

MASTER'S THESIS

Crisis balance: judging celebrity endorsement under conditions of ambiguity

Gu, Wenjun

Date of Award:
2009

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

**Crisis Balance: Judging Celebrity Endorsement
Under Conditions of Ambiguity**

GU Wenjun

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Philosophy**

Principal Supervisor: Dr. GUO Zhongshi

Hong Kong Baptist University

October 2009

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the consumers' causal attributions during celebrity's crises and their link with brand reputation. The potential and applicability of Balance Theory are by far not exhausted in order to understand why celebrity endorsers are used in ads. But celebrities are easy to be sent into crises nowadays. Attribution Theory helps to examine how organizations and consumers judge the crisis and hence influence consumers' evaluation of the brand. So this study forges a link between Balance Theory and Attribution Theory to judge celebrity endorsement after a certain crisis and to guide managerial decision-making. Furthermore, ambiguity of the crisis is employed as an extra-system variable which provides different contexts for attribution and balanced system. Thus, celebrity endorsement will be judged under ambiguous and unambiguous conditions separately. Such extensions can help to deepen our understanding of how organizations' response strategies will be perceived by consumers and how crisis managers can refine their strategies of branding and advertising during celebrity crises.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	x
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II. CONCEPTUALIZATION.....	4
2.1 Balanced Vs. Unbalanced States.....	4
2.2 Balance Theory Applied to Advertising Studies.....	10
2.3 Attribution Theory	14
2.4 Integrating the Perspectives: Crisis Attribution in a Balanced System	16
CHAPTER III. CONTEXT OF CURRENT STUDY	26
CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY.....	28
4.1 Participants and Design	28

4.2 Manipulation, Stimulus, and Procedure.....	30
4.3 Measurement.....	31
4.3.1 Independent Variables.....	31
4.3.2 Mediator.....	32
4.3.3 Dependent Variable.....	33
CHAPTER V. RESULTS.....	34
5.1 Manipulation Checks	34
5.2 Perceived Endorsement of celebrity as a Mediator of Brand Evaluation.....	36
5.3 Test of Hypotheses	39
5.3.1 Method 1: ANOVA	40
5.3.2 Method 2: Test of Pearson's Correlation.....	50
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	55
6.1 Discussion of Results.....	55
6.1.1 Organization's Response and Perceived Endorsement of Celebrity.....	55
6.1.2 Crisis Ambiguity and Perceived Endorsement of Celebrity.....	57
6.1.3 Balance System and Crisis Ambiguity	57
6.2 Possible Limitations.....	59
6.3 Implications for Research and Practice	61
6.4 Conclusions.....	65

REFERENCES.....	68
APPENDICES.....	72
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	77