



# The Role of Attachment in Endorsements

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## **DECLARATION**

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Natalya Saldanha

6<sup>th</sup> December 2018

## OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS FROM THIS THESIS

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I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my supervisors in each of the studies and subsequent papers. While I am the principal author for all of the studies and papers, I have been assisted in the writing of the papers by Dr Rajendra Mulye and Dr Kaleel Rahman.

1. Saldanha, N., Mulye, R. & Rahman, K., 2018. Would a perfume by any other name smell just the same? (*Currently under review with the Journal of Business Research*)  
**(ABDC ranking A)**

This paper has been presented in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

2. Saldanha, N., Mulye, R. & Rahman, K., 2018. A strategic view of celebrity endorsements through the attachment lens. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, pp.1–21.  
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## ABSTRACT

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Endorsement research has predominantly focused on how the effectiveness of an endorsement is affected by variation in an endorser's characteristics, such as their appeal, attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise, and more importantly, on their congruence with the endorsed product, and credibility as endorsers. However, there is little or no research on how the perceived commitment of the celebrity to the product affects the celebrity's level of attachment to the endorsed product and thereby endorsement effectiveness. The following thesis considers this aspect of product endorsements and identifies six categories of endorsement situations based on the types of endorsement and endorsers. It seeks to emphasise the importance of attachment between a product and the endorser, and its subsequent impact on consumer perceptions. The tripartite attachment model is introduced in this thesis, which introduces three attachment nodes in an endorsement, viz., attachment between the consumer and product, between the consumer and celebrity and between the celebrity and product. Attachment between the consumer and celebrity and between the consumer and product has been extensively examined. However, there is little or no research on the perceived attachment between the celebrity and product. The thesis focuses on this attachment node by introducing the progenic brand: a brand launched by endorsers wherein the endorser's name and values are imbued in the brand. The attachment theory was used to identify the endorsed, spokesperson and progenic, as the three primary types of endorsement situations associated with two types of endorsers, namely, celebrities and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). Using the source credibility model, it is hypothesised how the three appeals of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise vary across six endorsement situations and the subsequent implications for marketing practitioners. A new brand term called 'progenic' is introduced which has been shown to have higher perceived attachment between the endorser and product compared to traditional endorsements. Finally, this research not only contributes theoretically by

distinguishing between endorsement situations but can also assist practitioners when pairing the right type of individual with a specific product-type, and in distinguishing between product appeals.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Introduction

Celebrity endorsement is a popular form of marketing where celebrities are used to promote a range of products and services. This effective, ubiquitous type of marketing is like a monetary transaction, where money is exchanged for an image or reputation enhancement. It is common knowledge that celebrity endorsements facilitate product and brand differentiation (Atkin & Block 1983; Ohanian 1991), and also influence consumers' attitudes (Till et al. 2008) and purchase intention (Spry et al. 2011). This has been firmly established in endorsement research to date. However, one aspect of endorsement that has received little attention has been the effect of attachment between the three main entities, consumer, celebrity and product, on endorsement effectiveness. As a concept which has its origins in psychology, attachment is relevant in marketing and in endorsement. It is an innate or inherent characteristic which reflects both psychological and emotional connections between an individual and a product. Attachments result in commitment, passion and, from a marketing perspective, positive attitudes, loyalty and purchase intention (Thomson et al. 2005; Jimenez & Voss 2010). Attachments which originate from childhood continue throughout adulthood, existent between two or more individuals and between individuals and objects, including brands (Thomson et al. 2005). Endorsements consist of a triad, consumer, celebrity and product; which makes attachment between these entities extremely relevant. This thesis specifically looks at attachment in this triad and how it creates differences in endorsement situations.

Recent endorsement research, for instance, has examined various facets of endorsement such as: impact of endorsement on brands (Spry et al. 2011), celebrity meaning-transfer (Miller & Allen 2012) and trait transference (Arsena et al. 2014); characteristics of celebrities (Fleck et al. 2012; Moulard et al. 2015); effects of brand transgressions on consumers' perceptions of

celebrity endorsers (Thomas & Fowler 2016); and celebrity-product congruence (Chang & Ko 2016; Albert et al. 2017). While these studies have examined the more superficial characteristics of endorsers and the corresponding influences, only a handful of studies have looked at attachment in endorsements (Thomson 2006; Ilicic, Baxter, et al. 2016; Chung & Cho 2017; Gong & Li 2017; Escalas & Bettman 2017). Moreover, these latter studies examined attachment between consumers-celebrities, celebrities-consumers or consumers-products. According to the author's knowledge, attachment between the celebrity-product has not been explicitly examined. This missing link in endorsement research is important because it reflects consumers' attitudes not only toward the endorser and product but toward the overall endorsement situation.

The primary research objective of this thesis is to examine the role of attachment in endorsements. More specifically, its objective is to understand the interaction of influence of attachment between the three entities in any endorsement, consumer, celebrity and product, on consumer perceptions and overall effectiveness of the endorsement.

The research questions guiding this thesis are:

1. What is the role of attachment in endorsements?
2. How does attachment differ from traditional versus progenic endorsements?
3. What are the effects of the types of endorsement (endorsed, spokesperson and progenic) and the type of endorser (Celebrity, CEO) on perceived attachment between the celebrity and product?
4. What are the effects of the type of endorsement and the type of endorser on purchase intention?

5. What are the effects of the type of endorsement and the type of endorser on the three components of source credibility, viz. attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise?

As an introduction, Chapter 1 broadly examines the research to date on celebrity endorsement and the background of endorsement, from the types of endorsers to endorsement theories and models. It concludes with a summary of the subsequent chapters in the thesis. Chapter 2 is a compilation of the numerous pre-tests conducted during the PhD candidature, which lead into the studies detailed in Chapters 3 and 5. The third chapter consists of a series of interviews conducted in order to understand consumers' perceptions of attachments in the endorsement triad. Chapter 4 details the *tripartite attachment model* conceptualised from the qualitative inputs in Chapter 3. Finally, Chapter 5 tests different endorsement situations based on varying levels of attachment, the variation in source characteristics of products in different endorsement situations, and how different endorser-types and attachment levels create different endorsement situations.

The first major contribution in this thesis is the identification of the role of attachment in endorsements and its effect on the overall endorsement effectiveness and consumers' attitudes. Another contribution is the introduction of the *progenic endorsement* which refers to endorsements wherein the endorser launches products using their own name and imbues their ideals and values into the endorsed products. This thesis also contributes to the endorsement literature by extending the classic meaning-transfer model to introduce the *tripartite attachment model* for endorsements. The distinction of endorsed, spokesperson and progenic as endorsement types, and identification of six endorsement situations on the basis of the endorser-types (*celebrity, CEO*) and endorsement type (*endorsed, spokesperson and progenic*), are other major contributions by this thesis.

This thesis will follow the “PhD by publication” structure, a structure which has become popular in Australia (Robins & Kanowski 2008). As per the guidelines suggested by Robins and Kanowski (2008), a series of peer-reviewed academic papers which are published or ready for publication are compiled in the thesis with an introduction and overall conclusion. The overall structure of the thesis is outlined in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Thesis structure**

Chapter	Title	Details
1	Introduction	Significance of the research
		Background to the research
		Overview of methodology
2	Pre-Tests	Compilation of pre-tests conducted during the PhD candidature
3	Introduction of three attachment nodes and distinction in endorsements	<b>Attachment perspectives in endorsements</b>
		Exploratory study to understand consumer perceptions of attachment in endorsements
		Distinction of traditional endorsements from progenic endorsements
		Introduction of factors that affect three attachment nodes in an endorsement
4	Tripartite attachment model to explain attachment in endorsements	<b>Conceptual Framework: A tripartite model of attachment</b>
		Conceptual chapter to introduce tripartite attachment model which explains attachment between three attachment nodes
		Attachment styles, figures and strategies
5	Effects of endorser-type and endorsement on - Perceived attachment - Purchase intention - Source characteristics	<b>Who is the attached endorser? An examination of the attachment-endorsement spectrum</b>
		Quantitative study testing the effects of the endorser-type (celebrity, CEO) and endorsement type (endorsed, spokesperson and progenic) on perceived attachment, purchase intention and source characteristics (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise)
		Introducing six endorsement situations based on the endorser-type and endorsement-type
6	Thesis conclusion	Discussion of findings from all studies
		Theoretical and practical implications of results

## **1.2. Significance of the research**

While brand endorsement research has focused on endorsement effectiveness based on match-up and endorser's appeal (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Atkin & Block 1983; Kamins 1990; Ohanian 1991; Erdogan 1999), there is only a limited understanding of why or how a celebrity's characteristics affect a product's endorsement. Using attachment theory, it is proposed in this thesis that the perceived attachment of the endorser to the endorsed product has an important bearing on endorsement effectiveness. The thesis demonstrates how different types of endorsement and endorsers interact to create different levels of attachment. Several propositions are made about how attachment levels will affect the three components of the source credibility model (namely attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) and overall endorsement effectiveness.

Understanding individuals' perceived attachment to their associated products is important because recent studies have demonstrated that it affects consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Jimenez & Voss 2010; Whan Park et al. 2010). Attachment is found to be linked with involvement, satisfaction, loyalty and favourability of attitude (Thomson 2006). Attachment between individuals and products also indicates that there is an emotional connection between the two and the product has a deep, personal meaning to the individual (Mugge et al. 2006). Studies in psychology have described how attachments reflect individuals' commitment and ability to invest in and make sacrifices for that person or object (Hazan & Shaver 1994). In both marketing and psychology, attachment has only been examined from the perspective of the consumer with the product and the consumer with the celebrity. However, an important link which is the celebrity with the product has been ignored. This link is especially useful in endorsement, since there are three entities in endorsement, namely, consumer, celebrity and product. In endorsement literature, predominantly the endorser appeals only have been looked at, along with other dimensions of congruency or match-up, familiarity,



reputation and likeability. Attachment, as we know it, is the propensity to form strong affectionate bonds with others (Bartholomew & Horowitz 1991). There are no distinctions among endorsement types in the current literature which explain why and how consumers can form attachments to some types of endorsers and endorsement situations and not others.

In order to understand this research more clearly, a background review of the different endorsers and endorser-types is needed to provide a better perspective. The next section details the various endorser-types in endorsement literature to date.

### **1.3 Background to the research**

#### ***1.3.1 Celebrity endorser***

A celebrity is “*known for being well-known regardless of whether that eminence derives from the entertainment field, medicine, science, politics, religion, sports or close association with other celebrities*” (McCutcheon et al. 2002, p.67). Celebrity endorsements are not new to marketing. Once Queen Charlotte began to use the famed eighteenth century potter Josiah Wedgwood’s products, he began referring to himself as “potter to Her Majesty” (Seno & Lukas 2007). As early as 1890, actress Sarah Bernhardt appeared on posters for La Diaphane, a famous French brand of rice powder in the early 1890s (Fleck et al. 2012). Celebrity endorsement has helped marketers to achieve differentiation amongst competing products and services. Research as early as the 1950s by Vance Packard suggested that celebrity endorsement strategy is effective in selling products and services as status symbols, since celebrities are individuals of indisputably high status and in a way are inviting consumers to join them in the consumption process (Erdogan 1999). Leveraging endorsement of products by celebrities helps to avoid anonymity and can highlight products and services in saturated markets. This is why celebrities are preferred endorsers in comparison with non-celebrities, to promote products and services and increase overall endorsement effectiveness.

Many studies on endorser effectiveness suggest that a celebrity has a greater impact on a consumer's attitude and purchase intention than a non-celebrity (Erdogan 1999; Ohanian 1991). Advertisements featuring celebrity figures produce consistently more favourable impact than non-celebrity ads. Celebrity endorsers are perceived as significantly more trustworthy and competent and slightly more attractive (Atkin & Block 1983). When comparing celebrities versus non-celebrities, a high degree of congruence between product and the celebrity image leads to enhanced endorser believability and attractiveness as well as having a significantly positive effect on the consumer, in a more favourable attitude and higher purchase intention toward the product (Kamins & Gupta 1994). If companies are seeking to gain attention and increase sales, then a celebrity endorser can be more beneficial versus a non-celebrity endorser to help differentiate the endorsed brand from competition.

Kaikati (1987) extended prior research on endorser-types by including the chief executive as founder of products. Kaikati (1987) differentiated celebrity endorsements as genuine celebrities, look-alike celebrities, chief executives/founders as celebrities and, finally, celebrities by association. Genuine celebrities are described as being movie or TV stars, athletes, politicians and even award-winning scientists. The important point in the description of this endorser-type is that, "while stars may be making commercials, some commercials are also making stars" (Kaikati 1987, p.94). The controversial look-alike celebrity is the endorser-type which includes duplicates of real-life celebrities. This endorser-type was only beneficial to companies with small budgets, and was severely criticised because, most often, the original celebrity had no connection to the endorsed product. The third endorser-type was the chief executive who also happened to be the founder and starred in commercials endorsing their own products. Celebrity by association was again a controversial endorser-type whereby celebrities' names were used on product endorsements, which, however, featured images of other models. A significant contribution by Kaikati (1987) was that consumers were beginning to lose faith

in celebrity endorsements in the post-1980s era, because consumers ascribed celebrities' fees to product costs. Their conclusion was that CEO-founder endorsers were beginning to gain popularity due to the perceived credibility of the CEO founders. Again, while this research included what was deficient in prior research, it did not explore the possibility that a regular celebrity could also be a founder and owner of products, or the distinction of this endorsement type from traditional endorsements. Kaikati (1987) also grouped all endorsements as 'celebrity-like', which excluded the non-celebrity or fictitious endorser from endorsement considerations.

Endorsement literature has identified a few endorser-types which have been not explicitly distinguished as belonging to a specific category. The following section includes a categorisation of endorser-types, with a description of each endorser according to extant literature.

### ***1.3.2 Traditional endorser***

The influence of the use of different types of endorser is not well explored. According to the author's knowledge, Friedman et al. (1976) were the first to explore the different types of endorsers in endorsement research. In this seminal article, Friedman et al. (1976) introduced four types of endorsers, namely, the celebrity, typical consumer, professional expert and company president. The authors contrasted the appeals of each of these endorser types by describing the celebrity endorser as attractive and/or likable, the typical consumer's appeal as being similar to the target consumer, and the expert endorser and company president as possessing product expertise and specialised knowledge, respectively. The main purpose of the Friedman et al. (1976) research was to determine which of the four types of endorsers is more effective when compared to an advertisement without any endorsement. It was interesting to see that the believability measure for the celebrity endorsement was highest, compared to the other three types of endorsements. The researchers assumed that perhaps the participants, who

were college students, identified with Al Pacino, the actor who was the celebrity endorser in this research. Furthermore, Friedman et al. (1976) reasoned that believability was highest in this type of endorsement because the participants believed that Al Pacino liked the wine. The final result was that it is worthwhile to invest in endorsements, since there is a positive effect on the purchase intention. The high believability and purchase intention for the celebrity endorsement could be attributed to celebrities being famous, likable and attractive. While Friedman et al. (1976) compared the effectiveness of endorsements versus non-endorsements, their research did not examine why endorsements are more effective and, furthermore, which type of endorser would be suitable for which type of product.

### ***1.3.3 Endorser-type with product-type***

Friedman and Friedman (1979) extended endorsement research by specifically exploring which endorser-type would be more suitable for endorsing which product type, by examining the celebrity, the professional expert and the typical consumer. Their research looked at product types identified with the type of risk associated with them: (1) one rating high on social and/or psychological risk; (2) one rating high on financial, performance, and/or physical risk; and (3) one rating low on all five types of perceived risk. The participant sample was exposed to stimuli that included products which were rated according to the type of risk associated with them. Using a fictitious brand name which could be applicable to all products and which was not associated with existing products, Friedman and Friedman (1979) identified female celebrities on the basis of awareness, likableness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. The findings showed that the expert endorser elicited a higher overall attitude and greater purchase intention than the other endorser-types, but only for the product that was more complex. The typical consumer endorser elicited a higher overall attitude and greater purchase intention, but only for the product that was cheaper and had no risk associated with it. The celebrity endorser elicited a

higher overall attitude and greater purchase intention, but only for the product that was perceived as being a beauty- and attractiveness-related product. While this research addressed the void existing in the earlier research, Friedman and Friedman (1979) did not consider including the chief executive officer (CEO) in the endorsement categories or the possibility that the endorser category could also include a founder or owner.

#### ***1.3.4 Created endorser***

It is a well-known fact that a celebrity has a greater impact on a consumer's attitude and purchase intention than a non-celebrity (Erdogan 1999; Ohanian 1991). However, Mehta (1994) showed that consumers focused on the endorsed brand in non-celebrity-endorsed advertisements, while the focus was largely on the celebrity in celebrity endorsements. Studies have shown that there is no difference in the attitudes toward the ad, brand and purchase intention when comparing celebrity versus non-celebrity (Mehta 1994); while research has also shown how non-celebrity endorsers or "created" endorsers can be more effective than celebrity endorsers (Tom et al. 1992). The present research categorises non-celebrity and animated spokes-characters as 'created endorsers'. Tom et al. (1992) demonstrated how non-celebrity endorsement situations can be advantageous in many ways. Created endorsers could either be portrayed by real people or be completely fictional. These endorsers always endorse a single endorsement, compared to celebrities who typically have multiple endorsements at a time. Created endorsers could be made in such a way that they represent the desired product. It is also possible to create a non-celebrity endorser with personality attributes which could also closely match those of the target audience. Finally, created endorsers do not get involved in scandals, which can often tarnish celebrities' images and the associated endorsed brands. Only if companies are seeking to gain attention and increase sales, can a celebrity endorser then be

more beneficial compared to a created endorser, since the former could help differentiate the endorsed brand from the competition.

Animated endorsers have been popular for years, with some of the earliest characters being Bugs Bunny and Fred Flintstone. These animated characters began to be used as product presenters and promotional support for various restaurants and retailers (Callcott & Lee 1994). One of the most famous animated characters, second only to Santa Claus today, is Ronald McDonald. This animated spokes-character, which was created as early as 1963, continues to represent one of the largest fast-food chains in the world. Animated spokes-characters, like non-celebrity endorsers, are effective in that these endorser-types are exempt from scandals and negative publicity, which usually haunts human endorsers. Research by Stafford et al. (2002) applied the use of animated characters and human spokes-characters in the context of services. Their research shows that, aside from generating attention, animated characters positively affect consumers' attitudes, but would be more effective if other promotional elements were also used in the endorsement. While Stafford et al. (2002) compared these endorser-types with hedonic and utilitarian services, their research was only restricted to services as a category, and did not consider including products or endorsers who launched their own products and services.

