search* producten (wanneer consumenten bruikbare productinformatie kunnen krijgen door een afbeelding van het product te bekijken). Aanbevelers zullen wel geschikt zijn voor de aanbeveling van *experience* producten, omdat ze als eerdere productgebruikers worden gezien als geschikte bronnen van informatie. De resultaten van deze inhoudsanalyse lieten zien dat aanbevelers in advertenties voor *experience* producten vaker werden gebruikt dan in advertenties voor *search* producten. Dit resultaat is in overeenstemming met de verwachting. Aanbevelers waren het meest prevalent in advertenties voor *credence* producten. Experts zijn aanbevelers met verdergaande productkennis die vooral bij *credence* producten van pas kan komen. Het gebruik van experts verschilde echter nauwelijks bij de vergelijking van de advertenties voor de verschillende SEC-producten. Het waren juist de beroemdheden die het meest prevalent waren in advertenties voor *credence* producten. ‘Doorsnee’ consumenten waren het minst prevalent in advertenties voor *credence* producten en werden het vaakst gebruikt als aanbevelers van *search* producten.

Van de FCB-producten is in de geanalyseerde advertenties het meest voor affectieve producten geadverteerd, gevolgd door informatieve producten, genotsproducten en gewoonteproducten. Op basis van het *Elaboration Likelihood Model* was de verwachting geformuleerd dat aanbevelers vooral als perifere cues voor producten met lage betrokkenheid zouden worden gebruikt. Uit de inhoudsanalyse is gebleken dat aanbevelers juist vaker werden ingezet in advertenties voor producten met een hoge betrokkenheid. Het gebruik van de verschillende soorten aanbevelers hangt, zij het in beperkte mate, samen met de betrokkenheid van FCB-producten. Het valt op dat experts vooral als aanbevelers van lage betrokkenheidsproducten worden gebruikt. De verwachting was dat alle soorten aanbevelers (‘doorsnee’ consumenten, experts en beroemdheden) vooral bij lage betrokkenheidsproducten frequenter zouden worden ingezet dan in advertenties voor hoge betrokkenheidsproducten. De mate van ‘gevoel’ van FCB-producten hangt samen met het gebruik van aanbevelers, ook al is deze samenhang klein. Aanbevelers worden vaker ingezet in advertenties voor denkproducten dan in advertenties voor gevoelsproducten. Aanbevelers kwamen het minst vaak voor in advertenties voor genotsproducten (gevoelsproducten met lage betrokkenheid). Het soort aanbeveler hangt ook samen met de mate van ‘gevoel’ van

FCB-producten. Experts werden voornamelijk verwacht als aanbevelers van denkproducten, vanwege het feit dat experts het proces van internalisatie stimuleren. De verwachting werd dus ondersteund door de cijfers uit de dagelijkse reclamepraktijk. Beroemdheden worden gezien als de meest geschikte aanbevelers van gevoelsproducten. Zij zouden namelijk het proces van identificatie kunnen stimuleren, dat vooral van belang is voor deze producten. Er is echter geen verschil in het gebruik van beroemdheden bij de vergelijking van advertenties voor denk- en gevoelsproducten. De resultaten van de inhoudsanalyse tonen aan dat 'doorsnee' consumenten de rol van beroemdheden wat betreft identificatie in de reclamepraktijk lijken te hebben overgenomen. 'Doorsnee' consumenten worden zelden gebruikt als aanbevelers in advertenties voor informatieve producten, maar vaak in advertenties voor affectieve producten. Experts worden het vaakst gebruikt in advertenties voor gewoonteproducten (denkproducten met lage betrokkenheid). Dit resultaat komt overeen met de verwachting. Beroemdheden werden vooral ingezet in advertenties voor genotsproducten, gevoelsproducten met lage betrokkenheid.

