

Review of Celebrity Endorsement of Destination: Influencing Factors and Theoretical Models

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Abstract: As tourism market becomes more and more competitive, it is more and more common for destinations to invite celebrities to endorse destinations, but there are few academic studies on celebrity endorsement of destination. In order to enrich relevant researches, this paper sorted out relevant researches on celebrity endorsement of product and celebrity endorsement of destination. Main contributions of the paper are as follows: (1) It defined concepts of celebrity, celebrity endorser, celebrity endorser of tourism destination; (2) It summarized the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement of destination in relevant studies; (3) It summarized the influencing factors and theoretical models of celebrity endorsement of destination effect, including meaning transfer model, source model, match-up hypothesis, etc. Source credibility model, source attractiveness model, celebrity-destination match-up and celebrity-self match-up are main variables concerned in relevant researches. The paper reviewed the research progress of celebrity endorsement of destinations, which could provide certain reference for future theoretical research and also help to further explore effective ways of celebrity endorsement of destination in practice.

1. Introduction

At present, the brand image of tourist destination has become the entry point for the competition of various tourist destinations, and celebrity endorsement has become an important way for tourist destinations to shape, enhance and maintain the brand image of destination [1]. Celebrity endorsement of destinations can effectively enhance attention and visibility, thus promoting tourists' attitude and travel intention towards destination [2]. In recent years, many foreign destinations have hired celebrities as tourism ambassadors of destinations, and many domestic destinations also have adopted celebrity endorsement for tourism promotion, which can be divided into two types. One is that celebrities endorse specific scenic spots, such as Liu Ruoying endorsing Wuzhen, Wang Luodan endorsing Gubei Water Town, and Yang Chaoyue endorsing "Dutch Flower Sea" in Yancheng, Jiangsu, etc. Another one is that celebrities serve as tourism ambassadors of a certain city or province, such as Zhao Liying as tourism ambassador of Hebei Province, Yao Chen as tourism ambassador of Fujian Province, Hu Ge as tourism ambassador of Shanghai, and Huang Xuan as tourism ambassador of Gansu Province. However, the effect of celebrity endorsement is not the same among tourist destinations. Combined with the influence of negative information of celebrities, high marketing costs and other factors, many tourist destinations are confused about what kind of celebrity endorsement

they should choose and how to make celebrity endorsement play an effective role. At the academic level, compared with the ubiquitous phenomenon of celebrity endorsement, there are few researches on celebrity endorsement of destinations, and most of them are carried out based on relevant theories of celebrity endorsement of products. On the basis of reading extensive literature, the paper summarized the relevant concepts, influencing factors and theoretical models of celebrity endorsement of destinations.

2. Definition of Celebrity Endorsement of Destination

A celebrity is considered as a famous person. Explaining the concept from the perspective of the Oxford Dictionary, Shen argued that celebrity not only meant the name is known by the public, but also meant he/she had made contributions or achievements in a certain field [3]; Friedman, Termini and Washington first defined the celebrity in the endorsement situation: The celebrity was known to the public for his achievements in fields unrelated to the product category, such as an athlete, actor, comedian or other types of entertainer [4]; Zhou also argued that celebrities were individuals who excelled in a certain field and were noticed by the public so as to have prestige or status for a period of time [5]. Schlecht defined celebrity as that it was not limited to achievements in a certain field and he believed that celebrity referred to a person who was recognized by a specific public and had a unique charm and extraordinary lifestyle that could serve as a model. These characteristics are not easy to observe but can be described [6].

Endorser refers to a person who speaks, supports or recommends a product or brand on behalf of the product or brand [3]. Endorsers generally fall into three categories: expert, celebrity, and lay (who is neither expert nor celebrity). An expert is an individual or organization that is perceived to have expertise in a field, while a lay is an unknown or fictional person or character used in advertising [7]. McCracken defined a celebrity endorser as a person who enjoyed public recognition and used this recognition to endorse and recommend a product or service in the form of its co-appearance in an advertisement [8]. Sun further emphasized that celebrity endorser in the study were real people, which referred to individuals with certain popularity who appeared in corporate advertisements or other marketing activities to help improve brand image and spread brand information [9].

Based on the above discussion, tourism destination celebrity endorser can be defined as individuals or groups who enjoy public recognition and use such recognition to support and recommend tourism destinations to help promote tourism destinations, thus helping to enhance brand image and spread brand information.

3. Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement of Destination

According to the communication theory, opinion leaders are the mediators of opinions of mass media and the public. In reality, celebrities have a higher right to speak and unconsciously assume the role of opinion leaders among the public. Therefore, celebrity endorsement can help reduce the tedious thinking process for many people, thus bringing better communication effect [10]. Celebrity endorsement can not only attract consumers' attention, but also deliver accurate information to consumers in the marketing environment with jumbled information and achieve a higher brand memory [11]. In essence, the influence of celebrity advertisement on consumers belongs to the category of persuasion and attitude change in social gravity [12]. Till, Priluck and Stanley confirmed that celebrity endorsement could affect advertising effectiveness, brand awareness, brand recall, purchase intention and purchase behavior [13]. Hania, Marwana and Andreb found that celebrity endorsement appeal had a positive impact on consumers' advertising recall, but not on their purchase intention. Celebrity endorsement credibility has a significant impact on consumers' advertising recall and purchase intention [14].

At present, there are few researches on celebrity endorsement of destinations. Compared with general products, tourist destinations are more complex, which is a complex system integrated by different elements [15]. However, the tourist destination can be regarded as a brand in the study, that is, the tourist destination brand, and it is found that the tourist destination brand plays an important role in influencing tourism behavior of potential and existing tourists [16]. The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement of destination in practice has been proven by a number of scholars. Lee et al. believed that the appearance of public figures in the public and social media would have an impact on the image formation of the cities, regions or countries that these figures were associated with [17]. Gartner's research found that the formation of destination image involved many subjects, and the role of celebrities in the formation of destination image and destination selection process could not be ignored [18]. From the perspective of epistemology, Wang et al. adopted experimental method to explore the influence of tour guides and CEOs of travel agencies acting as endorsers for product brochures. The research found that tour guides acting as endorser for product brochures had more positive advertising effects than traditional brochures, while CEOs acting as endorsers would lead to higher purchase intention than tour guides [19]. Yuan evaluated the effect of celebrity endorsement of destinations from three perspectives: tourism awareness, favorable rating and travel intention, and found that the endorsement effect produced by different media was inconsistent [20]. Glover put forward the influencing characteristics of celebrity endorsement on different dimensions of destination image, including complexity, diversity, relevance and dynamics [1]. Through structural equation model test, Liu, Yan and Yang found that the influence of celebrity endorsement of destination on destination brand could be divided into three dimensions, namely brand awareness, brand association and brand quality, and these three dimensions had a significant positive impact on tourists' attitude towards destination, and destination attitude had a significant positive impact on tourists' travel behavior intention [21]. To sum up, scholars' discussions on the role and effect of celebrity endorsement of destinations mainly focus on the brand equity of destinations, tourists' attitude towards destinations and travel intention, among which the brand equity of destinations includes brand awareness, brand association, brand reputation, brand loyalty, etc.

However, celebrity endorsement is not always positive and may lead to negative effects. Celebrity endorsement binds celebrities to products, brands or destinations. Therefore, when negative information about celebrities themselves appears, from the perspective of associative learning, consumers will associate the celebrities with the products, brands and destinations they endorse, thus transferring their attitude towards celebrities to the products, brands or destinations, and ultimately negatively affecting the destinations [22]. In addition, Erfgen, Zenker, and Sattler have proposed and demonstrated the vampire effect of celebrity endorsements, in which consumers focused on the celebrity rather than the brand, and the brand served as a complement to the celebrity but the celebrity did not serve the brand. But they also demonstrated that celebrity-brand match-up and consumer perception of celebrity-brand significantly moderated the vampire effect [23].

4. Influencing Factors and Theoretical Models

Zhou analyzed the factors affecting the effect of celebrity advertising, and he believed that the factors affecting the effect of celebrity advertising include celebrity factors, product and advertising factors, audience factors and environmental factors, among which celebrity factor received the most attention. Celebrity factors included the matching between celebrities and products, the negative information of celebrities, the reliability of celebrities, the charm of celebrities, the true authenticity of celebrity endorsement and the number of products endorsed by celebrities. Product and advertising factors included product type, product grade and the way of providing advertising information. Audience factors included the level of audience involvement, audience age and audience product

knowledge. The environmental factors included the influence of culture and the activation degree of related values in the consumption context [5].

Table 1: Empirical Studies on Celebrity Endorsement of Destination

Source	Influencing factors	Mediator/moderator	Dependent variable
Gilal, Paul, Gilal et al. [25]	source credibility, source attractiveness	mediator: satisfaction of relationship needs; moderator: celebrity-tourist gender consistency	brand enthusiasm
Zhang, Xu, Gursoy [26]	source credibility, source attractiveness	mediator: pseudo-social interaction	destination brand love
Roy, Drylb, Gil [29]	types of celebrity	moderator: type of tourist, celebrity-destination consistency	advertising attitude, destination attitude, travel intention
Lee, Scott, Kim [30]	celebrity involvement	mediator: familiarity, emotional image / cognitive image	travel intention
Chan, Lee, Man [31]	celebrity involvement	mediator: destination emotional image	travel intention
Teng, Chen [32]	constructive authenticity, existential authenticity	mediator: celebrity attachment	destination loyalty
Nicolau, Sharma, Shin [33]	celebrity-destination association	moderator: tourists' brand knowledge	tourism market value
Shen, Li, Qu [24]	source credibility	/	destination brand equity
Zhang, Xu, Li [28]	source credibility, source attractiveness, celebrity-destination match-up, celebrity-self match-up	mediator: internalization, destination brand trust	destination brand love
Liu, Chen, Wei [2]	celebrity-destination match-up, celebrity-self match-up	mediator: celebrity credibility, celebrity identification, destination attitude	travel intention
Shen, Li, Lv [27]	celebrity-destination match-up	moderator: self-involvement	attitude towards destination
Liu [34]	celebrity image	mediator: celebrity identification	attitude towards destination, travel intention
Liu, Yan, Yang [29]	celebrity	mediator: tourist's attitude	tourist behavior intention