### ***1.3.5 Influencer***

A new category of endorser has emerged in recent times, which is still nascent and unexplored in academic research, but not so unfamiliar in the media: brands lately have been using so-called "influencers" to promote numerous products. Influencers are referred to as, "people who have built a sizeable social network of people following them" (De Veirman et al. 2017, p.798). Social media influencers could be fashion models, fitness gurus, gaming addicts, beauty bloggers, or even regular consumers who start a new trend. Influencers' endorsed opinions

about products help consumers to connect with brands, especially when these testimonials are shared on social media platforms which are public media spaces (Fleming 2018). Influencers' testimonials are being regarded as highly credible EWom "Electronic Word Of Mouth" (De Veirman et al. 2017). One survey found that 71% of consumers are more likely to make a purchase endorsed by an influencer, while 70% of teenage YouTube subscribers trusted influencer opinions over traditional celebrities (Ward 2017). Social media influencers were rated among the top celebrity endorsers for brands in 2016 and 2017 (Gee 2017; Fleming 2018). While this trend could continue and potentially rise in future, what is debatable is the sustainability of this endorser-type. Influencers' personal lives are constantly under public scrutiny, so any scandal and negative publicity directly impacts their endorsed brands. Furthermore, companies will constantly need to ensure that influencers are in long-term contracts; if not, influencers can endorse competing brands (Ward 2017). Again, this endorser-type is not ideal for all product-types and consumer profiles.

While we have described different endorser-types with their pros and cons, all of these endorsers have aspects which can be challenged and which account for inconsistencies in endorsement findings. It can be surmised that, in general, advertisements featuring celebrities have produced consistently more favourable impact than the non-celebrity advertisements. Celebrity endorsers are perceived as significantly more trustworthy and competent and slightly more attractive (Atkin & Block 1983). When comparing celebrities with non-celebrities, a high degree of congruence between product and the celebrity image leads to enhanced endorser believability, attractiveness and a significantly positive effect on the consumer in celebrity-endorsed situations (Kamins & Gupta 1994).

However, non-celebrity endorsers have advantages which include matching their profiles with product attributes, endorsing single non-competing brands at a time, and there being no impact of negative PR and controversy. Animated endorsers, while also possessing

characteristics of non-celebrities, can be a useful endorsement strategy; yet this endorser-type is not suitable for all product types. In general, low-involvement and less complex products are associated with animated endorsers, and the target audience for such endorsements is younger consumers (Callcott & Lee 1994). Research has shown that celebrity endorsers are suited to promote attractiveness- and beauty-related products, expert and CEO endorsers are associated with more complex, technical products, and typical consumers promote low-involvement and low-risk products (Friedman & Friedman 1979). Influencers' endorsements of product-types have not yet been detailed, but it can be observed that the product-type for this endorsement is less complex and low risk. What is clearly lacking in endorsement research is one endorser-type that can be suited for varying product-types and audiences.

The present thesis makes a contribution in this respect by introducing the 'progenic endorsement' type, wherein this endorser-type comprises both celebrities and non-celebrities such as CEOs and includes a component, of 'perceived attachment'; that is missing from the existing endorser-types.

Endorsement effectiveness has been looked at from many angles, for example, source effectiveness and numerous endorsement theories which have tried to understand consumers' purchase intentions and attitudes toward endorsed products and services. The popular and most widely-used endorsement theories to date are captured in the next section.

## **1.4 Endorsement theories**

### ***1.4.1 Source credibility model***

Source credibility can be defined as "a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message" (Ohanian 1990, p.41). The *source credibility model* was initially designed by Hovland and Weiss (1951) to understand the effect of the source in a



communication process. According to the original source credibility model, credible sources have both direct effects on people's willingness to accept messages and indirect effects on attention and comprehension (Amos et al. 2008). Information from a credible source (e.g. celebrity) can influence beliefs, opinions, attitudes and/or behaviour through a process called 'internalisation', which occurs when receivers accept a source influence in terms of their personal attitude and value structures (Erdogan 1999). The effectiveness of a message depends upon the perceived level of expertise and trustworthiness of an endorser (Ohanian 1991). When considered jointly, expertise and trustworthiness are presumed to embody the source credibility construct.

#### ***1.4.2 Source attractiveness model***

The *source attractiveness model* posits that the attractiveness of any source is determined by the communication receiver; and in the context of endorsement, by the consumer's perceptions of the endorser's similarity, familiarity, and likeability (Amos et al. 2008). The source attractiveness model argues that the physical appearance of a celebrity influences the effectiveness of the advertising message and purchase intention. The physical attractiveness of an endorser determines the effectiveness of persuasive communication through a process called identification, which is assumed to occur when information from an attractive source is accepted as a result of desire to identify with that endorser (Erdogan 1999). If consumers like an endorser, are familiar with them and perceive them to be similar to themselves, the consumer will tend to find the celebrity more attractive. While a celebrity's physical attractiveness has a positive impact on brand recall, attitude toward the brand and purchase intent, different product types will see differing endorsement effectiveness results. For instance, products related to attractiveness will see attractive endorsers having a positive effect on consumers' attitudes and

purchase intentions, compared to products with high involvement and those involving a certain expertise (Friedman & Friedman 1979).

There are limiting conditions on the source credibility models which make them inconclusive for studying endorsement effectiveness. The source attractiveness and source credibility models consider the source (endorser) to possess traits of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise in order for an endorsement to be effective. However, these endorser appeals only impact the consumer's attitudes and not the purchase intentions (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Ohanian 1991). Kamins (1990) varied physical attractiveness of the celebrity and the degree to which the usage of the product enhances the subject's attractiveness, only to learn that perceived expertise of the endorser was linked to intention to purchase. The source appeals further differ with different product types. Attractiveness is significant only for attractiveness-related (beauty) products, while trustworthiness and expertise are relevant only when the product is complex and has high social and psychological risk (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Atkin & Block 1983). However, Kamins et al. (1989) found that two-sided advertisement messages which featured celebrities generated positive endorsement effects for consumers of high financial and performance risk products/services such as management consultation and computers. Callcott and Phillips (1996) found that consumers are, in general, influenced by spokespersons if products are inexpensive and low-involving and few differences are perceived among available brands.

The source models appear to be incomplete, as they do not consider all the perceptions and significance connected to a particular endorser, merely focusing on certain characteristics of the endorser; thus, according to Fleck et al.(2012), they are not capable of capturing what a person, as a whole, is capable of contributing to an advertisement.

Trustworthiness is not significantly related to purchase intention, while expert endorsers are more persuasive and increase purchase intent. However, the actual level of the

celebrity's expertise is unimportant; rather, it has been suggested that what matters are consumers' perceptions of the celebrity's level of expertise (Ohanian 1991). If consumers have a positive predisposition toward an advertising message, a less credible endorser can be more persuasive than a more credible source (Keel & Nataraajan 2012). A major disadvantage of both source attractiveness and source credibility models is limiting the assessment of an individual to certain dimensions which, in many situations, cannot be accurately identified (McCracken 1989; Erdogan 1999).

Again, results differ for endorsements with higher perceived congruence between the endorsers and products.

### ***1.4.3 Match-up model***

The '*match-up*' model refers to the perceived fit between the individual and the product. Celebrities are likely to form a 'good fit', or 'match', when the perceived product is not already associated with another product or service and when this perceived product does not pose a potential risk of tarnishing the brand's image (Kamins 1990; Kamins & Gupta 1994; Till et al. 2008; Ilicic, Kulczynski, et al. 2016). Fit (which is also referred to as congruency), similarity and relevance, in endorsement, generally refer to the degree of similarity or consistency between the celebrity and the brand (or product category). For instance, Roger Federer would be a good fit with any tennis-related products.

Fit, just like celebrity expertise, is specific to a particular endorsement situation (unlike celebrity attractiveness and liking, which are independent of the situation). Fit has been operationalized variously as a main effect on brand evaluations or as a moderator of other main effects such as attractiveness and expertise (the match-up hypothesis) (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). The match-up model demonstrates how congruence or fit between a celebrity and

product will affect the endorser's perceived attractiveness and trustworthiness and the consumer's attitudes and purchase intentions.

However, a moderate mismatch between a celebrity and product can be more effective than a complete match or mismatch (Lee & Thorson 2008). Lee and Thorson (2008) manipulated the degree of celebrity-product congruence and discovered that celebrity endorsements were evaluated more favourably in terms of purchase intention when there was a moderate mismatch between the endorser and the product than when there was either a complete match or an extreme mismatch (product-involvement). For example, low risk and inexpensive products such as candy can be endorsed by any attractive endorser, who need not necessarily be highly familiar or trustworthy. This is more advantageous than using a popular and trustworthy celebrity whose endorsement of a candy bar can be perceived to be purely driven by monetary motivations. In yet another study, Choi and Rifon (2012) manipulated celebrity and product selections. The result was that, when a consumer perceives a celebrity endorser as possessing an image close to his or her ideal self-image, the consumer is likely to rate the ad as more favourable and report greater purchase intentions. The celebrity/product congruence appeared to have a direct, positive effect on attitude toward the ad. This congruence has no bearing if the meaning from the celebrity to the consumer has not been effectively transferred.

#### ***1.4.4 Meaning-transfer model***

The original location of the cultural meaning that ultimately resides in consumer goods is the culturally constituted world: cultural categories are the fundamental coordinates of meaning (McCracken 1986). Meaning begins in the first stage of endorsement, where this 'meaning' resides in celebrities. Endorsements allow individuals (celebrities) charged with detailed and powerful meanings to transfer this meaning to products, in the second stage of the endorsement

process. Some of the meanings of the celebrity are now the meanings of the product. In the final stage, the meaning moves from the product to the consumer (McCracken 1989). In short, the endorser's equity is transferred to the endorsed product in the endorsement process, and this 'meaning', or equity, is then transferred to the consumer through the consumption process.

The celebrity introduces meanings and associations to the brand and receives financial compensation for doing so. However, because celebrities have become their own brands, existing models for explaining celebrity endorsement strategies appear incomplete. Accordingly, some studies propose that celebrity endorsement is an interactive, reciprocal process, such that the brand also has an impact on the celebrity's equity (Ambroise et al. 2014).

The *meaning-transfer* model accounts for a one-way transfer of meaning from the endorser to the product. Celebrity endorsement, however, is an interactive and reciprocal relationship. With the increasing acceptance of celebrities being treated as their 'own brands', existing endorsement models explaining celebrity endorsement effectiveness strategies appear incomplete. In recent times, research has acknowledged that the brand also has an impact on the celebrity's equity (Till 1998; Seno & Lukas 2007; Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta 2010).

The meaning transfer model has also failed to specify the psychological manifestations of meaning transfer, in terms of the following questions: What exactly is transferred to a brand through endorsement? What effects are realized at the individual level? and When and how does this meaning transfer take place? (Miller & Allen 2012).

#### ***1.4.5 Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)***

The basic tenet of the *Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)* is that peripheral processing takes place when consumers respond less to the content of a persuasive message than to factors incidental to the content (e.g. an attractive source). This means that there are two routes through which an advertisement can influence consumers: a high involvement, central route; and a

lower involvement, peripheral route. When the elaboration likelihood is high, the central route to persuasion should be particularly effective; but when the elaboration likelihood is low, the peripheral route should be better (Petty et al. 1983; Rice et al. 2012). For example, celebrities serve as peripheral cues especially when consumers are not involved in the product category or in processing the ad. However, celebrities may provide central information when an aspect of the celebrity matches the product (match-up).

However, the ELM does not consider the possibility that a peripheral persuasion cue (such as attitude toward the ad) may also have an impact on the central route to persuasion by fostering message acceptance. The ELM fails to recognise that central and peripheral processes are intertwined rather than being substitutes for one another (Mackenzie et al. 1986). According to the ELM framework, celebrities are seen as peripheral cues which have a positive effect on brand evaluations under conditions of low-effort processing. However, a limitation of the ELM is that it does not specify the mechanism through which the peripheral cue operates. If there is a positive effect on brand evaluations, it is not clear why this happened (Bergkvist et al. 2016).

In addition to the endorsement models and theories such as *ELM*, *meaning-transfer*, *match-up and the source models*, there could be other factors that can impact endorsements. A celebrity's reputation can tarnish the overall image of the endorsed brand if the celebrity is involved in a scandal or negative publicity. In these instances, perceived endorser appeal or product match might not be considered relevant. When celebrities endorse a single product versus multiple endorsements, the endorser's perceived appeal and overall consumer attitude and purchase intention become affected. Even if the celebrity ranks high on perceived source credibility appeal, endorses only a single product and has a high congruence with the product, a vampire effect, or 'eclipsing', can damage the overall endorsement effectiveness (Erfgen et al. 2015). This becomes dangerous for those companies launching a new product or wishing to

promote a brand, which instead loses focus when the celebrity gains all the attention (Tripp et al. 1994; Um 2010; Erfgen et al. 2015).

Studies that have examined the factors accounting for the impact of celebrity endorsements have focused mainly on the endorser attributes considered responsible for the endorsement effect, employing the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model (Yoo & Jin 2013). However, source credibility, source attractiveness and match-up research do not provide measures to cope with multidimensionality of source effects (Erdogan 1999). This is why *attachment* is considered as a focus in this thesis and attachment theory is the primary theory underpinning this work.

## **1.5 Overview of methodology**

This thesis combines both qualitative as well as quantitative research methodology in trying to understand the construct of attachment in endorsements. Chapter 2 provides an overview of pre-tests conducted throughout the candidature, which help to inform the qualitative and quantitative studies subsequently undertaken. The first pre-test conducted (Pre-Test 1) was useful in establishing that fictitious male and female endorsers do not cause significant changes in consumers' attitudes toward the endorsement, and thereafter the decision was made to use actual male and female endorsers. This decision was arrived at by conducting another pre-test (Pre-Test 2), where results were skewed because of consumers' indifferent responses to the fictitious endorsers. However, this pre-test was useful in establishing the reliability of the scales (Appendix A1) that have later been used in the thesis in Chapter 5. Pre-Test 3 was useful in identifying Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Zuckerberg, who were selected from a sample of real-life male celebrities and CEOs. These two endorsers were used in the experiment in Chapter 5, as part of the quantitative study in the thesis. In addition, both male and female real-life celebrities, Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova, were used to promote fictitious fragrance

brands as part of the qualitative study in Chapter 3. Hypotheses were generated as part of the conceptual framework in Chapter 4 and the qualitative study (Chapter 3) and quantitative study (Chapter 5) were conducted to address the overarching research objective of this thesis, namely, understanding attachment in endorsements. RQs 1 and 2 are addressed in Chapter 3 and RQs 3, 4 and 5 are answered in the experimental study in Chapter 5.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the background to the thesis with a literature review on the types of endorsers and endorsement theories to date. These sections provide a comprehensive background surrounding the traditional endorsers, endorsers promoting different product types of varying risk-levels, and fictitious and animated endorsers, which together comprise the general gamut of endorser-types. This chapter also detailed the most widely used and popular endorsement theories such as the source credibility, source attractiveness, match-up, meaning-transfer and ELM models; of which, the source credibility model is employed to examine endorsement differences, while the meaning-transfer model is adapted to introduce the tripartite attachment model, later in the thesis. With traditional research in the area of celebrity endorsement focused on the attributes that make a celebrity effective, little research has explored distinctions in endorsement situations and what truly makes an overall endorsement effective. In addition, only a modest amount of research has examined the concept of attachment in endorsements, and no research to date has examined perceived attachment between the celebrity and product. Chapter One presented a justification for conducting the present research. Chapter Two presents an overview of the numerous pre-tests conducted, which culminate in studies presented in Chapters 3 and 5.



## INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 2

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In order to understand attachment in the endorsement context, both a qualitative and a quantitative study were conducted with consumers. However, before these studies commenced, numerous pre-tests were deemed imperative to conduct interviews (qualitative study, Chapter 3) and the final questionnaire (used in the quantitative study, Chapter 5). Chapter 2 is a consolidation of all the pre-tests conducted throughout the overall PhD candidature, beginning with the identification of endorsers, which was essential for both studies. All the scales used in the thesis (quantitative study) were also pre-tested for reliability and validity. Another set of pre-tests for endorser selection (finally used in the quantitative study) were required, since the first round of pre-tests for endorser selection were not conclusive and did not help with the final selection process. Finally, pre-tests were conducted to understand whether consumers indeed differentiated between traditional and progenic endorsements, and for a further understanding of their progenic endorsement perspectives.

## CHAPTER 2: PRE-TESTS

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### 2.1 Pre-Test 1: Identifying male and female endorsers

A pre-test was conducted using the online platform Qualtrics, in order to ascertain the fictitious male and female endorser to be used in the study. A total of 28 responses for the survey which featured five fictitious male models, and 36 responses for the survey which featured five fictitious female models, were recorded (Figure 2.1).

Participants were asked to rate the models on the basis of their attractiveness, how trustworthy they appeared, and whether they appeared to have technological expertise. The final male (Image 3) and female models (Image 4) that were used in the next pre-test were chosen on the basis of them having moderate ratings; while neither appeared to rate highly on attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise.



Figure 2.1 Pre-test 1 female and male models

### 2.2 Pre-Test 2: Testing scales

A pilot study was conducted with 250 undergraduate students, wherein 74 participants finally took part in the experiment (response rate = 29%). These participants ( $n=74$ ) were presented

with randomly distributed experimental packs. Each pack contained an envelope with the PICF (Participant information and consent form), the advertisement stimulus which either showed the male or female model in an advertisement (Figure 2.2), and the questionnaire (Table 2.1). There were six envelopes each for the male and female stimuli, where each stimulus corresponded to one of the identified endorsement situations in this study, endorsed, spokesperson and progenic, and where the endorser was either portrayed as either a celebrity or CEO. This research hypothesised that there would be a difference in the responses for the male and female endorsers. However, there was no visible difference in the responses. The study was useful in that all the scales were very reliable. The reliability of each scale will be discussed in the section below on scales. However, a comparison of means did not support the hypotheses on the variance of source credibility appeals for each category. While a one-way ANOVA on the source credibility construct indicated that there was significance for trustworthiness and expertise, the variance in the appeals for the six endorsement situations did not support any of the proposed four hypotheses. The reason that none of the hypotheses were supported could be that none of the participants were able to form any attachment to the fictitious male and female model in the advertisements. Hence the results were skewed.



**Figure 2.2 Pre-test 2 stimuli**

### 2.3 Selecting measurement scales

Measurement scales have been adapted from past research: the source credibility scale (Ohanian 1990), endorser authenticity scale (Moulard et al. 2015), brand credibility scale (Spry et al. 2011), attachment scale (Mugge et al. 2010) and purchase intention scale (McDaniel & Gates 2001). Most of these are established scales generally employed in endorsement research, thus the reliability of key constructs was examined using conventional methods. The 250 participants were asked to indicate their responses for all measures on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) (Table 2.1). The Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of each construct exceeded the suggested cut-off value of 0.70 (Spry et al. 2011).