Hoofdstuk 4

Dit hoofdstuk laat de resultaten zien van een onderzoek dat het doel had om inzicht te krijgen in de mate waarin de *soorten* aanbevelers en de soorten SEC- en FCB-producten ook als zodanig werden geclassificeerd. De resultaten van dit onderzoek werden gebruikt om de stimulusadvertising voor de twee experimentele onderzoeken vorm te geven.

De resultaten laten zien dat de classificatie van de voorgelegde 'doorsnee' consumenten en beroemdheden in lijn met de verwachting lag. Ditzelfde geldt voor de experts, al moet bij dit type aanbeveler worden opgemerkt dat deze classificatie niet overtuigend is. De voor dit onderzoek gebruikte experts bleken voor een deel ook te worden geclassificeerd als 'doorsnee' consumenten.

Van de voorgelegde SEC-producten werden alleen de voorgelegde *experience* producten als *experience* producten geclassificeerd. De voorgelegde *search* producten werden niet als zuivere *search* producten geclassificeerd. Deze producten bleken mengproducten te zijn met zowel *search* als *experience* eigenschappen. Ook de gepresenteerde *credence* producten waren mengproducten, waarbij het bij deze producten vooral om een 'mix' van *credence* en *experience* eigenschappen ging.

Bij de voorgelegde FCB-producten bleken de voorgelegde informatieve producten in meer of mindere mate als informatieve producten te worden geclassificeerd. Bij de affectieve producten bleek slechts één product (parfum) een goede representant van dit soort FCB-product te zijn. De overige producten (wijn, bril en behang) bleken op productbetrokkenheid en de mate van 'gevoel' minder overtuigend te scoren. Bij de gewoonte producten waren drie producten (keukenpapier, bleekmiddel en insectenspray) goede representanten van deze productcategorie. Deze producten scoorden laag op de mate van 'gevoel' en op productbetrokkenheid. Het andere product, shampoo, scoorde veel minder laag op productbetrokkenheid en de mate van 'gevoel'. Van de veronderstelde genotsproducten bleek de helft ervan (donuts, zoutjes) te voldoen aan de criteria van genotsproducten. Beide producten hadden een hoge score op de mate van 'gevoel' en scoorden laag op productbetrokkenheid.

Hoofdstuk 5

Hoofdstuk 5 beschrijft de resultaten van een experimenteel onderzoek. Het doel van het hierboven beschreven experimentele onderzoek was om na te gaan welke invloed (*soorten*) aanbevelers bij *search*, *experience* en *credence* producten hadden op afhankelijke variabelen. De resultaten laten zien dat er voor geen enkele afhankelijke variabele sprake was van een significant interactie-effect van de aanwezigheid van aanbevelers en soorten SEC-product. De resultaten laten wel zien dat het ontbreken van aanbevelers de attitude ten aanzien van de advertentie positief beïnvloedt. Advertenties voor SEC-producten zonder aanbeveler worden onder andere beter, interessanter en leuker gevonden dan advertenties waarin wel een aanbeveler staat afgebeeld. Deze uitkomst is in lijn met de verwachting dat aanbevelers bij *search* producten geen meerwaarde hebben. Consumenten kunnen namelijk al voldoende informatie krijgen door enkel de afbeelding van het product te bekijken.

Er bleek wel een significante interactie te zijn tussen het soort SEC-product en het soort aanbeveler. De resultaten laten zien dat een 'doorsnee' consument als aanbeveler van *experience* producten tot de hoogste scores op persoonlijke koopintentie en gepercipieerde overtuigingskracht hebben geleid. Dit resultaat is tegengesteld aan de verwachting dat er bij *experience* producten geen verschil zou zijn in de scores op de afhankelijke variabelen als de *soorten* aanbevelers met elkaar zouden worden vergeleken. De drie *soorten* aanbevelers zijn

namelijk eerdere productgebruikers die vooral bij *experience* producten een toegevoegde informatiebron zouden kunnen zijn.