Most researches on celebrity endorsement of destinations are based on theories about celebrity endorsement of products, and are also mainly based on celebrity factors, involving theoretical models such as source model and match-up hypothesis (or consistency model), among which source model can be divided into source attractive model and source credibility model. Most scholars paid attention to the influence of celebrity endorsers' credibility and image on tourists' advertising attitude, destination attitude and travel intention. Some scholars also conducted qualitative discussion on the appropriateness of the strategy of celebrity endorsement of destination and how to select endorsers

4.2. Source Model

4.2.1. Source Credibility Model

Source Credibility Model holds that whether information can be accepted by receivers depends on the credibility of information, which will influence the audiences' beliefs, evaluations, attitudes and behaviors through internalization [5]. In the researches related to celebrity endorsement of destinations, the credibility of source is mainly used as an exogenous variable to affect the brand equity of destination, tourists' destination attitude and travel intention [24,28,25,26]; but there also are some studies believe that the credibility of celebrities is based on tourists' trust in celebrities and destinations after they perceive that celebrities match the destination [2]. At present, different scholars hold different views on the credibility dimension, and most of them adopt Ohanian's classification, in which the credibility of information depends on the expertise and trustworthiness of the source, which are the result of worthiness perceived by the audience [3,25,26,36]. Some scholars obtained different dimension indicators of source credibility through exploratory factor analysis and other methods. Wang et al. obtained four dimensions indicators including moral character, attractiveness, consistency of celebrity and product, and professionalism [37]; Shen et al. concluded that celebrity attractiveness and celebrity-destination match-up can be ultimately attributed to celebrity credibility model based on the summary of relevant literature. They also obtained six dimensions of credibility of celebrity endorsement of destination through qualitative analysis: achievement, influence, popularity, moral character, physical attractiveness, and relevance to destination [24]. Liu et al. proposed three dimensions of brand value of celebrity endorsement, and the third dimension, brand quality, focused on whether the endorser was credible and set a one-dimensional measurement item [21].

4.2.2. Source Attractiveness Model

Source Attractiveness Model was proposed by McGuire in 1985. He argued that the effectiveness of information transmission depended on the audience's perception of the information source from three aspects: familiarity, likability, and similarity between audience and source. Familiarity was obtained through repeated contact, preference was the emotional response triggered by the celebrity's appearance, behavior, or personality, and similarity was the similarity that audience imagines with celebrity [5]. With the deepening of the research, some scholars began to integrate source credibility model and source attractiveness model, and proposed that the ultimate influence of celebrity endorsement effect is credibility, and celebrity appearance attractiveness is one of the dimensions of Source credibility model [24,37,38]. A number of studies had demonstrated the role of physical attractiveness in celebrity endorser [39,40], but some scholars have proposed that attractiveness is multidimensional in nature, which not only means the attractiveness of physical appearance, but also includes other quality characteristics perceived by consumers of celebrity endorser, such as knowledge and skills, personality characteristics, lifestyle or sports style [41]. Most of the relevant literature focuses on the attractiveness of celebrities and neglects other possible dimensions of attractiveness, so it remains to be discussed how to integrate the attractiveness of celebrities into the source credibility model [42].

4.3. Match-up Hypothesis

Match-up Hypothesis was first proposed by Kamins. He believed when there was a certain degree of correlation between celebrities and products, the effect of celebrity endorsement would be better [43]. Match-up hypothesis mainly refers to celebrity-product match-up, focusing on the matching between celebrity and product or brand to be endorsed, and it is believed that when celebrity and