Data were collected using a 3x2 between-participants factorial design. The endorsement type was manipulated at three levels, endorser, spokesperson and progenic. The

endorser was manipulated at two levels, celebrity and CEO. This design thus resulted in six different conditions, which were implemented through six corresponding print advertisements. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the six treatment conditions.

**Table 2.1 Questionnaire used in Pre-Test 2**

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Attractiveness</b>	I find the endorser attractive	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser classy	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser good-looking	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser elegant	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser sexy	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	I find the endorser dependable	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser honest	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser reliable	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser sincere	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Expertise</b>	I find the endorser to be an expert on the phone	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser to be experienced with the phone	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Expertise</b>	I find the endorser to be knowledgeable about the phone	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser to be qualified to endorse the phone	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the endorser skilled to endorse the phone	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Consumer's attachment to the product</b>	This phone has no special meaning to me	1	2	3	4	5
	This phone is very dear to me	1	2	3	4	5
	I find I have a bond with this phone	1	2	3	4	5
	This phone does not move me	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Celebrity's attachment to the product</b>	I am very attached to this phone	1	2	3	4	5
	I feel emotionally connected to this phone	1	2	3	4	5
	I can see that the endorser is committed to maintaining a relationship with the phone	1	2	3	4	5
	It appears that the phone has a great deal of personal meaning to the endorser	1	2	3	4	5
	It appears that the endorser is	1	2	3	4	5

	proud to be associated with the phone					
<b>Consumer's attachment to the celebrity</b>	I like to purchase all products endorsed by the endorser	1	2	3	4	5
	I prefer the endorser's products over other endorsers	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Attitude toward the ad</b>	I have a favourable attitude towards the ad	1	2	3	4	5
	I like the ad	1	2	3	4	5
	I find that the ad does not irritate me	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the ad to be interesting	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Attitude toward the brand</b>	I find the brand is good	1	2	3	4	5
	I like the brand very much	1	2	3	4	5
	I find the brand pleasant	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	I would definitely buy the phone	1	2	3	4	5
	I would probably buy the phone	1	2	3	4	5

### ***2.3.1 Dependent measures: source credibility***

Using extant endorsement literature and theories such as the source credibility model (Hovland et al. 1953; Ohanian 1990), the present research tested to see whether the source credibility appeals have differing priorities in the endorsement situations. Participants were asked to rate the endorser on a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

The five adapted items were, “I find the endorser attractive”, “I find the endorser classy”, “I find the endorser elegant”, “I find the endorser good-looking”, and “I find the endorser sexy”. The remaining 10 items for trustworthiness and expertise remain the same. The items (Cronbach alpha=0.899) for trustworthiness are, “I find the endorser dependable”, “I find the endorser honest”, “I find the endorser reliable”, “I find the endorser sincere” and “I find the endorser trustworthy”. The last 5 items for expertise are, “I find the endorser to be an expert on the phone”, “I find the endorser to be experienced with the phone”, “I find the endorser to be knowledgeable about the phone”, “I find the endorser to be qualified to endorse the phone” and “I find the endorser skilled to endorse the phone”.

### ***2.3.2 Dependent measures: attachment***

Attachment as described so far has three perspectives in the present research: the consumer’s attachment to the product, the endorser’s attachment to the product, and the consumer’s attachment to the celebrity. This research used the attachment scale from Mugge et al. (2010) to determine the consumer’s attachment to the product; while this thesis created the items for the other two attachments, namely consumer’s attachment to the celebrity and the celebrity’s attachment to the product . The items in this scale were, “This phone has no special meaning to me”, “This phone is very dear to me”, “I find I have a bond with this phone”, “This phone does not move me”, “I am very attached to this phone” and “I feel emotionally connected to the phone”. The initial reliability of this scale was Cronbach alpha=0.605; and hence, it was tested for reliability if items from this scale were deleted. The revised alpha was Cronbach alpha=0.881 when two items were deleted, namely, “This phone has no special meaning to me” and “This phone does not move me”. Endorser’s attachment to the product was tested with measures (Cronbach alpha=0.756), “I can see that the endorser is committed to maintaining a relationship with the phone”, “It appears that the phone has a great deal of personal meaning



to the endorser” and “It appears that the endorser is proud to be associated with the phone”. Finally, the consumer’s attachment to the celebrity was tested (Cronbach alpha=0.919): “I would like to purchase all products endorsed by the endorser”, “I am committed to maintaining a relationship with the endorser”, “I like this endorser” and “I would purchase the endorser’s products over competition”.

### ***2.3.3 Dependent measures: endorser authenticity and brand credibility***

Two more constructs were added to check the credibility and authenticity of the endorser and brand. The items to measure endorser authenticity have already been tested for reliability (Moulard et al. 2015): “The endorser is genuine” (Cronbach alpha= 0.87), “The endorser seems real to me”, (Cronbach alpha= 0.87) and “The endorser is authentic” (Cronbach alpha= 0.70). Brand credibility was measured using items from a scale developed and tested by Spry et al. (2011): “The brand has the ability to deliver what it promises”, “The brand’s product claims are believable”, “The brand doesn’t pretend to be something it isn’t” and “The endorsement is authentic” (Cronbach alpha= 0.93).

### ***2.3.4 Attitude toward ad and brand***

Attitude scales were tested using classic attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the brand measures (Mitchell & Olson 1981; Mitchell 1986; Mackenzie et al. 1986). The measures for attitude toward the ad (Cronbach alpha=0.76) are, “I have a favourable attitude towards the ad”, “I like the ad”, “I find that the ad does not irritate me” and “I find the ad to be interesting”. The measures for attitude toward the brand (Cronbach alpha=0.86) are, “I find the brand is good”, “I like the brand very much” and “I find the brand pleasant”.

### **2.3.5 Purchase intention**

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which the advertisement had increased the chance that they would consider purchasing the product in the future. This cognitive measure parallels those used in prior studies (McDaniel & Gates 2001). The items (Cronbach alpha=0.791) are, “I would definitely buy the phone” and “I would probably buy the phone”.

### **2.4 Pre-Test 3: Endorser selection**

A second pre-test was conducted with a convenience sample of 14 undergraduate students to decide on the male endorser for the main study. This test was conducted because the previous pre-test did not yield any significant results, since the endorsers were fictitious. The participants were shown pictures of Hollywood actors Leonardo Di Caprio (LC) and Bradley Cooper and CEO Founders Mark Zuckerberg (MZ) *CEO and Founder of Facebook* and Elon Musk, *CEO of Tesla and Space X* and answered questions for the scale (Appendix A2). All participants recognised Leonardo Di Caprio ( $n=14$ ), followed by CEO Mark Zuckerberg ( $n=11$ ), Bradley Cooper ( $n=8$ ) and Elon Musk ( $n=4$ ). Leonardo Di Caprio was the most popular celebrity and Mark Zuckerberg was selected as the most popular CEO. The items in this questionnaire included a basic familiarity test, ‘Do you know this individual’ and ‘How familiar is this individual to you?’ (*Very familiar “1” and not so familiar “2”*), wherein all 14 students rated Leonardo Di Caprio as “1” and 11 individuals rated Mark Zuckerberg as “1” in the familiarity measure. Further in order to confirm their familiarity with the celebrity and CEO, an item, ‘Where have you heard about this individual’, with options such as social media, movies, TV series, news and others, was also included. All participants indicated that they were aware of Leonardo Di Caprio and Mark Zuckerberg from social media, movies and news sources. Likeability was tested with, ‘Rate the extent to which you like this individual’ (*Like this person a lot “1”, like this person a little “2” and do not like this person at all “3”*). Leonardo Di Caprio

scored “1” ( $n=10$ ) and “2” ( $n=4$ ) and Mark Zuckerberg scored “1” ( $n=8$ ) “2” ( $n=2$ ) and “3” ( $n=1$ ). Finally, items were included in order to check whether the celebrity and CEO had any previous product category or brand associations (*Name any product or brand that you associate with this individual*). Leonardo Di Caprio was believed to have associations with climate change ( $n=4$ ) because of a documentary he was involved with, and a few subjects mentioned his association with movies as a product category ( $n=3$ ), luxury brands ( $n=1$ ) and watches ( $n=1$ ); while Mark Zuckerberg was associated with Facebook and social media ( $n=11$ ). The last item (*For which product category could this individual be used*) showed that most participants could see Leonardo Di Caprio potentially endorse products related to male grooming/fragrances/clothes ( $n=5$ ), while participants ( $n=11$ ) responded that Mark Zuckerberg could potentially endorse apps/social media or anything related to technology.

## **2.5 Pilot-Study: Understanding progenic brands**

A pilot-study was conducted with 21 participants, which provided insights about the ‘progenic brand’ endorsement situation and its association with related constructs. This was achieved through the projective technique of word-association followed by in-depth interviews, in the context of five progenic brands: Oprah Winfrey’s TV Show; Dick Smith’s Foods; Jamie Oliver’s TV show and homeware; Paul Newman’s Sauce; and Ben and Jerry’s ice-cream. The interview with each participant was conducted in order to understand their rationale for the given words for each of the progenic brands. To consolidate all the responses generated, this study categorised the word associations on the basis of the *number of their occurrences* followed by their *favourability, strength and uniqueness* (Keller 1993; Krishnan 1996). All the word-associations and interviews were in English.

The pilot study categorised these word associations on the basis of the number of their occurrences (Krishnan 1996), followed by their uniqueness, favourability and strength (Keller

1993). The responses generated from the pilot-study have been depicted in tables corresponding to each of the meaning-making factors as identified in the study (Tables 2.2 to 2.5).

**2.5.1 Number of associations**

It is important for a brand to have a large number of associations. Even if the associations might not be product attribute-based, they help provide a complete picture of the consumers' perceptions of the progenic brand (Krishnan 1996).

**Table 2.2 Number of associations**

<b>OPRAH WINFREY</b>	<b>BEN AND JERRY'S</b>	<b>DICK SMITH</b>
American	Cow	Australian-made
Black	Blue	Electronics
TV show	Ice-Cream	Entrepreneur
Wealthy	Cookies and Dough	Spectacles
Influential	Chocolate	Aviator
Generous	Chunky	Yellow and Black
Weight Problems	Movies	Liquidation
Actress	Two guys	Food products

**2.5.2 Favourability of brand associations**

Associations differ according to how favourably they are evaluated. This favourability depends on the importance the consumers attach to an attribute (Keller 1993).

**Table 2.3 Favourability of brand associations**

<b>JAMIE OLIVER</b>	<b>BEN AND JERRY'S</b>	<b>PAUL NEWMAN</b>
Olive oil Healthy-eating Passionate Enthusiastic	Tasty Many different and unique flavours Good quality Good times	Handsome Faithful (long-term marriage) Popular

**2.5.3 Strength of brand associations**

Associations can be characterized also by the strength of involvement to the brand node. The strength of associations depends on how the information enters consumer memory (encoding) and how it is maintained as part of the brand image (storage). When a consumer actively thinks about and "elaborates" on the significance of product or service information, stronger associations are created in memory (Keller 1993).

**Table 2.4 Strength of brand associations**

<b>DICK SMITH</b>	<b>OPRAH WINFREY</b>	<b>JAMIE OLIVER</b>
Advocate of local industry Australian-made products (locally sourced) Bankruptcy Electronics	Influence (over women) Talk-Show South African schools TV Network	TV Show Obesity Homeware Passionate

**2.5.4 Uniqueness of brand associations**

Brand associations may or may not be shared with other competing brands. The essence of brand positioning is that the brand has a sustainable competitive advantage or "unique selling proposition" which gives consumers a compelling reason for buying that particular brand (Keller 1993).

**Table 2.5 Uniqueness of brand associations**

<b>PAUL NEWMAN</b>	<b>DICK SMITH</b>	<b>BEN AND JERRY'S</b>
Race-cars Veteran Faithful	Australian-made products (locally sourced) Bankruptcy Electronics	Movies Colourful Flavours

## **2.6 Summary of pre-tests**

Experimental designs in endorsement research tend to use fictitious celebrities to control for extraneous effects emanating from existing attitudes or popularity of real celebrities. However, the pre-tests showed that this approach is not workable as it was not possible or even meaningful to gauge participants' responses relating to attachment to fictitious models.

While the disadvantage of using real celebrities in experiments is the risk that prior attitudes towards the celebrity would bias results, this research used actual people: celebrity and CEO to make the task more meaningful to the respondent. While an experimental design allows isolating effects, it can also reduce or enhance some other effects. Pre-tests were conducted in order to identify celebrities who were not known to endorse any brands and were perceived to be equal in attractiveness and familiarity. Celebrities who have previously endorsed other products (especially smart-phones) were removed from this pool, as this is known to affect consumer evaluations of the endorser and the endorsed brand. It is more difficult to build an associative link between a celebrity endorser and a brand when the same endorser is already associated with other brands (Till & Busler 1998). Furthermore, the use of a celebrity who had endorsed another product can affect consumers' perceptions of celebrity-brand congruence, which can subsequently impact the effectiveness of the endorsement (Kamins & Gupta 1994). Lastly, celebrities were removed if they had received negative publicity. Negative information can harm consumer perceptions of the endorsed brands (Till & Shimp 1998). Finally, past

research suggests that a higher proportion of male celebrities are associated with functional products. A smart-phone can be considered a functional product; hence, female celebrities were not included in the quantitative study in Chapter 5 (Spry et al. 2011).

Unless the brand has no competitors, the brand will most likely share some associations with other brands (Jamie Oliver with Heston) (Oprah Winfrey with Ellen De Generes) (Dick Smith with Harvey Norman) (Keller 1993). Sometimes, because the brand is linked to the product category, some product category associations may become linked to the brand, in terms of either specific beliefs or overall attitudes. Product category attitudes can be a particularly important determinant of consumer response (Female TV talk-show host is synonymous with Oprah Winfrey) (Keller 1993). The stronger an association, the more likely that it will be recalled from memory via the spreading activation process that underpins mental maps (French & Smith 2006). Consumers have more highly developed brand association structures for familiar brands than for less familiar ones, and hence are more likely to have multi-dimensional brand associations for familiar brands compared to less familiar or unfamiliar brands (Low & Lamb Jr 2000). The responses generated helped understand what comprises progenic brands, the depth of these brands, and in general how consumers form perceptions of the products associated with the individuals who launched progenic brands: true and fused progenic brands. This was also helpful since progenic brands and the individuals who launched them have not been studied as a separate brand category in marketing literature to date.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

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Chapter 2 was a compilation of all the pre-tests conducted throughout the PhD candidature. This helped in the development of hypotheses proposed in Chapter 4. The first pre-test conducted using Qualtrics was to identify endorsers to be used in the overall research. The ten fictitious male and female endorsers did not generate any significant differences across the measures of interest with the total 64 respondents selected this test. Fictitious endorsers were deemed appropriate, because research has shown that consumers usually have pre-existing biases (either positive or negative) toward known endorsers. A second pre-test was conducted with known endorsers (Mark Zuckerberg and Marissa Mayer) to test the scales to be used in the quantitative study and help with endorser selection. The reason these endorsers were selected was to achieve a combination of both celebrity and CEO (endorser-types) as well as a gender balance. This pre-test was achieved with 74 participants (from a pool of 250 respondents). Again, while these endorsers were used to promote a fictional smart-phone brand, the responses were not deemed significant in terms of endorser source characteristics (attractiveness, trustworthiness and credibility). However, the constructs (source credibility, attachment, attitudes and purchase intention) exceeded the suggested Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, which indicates robust scales. The third pre-test was conducted with 14 participants to finalise the endorsers. Using a combination of both male and female celebrities and CEOs, Mark Zuckerberg and Leonardo Di Caprio were chosen as ranking equally on source characteristics. These endorsers were used in the final study (Chapter 5) especially, since research has shown that male endorsers are more suited to endorse functional products such as smart-phones. A final pre-test conducted with 21 participants using word-association and interviews helped to understand consumer perceptions of traditional versus progenic endorsements and reveal their understanding of progenic endorsements.



## INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 3

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Chapter Three describes a qualitative study conducted in order to understand consumer perceptions of endorsements. The findings culminate in three primary attachment concepts which are examined in the subsequent chapters. This study helped to understand how consumers perceived endorsements, using the attachment lens. Current research has largely focused on quantitative studies in endorsement which, while helpful, do not always provide a more in-depth understanding of consumer perceptions. This is why in-depth interviews were conducted in order to understand what consumers perceived of attachment in endorsements and the distinction in their perspectives between traditional and progenic endorsements. This study not only shows that consumers actually find a difference in traditional and progenic endorsements but also identifies '*attachment concepts*'. Primary attachment concepts are identified, which comprise secondary attachment concepts that help to provide a more detailed understanding of consumers' perceptions of attachment in endorsements. Findings from this study will inform development of the conceptual model in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 3: ATTACHMENT PERSPECTIVES IN ENDORSEMENTS

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### 3.1 Introduction

*“I had no idea that being your authentic self could make me as rich as I’ve become. If I had, I’d have done it a lot earlier” (Oprah Winfrey).*

A casual observation of advertising endorsements suggests that the traditional role of the celebrity as an endorser of a third-party product has evolved into more complex product engagement such as company spokesperson, brand ownership and co-branding. These associations have been both incidental and deliberate. For instance, when pop star Beyoncé sang ‘Drunk in love’ which included ‘watermelon’ in the lyrics, little did she realise that “Watermelon” would incidentally become part of her brand equity, leading to successful endorsement and investment in a health drink start-up under the brand Watrmln Wtr. Similarly, when comedian and actor, Ashton Kutcher, played the role of an Internet billionaire in the sitcom, Two and a Half Men, he forged a new identity for himself in real life as ‘tech’s top investor’ with his involvement in the start-up Airbnb. On the other hand, billionaire talk-show host and entrepreneur, Oprah Winfrey, not only deliberately launched businesses after her own name but also actively managed those businesses, creating a unique endorsement for her products.

In this thesis it is argued that, when an endorser is seen as directly linked with the product, either by way of full or part company ownership (Beyoncé with Watrmln Wtr), by their role as an investor in the brand (Ashton Kutcher with Airbnb), or by their role as CEO of the company and lending their name to the brand (Oprah Winfrey), the endorsement creates a unique brand meaning that goes beyond mere endorsement of the product. This latter endorsement is referred to here as a progenic endorsement situation and explored further in this

chapter. Furthermore, because these products are, in a way, an extension of their endorsers, there is a higher perceived attachment or commitment between the endorser and the product, compared to traditional endorsement. This perceived attachment is what sets the progenic endorsement apart from the entire gamut of endorsements, which thus deserves special research attention for its unique contribution to endorsement.