De verwachting dat de aanbeveling door de expert van *credence* producten tot de hoogste scores op de afhankelijke variabelen zou leiden, bleek niet door de resultaten te worden ondersteund. Experts zouden de meest geschikte aanbevelers van *credence* producten zijn, aangezien zij veel kennis hebben over deze producten. De expert zou deze rol van informatiebron kunnen vervullen. De resultaten laten echter zien dat de 'doorsnee' consument deze rol heeft ingenomen.

Hoofdstuk 6

Het doel van dit experimentele onderzoek was om na te gaan welke invloed (*soorten*) aanbevelers bij informatieve, affectieve, gewoonte en genotsproducten hadden op afhankelijke variabelen. Er bleken geen interactie-effecten te zijn van de aanwezigheid van een aanbeveler en de verschillende soorten FCB-product op de afhankelijke variabelen. Er bleken interactie-effecten te zijn van het *soort* aanbeveler in de advertentie en het soort product op persoonlijke koopintentie en productaanbeveling. Een 'doorsnee' consument als aanbeveler van gewoonteproducten leidt tot de hoogste score op persoonlijke koopintentie en productaanbeveling. Voor deze producten is de verwachting geformuleerd dat vooral de expert de sterkste effecten zou hebben, omdat dit *soort* aanbeveler het proces van internalisatie bij gewoonteproducten zou bevorderen. Internalisatie speelt namelijk vooral een rol bij denkproducten, waarvan gewoonteproducten een voorbeeld zijn. De consument lijkt de rol van expert hier te hebben overgenomen. De andere verwachting dat beroemdheden de meest effectieve *soort* aanbevelers zouden zijn in advertenties voor genotsproducten, werd door de resultaten van dit onderzoek niet ondersteund. Deze product-aanbeveler combinatie leidde zelfs tot de laagste scores op persoonlijke koopintentie en productaanbeveling. De persoonlijke koopintentie is het laagst wanneer een expert of een 'doorsnee' consument informatieve producten aanbevelen. Productaanbeveling is het laagst wanneer een 'doorsnee' consument als aanbeveler van informatieve producten in advertenties wordt ingezet.

Verder is bekeken of de effecten van de (*soorten*) aanbevelers anders zijn, wanneer afzonderlijk wordt gekeken naar de mate van 'gevoel' en de mate van betrokkenheid van FCB-producten. Voor de mate van productbetrokkenheid bleken er geen interactie-effecten te zijn van de aanwezigheid van aanbevelers en het soort betrokkenheidsproduct op de

afhankelijke variabelen. Deze uitkomst ondersteunt daarmee niet de verwachting dat het gebruik van aanbevelers vooral positieve effecten zou hebben in advertenties voor de lage betrokkenheidsproducten. Aanbevelers zouden als perifere cues vooral bij lage betrokkenheidsproducten een rol hebben. Er bleken wel interactie-effecten te zijn van het soort aanbeveler in de advertentie en het soort betrokkenheidsproduct op persoonlijke koopintentie en productaanbeveling. De persoonlijke koopintentie en productaanbeveling zijn het hoogst wanneer een consument lage betrokkenheidsproducten aanbeveelt. Persoonlijke koopintentie en productaanbeveling zijn het laagst wanneer een expert hoge betrokkenheidsproducten aanbeveelt. Dit laatste resultaat is voor een deel opvallend, aangezien consumenten bij hoge betrokkenheidsproducten de koop ervan baseren op een grondige afweging van argumenten. Die argumenten zouden in de advertentie juist door een geloofwaardige bron, zoals de expert, kunnen worden aangedragen. Voor de mate van 'gevoel' van FCB-producten bleken er geen interactie-effecten te zijn van de (soorten) aanbevelers en het soort gevoelsproduct op de afhankelijke variabelen. De verwachting was echter dat de expert de meest effectieve soort aanbeveler in advertenties voor denkproducten zou zijn. Experts zouden namelijk het meest geschikt zijn om het proces van internalisatie bij denkproducten te stimuleren. Beroemdheden werden het meest geschikt geacht als aanbevelers van gevoelsproducten, omdat zij het proces van identificatie bevorderen.

