

Fame matters more than beauty in consumer behaviour

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New research from Aston University in Birmingham, UK suggests that fame really does matter more than beauty when it comes to consumer behaviour.

A study by psychologists Dr Carl Senior and Baldeesh Gakhal found that even average looking celebrity models in advertisements produced a greater emotional response in test subjects than good-looking, but non-celebrity endorsers.

The research in turn suggests that there may be a dedicated area in the brain that has now become hard wired to produce a reaction to celebrity endorsed products.

Participants in the study were shown a series of specially constructed, hypothetical advertisements for perfume which used a series of models who were either famous or non-famous and either attractive or average looking. Their responses to the images were measured and analysed.

Carl Senior said: 'It is well known of course that both beauty and celebrity endorsements are used by marketers to sell products. Celebrities are chosen to advertise specific products because of what we call their ESP, or Emotional Selling Proposition. However, given that most celebrities are also considered to be attractive it is not known to what extent celebrity and beauty interact to drive consumer decision-making.'

‘In our study we examined a specific question regarding the relationship of fame and beauty with consumer behaviour; namely, is there a difference in the emotive nature of celebrity advertisements compared to these adverts that depict attractive models who are non-celebrities?’

‘Psychophysiological data were recorded from both of the subjects’ hands while being shown these test advertisements. The aim was to measure the electroconductivity of a form of fine sweating that is automatically generated during emotive responses on our hands, a technique which is also known as the electrodermal response.

‘Although it was a relatively small scale study, and there is certainly potential for further research, the results we obtained suggest that it doesn’t matter how attractive the celebrity is or isn’t because the test subjects still exhibited a greater emotional response when looking at a celebrity than a non-celebrity.’

Source: Aston University

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