The current literature does not make a clear distinction in endorsements resulting from the nexus of different types of endorsers, and in the factors that create this distinction. Articles published in the *Journal of Business Research*, which represent the extant literature on endorsement, are largely focused on congruency between the brand-consumer and celebrity-consumer (Misra & Beatty 1990; Albert et al. 2017) and on endorser characteristics (Rossiter & Smidts 2012) that impact endorsement effectiveness. As the role of attachment in endorsement has only been acknowledged recently (Keel & Natarajan 2012; Thomas & Fowler 2016), there is incomplete understanding of how attachment works in an endorsement context with multiple stakeholders involved, and especially in case of the new category of progenic brands. The present research is, therefore, part of a wider tradition of returning to a qualitative approach where, as in the case of the celebrity endorsement literature, existing models appear incomplete and offer only partial understanding. An exploratory approach is adopted in the present study to address two primary research questions:

RQ1) What is the role of attachment in endorsements?

RQ2) How does attachment differ from traditional versus progenic endorsements?

In order to understand consumers' perceptions of attachment in an endorsement context, firstly, progenic brands are introduced, and their unique characteristics discussed, compared to traditional and existent endorser-types which relate to 'lower perceived attachment between the celebrity and brand'. The attachment theory is then described along with the attribution theory and Kelman's social influence processes, which provide the

theoretical underpinnings for this research. Finally, the findings are examined, concluding with implications and future research scope.

## **3.2 Literature Review**

### ***3.2.1 Progenic brands***

In this thesis, the term “progenic” is introduced to describe a product or service launched by an endorser under his/her own name, which derives its brand equity from association with the endorser. Two types of celebrity are further distinguished: those who launch and own products and services under their own name, which is coined a ‘fused progenic’ endorsement situation; as opposed to the ‘true progenic’ type of endorsement situation comprising brands launched by CEOs under their own name.

By launching the progenic brand, the celebrity or CEO has a commitment that goes beyond endorsement and is long-term or enduring in nature with the associated product-brand. The endorser is responsible for the success of the progenic brand, either directly or indirectly; and one can expect consumers to perceive a ‘high degree of attachment’ and commitment between the endorser and the progenic brand. To a certain degree, the progenic brand resembles a sub-brand. However, there is an attachment between the individual and the product in progenic brands which does not necessarily exist in sub-brands.

#### ***3.2.1.1 Fused progenic brands***

Fused progenic brands retain the names of the endorsers and are launched and managed by the endorsers who are human brands in their own right. These brands are perceived to have a high degree of attachment with the associated celebrity endorser. The Kylie Minogue fragrance and beauty collection and Cristiano Ronaldo fragrances are progenic brands launched by singer and actress Kylie Minogue and soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo, respectively. These human-brands

are famed for their respective contributions to music and entertainment and sports, respectively. The similarity between these two endorsements is consumers' prior association with the endorsers' names, roles and identities, which gets transferred to the brands named after the celebrities, thereby imbuing or '*fusing*' their ideals and identities with the endorsed products. The celebrity's behaviour in public and overall reputation will directly affect the reputation of the associated progenic brands and, in turn, affect consumers' perception of the progenic brand. This is another reason that justifies the high degree of attachment between the celebrity and the progenic brand.

### *3.2.1.2 True progenic brands*

This category of progenic brands comprises brands that are launched and owned by CEOs. Electronics brand, Dyson, is a true progenic brand. This brand, particularly famed for its vacuum cleaners, is named after its founder, renowned British inventor and entrepreneur James Dyson. There is a high degree of attachment between CEOs and their associated progenic brands, because the latter have not only been launched by these individuals but reflect their individual personalities. What distinguishes true progenic brands from fused progenic brands is the '*prior association*' of the popular human-brands with their glamorous identities and lifestyles. True progenic brands are usually launched by individuals who are famous for their technical expertise but lack the 'glamour' quotient that is associated with human-brands who launch fused progenic brands.

At the heart of the progenic classification is the type of endorsers making the endorsement; and while research on the effects of endorser-type is scant, the few studies that have looked at the effect of endorser-type on endorsement have looked at the issue from an outcome perspective, such as risk reduction or effectiveness of an endorsement, without delving into any theoretical explanation of the observed effect.

The next section describes extant research to date on the various endorser-types, which has ignored the possibility that endorsers could also launch and own products.

### ***3.2.2 Types of endorsers***

Friedman et al. (1976) were the first to explore the different types of endorsers in endorsement research. In their seminal article, Friedman et al. (1976) compared advertisements using different types of endorsers and concluded that endorsed advertisements generally affected consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions, compared to advertisements without an endorser. It was interesting to see that the believability measure for the celebrity endorsement was highest, compared to the endorsements featuring a typical consumer, professional expert and company president. While Friedman et al. (1976) significantly contributed to endorsement research by concluding that advertisements with an endorser were more effective than non-endorsed advertisements, perhaps they did not realise that this difference in endorsements could have been attributed to 'attachment'. In the present study, it is reasoned that attachment could have helped explain or shed light on their findings. Their research did not examine why endorsements are more effective and, furthermore, which type of endorser would be suitable for which type of product. In a later study in 1979, they addressed this limitation by specifically exploring which endorser-type would be more suitable for endorsing which product type, by examining the celebrity, the professional expert and the typical consumer. They looked at product types identified with the type of risk associated with them: (1) one rating high on social and/or psychological risk; (2) one rating high on financial, performance, and/or physical risk; and (3) one rating low on all five types of perceived risk. Their research showed that different endorser types are more effective when endorsing products of different risk and involvement levels. However, while this study by Friedman et al. (1979) made a seminal contribution to endorsement research, their study did not provide a rationale for the different endorser-types

endorsing different product-types. In the present study, the difference in involvement levels is attributed as stemming from differences in attachment: attachment between the endorser and product. For instance, the professional expert is clearly an expert in a particular field, hence they will be more attached to more complex and high-risk products generally associated with their field of expertise. While their research addressed the void existing in the earlier research, Friedman and Friedman (1979) did not consider including the chief executive officer (CEO) in the endorsement categories or the possibility that an endorser could also include a founder or owner. This is important because CEOs have always been used to endorse more complex products and were also identified as an endorser-type by Friedman et al. (1976).

The limitation in the Friedman and Friedman (1979) study was addressed by Kaikati (1987), who differentiated celebrity endorsements as genuine celebrities, look-alike celebrities, chief executives/founders as celebrities, and finally, celebrities by association. Again, while this research included what was deficient in prior research, it did not explore the possibility that a regular celebrity could also be a founder and owner of products. Kaikati (1987) also grouped all endorsements as 'celebrity', which excluded the non-celebrity or CEO endorser from endorsement considerations.

Tom et al. (1992) showed how non-celebrity endorsers or "created" endorsers can be more effective than celebrity endorsers. Similarly, Mehta (1994) showed that consumers focused on the endorsed brand in non-celebrity endorsed advertisements, while the focus was largely on the celebrity in celebrity endorsements. It is reasoned here that this could be attributed to the extent of consumers' internalisation of the brand and incorporating this into their self-concepts.

In order to better understand progenic endorsements especially from an attachment perspective, the attachment theory serves as a theoretical underpinning which elucidates reasons why consumers perceive such high attachment in these endorsements.

### **3.3 Theoretical support**

Attachment theory holds a prominent place in developmental psychology and has been adopted to explain numerous domains of psychology and, in recent times, to understand consumers' attachment to products and to celebrities (Thomson 2006). The desire to form attachments stems from an innate human need, which begins with a child's attachment to their mother and continues throughout adulthood. As per attachment theory, the degree of emotional attachment to an object predicts the nature of an individual's interaction with the object and, consequently, the emotional and financial attachment to the object (Thomson et al. 2005).

From an endorsement perspective, we look at attachment as the primary underpinning behaviour responsible for the existence of the endorsement triad - consumer, brand and celebrity. From a marketing context, attachment reflects commitment, which Thomson et al., (2005) describe as, "the degree to which an individual views the relationship from a long-term perspective and has a willingness to stay with the relationship even when things are difficult" (p.78). In a way, commitment is a measure of attachment of the consumer to the brand. While research abounds on attachment and its relevance from consumer-product (Albert et al. 2008; Whan Park et al. 2010; Malär et al. 2011) and consumer-celebrity (Thomson 2006; Loroz & Braig 2015; Huang et al. 2015; Escalas & Bettman 2017) perspectives, it is still nascent when it describes attachment between the celebrity-product. The closest concept in endorsement research that takes this into account is the match-up hypothesis, which focuses on the congruency between the celebrity's image and product. Higher match-up is generally associated with higher endorsement effectiveness. It is argued here that the celebrity-product attachment is, however, distinct from the match-up hypothesis. A celebrity could have a high perceived attachment with the product due to their ownership or other associations with the brand, yet there could be a mismatch between the celebrity's image and product. Attachment as a concept has psychological underpinnings that help to explain the relationship between



entities. Research has already described the distinction of attachment from the other marketing constructs of involvement, attitudes and satisfaction (Ball & Tasaki 1992); the present study will, instead, focus on the relationship between attachment and the three components of any endorsement: consumer, celebrity and brand. The question that has been ignored in endorsement research so far is the linkage of attachment between the components of the triad in an endorsement and, more importantly, how consumers perceive attachment in this endorsement triad. Endorsements have long been described as having source characteristics which, in research, have generally been used to describe and differentiate various endorsement situations. It is important to understand the perceived attachment from an endorser to a product, since endorsements are a triad: the consumer, the endorser and the product. Consumer's attachment to products ultimately determines purchase intention and actual purchase. However, if a consumer has a negative attitude toward the endorser, then there would be no potential purchase intention for that product. Similarly, if the consumer perceives the celebrity to not be attached to the product, then it conveys a message that the product is questionable or the overall endorsement is not effective. When consumers perceive celebrities to be attached and connected to the endorsed products, they perceive higher commitment and involvement with the products. This impacts consumer purchase intention, since consumers not only see a good fit or match-up between the celebrity and product, but also see a greater role played by the celebrity in the overall endorsement.

Attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and credibility are the source characteristics which impact consumers' perceptions toward the endorser and eventually, the brand and the endorsement. While most studies have found a positive relationship between celebrity attractiveness and brand evaluation, studies also show that this relationship is not always positive (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). Match-up, meaning-transfer, and Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), including the integrative model, examine cognitive, heuristic and superficial

aspects which have varying results across endorsement situations. An attractive celebrity might not be perceived to be as attractive in the event of transgressions, monetary-motivations, or just simply endorsing a product that is not perceived to be reputable or of good quality.

The rationale proposed here is that, regardless of the product-type and endorser, endorsements can become more effective and efficient if perceived attachment levels are high. This attachment reflects commitment and involvement with the endorsement. High attachment levels can reflect emotional connections of love and passion. This is why it is reasoned here that attachment is the only psychological and interpersonal motivation that can determine success or failure of endorsements. Attachment is especially relevant when people launch their own products, instead of merely promoting them for a limited duration.

While the balance theory can explain a person's desire to maintain consistency in the triad (Knoll & Matthes 2017), attachment theory addresses imbalances that arise when a consumer's perception of the triad is not equally valenced. It is the attachment system in an endorsement that, in fact, balances an overall endorsement. Proximity-seeking as a primary attachment strategy is activated when the consumer perceives that either the brand or the endorser is transgressing in some way; while hyperactivation or deactivation (overtly seeking attachment or completely rejecting attachment) steps in when the attachment system is imbalanced again. The attachment system in endorsements includes representations of attachment figures' responses (consumer/brand/endorser) as well as representations of consumer's efficacy and value (working models of self) (Mikulincer & Shaver 2003; Aaker & Fournier 2004). It is this reciprocal nature of the triad in the attachment system that reflects customers' overall attitudes and purchase intentions in the long run.

While attachment theory is the primary theoretical underpinning of our research, attribution theory and Kelman's social influence processes of identification and internalisation also lend support to our understanding of attachment in the endorsement context. Attribution

theory, which was originally founded by Heider (1958), was developed to explain how individuals assign responsibility for events, considering whether a person's behaviour is attributed to intrinsic or extrinsic pressures, with the influence of three criteria, namely, *distinctiveness, consistency and consensus* (Moulard et al. 2015). Consumers' attributions about the endorser's belief in the product and, in the context in the present study, attachment, results in outcomes of social influence first proposed by Kelman (1961), namely, 1) identification and 2) internalisation. Identification with the endorser usually stems from attractiveness and familiarity, which translates into the desire to become like the endorser by imitating their behaviour; and internalisation of the endorsement arises through authenticity and credibility, wherein consumers adopt the message (Kapitan & Silvera 2016).

The present study adopts this approach of combining the attribution theory with Kelman's social influence processes; however, a distinction is created here in the way Kelman's social influence processes are interpreted, doing so from an attachment perspective. According to their research, Kapitan and Silvera (2016) propose that identification with the message occurs through superficial processes (endorser's source attractiveness), while a longer-lasting internalisation results from enduring source credibility characteristics. Consumers attribute various causes, or what are termed here 'concepts', that impact attachment between the consumer-brand-celebrity.

### **3.4 Methodology**

In order to answer the two research questions being posed regarding 1) consumers' perceptions of attachment in endorsements and 2) differences in attachment between traditional versus progenic endorsements, semi-structured in-depth interviews, in conjunction with third-person projective techniques, were used. Qualitative research using a combination of various qualitative techniques generally yields valuable information, helping participants to overcome

issues of unarticulated feelings and inhibition (Japutra et al. 2014; Belk 2017). Furthermore, interpretive methods are critical when seeking to comprehend consumers' relationships with their brands, as attitudes and values it explores do not lend themselves to the more formal structured techniques of the statistical, questionnaire-based surveys (Beverland et al. 2008).

In-depth interviews conducted took the form of informal, semi-structured conversations about perfumes and their relationship with the respondent. Perfumes were chosen as stimuli because: firstly, they are deemed personally relevant as a sign and symbol since they represent an individual's relationship with that product (Durgee 1986); and hence, provide a good indicator of attachment; and secondly, progenic branding is common in the perfume industry. Fahrenheit and Dior were specifically chosen as the representative perfume brands because both brands, in addition to belonging to the same parent brand 'Dior', are generally considered popular brands for both genders.

During the course of the interview, participants were asked to look at the stimulus (Fahrenheit for men and Miss Dior for women) along with three advertisements, which featured: 1) just the product (Figures 3.2 and 3.5); 2) with the endorser (Figures 3.3 and 3.6); and finally, 3) the same endorsement, but in the role of the endorser launching the product (Figures 3.4 and 3.7). Respondents were asked to assume the role of a brand manager for Dior, and recommend a particular ad for the brand and elaborate on their reflections. Ten participants were selected from a purposive sample with equal representation of both genders, with an age range of 20-55. The interviews took place in the authors' office, with each interview lasting 45-60 minutes. The interviews involved grand tour questions relating to consumers' attachments to brands and celebrities in general, and floating prompts, as commonly adopted in this type of methodology (Beverland et al. 2008). When interviews 8, 9 and 10 failed to elicit any new information, theoretical saturation was assumed and the data collection process ceased (Strauss & Corbin 2008). Each interview followed a semi-structured format in which the

respondents were asked to describe: their relationship with products/brands including fragrances; frequency and occasion of usage; and extrinsic and intrinsic factors motivating purchase and attitudes toward fragrances, and toward other products/brands that the respondents were highly attached to besides fragrances. Established procedures were used to underline the credibility of the coding and interpretation processes. After analysing and integrating the data, member checking and an investigator triangulation were conducted where the independent findings of the researchers' evaluation of the data were compared. The researchers' conclusions were similar, confirming the validity of the findings. Each of the interviews was transcribed verbatim, and these transcripts were analysed and interpreted by the authors (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Summary of respondents and themes (primary and secondary)**

<b>Primary Attachment Concepts</b>	<b>Participants exposed to their respective stimuli</b>	<b>Consumers' attachment to endorsed product</b>	<b>Consumers' attachment to endorsers</b>	<b>Celebrities' perceived attachment to brands</b>
<b>Secondary Attachment Concepts with Participants</b>	<b>Exposed to Miss Dior stimulus</b> <i>(K, L, N, J, S)</i>	<b>Product-involvement</b> <i>(S, N, L)</i>	<b>Type of celebrity</b> <i>(K, P, M, L, J)</i>	<b>Traditional endorsement</b> <i>(S, A, P, N, J)</i>
<b>Participants coded as A-S</b>	<b>Exposed to Fahrenheit stimulus</b> <i>(A, C, E, M, P)</i>	<b>Self-consciousness</b> <i>(J, M)</i>	<b>Personality of celebrity</b> <i>(P, S, N, A, M)</i>	<b>Progenic endorsement</b> <i>(A, C, E, P, J, K, L, M)</i>
		<b>Self-brand connection</b> <i>(N, L, M, P)</i>		
		<b>Sense of belonging</b> <i>(L, M, E)</i>		

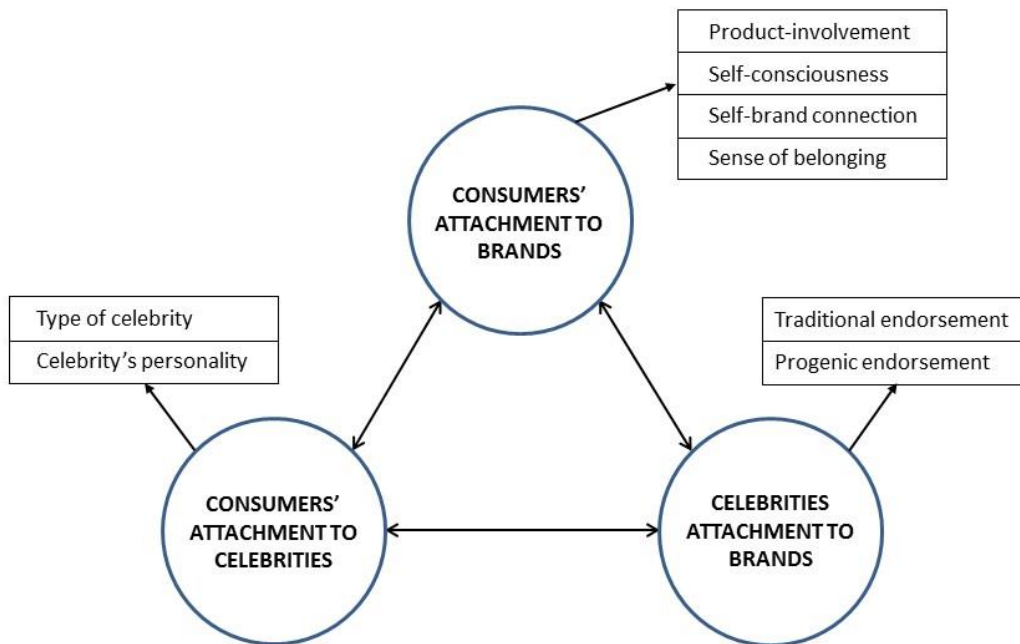
### 3.5 Findings

The transcripts were reviewed for thematic groupings associated with the research questions. In-depth discussions revealed that most respondents had a personal and complex relationship with perfumes that transcended their functional attribute. They were not always able to articulate their feelings about the perfumes; and some, especially men, were even reluctant to delve into specifics about this relationship. They used other narratives to articulate their feelings about their relationship with the product, even referring to TV shows to indirectly describe their attachments. The *three primary emergent concepts* were identified as: 1) consumers' attachment to brands; 2) consumers' attachment to celebrities; and 3) celebrities' attachment to brands. Secondary concepts identified were merged under the three primary concepts.