Hoofdstuk 7

De in dit proefschrift beschreven onderzoeken waren gericht op het vinden van een antwoord op de vraag welke soort aanbevelers het meest effectief is bij welk soort product. In het onderzoek is gebruik gemaakt van theoretische productclassificaties, zoals die binnen de economie en de dagelijkse praktijk van de reclame veel worden gebruikt. Binnen de economie speelt het begrip informatieasymmetrie een belangrijke rol bij het indelen van producten. Dit onderzoek wijst uit dat informatieasymmetrie inderdaad goede aanknopingspunten biedt voor het begrijpen van de inzet van aanbevelers. In de praktijk van de dagelijkse reclame in tijdschriften is de inzet van aanbevelers het grootst bij producten met een grote informatieasymmetrie (*credence* producten). De theoretische uitgangspunten keren dus in de praktijk terug.

In tegenstelling tot de verwachting waren experts niet de meest gebruikte aanbeveler bij producten met de hoogste informatieasymmetrie (*credence* producten), maar beroemdheden. Het experimentele onderzoek toonde aan dat de combinatie beroemdheid-*credence* product ook effectief is. Een beroemdheid als aanbeveler van *credence* producten levert hoge scores op persoonlijke koopintentie en op gepercipieerde overtuigingskracht op. Ten aanzien van de gepercipieerde overtuigingskracht van de advertentie heeft de expert voor *credence* producten zelfs de laagste score op deze variabele tot gevolg. Van de expert werd voor deze producten juist de hoogste scores verwacht. De reclamepraktijk lijkt het hier duidelijk te winnen van de theorie.

In de dagelijkse praktijk van de reclame maakt men veel gebruik van de FCB-matrix waarbij men op basis van betrokkenheid en mate van gevoel een onderscheid maakt tussen vier soorten producten. Er lijkt zich bij het optimale gebruik van aanbevelers in combinatie met producten uit de FCB-matrix een duidelijk tweedeling voor te doen. Bij affectieve en informatieve producten zijn beroemdheden het meest effectief en deze combinatie gebruikt men in de dagelijkse reclamepraktijk al veel. Hier lijkt de praktijk het van de theorie te winnen.

Bij genotsproducten en gewoonteproducten zijn 'doorsnee' consumenten zeer effectief en deze combinaties gebruikt men in de dagelijkse reclamepraktijk te weinig. Bij genotsproducten maakt men teveel gebruik van beroemdheden als aanbevelers en bij gewoonteproducten maakt men ten onrechte te veel gebruik van experts. Hier lijkt de theorie het van de praktijk te winnen.

Een ander opvallende uitkomst van het onderzoek deed zich voor bij het gebruik van aanbevelers bij producten met een hoge vs. een lage betrokkenheid. Op basis van theoretische overwegingen was verwacht dat men vooral bij lage betrokkenheidsproducten aanbevelers zou gebruiken. Het tegendeel bleek echter waar. In de dagelijkse reclamepraktijk zet men bij een toename van de productbetrokkenheid vaker aanbevelers in. Hierbij maakt men het meest gebruik van beroemdheden als aanbevelers. Een verstandige keuze. Want uit het experimentele onderzoek is gebleken dat bij toename van de productbetrokkenheid de beroemdheid de meest effectieve soort aanbeveler wordt. Bij lage betrokkenheidsproducten is de 'doorsnee' consument het meest effectief. Hier lijkt de praktijk het van de theorie te winnen.

Wat betreft de mate van gevoel van producten maakt het voor de effectiviteit geen verschil welke soort aanbeveler in de advertentie wordt ingezet. De reclamepraktijk leert ons dat reclamemakers voor gevoelsproducten de voorkeur geven aan de inzet van de 'doorsnee' consument in de bijbehorende advertentie. Een niet onverstandige keuze, want het experimentele onderzoek toont aan dat het voor de effectiviteit niet uitmaakt of men gebruik maakt van beroemdheden of van 'doorsnee' consumenten.