product or brand to be endorsed have a high consistency, celebrity endorsement can bring higher brand memory and brand love, so that consumers will have a more positive attitude and purchase intention [43,44]. However, some scholars were not limited to celebrity-product match-up, but also started to pay attention to the match-up between celebrities and consumers, match-up between products and consumers. Match-up between celebrity and brand depends on the degree of perceived fit between celebrity image and brand, including brand name and brand attribute [41]. It is important to note that the relevant research did not explain how and in what aspects the celebrity and the product/brand should be matched [5,42]. The purpose of celebrity endorsement is to make consumers have a more positive attitude or purchase intention towards the product or brand. When the celebrity image has a high correlation with the product or brand, consumers have a more positive attitude towards the product, which can also lead to better brand memory and brand love^[44-46]. Based on this, Zamudio proposed a bilateral matching model for celebrity endorsement, believing that celebrity endorsement should be the result of two-way selection [47]. Choi and Rifon confirmed the influence of celebrity image and consumers' ideal self-matching on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement [48]. Albert et al. further proposed a model of pairwise consistency between brand, endorser and consumer, and found that only brand-consumer match-up had a significant impact on brand attitude, brand commitment, brand identification and behavioral intention, while celebrity-brand match-up and celebrity-consumer match-up had limited effects on that [49].

In existing researches on celebrity endorsement of destinations based on matching hypothesis, scholars mostly extended from celebrity-product match-up to celebrity-destination match-up, so as to explore the influence of celebrity-destination match-up on brand equity, attitude and tourism intention of destinations [2,34,27]. In addition, there were some scholars not only discussed celebrity-destination match-up, but also began to explore the mechanism of celebrity-self match-up in the effect of celebrity endorsement of destination [2,28]. The pairwise matching between celebrity, destination, tourist have been paid attention to in the research of celebrity endorsement of destination.

4.3.1. Celebrity-destination Match-up

Celebrity-destination Match-up is the expansion of celebrity-product matching in the field of tourism research. It refers to that the image of celebrities perceived by tourists is consistent with or matches the image of destinations [28], and there is no uniform standard for celebrity-product matching. Kahle and Homer explored the effect of celebrity-product match-up from the perspective of celebrity's physical attractiveness [40], but Till and Busler's research to test the influence of celebrity-product match-up on consumers' brand attitude, purchase intention and brand belief, were based on not only celebrity's physical attractiveness but also celebrity professionalism, and the results showed that matching based on celebrity professionalism would produce better results [50]. However, more scholars discussed celebrity-product matching based on the overall image of celebrities and products and did not discuss the specific aspects in which celebrities and products should be matched [48,51]. Therefore, domestic scholars' researches about celebrity endorsement of destinations mainly used the overall image perception of celebrities and the overall image perception of destinations as the criteria for celebrity-destination match-up on the basis of synthesizing several scholars' celebrity-product match-up standards [2,27,28,34].

4.3.2. Celebrity-self Match-up

Celebrity-self Match-up, also known as Celebrity-self Image, refers to the match between tourist's perceived image of the celebrity and their self-concept [52]. It was found that in addition to celebrity-brand match-up, celebrity-consumer match-up also had a significant impact on brand attitude and purchase intention, etc. Therefore, future research on celebrity endorsement of destinations should

not only consider the influence of celebrity and destination matching on endorsement effect, but also consider the role of celebrity and tourist's self-matching. That is, celebrity-self match-up in the context of celebrity endorsement of destination [1,48].

Self-image comes from psychology and is a kind of mental image based on self-concept, among which self-concept refers to an overall combination of an individual's views and emotions about himself [52]. Malhotra divided the self-concept into two dimensions which were real self and ideal self [53]. Sirgy introduced social self and divided the concept of self into real self, ideal self, social self and ideal social self [54]. Brewer and Gardner divided the concept of self into individual self, relational self and collective self from the perspective of relationship between the individual and others and social groups [55]. In researches of consumer behavior, Self-image Congruity refers to the cognitive matching between a consumer's self-concept and product image, brand image, store image, destination image, users' image et al. of a particular product, brand, destination or service [52]. Self-image Congruity in tourism is mainly reflected in the congruity between the tourists' image they perceived and their self-concept, namely Destination-self Congruity. When their self-image is consistent with tourists' image of the Destination, destination-self match-up is at a high level, and otherwise, destination-self match-up is at a low level [56,57].

5. Conclusion

The application of celebrity endorsement in practice has attracted extensive attention from the academic circle. However, the researches on celebrity endorsement mainly focus on enterprises and their products, and rarely take tourist destinations as the research object. The researches on celebrity endorsement of destinations are still in the initial stage. By combing the research of celebrity endorsement of products and destinations, the paper clarified the concepts of celebrity and celebrity spokespersons. At the same time, it concluded that most scholars discuss the influence of celebrity endorsement of destinations on tourists' advertising attitude, destination attitude, visit intention and destination brand equity based on celebrity endorsement models such as Source Credibility Model, Source Attraction Model and Match-up hypothesis. Summarizing the current research progress on celebrity endorsement of destinations can not only guide the practice of celebrity endorsement of destinations, but also build a theoretical basis for the follow-up research on celebrity endorsement of destinations.

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