The first-tier categories, also known as the primary attachment concepts, are signalled by the circles which represent the focus of the interview components. As the focus of the thesis is on attachment, the key themes and second-tier categories, also known as the secondary attachment concepts, are organised within this. The findings also illustrate a reciprocal relationship between the constructs, since all three attachment constructs combine to form the overall attachment gamut in endorsements. Each of the secondary attachment concepts represents a factor identified from the responses of the participants that influenced how they evaluated the attachment for those respective attachment constructs. The themes or secondary attachment concepts, placed in the primary attachment concept of consumers' attachment to brands (tier), is represented by product-involvement, self-consciousness, self-brand connections and sense of belonging. The themes or secondary attachment concepts placed in the primary attachment concept of consumers' attachment to celebrities (tier) is represented by type of celebrity and celebrity personality. The themes or secondary attachment concepts

placed in the primary attachment concept of celebrities' attachment to brands (tier) is represented by traditional endorsement and progenic endorsement.

The present study adopted Fournier's (1998) approach of the four core conditions considered in interpersonal relationships, and the same for the endorsement-attachment triad. The relationship in an endorsement triad: (1) involves reciprocal exchange between the consumer, brand and endorser; (2) is purposive, with the consumer constantly seeking meaning from the brand and endorser, while the endorser seeks meaning from the brand; and finally, (3) is a process that evolves and changes over a series of interactions and in response to change over a series of interactions in the endorsement duration. These attachment concepts comprise multiple factors that consumers attribute as causes and outcomes for their respective attachment, which have been termed here, '*secondary attachment concepts*'. In this way, the first research question, RQ1, is addressed. The product-type determines the level of consumers' involvement with the brand; which, in turn, affects the portrayal of their identities not only to themselves but to others and how connected they feel with others; which creates their attachment to the brand. The celebrity-type and personality of the endorser together creates consumers' attachment to celebrities. Kelman's social identity processes of identification and internalisation affect consumers' perception of celebrities' attachment to their brands.



**Figure 3.1 Thematic map of the attachment perspectives in endorsement**

### ***3.5.1 Consumers' attachment to brands***

Extant literature has examined attachment in marketing from the consumer-to-brand context (Schultz et al. 1989). Consumers' attachment to brands stems from social, individual and also product-related aspects which determine the strength of attachments. *“Brands can be used to meet higher order, psychological needs, such as self-construction, social integration, self-differentiation, and self-presentation”* (Escalas & Bettman 2015, p.33). Consumers value products and brands not only for a product's tangible benefits but also for functional, emotional, and self-expressive purposes; and these 'additional' intangible benefits can help reinforce the way consumers think about themselves. Consumers use products and brands to



thus create and represent images of themselves to others or to themselves (Escalas & Bettman 2015). In the present study, it is found that, 1) product-involvement, 2) self-consciousness, 3) self-brand connection, and 4) sense of belonging, were secondary attachment concepts that affected consumers' perceived attachment to their products. Product-involvement becomes the tangible benefit, while self-consciousness, self-brand connection and sense of belonging become the intangible benefits, of consumers' attachment to brands and why they value them.

### *3.5.1.1 Product-involvement*

Product-involvement is the level of the consumers' involvement with a product depending on personal relevance, importance and interest to the consumer (Malär et al. 2011). It is argued here that this involvement reflects consumers' attachment to the products. Higher involvement also reflects the product-type. If a product was less expensive, risky and not concerning the physical or aesthetic appearance of a person, then consumers would likely be less involved, and thus, less attached to the product. For example:

*“I am most attached to cosmetics because I care about my skin, it's very important to me, it's what I put on my skin” [S,39].*

*“I feel complete (when referring to perfumes). The image of this brand (Miss Dior) is elegant, sophisticated...nice smell is me, it defines me. I don't want to only be in one branch of life. I'm a mother, I'm a wife and more importantly I'm a woman and I should care about myself” [N,36].*

Product-involvement can be so extreme that endorsements can sometimes be frowned upon. This happens when consumers are so attached to the brand that extraneous factors such as frequent celebrity endorsements and celebrity's reputation could possibly risk diluting their strong attachment:

*“It annoyed me when Chanel did the campaign with Brad Pitt and Nicole Kidman. It devalues Chanel” [L,55].*

This supports earlier research (Petty et al. 1983) which has explained that, for products of high involvement, the celebrity status of the product endorsers had no effect on attitudes. Again, perfumes are considered here to be high involvement-products, because of the social risk involved and the social nature of their consumption. This was found to lead to a desire amongst respondents to seek social approval for, or at least avoid disapproval from, using a particular type of perfume. This is explored in the next section.

### *3.5.1.2 Self-consciousness*

Self-consciousness, or *“the awareness that others are aware of the self”* (Malär et al. 2011, p.37), depends on product-involvement and product-type. The present research shows that, with an attractiveness-related product such as perfumes, consumers cared what others thought about their choice of perfume. This also shows that, if a consumer has higher involvement with a product, social approval becomes more relevant. While ‘parasocial relationships’ have predominantly been studied in the context of consumers’ attachment to celebrities, the findings here support recent studies which show that consumers’ attachment to products is influenced by others’ opinion (Proctor & Kitchen 2018):

*“I’d have to get someone else’s opinion. Also for a fragrance, it’s about who would typically buy something like this for another. Perfumes are usually gifted so perhaps “target their male partners”” [J,51].*

*“I care a lot about what other people think of the perfume I am wearing, like my spouse” [M,33].*

Brands also impact consumers’ self-image and, more importantly, the portrayal of this image to their social network. The attachment and connection of the consumer to the brand

reflects the importance of the brand in constructing and maintaining consumers' self-image and identity. In other words, consumers' attachment to brands stems from the way they perceive the intangible benefits of brands which either change or reinforce their image to themselves and to others.

### *3.5.1.3 Self-brand connection (SBC)*

Products and brands facilitate consumers to create their self-identity and to present these images to others or to themselves (Escalas & Bettman 2003; Edson Escalas 2004). Self-brand connection (SBC) refers to “*the extent to which individuals have incorporated brands into their self-concept*” (Escalas & Bettman 2003, p.340). While most brands and products offer consumers experiential and utilitarian value, experiential benefits have been associated with stronger self-brand connections (Granitz & Forman 2015). The findings in the present study show that products such as perfumes, even though they might be ‘attractiveness-related’, have high experiential value for consumers. This can be attributed to self-consciousness, high product involvement and sense of belonging by the consumer:

*“When I look at Miss Dior, I think of a beautiful woman. It reminds me to care about yourself. You are a woman, you must care about yourself. You are a woman. Sometimes, you forget because of marital tasks or motherhood jobs or educational pressure (at university) and also many issues that usually impact you [...] and make you forget you are a woman. This instrument, like Miss Dior reminds me that life is too short, you are getting older, and you won't be young again” [N,36].*

*“Miss Dior was given to me by my mum as a special birthday present. I was very young [...] and only wore it for special occasions. After I left school, it was the perfume of my choice” [L,55].*

In fact, participants' comments matched the items from the SBC concepts by Escalas and Bettman (2003), specifically, "Brand X reflects who I am" and "I feel a personal connection to Brand X"; which supports the present study's theory that SBC impacts consumers' attachment to brands.

Attribution theory also lends support to why consumers form attachments with brands. By being unique and distinct from competition, high distinctiveness can also be attributed to strong consumer attachments to brands, because of external causes such as societal approval (Moulard et al. 2015). Consumers become attached to the one specific brand which justifies not only their self-identity construal but also that of others:

*"I liked having brands which you couldn't get in those places. I don't like people having the same clothes as me..." [M,33].*

*"Something more masculine (referring to perfume), something like Brut seems to resonate [...] because that's what my dad used to use, I find it's a bit of a classic [...]" [P,39].*

The present study links friendship, understanding and identification as reasons for consumers to feel self-brand connection and which impacts their attachment with brands (Chung & Cho 2017):

*"My mother-in-law, even my grandmother knew this brand (Dior)...but Sharapova or other celebrities, who knows them?" [N,36].*

Consistency, a criterion from the attribution theory, deals with the relationship between endorser and product over time and modality, in an endorsement context. High consistency would mean that the endorser promotes the product for a long duration or that the product by itself has consistently delivered in terms of performance and quality. It is found here that consistency of the product could be attributed to consumers' attachment with brands:

*“I’m a creature of habit [...] so if I get something that’s good, I’ll keep getting that. If I have something that’s good, I don’t have a particular desire to get something new unless I desire change” [P,39].*

*“I am loyal primarily because of reliability when it comes to my handbags; I just know how it’s going to perform. That’s why I get frustrated when something does not perform, for me it’s all about performance, effectiveness” [L,55].*

#### *3.5.1.4 Sense of belonging*

Sense of belonging relates to a feeling of social approval. Escalas and Bettman (2017) describe the need to belong (NTB) as emergent from consumers’ self-esteem. These constructs measure the level of social approval/rejection, which impact attachment. Research has already demonstrated the connection between social influence and brand usage (Escalas & Bettman 2003). Consumers’ sense of belonging to reference groups, both aspirational and membership, affects their choice of purchases. This is because consumers use brand associations resulting in self-brand connection, which in turn impacts their perceived attachment to products:

*“You become part of a club, you become part of group. You’re one of the other people who buy that exclusive product in the boutique; it makes you feel like you belong to something, they’re just like me. Just gives me a sense of belonging, a sense of being known, a sense of community” [L,55].*

*“I think when it comes to things like coffee, they’re these niche markets, there’s something quaint about them. Like in Melbourne, just going to these quaint roasters...they all have different levels of prestige which almost make them like the ‘coffee underworld’. It’s the perception in the community of coffee drinkers about what’s the best and people talking about them, that makes them good” [M,33].*

Sometimes, not wanting to conform, just because everybody else has it or does it, also affects consumers' attachment to brands. In a way, consumers try to not conform, so as to be unique. This was also described by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011) as not resulting in "transitive" attachment, as shown in the following quote:

*"I like it (when referring to Paco Rabane perfume) but everybody has it, so I don't want to smell like everyone, literally all my friends wear it..." [E,20].*

This is why it is emphasised here that self-consciousness and self-brand connection together affect consumers' sense of belonging. Attachment forms when brands help consumers achieve self- and social-oriented goals.

### ***3.5.2 Consumers' attachment to celebrities***

An important reference group that affects consumers purchase decisions arising from endorsements is the 'celebrity'. Celebrities function as reference groups for consumers who begin to perceive an attachment with them, because celebrities enhance or support consumers' self-identities (Albert et al. 2017). Through a cultural context and the celebrity personalities, consumers can construct or enhance their identities by using celebrities who represent something of significance to themselves (Thomson 2006). Using Kelman's social influence theory, two processes—identification and internalisation—can help explain how celebrities influence consumers. In the present study, consumers' sense of identification with celebrities in an endorsement context is attributed as impacting their attachment to the celebrities and, finally, the products. More specifically, it is found here that, 1) type of celebrity, and 2) personality, influenced consumers' perceived attachment to celebrities.

### 3.5.2.1 Type of celebrity

In the attribution process, what is considered important is the relationship between the consumer and the endorser. Consumers attributed the type of celebrity as being responsible for their purchase choice. This ‘type’ was further attributed to their reputation, which translated to the quality of the products:

*“I remember (referring to purchasing a product launched by an endorser) when I bought a line of make-up inspired by this film director, Wong Kar Wai, who is also my favourite director of all time when I was studying film studies [...] It was a limited edition, it was really special...not like every film maker will endorse make-up...[...]” [K,32].*

*“I get affected by celebrity endorsements...in the past more so, but nowadays more the YouTube endorsers of influencers....celebrity endorsements are back of the mind, it depends which celebrity. You’ve got to be connected with the celebrity” [K,32].*

*“For me, anybody who stands behind the brand is taking responsibility for the brands’ actions, if that’s poor quality or malfunctioning [...] then that celebrity is responsible for that. I don’t know Louis Vuitton or who they are as a person or Calvin Klein, but I like certainly celebrities who put themselves out there in the media [...]” [P,39].*

The findings here also support the Escalas and Bettman (2015) study which shows how consumers reported higher SBC for brands with images that are congruent with the image of a celebrity that they aspire to be like, particularly in the case when there is source congruence, that is, where the image of the celebrity and the brand match, and when the brands are symbolic. The findings here, however, contradict the Fleck et al. (2012) study which reports that endorsers who were widely appreciated were likely to be congruent with any brand: a celebrity endorsement is effective when it is congruent with the brand and also when the celebrity is

appreciated or popular, with a compensation effect between these two variables. However, the present study finds that, even though all participants appreciated both Federer and Sharapova, they were not perceived to be congruent with a symbolic brand such as Dior:

*“Would probably prefer Federer to be associated with a sports-related product, Leonardo Di Caprio would be more suited... someone suave” [M,33].*

*“Miss Dior is a fun, sexy brand so the person would have to personify that sexiness. Miss Dior is not an active brand, whereas Maria Sharapova is about ‘active’. It’s about sophistication and showing you the way, which Sharapova does not embody” [L,55].*

*“I see the product as being very feminine. But to me, when I see Sharapova I see strength, competitiveness, endurance...a bit more practical compared to this soft feminine type of product” [J,51].*

### 3.5.2.2 Personality

Role model identification was identified by Rossiter and Smidts (2012) as being an important characteristic for high-risk products. However, the present thesis attributes a celebrity’s personality as being important for consumers purchasing both high and low-risk products. Furthermore, a celebrity’s personality is described here as being ‘likable, familiar, reputable, relatable and trustworthy’. If a celebrity is perceived to be lacking in any of these characteristics, then the consumers do not have a positive perception of the celebrity’s personality. In this way, they either directly or indirectly attributed this perception to that of the endorsed product being ‘good quality’ and the congruence between the endorser and the product:

*“Local celebrities like Russell Crowe, Eric Bana, seem extremely genuine and that’s something that appeals to me. I wouldn’t really engage so well with somebody that*



*seems to be fake, some actors might be and have to be because they have to maintain a public image [.....] they seem to be quite modest, quite approachable ...]* [P,39].

*“I like Natalie Portman because I think she’s very kind, relaxing. She could also be a good endorser for Miss Dior because I think the brand stands for those values”*  
[S,39].

*“I like George Clooney, I like his style...even when he got married, he didn’t approach a celebrity. If Clooney launched his own range of coffee, I would buy it. But if Clooney endorses H&M, both Clooney and H&M will lose their worth for me...”* [N,36].

In the present study, the ‘medium or the platform’ of the celebrity endorsement is attributed to be influential in affecting consumers’ perceived attachment to celebrities’ personalities. For instance, there were two participants who very strongly identified with television personalities because they thought those personalities’ images were “cool” and somewhat relatable:

*“I would buy clothes worn by the lead male actor from “Power” because it looks ‘posh’”* [A,30].

*“I like TV shows and who’s wearing what in those shows. When I was younger, I wanted to look like them so would buy products. Not that a product was associated with it...”*  
[M,33].

### **3.5.3 Celebrities’ attachment to brands**

As part of the endorsement triad, the final attachment node is the attachment between the celebrity and brand. This attachment is further distinguished as dependent on traditional endorsement or progenic endorsement. This attachment is lower in the traditional endorsement in comparison to the progenic endorsement situation. The distinction in attachment arises with

celebrities being replaced because of the nature of celebrity endorsements, compared to situations when people launch their own products thus justifying higher attachment levels (Saldanha et al. 2018). The second research question, RQ2, which is concerned with understanding how attachment is perceived as different from traditional to progenic endorsements, is thus answered.

### *3.5.3.1 Traditional endorsement*

Consumers who perceive celebrities' dedication to the brands develop favourable attitudes to the endorsement. This dedication of celebrities is their perceived attachment to the brands. Perceptions generated by the celebrities bind to the endorsed brands through recurring associations which reflect the celebrities' attachment to the brand (Albert et al. 2017). In the present thesis, the reason for celebrities' perceived attachment to the brand is attributed as the extent to which they identify with the associated brand. If celebrities perceive the brand to be congruent with their image, then there will be higher perceived attachment to the brand. If they also identify the brand as extending and maintaining their self-image and reputation, then there will be high perceived attachment to the brand. On the contrary, a celebrity only motivated by remuneration would be seen as disregarding the endorsed product type, quality and brand reputation, and could be seen to not identify with the brand, resulting in no attachment to the brand:

*“Celebrities generally care about their reputation, so they would be careful about what they typically endorse” [S,39].*

*(Referring to Roger Federer's name on products) “He is a top bloke, if he is endorsing something, then he's good quality, so it's going to be good quality” [A,30].*

*“Endorsers might hit a resonance, if they’re at the right moment and I’m thinking about them and I see the endorsement, then it spikes my curiosity about what the product is and if I respect the endorser, might consider to purchase the product...” [P,39].*

*“I love one brand at a time only...I love the image. I have my own brand and like that every endorser should be unique and so should brands” [N,36].*

*“The company have associated her (Maria Sharapova) with that brand. But effectively she could have been anybody. They could go and pick anyone else. It’s a convenience type of endorsement. If she does something bad, we’ll replace her with someone else, it’s more superficial” [J,51].*

### *3.5.3.2 Progenic endorsement*

When endorsers launch their own product, naming it after themselves, and imbuing their values into the product, they are perceived to have the highest attachment to the brands:

*“He probably has some input in making this perfume” (referring to Figure 3.4, see Appendix) [A, 30].*

*“I’d buy Beckham shoes if Beckham launched his own range of sports shoes because I’d feel those shoes have an “added kick”” [C,24].*

*“I played basketball for 9 years and I had the Jordans from Michael Jordan...and they are really really [sic] good quality because he’s a basketball player and he knows what’s best for the sport, so he knows a lot about that and he makes good quality...it’s a little bit expensive but the quality is so good, so I bought them a lot” [E,20].*

*“With the Jamie Oliver cooking set, that was a gift for someone. For my sister, a wedding gift...it was time, place, convenience, price maybe and it certainly didn’t hurt*

*the purchasing decision and it would have helped the purchasing decision if there was that endorser behind it” [P,39].*

*“The brand has gone to another level of effort; they are more committed, shows greater commitment by the company and signifies more of a commitment between the company and her. It’s not uncommon for celebrities to launch their own products because they all need to capitalise on their celebrity” (referring to Figure 3.7, see Appendix) [J,51].*

Consumers’ perceptions of *trust* and *credibility* are factors that motivate purchase and eventually brand loyalty. Furthermore, *expertise* of the endorsers associated with the brand creates positive attitudes toward the brand. This supports extant research finding that trust, when combined with expertise and credibility, causes positive consumer evaluations of the brand (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). Trustworthiness alone as a source determinant is insufficient to be linked with positive endorsement effectiveness (Rossiter & Smidts 2012). While traditional endorsements, as seen from the findings in the present study, can be perceived to be sometimes either trustworthy or credible, this is not the primary motivation. Progenic endorsements are moulded by trust, credibility and expertise, because consumers perceived these endorser characteristics to be transferred to the products launched by these endorsers.

*“If her name is on the bottle, I assume she has a part in designing that product... in creating that product (referring to Figure 3.7, see Appendix). That’s why I bought that special make-up from film director, Wong Kar Wai...it said it was inspired by him or he had a hand in deciding which colours, it represented the colours and mood of his films” [K,32].*

*“It’s about them, they’re trading their name a lot harder than someone who doesn’t, it’s easier to remind me of them” [L,55].*

*“It looks like he takes ownership of the brand, because his name is on the product itself. It becomes very tied to him on a personal level. You would hope that in an ideal world, that by taking ownership of the product and putting their name on it, that it’s a phenomenal product” (referring to Figure 3.4, see Appendix) [M,33].*

### **3.6 Discussion, limitations and future research**

Extant research, thus far, has been limited with respect to the effect of the type of role played by endorsers (Friedman et al. 1976; Friedman & Friedman 1979; Kaikati 1987). However, there has been an increase in people launching products and naming these products after themselves. This has not received much attention from scholars, though the business press has begun to identify such endorsers. This type of endorser is described as becoming a brand in their own right and using their status to build personal empires (Euromonitor 2014). In the present study, a distinction is created in the endorsement situations according to the endorser types; which, according to the author’s knowledge, has not been addressed in academic literature to date. Along with the distinction in endorser types, the present study introduces the progenic endorsement situations.

While a recent paper (Albert et al. 2017) introduces the measurement scale of endorsement effectiveness, it applies the congruency outlook to examine the endorsement triad: consumer, brand and celebrity. The present study proposes and examines qualitatively the underlying dynamics of the consumer-brand-celebrity triad influencing endorsement effectiveness.

The main objective of the present research was to understand how consumers perceive attachment in endorsements and whether there was a distinction in this perception from one endorsement to another. This was achieved with the three primary attachment concepts that

emerged as consumers' perceptions of attachment in endorsements. Upon further examination, there was a clear differentiation in how and why consumers perceived attachment in progenic endorsements as distinct from traditional endorsements. Trust, credibility and expertise were the main reasons attributed for this distinction. This was because consumers perceived the endorsers and the overall endorsement to be trustworthy and credible, which increased the believability of progenic endorsements for them. In this way, the research questions, RQ1 and RQ2 are answered.

Through the various secondary attachment concepts, consumers attributed product-involvement, self and social goals and identities explained through self-consciousness, self-brand connections and sense of belonging as reasons for their perceived attachment to brands. Consumers also attributed the celebrity-type and celebrity personality as causes for their attachment to celebrities. Through Kelman's social process of identification, consumers clearly distinguished celebrities' perceived attachment to celebrities in traditional versus progenic endorsements.

From a theoretical perspective, the present study captures attention by examining attachment qualitatively but by using stimuli as an aspect of experimental design. In this context, by combining popular and reputed sports celebrities with a popular perfume brand, the study explores consumers' feelings of attachment toward their favourite product types, brands and celebrities. Using projective techniques, it has been able to generate uninhibited responses which would not have been possible if the study was quantitatively designed. The study mapped the methodological framework of the research, and attempted to understand consumers' perceptions of endorsements, especially the attachment spectrum which differentiates traditional and progenic endorsements.

There is some indication that well-known and loved brands such as Chanel among others, should perhaps refrain from using celebrity endorsers if possible. By using celebrity

endorsers, the brand image of these popular brands possibly gets diluted; and thus conveys to loyal consumers that the brand is confused or just succumbing to the ‘celebrity’ craze of endorsement. Furthermore, the disadvantage is that consumers might choose to look at competitive brands and switch loyalties. However, the present study supports existing research which practitioners can continue to follow: match-up and source models (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) are relevant for all brand-types, including beauty-related products. It is also important to note that perfumes can be regarded as high-involvement products, since social approval for such product-types is extremely important to consumers’ self-identities. Furthermore, the cost of these products justifies that companies should be careful when choosing their endorsers and should not randomly use attractive models that are not as well-known as actors. Finally, consumers perceive products launched by individuals as being more attached to the endorser’s ideals and image. Hence, it is recommended that companies should encourage celebrities who have an expertise or are skilled in a particular craft to launch products using their own names, instead of mere endorsements.

A limitation to this study is the use of the product-type, for which it can be argued that, for male consumers, perhaps perfumes are not as relevant and essential as they are for the female consumer. Finally, it would be interesting to have the three attachment concepts tested quantitatively. These limitations, as well as the study’s contributions, encourage further research on attachment in endorsement and, more specifically, to examine distinctions in endorsement situations.

A new category of endorsers has emerged in recent times, which is still nascent and unexplored in academic research, but not so unfamiliar in the media. Brands lately have been using so-called ‘influencers’ to promote numerous products. While this trend could continue and potentially rise in future, what is debatable is sustainability of this endorser-type. Influencers’ personal lives are constantly under public scrutiny, so that any scandal and

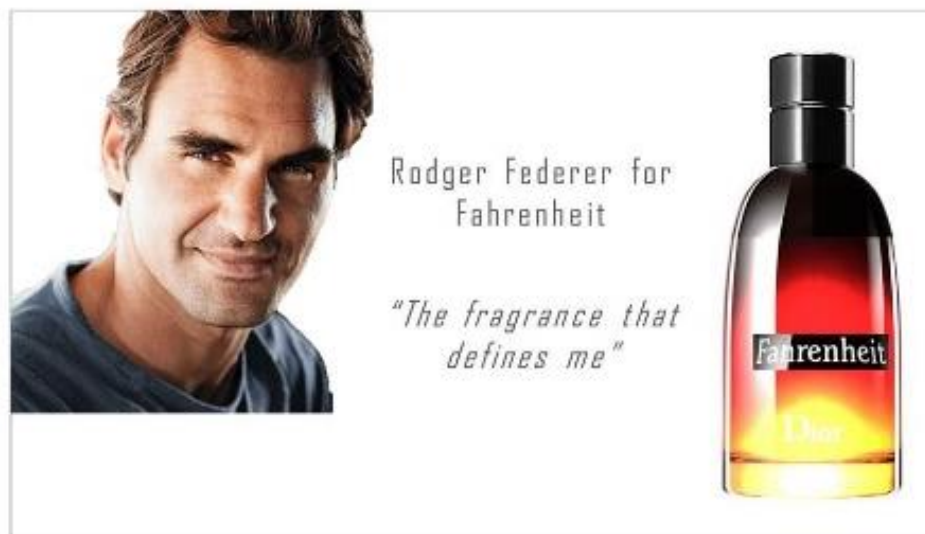
negative publicity directly impacts their endorsed brands. Influencers as a new endorser-type could possibly challenge the popularity of traditional endorsements and, potentially, see more firms employ this new endorser-type. However, what becomes more credible and trustworthy for consumers would be influencers launching their own products and then promoting them on social media platforms. In this way, influencers become a part of the progenic endorsement gamut.



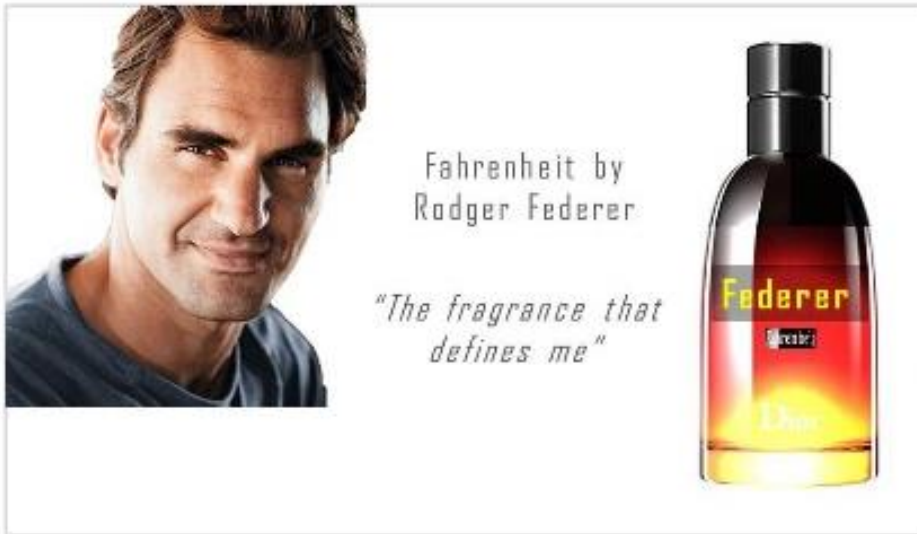
**Appendix: Figures**



**Figure 3.2 No endorsement**



**Figure 3.3 Traditional endorsement**



**Figure 3.4 Progenic endorsement**



**Figure 3.5 No endorsement**



Figure 3.6 Traditional endorsement



Figure 3.7 Progenic endorsement

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 3

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This chapter introduced three primary attachment concepts referred to as nodes in the ensuing chapters of this thesis. With the identification of both primary and secondary attachment concepts, the qualitative study successfully explored consumers' perceptions of attachment in endorsements. Furthermore, it also showed that consumers not only distinguished between traditional and progenic endorsements, but also provided an understanding of how progenic endorsements were evaluated more favourably on the basis of trust, credibility and expertise.

These three attachment nodes are further examined in the conceptual model of this thesis, namely, the *tripartite attachment model* in the next chapter. This model examines the flow of attachment between the three nodes, providing a better interpretation of the overall concept of attachment in endorsements.

## INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 4

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The qualitative study from the previous chapter resulted in identifying three primary attachment concepts, now referred to as nodes, which will be used to form the conceptual framework for the thesis in this chapter. Again, like the qualitative study, the attachment theory is the primary theoretical underpinning for Chapter Four. However, in addition to this theory, McCracken's meaning-transfer model will be adapted and extended to explain attachment in the endorsement context. The tripartite attachment model developed in Chapter 3 will be extended using the existing meaning-transfer model framework to explain how attachment flows in the endorsement triad. Hypotheses are proposed to explain the interaction and interplay of attachment between the consumer, celebrity and product.

## CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: A TRIPARTITE MODEL OF ATTACHMENT

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*“My brands are an extension of me. They’re close to me. It’s not like running GM, where there’s no emotional attachment.” (Jay-Z, rapper)*

Celebrities are being increasingly used strategically in endorsements, not only to promote a product but also to act as company spokesperson and even business partner. An estimated 60% of advertisements in India and South Korea, 45% of advertisements in Taiwan, and 15% of advertisements in the United States and Europe, feature celebrity endorsements (Chung & Cho, 2017). A celebrity is “known for being well-known regardless of whether that eminence derives from the entertainment field, medicine, science, politics, religion, sports or close association with other celebrities” (McCutcheon, Lange, & Houran, 2002, p.67). One reason for celebrities’ popularity in product endorsement is their ability to cut through advertising clutter, create favourable attitudes toward the advertised brand, and facilitate purchase decisions (Arsena et al. 2014; Erdogan 1999; Thomas & Fowler 2016). More recent studies have shown that celebrity endorsements can even help make expensive products seem available and accessible to the masses (Paul 2015), increase firm value (Derdenger 2018), and help celebrities engage with fans on social media (Gong & Li 2017). However, not all endorsements are equal. The quote above by famed rapper and recently turned entrepreneur, Jay-Z, marks the subtleties in endorsements, from a dispassionate endorsement of a major brand by a celebrity to a celebrity intricately involved in the production and even ownership of an endorsed brand.

Current theories on endorsement have not kept pace with such developments. These theories, which primarily include source models and the match-up hypothesis, have largely evolved from the communication research area, and are thus persuasion-based with a narrow focus on celebrity endorsement (Soneji et al. 2015; Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). Not surprisingly,

researchers such as Bergkvist and Zhou (2016) and Knoll and Matthes (2017) have called for additional theory and research to challenge extant endorsement research and address the conflicting results in various endorsement studies over the years. The present thesis addresses this concern and draws upon *attachment theory* to extend the current models of endorsement. It is argued here that the fundamental driver of endorsement effectiveness is the innate psychological need of attachment which consumers experience through the meaning transfer process in an endorsement situation.

Consider the recent product endorsement of a regular South Korean beer brand, Cass, by Gordon Ramsay (McCurry 2017). This endorsement came under severe criticism on social media platforms, including from Ramsay's own fan club, who believed this endorsement of an ordinary beer went against Gordon Ramsay's ideals of perfection and quality. Although Gordon Ramsay defended the endorsement by stating that Korean food did not require a sophisticated or expensive beer to complement it, and that he really thought that this 'non-pretentious' beer was a perfect match with 'honest' Korean food, this did not go down well with the critics. What went wrong here? Did Ramsay's fans feel that he became a sell-out and that commercialism had tainted his ideals? If celebrity endorsement worked through the formation of celebrity-induced self-concept for the consumers, then there should have been unwavering support for Ramsay irrespective of the product endorsed. This was clearly not the case. What could be other possible reasons for this endorsement failure? Did the consumers perceive a lack of attachment of Ramsay to the beer brand? Or is it that the consumers were not attached to the beer brand, had a low opinion of it, and this ultimately affected their perceived attachment of Ramsay to the brand? Or could it be that they did not like certain aspects of Ramsay's personality and so had a weak attachment which was easily eroded by the endorsement gaffe?

The present study attempts to answer these questions by using Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory and McCracken's (1989) meaning transfer model to provide a holistic view of attachment encompassing the three main entities in an endorsement—the consumer, the celebrity and the product. The study posits that a deeper, psychological bond of ‘attachment’ goes beyond consumers’ self-concepts and superficial source characteristics. If an endorser is perceived to be attractive, trustworthy and an expert, then regardless of the product-type or consumer involvement, the consumer not only gets attached to the endorser but also, in turn, gets attached to the endorsed product. Similarly, if the consumer is attached to a product, and if that product gets endorsed by a celebrity, the consumer will begin to get attached to the endorser, who is then perceived to possess positive source characteristics. Again, if the endorser is perceived to have an attachment with the product, this can be seen as the celebrity having a good match with the product, which will then positively affect the consumers’ attitudes toward the endorser and product. Thus, irrespective of the endorser’s source characteristics, it is proposed here that attachment as an outcome will affect the consumers’ attitude and purchase intention. This in itself has strategic marketing implications that could positively affect endorsement situations.

The present study draws upon attachment theory and the meaning-transfer model to argue that attachment between the three elements in an endorsement (consumer-celebrity-product), hereafter referred to as the *endorsement triad*, determines the success or failure of the overall endorsement attachment. The study provides rationales for the importance of applying attachment theory in endorsement, proposes a tri-partite framework of attachment, and concludes with strategic implications for marketing practitioners.



## **4.1 Theoretical Development**

### ***4.1.1 Attachment and attachment theory***

The origin of attachment can be traced back to the attachment theory in psychology developed by John Bowlby, the ‘father’ of modern attachment theory (Bowlby 1969). This theory was developed to understand a child’s attachment to a primary care-giver, often the mother. Bowlby believed that a child’s prime motivation, in addition to their physical and other emotional needs, is their need to bond with a real attachment figure, and that this can be seen not only throughout infancy but also throughout one’s adult life. The most important human motivation is, indeed, the need for affectional bonds with others; and Bowlby considered the mother’s behaviour an important aspect of the infant’s attachment responses (Bowlby 1969). Attachment is essential to one’s overall personality development and can manifest itself in interpersonal communication and relationships. Bowlby (1969) conceptualised attachment as the “interactive regulation of synchrony between psychobiologically attuned organisms” (p.11). He described attachment behaviour as an evolutionary function of protecting one’s infant from danger, which is rooted in the survival of the human species. Since its development, attachment theory has been adopted to explain numerous domains of psychology, beginning with parent-child relationships to adult relationships and how lack of attachment causes anxiety and loss.

Attachment and attachment theory have been described in a relationship construct (Hazan and Shaver 1994), in a behavioural and clinical context (Goodwin 2003), and even in a religious context (Hewitt 2008). The one common tenet is that individuals have a deep sense of belonging, especially with people they are comfortable with, which is universal, regardless of one’s cultural influence. Attachment theory has also been used in the marketing context to understand attachment between the consumer and product (Japutra, Ekinici, & Simkin, 2014; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011; Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich, &

Iacobucci, 2010) and between the consumer and celebrity (Thomson 2006; Loro & Braig 2015; Huang et al. 2015; Escalas & Bettman 2017). In light of this, attachment is defined in the present study as, “a multi-faceted property of the relationship between a specific individual or group of individuals and a specific material object and/or specific individual or group of individuals that includes a deep psychological and emotional connection”.

The notion that attachments include emotional and affectional bonds has already been reflected in consumer research (Shimp & Madden 1988; Thomson et al. 2005). Celebrity endorsements are analogous to human relationships in that consumers also form relationships with products and celebrities (Ilicic, Baxter, et al. 2016; Thomson 2006). The chief function of attachment is to confer “emotional security to the attached party by being responsive to a person’s needs” (Thomson 2006, p.106), and both consumers and celebrities make this happen in endorsements. While consumers demonstrate this attachment in the form of positive attitudes toward the brand, celebrity, and finally, purchase intention, celebrities through the marketing communication process take part in active relationship roles, also making them eligible as reciprocating relationship partners (Ilicic, Baxter, & Kulczynski, 2016).

Studying attachment from a marketing perspective is essential, because attachment affects behaviours that foster brand profitability and customer lifetime value (Thomson et al. 2005). Fournier's (1998) article on consumer-brand relationships suggests that feelings linked to attachments are fundamental to strong brand relationships, and demonstrates that commercial relationships behave in a similar way to personal relationships. Research has also shown how attachment has strong motivational and behavioural implications which result in not only cognitive but also financial manifestations, which translate into purchase intention (Fedorikhin et al. 2008).

#### ***4.1.2 How can attachment theory complement extant endorsement theories?***

An overview of recent endorsement literature highlights the fact that traditional endorsement models are being modified in order to explain endorsement effectiveness across a myriad of situations. For instance, one article (Proctor & Kitchen 2018) supports the notion of parasocial relationships in social media as being a better alternative to endorsements. The justification is that like-minded people would share similar interests in the same celebrities, which translates to an emotional connection with not only the celebrity but also product or brand through the process of parasocial relationships. Similarly, Chung and Cho (2017) identify parasocial relationships as being effective in endorsements, especially for social media platforms, since these relationships foster a “psychological attachment between the viewer and a character” (p.483). From these perspectives, consumers with similar mind-sets would purchase similar brands and form strong attachments with celebrities. Furthermore, for all parasocial relationships in recent times have acknowledged that social media is more effective for these relationships to work and make endorsements meaningful to consumers. How does this work for traditional media endorsements? With the attachment theory, consumers who are both dissimilar and similar-minded form attachments to celebrities and their endorsed products because of a perceived attachment between the celebrity and product. This attachment becomes affected when the celebrity is involved in an endorsement gaffe or is embroiled in a controversy. Parasocial relationships explain attachment between the viewer and celebrity, but the meaning-transfer process explains attachment between the consumer and product. However, an important attachment node, the celebrity-product one, is ignored; which can explain why consumers who are like-minded are not attached to the same celebrities, even when there is no endorsement gaffe.

Escalas and Bettman (2017) use social identity theory to examine the consumer-celebrity relationship. They propose that consumers internalise the brand symbolism that

emanates from celebrity endorsements in order to construct and communicate their self-concepts. With this rationale, celebrity endorsements help consumers to meet social identity needs by providing meaningful connections. However, this does not explain *why* consumers feel a need for forming these connections in the first place. It is proposed in the present study that the deep, psychological need that drives consumers to form connections in endorsements is related to the triad of attachment that the consumers experience between the self, the celebrity and the product.

One of the reasons that the source models from endorsement research appear incomplete is that they do not consider all the perceptions and significance connected to a particular endorser, merely focusing on certain characteristics of the endorser. Fleck, Korchia, and Roy (2012) argue that the source models are not capable of capturing what a person, as a whole, is contributing to an advertisement, have varying results, and more importantly, cannot account for the entire system of influence associated with celebrity endorsements (Albert et al. 2017). Another explanation for these contrasting results on the influence of source factors attributes these to the study approach. Experimental studies have obtained more significant results than survey-based studies (Bower and Landreth 2001). If consumers have a positive predisposition toward an advertising message, a less credible endorser can be more persuasive than a more credible source (Keel and Nataraajan 2012). A major disadvantage of both source attractiveness and source credibility models is limiting the assessment of an individual to certain dimensions which, in many situations, cannot be accurately identified (McCracken 1989; Erdogan 1999). Managers do not see celebrities as uni-dimensional individuals, as celebrities are different from unknown endorsers since celebrities represent a set of meanings from the roles they assume in any field (Erdogan et al. 2001). If we were to apply attachment theory to the source models' context, regardless of an endorser's characteristics, there could be perceived attachment between the celebrity and product because of the celebrity's association

with the product category, or even a match-up. The match-up hypothesis is another widely used theory that examines endorsement effectiveness; and the present thesis reasons that attachment theory can, again, justify inconsistent findings in match-up results.

The main premise of the match-up hypothesis is that a perfect fit or match-up between the endorser and product will positively affect consumer evaluations of an endorsement. Solomon, Ashmore, and Longo (1992) extend the original match-up hypothesis to examine how attractiveness varied across endorsers and endorsements, and more specifically, that attractiveness as a concept is multidimensional and can vary not just with consumers' perceptions but also with product-types. Again, there have been conflicting results, with some studies stating that attractiveness is effective when the product endorsed is used to promote attractiveness, while others have shown that highly attractive or non-attractive endorsers could be effective depending on consumer involvement with the product and also if the product is used for product-solving purposes (Bower and Landreth 2001). Further complicating the issue is the study by Lee and Thorson (2008), which shows that a moderate mismatch between a celebrity and product can be more effective than a complete match or mismatch. While researchers have reasoned that beauty is a psychologically complex concept (Solomon et al. 1992), it is argued here that it does not constitute a relationship. A psychological and emotional connectedness is what makes or breaks a 'fit' in endorsements.

An endorser who is attractive and expert-like might seem like a good fit with a product; however, if there is no attachment between the endorser and product, the overall endorsement will suffer. Attachment is an outcome of both source characteristics and match-up, which can strategically determine the success or failure of an endorsement. This is why the present study seeks a fundamental understanding of *attachment* as a focus in the present research, and why attachment theory is the primary theory underpinning the present work.

### ***4.1.3 Role of attachment in endorsements***

Although the role of attachment is well established in branding and clearly has benefits from an overall relationship perspective, it's role has not been widely examined in the advertising context (Bidmon 2017) or, more specifically, in terms of celebrity endorsement. This is a surprising omission given that a recent survey (Knoll and Matthes 2017) of celebrity endorsement estimates that every fourth to fifth advertisement incorporates endorsement, although this varies across countries (Japan: 70%, Taiwan: 45%, India: 24%, USA: 19–25%, UK: 21%).

The nexus of consumer-celebrity-product in endorsement research has focused largely on: the consumer-celebrity relationship explained by emotional attachment, which constitutes autonomy-relatedness-competence (A-R-C); parasocial relationships, or sense of belonging (Escalas & Bettman 2017; Ilicic, Baxter, et al. 2016; Thomson 2006); and image congruence between the celebrity and product (Albert et al. 2017; Paul & Bhakar 2018). Although attachment is an emotional connection with another person, this does not imply that attachments represent emotions or vice-versa. As Jimenez and Voss (2010) point out, “because particular reactions can emanate from different emotions and particular emotions can result in different reactions, inferring an emotion from a particular behavioural reaction is inappropriate” (p.363). Need to belong and parasocial relationships help in explaining consumer to celebrity relationships, but do not capture the overall endorsement process. Current endorsement research, in being limited to the above theories, is thus restricted to how consumers form attachments based on others' beliefs and opinions. However, what happens when a consumer is genuinely attached to a product or a celebrity without being biased by others' perspectives?

Furthermore, the attachment between a celebrity and the endorsed product, and an overall evaluation of attachment and its linkage with other entities, have not been fully

explored, leading to inconsistent findings in endorsement research. A few studies (Keel & Nataraajan 2012; Thomas & Fowler 2016) have made indirect reference to consideration of the attachment between the celebrity and product in their future research scope, but have not explicitly tested this relationship. Furthermore, prior research has not considered attachment as a multi-dimensional concept, although related work on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements points to the importance of attachment. The reference to attachment has been either indirect or not completely acknowledged. Current studies on attachment in marketing have studied consumers' attachment to products (Ball & Tasaki 1992; Mugge et al. 2010) and to human brands (Thomson 2006; Loroz & Braig 2015). Table 4.1 provides the existing constructs that illustrate definitions, context and operationalization of attachment. The present research has categorised product, brand and emotional attachment as 'attachment between the consumer and product'.

**Table 4.1: Literature review of attachment constructs**

<b>Attachment Node</b>	<b>Author/s</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Ball and Tasaki 1992)	Attachment between a consumer and brand varies with the type of object and stage of ownership
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim 2008)	Attachment indicates the existence of an emotional tie between a person and an object
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Mugge, Schifferstein, and Schoormans 2010)	Products' appearance and utility positively affect attachment and satisfaction

<b>Attachment node</b>	<b>Author/s</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(David and Bearden 2017)	Consumers' interpersonal attachment styles impact purchase intention of products depicted in ads
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Park et al. 2010)	Brand attachment is strongly related to the emotional indicator of attachment and separation distress
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Malär et al. 2011)	Brands with actual self-congruence generated higher levels of emotional brand attachment
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Thomson, Whelan, and Johnson 2012)	Attachment styles predict consumers' reactions after brand relationships end
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Bidmon 2017)	Attachment style impacts brand attachment and can be leveraged to create emotional bonds with brands
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005)	Devised a scale to measure emotional attachment (EA) between the consumer and brand
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Fedorikhin, Park, and Thomson 2008)	Parent brand attachment affects consumers' reactions to brand extension transgressions
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Jimenez and Voss 2010)	Emotional Attachment and self-concept maintenance (SCM) interact to predict purchase intention



<b>Attachment node</b>	<b>Author/s</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
<b>Consumer-Product</b>	(Grisaffe and Nguyen 2011)	Developed five antecedents to understand emotional attachments between consumers and brands
<b>Consumer-Celebrity</b>	(Thomson 2006)	Extending attachment theory to include autonomy, relatedness, and competence (i.e. A-R-C)
<b>Consumer-Celebrity</b>	(Loroz and Braig 2015)	Using A-R-C as attachment antecedents and brand personality appeal to understand attachment to celebrities
<b>Consumer-Celebrity</b>	(Ilicic, Baxter, and Kulczynski 2016)	Examining parasocial relationships between consumers and celebrities within the attachment framework
<b>Consumer-Celebrity</b>	(Escalas and Bettman 2017)	Examining parasocial relationships using need to belong and self-identity as consumers seeking meaning from brands in endorsements

Attachment between the consumer and the celebrity is labelled as ‘human-brand attachment’. Product attachment research has in general described consumers’ attachment to products according to the type of object and stage of ownership (Ball and Tasaki 1992), existence of an emotional connection between the consumer and product (Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim 2008), and various determinants of a product from its appearance to utility

(Mugge, Schifferstein, and Schoormans 2010). Human-brand attachment research, on the other hand, has described interpersonal relationship and attachment styles to characterise consumers' attachment to celebrities (David and Bearden 2017; Ilicic, Kulczynski, and Baxter 2016; Thomson 2006). These two streams of research have examined attachment from a singular, linear perspective such as only between consumer and product or between consumer and celebrity in endorsements. However, at least five studies have indicated in their future research scope that perhaps greater attention should be paid to attachment between the endorsement triad (consumer-celebrity-product) and, more specifically, between the endorser and product.

Ohanian (1991) and Till and Busler (1998), in their directions for future research, recommend special attention to celebrities who have direct connection with their endorsed product and who are perceived to be experts by the target audiences, or in other words, celebrities who have an ongoing attachment with the product. Two recent studies (Keel and Nataraajan 2012; Thomas and Fowler 2016) conjecture that the level of involvement between the endorser and the product could have moderated their findings and should be the focus of future studies. Keel and Nataraajan (2012) suggest that the level of involvement between the endorser and product could affect brand awareness and purchase intent, when examining various aspects of celebrity branding and endorsement. They state that this perceived level of involvement could perhaps affect consumers' persuasion-effect of attitude toward the ad, the brand and purchase intention. Similarly, Thomas and Fowler (2016) mention that the level of involvement between the endorser and product could vary, from mere advertising to using or creating the product, and that this could affect consumers' perceptions of brand and celebrity actions and transgressions. It is reasoned in the present study that connection and involvement, mentioned as future research in the above-specified articles, allude to attachment or, more specifically, to perceived attachment between the endorser and product. Finally, Saldanha, Mulye, and Rahman (2018, p.248) mention, in their future research, "that the construct of

attachment could be explored further in the context of endorsements by looking at different types of attachments that can occur in the endorsement situation, such as between the triad of consumers, products and endorsers”. The present study heeds these calls for research by making attachment the central construct in studying endorsement.

## **4.2 Conceptual framework development**

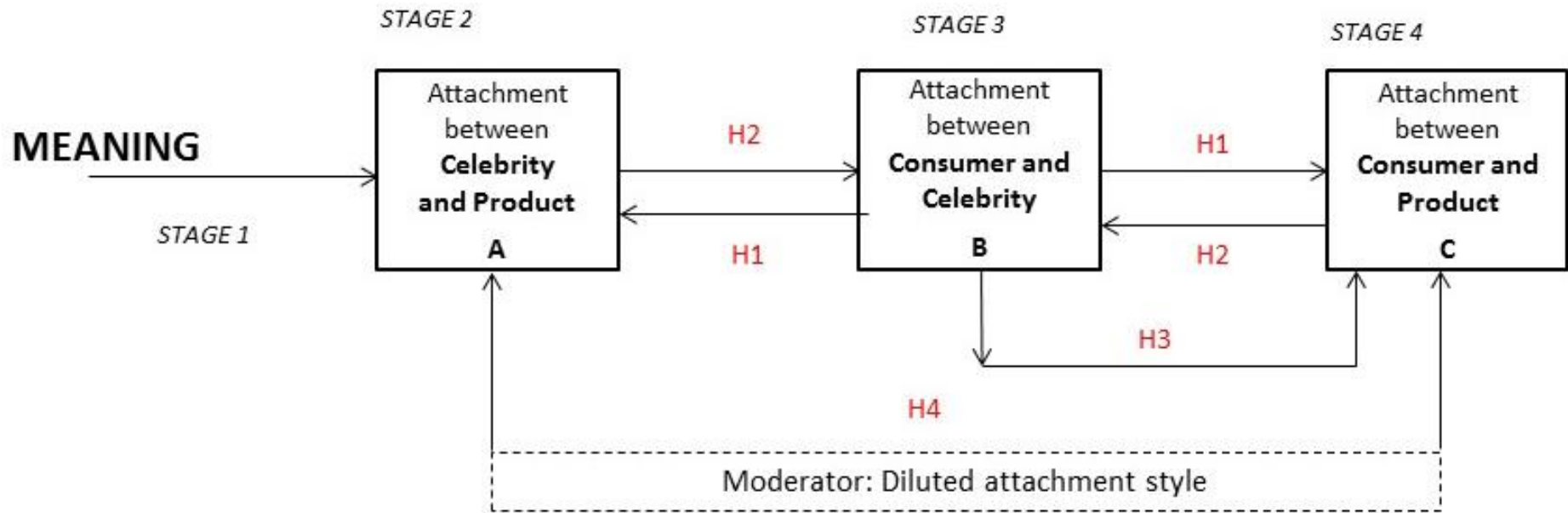
This chapter, therefore, proposes a tri-partite model of attachment in the endorsement context (Figure 4.1). The proposed model comprises of three primary nodes: celebrity-product, consumer-celebrity, and consumer-product. According to this model, meaning flows from a cultural context to the celebrity-product node, from which meaning is transferred to the consumer-celebrity node and, finally, to the consumer-product node. What is noteworthy is that, while meaning and values are being transferred between these endorsement nodes, the outcome of this meaning is reflected in attachment. Attachment, in this way, thus binds all three nodes in an endorsement to ensure that a meaningful transaction is completed.

The proposed model draws support from the well-established meaning-transfer model founded by McCracken (1989). According to this model, the original location of meaning stems from a cultural context. Celebrities have distinct personalities and lifestyles in addition to their talent, and they draw this meaning from a cultural context. This cultural context typically defines a celebrity. It gives meaning to the celebrities; and this is the first stage of endorsement, where ‘meaning’ resides in celebrities. Endorsements allow individuals (celebrities) charged with detailed and powerful meanings to transfer this meaning to products, in the second stage of the endorsement process. Some of the meanings of the celebrity are now the meanings of the product. In the final stage, the meaning moves from the product to the consumer (McCracken 1989). In short, the endorser’s equity is transferred to the endorsed product in the endorsement process, and this ‘meaning’, or equity, is then transferred to the consumer through

the consumption process. The main premise of this model is the ‘meaning’ or symbolism that the endorser brings to the overall endorsement process. The meaning-transfer model has both cognitive and affective aspects which deem this model more appropriate to be considered for evaluating a holistic endorsement process, in comparison with other endorsement models (Fleck et al. 2012).

The most significant point to note is that, while attachment is the focus in the present research, the three nodes in the endorsement triad are correlated. This means that it is not critical for attachment to initially exist between the celebrity and product in order for it to exist between the consumer and celebrity and between the consumer and product. There can be many instances when consumers who are already familiar with celebrities and attached to them over many years can become attached to the products they endorse. Similarly, consumers who are extremely brand loyal and, hence, highly attached to certain products can become attached to the celebrities associated with those products.

Figure 4.1 Tripartite model of attachment



#### ***4.2.1 Stage 1: culture accrual (culture → celebrity)***

This is the first stage of the tripartite attachment model, wherein through an endorsement, the consumer has access to a celebrity endorser. Celebrities provide meaning to objects and, in a circular fashion, their own meaning is also created by the products they endorse (Escalas & Bettman 2017). The accumulated meaning of celebrities makes them a significant source in the endorsement process.

The cultural accrual stage is described in the present study as akin to the ‘formation of the celebrity image’, where symbolic meaning and values are created and introduced into the realm of endorsement. This is the stage where the celebrity draws meaning from a context; typically, the field that the celebrity hails from. The celebrity could be a movie or pop star, athlete, politician and even an entrepreneur (CEO). It is important to note that this stage of ‘culture accrual’ becomes largely insignificant when the endorser is a non-celebrity. This can be attributed to the fact that non-celebrities, while possessing distinguishing information such as age, gender, race and background, do not have a celebrity cultural context that has shaped their beliefs and personality (McCracken 1989). This unique cultural background and influence in endorsements provides meaning and values that shape an individual who is in the public eye, subject constantly to praise and criticism. In the culture accrual stage, two vehicles that facilitate the transfer of cultural meaning are the firm and the external environment. The firm would typically comprise the marketing, creative, sales and sponsorship, product placement, and public relations departments. The external environment is the factors that lie outside the product’s control such as the mass media, the entertainment industry (movie or music), journalists, social media and opinion leaders. Once the celebrity has acquired meaning and cultural significance, the celebrity gets attached to the product and is followed by the consumer, finally culminating in attachment between the consumer and celebrity.

#### ***4.2.2 Stage 2: attachment between (celebrity → product)***

Currently, research is silent on the perceived attachment between the celebrity and product. What has been examined is image congruence between the celebrity and product. Image congruence or endorser-image congruity relates to the degree of match-up between endorser associations and brand attributes (Choi & Rifon 2012; Paul & Bhakar 2018). In terms of match-up of the celebrity with the product, when there is little fit or a perceived mismatch between the celebrity and product, consumers lose focus on the advertisement and, in turn, the endorsement. When an endorsement is viewed, consumers consider attributes from both the product and celebrity in order to ascertain whether there is a match or fit between the celebrity and product (Rice et al. 2012). The match-up hypothesis suggests that endorsers are more effective when there is a 'fit' between the endorser and the endorsed product (Kamins 1990). Most empirical work on the match-up hypothesis has focused on the physical attractiveness of the endorser. The conceptual argument is that attractive celebrities are more effective endorsers for products that are used to enhance one's attractiveness, leading to higher brand attitude and purchase intentions (Till & Busler 2000). Match-up models function on the premise that correlation between endorser image and the product being advertised holds the key to effective promotion (Albert et al., 2017; Choi & Rifon, 2012). However, it should be emphasised that consumer-product attachment is distinct from the match-up hypothesis. A celebrity's image could be a mismatch with the product, yet the same celebrity could have a high perceived attachment with the product due to their ownership or other associations with the brand.

The present research has identified this link of attachment in the endorsement as important in order to complete the attachment (consumer-celebrity-product). It is argued here that this perceived attachment would depend primarily on the role played by the endorser. If, like any typical endorsement, the endorser is just endorsing a product but could be replaced in time with another celebrity, then the perceived attachment of the celebrity to that product is

minimal. This will not be the case if the endorser is a spokesperson for the product, who has spent a significant amount of time promoting the product. With the spokesperson's association with the product said to be longer, the perceived attachment between this endorser and the product is higher than in a traditional endorsement. Finally, if a celebrity has launched a product that retains their name and equity, then the perceived attachment between that endorser and the product is even higher than for a spokesperson and a traditional endorsement. In addition to the role played by the endorser, two other considerations could affect the celebrity-product link. These are, the number of products endorsed, and match-up of the celebrity with the product; both of which can also affect the perceived attachment between the celebrity and product.

There is ample evidence to suggest that endorsements are more effective when there is a match-up between the endorser and the endorsed product. However, ensuring a match-up can be illusive, as Paul and Bhakar (2018) interestingly found out in their study on shampoo endorsement. Although it is generally believed that popular celebrities are a good fit with attractiveness-related products such as shampoo, respondents in their study did not consider the dandruff shampoo to be a good match with Bollywood celebrities. Respondents who idolised these celebrities viewed them as symbols of perfection, immune from dandruff problems of mere mortals! This study further supports the conjecture here that, for an endorsement to be effective, the celebrity-product connection should go beyond a match-up to consider perceptions of attachment between the celebrity and the product and the value transfer that occurs there within.

In the case of the number of products endorsed, it is becoming more common for celebrities to endorse multiple brands, which results in the transfer of associations from the celebrity to each of the concurrently endorsed brands because of their pairing with the same celebrity. For example, when a celebrity endorses two or more brands, they engage in two or more co-branding strategies, because the associations of these two or more unrelated brands



are processed along with those of the celebrity (Cheng-Hsui Chen et al. 2013). This could lead to conflicting notions for the consumer, which results in negative brand attitude and purchase intention (Tripp et al. 1994). The consumer's attachment to the celebrity increases if the celebrity endorses a single product, and subsequently decreases when the celebrity endorses multiple unrelated products.

If the celebrity is highly attractive, there is high perceived attachment between the consumer and celebrity, which leads to a match-up for attractiveness-related products. If there is high attachment between the consumer and celebrity, and the celebrity is regarded as an expert, then there is a match-up for finance or high-risk products. Once a consumer perceives attachment to exist between the celebrity and product, the consumer gets attached to the product, leading to the first hypothesis in this study:

*4.2.2.1 H1: The higher the attachment between the celebrity and product and between the consumer and celebrity, the higher the perceived attachment between the consumer and product.*

#### **4.2.3 Stage 3: attachment between (consumer → celebrity)**

Thomson's (2006) foundational article on consumers' attachment to human brands describes human-brands as celebrities from any field, including politicians, athletes and CEOs, and finds that certain human needs, such as autonomy, relatedness and competence, influence an individual's attachment to a human brand. In addition to these antecedents of human brand or celebrity attachment, the perceived authenticity of the celebrity, i.e. whether a person behaves according to their 'true self', could also be equally important in affecting consumers' attachment to celebrities (Moulard et al. 2015).

A celebrity endorser's attributes of familiarity, likeability and reputation can also influence a consumer's attachment to the endorser. Familiarity includes likeability and affection for the endorser as a result of the endorser's physical appearance and behaviour, and similarity as a supposed resemblance between the source and receiver of the message. Ambroise et al. (2014) report stronger celebrity endorsement effects with unfamiliar compared to familiar brands. Studies have also shown the likelihood of conditioning effects for unknown or moderately known objects, but not for well-known ones (Knoll and Matthes 2017). As a consumer's attachment to the celebrity increases, the familiarity of the celebrity increases. The consumer, in a way, becomes acquainted with the celebrity and starts becoming familiar with the celebrity's way of life, which most often extends beyond their regular endorsements. This familiarity could create positive or negative consequences in an endorsement. Research has shown that, out of all the endorser's attributes, likeability is the most important attribute of trust. As a result of these findings, companies have been urged to select personalities who are well liked when deciding on choosing a trustworthy celebrity to endorse brands. Likeability and attachment are intertwined. If a consumer has a high degree of attachment to a celebrity, the celebrity becomes more likeable than in a situation where there is a relatively lower degree of attachment between the consumer and celebrity. An endorser's reputation, like their credibility, is usually transferred to the product they endorse. If the celebrity has a tarnished reputation, then there can be avoidance of the celebrity by the consumer. If the consumer has a high attachment to the celebrity, then this leads to higher attachment between the consumer and product. If the consumer has a low attachment to the celebrity, then this could lead to anxiety and avoidance of the product by the consumer. This leads to the second hypothesis:

*4.2.3.1 H2: The higher the attachment between the celebrity and product and between the consumer and product, the higher the perceived attachment between the consumer and celebrity. This leads to higher perceived source credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity by the consumer.*

#### **4.2.4 Stage 4: attachment between (consumer → product)**

Attachment between consumer and product has been studied from the product, brand and emotional attachment perspectives as also being personality transfer between the consumer and product. Belk (1988) indirectly referred to attachment in his paper on consumers' self (being) with possessions, but focused on the 'self' and its extension. Schultz, Kleine, and Kernan (1989), in fact, actually described the construct of attachment, in the similar context of consumers and products. Ball and Tasaki (1992) extended this research, on attachment between consumers, products and the 'self', by introducing 'product attachment'. Product attachment is defined as "the extent to which an object which is owned, expected to be owned, or previously owned by an individual, is used by that individual to maintain his or her self-concept" (Ball and Tasaki 1992, p.158). Product attachment was then adopted in numerous studies over the years that also included the construct of brand attachment.

Brand attachment is defined as "the strength of the brand connecting the consumer with the self" (Park et al 2010, p.10). A clear distinction between brand attachment and other constructs such as attitude and involvement has explicitly helped to describe why and how consumers' form attachments to some brands (Malär et al. 2011; Park et al.2010; Schifferstein and Zwartkruis-Pelgrim 2008). Emotional attachment is another related attachment construct between consumers and products that has been documented in contemporary marketing literature. Thomson et al., (2005) created a scale to measure this construct of emotional

attachment, which was further extended by scholars to describe how consumers also develop emotion-laden relationships with their brands.

Personality transfer can also be considered in the attachment between the consumer and product. Aaker (1997) recommends that consumers typically humanize products, which facilitates their sense of emotions felt toward the product and their creation of a relationship with it. The concept of personality, therefore, can help to explicate the brand identification process (Ambrose et al. 2014). Usually, once there is attachment between the consumer and product and between the celebrity and product, the consumer will become attached to the celebrity. Again, as mentioned earlier, the endorsement triad is correlated in such a way that it is not imperative for attachment to exist between two entities in order for the other entity to become attached; which leads to the third hypothesis

*4.2.4.1 H3: The higher the attachment between the consumer and celebrity and between the consumer and the product, the higher the perceived attachment between the celebrity and product. This leads to higher perceived image congruency between celebrity and product.*

### **4.3 Attachment styles in endorsement**

Attachment as we know it includes psychological expressions in addition to emotional and cognitive reactions, which lead to different strengths in attachment. Stronger attachments are characterised by stronger emotional and affective bonds, in contrast to weaker attachments (Thomson 2006; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005). Furthermore, attachment styles can be either avoidant, anxious or secure, and are reflective of individuals' personalities and inherent behaviour (Bartholomew & Horowitz 1991; Thomson et al. 2012). These attachment styles affect individuals' interpretations of and expectations regarding interpersonal situations, and should not be disregarded from an endorsement perspective. Hazan and Shaver (1994) introduced the reactive, evocative and proactive interaction types to explain attachment

stability throughout the lifespan of an individual. It is acknowledged here that these interaction types support attachment styles, which helps in understanding attachment in the endorsement triad (consumer-celebrity-product). If a person is a secure individual, confident of himself or herself, he/she will be positively inclined to seek out 'proactive' relationships that are also secure and represent his/her identity, regardless of his/her social group's influence.

In marketing, anxious and avoidant styles have been described (Swaminathan et al. 2008; Thomson et al. 2012), and will also be considered as the two primary attachment styles influencing an endorsement process in the present research. The anxiety dimension refers to the extent to which a person's view of self is positive or negative; whereas the avoidance dimension is based on the extent to which a view of others is positive or negative (Swaminathan et al., 2008). It is proposed in the present study that, if a consumer is anxious and avoidant, then they will not be strongly attached to either an endorser or product or both, and that this could lead to 'diluted attachment'. If a consumer is attached to either an endorser or product or both, then there will be 'undiluted attachment'. Regardless of the endorsers' characteristics, product-type, consumer knowledge, consumer involvement or match-up with a product, a highly anxious and/or avoidant consumer will not be attached to a product and endorser. This leads to the following hypothesis:

*4.3.1 H4: Diluted attachment lowers perceived attachment between the celebrity and product and between the consumer and celebrity, which leads to lower perceived attachment between the consumer and product.*

#### **4.4 Attachment figures in endorsement**

Given Bowlby's original formulation of attachment theory and the empirical evidence that has accrued in its support, it would be inappropriate to say that singularity in attachment relationships is either predicted or expected. Humans normally become attached to multiple

individuals and even inanimate objects (Hazan & Shaver 1994). Consumers, like people in general, can develop attachments to brands, places, collectibles, celebrities and even pets. Attachment to multiple objects and persons can exist at the same time (Thomson et al. 2005). While it can be argued that there are multiple attachments in adults, attachment is primarily between one entity and another. The number of those entities is not important. However, it is still the same linear pattern where a person is attached to another person or object: person-to-object or person-to-person.

Early attachment research indicates a singular focus, since a child will always be attached to that one person who most consistently provides care and responds to their distress signals. However, while there will always be the primary attachment figure, secondary attachment figures are common. Attachment theory in fact originated on the basis of the premise that infants are attached to their mothers and primary carers, who were categorised as ‘primary attachment’ figures, and that children as they grow up can form attachments with others who are categorised as ‘secondary attachment figures’ (Bowlby 1969). While attachment in endorsement research has examined the celebrity as the primary attachment figure for the consumer, it is argued here that products, too, become attachment objects. In fact, the secondary attachment roles in endorsement are redefined here as being the celebrity or product. The consumer can have a primary attachment with either the celebrity or product, which leads to attachment with the other entity.

While it can be reasoned that the singular nature of attachment is justified, it is argued here that, in endorsement situations, attachment cannot be singular, because endorsements always have three entities: consumer, product and celebrity. The present thesis states that, within an endorsement, there is attachment from the celebrity to product, consumer to celebrity, and consumer to product, because of the endorsement triad. This in itself creates relationships and interactions that affect the overall endorsement effectiveness.

#### **4.5 Attachment strategies in endorsement**

Both primary and secondary attachment figures affect individuals' attachment and, importantly, their attachment strategies. Proximity seeking is a primary attachment strategy that occurs when attachments with either primary or secondary attachment figures are threatened. Secondary attachment strategies of hyperactivation and deactivation set in when primary attachment of proximity seeking is ineffective. Those with an avoidant style of attachment will seek deactivation as an attachment strategy, while the anxious style of individuals will seek hyperactivation in their attachment strategies (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Swaminathan et al., 2008). These attachment strategies of hyperactivation and deactivation are relevant to celebrity endorsement. Both these secondary attachment strategies are in this way negative outcomes of attachment, and can have negative consequences for the affective nature of relationships (Mende & Bolton 2011).

Consumers with an anxious style of attachment are usually unsure of the endorsement. This uncertainty could stem from uncertainty of the perceived attachment between the celebrity and product or between the consumer and product. Furthermore, if there was any negative publicity or controversy involving the celebrity or product, this could further add to the consumers' anxiety about the overall endorsement. Hyperactivation then steps in, making such a consumer-type actively seek out comfort and reassurance. This translates into actively seeking out information on the product or celebrity or both. A hyperactivating consumer will not give up their proximity-seeking attempts, but rather intensifies them in order to coerce assurance of the overall endorsement. Consumers with an avoidant style of attachment, on the other hand, will easily resort to deactivation when their primary attachment of proximity seeking and comfort is slightly threatened. Such individuals, who are easily swayed by others' perceptions of the endorsement being negative, will succumb to societal pressure and simply

stop purchasing the product because of perceived negative aspects of either the product or the celebrity or both.

#### **4.6 Theoretical implications**

With the introduction of the tripartite view of attachment, the linkage between all three entities in an endorsement can be accounted for. Furthermore, this chapter also introduces the concept of attachment between the celebrity and product, which, according to the authors' knowledge, has not been described in research to date. Just as the meaning-transfer model was introduced to extend the source characteristics of endorsers, the tripartite attachment model recognises the importance of attachment between all three entities and provides strategic marketing implications for practitioners in this regard.

Furthermore, the present study also draws a parallel with attachment theory concepts, and shows how attachment styles and strategies are as relevant in endorsement as they are in psychology. Consumers with anxious or avoidant styles of attachment would typically adopt hyperactivation or deactivation attachment strategies, respectively, and the tripartite attachment model can either positively or negatively facilitate consumers' perceptions of the endorsement.

Brand managers must consider different aspects and levels of attachment in endorsements in order to ensure that endorsement campaigns are effective and beneficial to all entities.

##### ***4.6.1 Practical Relevance: celebrity – product***

If practitioners can identify celebrities who are perceived to be attached to their products, then according to the tripartite attachment-endorsement model, attachment will flow from these celebrity-product pairings to consumers. Consumers, in turn, perceive such celebrities to be a



good fit with products, and thus congruence exists between the celebrity and product. Before the selection of endorsers, companies usually strive to achieve a match-up or congruence between endorsers and products. It is precisely this congruence between personality and brand that facilitates an effective meaning transfer (Fleck et al. 2012). When the relevant characteristics of the endorser match the relevant attributes of the endorsed product, the overall transfer of meanings in the endorsement should culminate in a desired brand image (McCracken 1989; Kamins 1990). In the presence of a mismatch or poor congruence, the meaning-transfer process can become affected, which could negatively affect consumers' attitudes (Hackley & Hackley 2015). In addition, meaning transfer from the product to the endorser, or 'brand meaning', can also be negatively impacted if there is no congruence between the endorser and product (Seno & Lukas 2007). Congruence creates attachment; and since the tripartite attachment model considers a three-way exchange of meaning between the consumer, celebrity and product, there will still be meaning transfer according to the tripartite attachment model, even if the endorser and product are incongruent.

#### ***4.6.2 Practical Relevance: consumer – celebrity***

When high-perceived attachment exists between consumers and celebrities, products can be appropriately selected for such endorsements. Consumers' attachment to celebrities in general stems from the celebrities' reputation, likeability and familiarity in addition to source characteristics of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. It is important to select endorsers that do not have tarnished reputations, especially for new products. Endorsers' reputation, like their credibility, is usually transferred to the brands they endorse.

Companies have been urged to select personalities who are well liked when deciding on choosing a trustworthy celebrity to endorse brands. Attractive celebrities are familiar to the target audience and likable. If a consumer is highly attached to a celebrity, the celebrity

becomes more likeable than in a situation where there is little or no attachment between the consumer and celebrity.

It is also beneficial for companies, especially in situations of negative publicity or controversy involving the product or celebrity, that as much information as possible is provided from multiple sources in order that all types of consumers, including the anxious- and avoidant-style consumers, can have access to the right information and accordingly make their purchase choices.

#### ***4.6.3 Practical Relevance: consumer – product***

Celebrities should select those products that are perceived to have high brand and product loyalty, so that attachment can rise between the consumer and celebrity because it already exists between the consumer and product. When such attachment between the consumer and product exists, celebrities can be selected to complement such consumer-product pairings. It is a widely known fact that consumers spontaneously and effortlessly infer traits that get transferred to products. It is plausible that these attributes are then transferred back to the endorsing celebrity from the product. The result is likely to be an augmentation of the celebrity's image (Seno & Lukas 2007). Trait transference is a subset of meaning transfer wherein traits associated with endorsers are transferred to the products they endorse (Arsena et al. 2014). To date, there are only two studies of transfer from brand to celebrity. Furthermore, these two studies have contradictory results. The first study (White et al. 2009) finds no negative effects on the attitude toward the celebrity as a result of a brand transgression. However, the second study (Arsena et al. 2014) demonstrates that personality traits associated with brands are indeed transferred to celebrities. The tripartite attachment model, with its connections between the consumer, celebrity and product, allows for mutual transference of endorser, consumer and product traits.

Research has demonstrated that automatic meaning transfer (through mere association effects) can be enhanced with greater familiarity. Thus, the effects of multiple endorsers and multiple endorsements may actually be greater for familiar brands under certain conditions (Rice et al. 2012). Irrespective of the familiarity of the endorser or the product, the tripartite attachment model allows for meaning transfer to occur in the endorsement triad, resulting in attachment and meaningful transactions.

#### **4.7 Conclusion and future research**

The attachment construct is being increasingly recognised as an influential construct in many aspects of research in marketing, yet it is still nascent in endorsement studies. Current studies have examined the construct in a piecemeal manner, usually from two perspectives—between the consumer and product and between the consumer and celebrity—with exclusion of the influence of perceived attachment between the celebrity and product. Furthermore, there is an absence of a unifying theory that combines these three perspectives into one model that provides a fuller picture of the influence of attachment. Using the meaning-transfer model, the present study proposes a tripartite formulation of attachment and presents several propositions regarding the correlation of attachment between the consumer, celebrity and product. The main outcome of this meaning transfer is attachment that binds the entire triad in an endorsement. This psychological milieu of attachment can explain the transfer of meaning, values and culture in an endorsement triad. While the meaning-transfer model is still relevant to explain the transference of meaning in endorsements, attachment theory provides support in explaining the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of meaning transfer.

There is scope for innovative research methodology in celebrity endorsement research, especially research involving psychological mechanisms. The methodological standardization of experiments has led to efficiency in terms of number of studies, but it has also hampered

creativity with respect to the research problems addressed (Bergkvist & Zhou 2016). Therefore, researchers should be open to combining quantitative study designs with projective and qualitative techniques. This will help to obtain a meaningful insight into customers' perceptions of attachment in any endorsement. It would be preferable to use a combination of stimuli with endorsers who are not associated with a field; for instance, athletes endorsing beauty-related products.

By examining attachment perspectives from consumers, both academics and practitioners can evaluate the feasibility of using non-celebrity endorsers instead of celebrities, particularly when it comes to launching relevant products. It would be interesting to see diluted and undiluted attachment styles examined for those products where sales volumes are on a steady decline. This could also provide context to rapidly declining interest and margins for products, which are seemingly popular in a market.

The proposed tripartite attachment model can also work to examine the other endorsement-related variables, of match-up, source credibility and attractiveness, and endorsement of a single versus multiple products. This also proves that the tripartite attachment model, indeed, provides a holistic perspective on attachment compared to existing endorsement models and theories.

#### **4.8 Summary**

The construct of attachment has received increased attention in the marketing literature in recent years, although its applications in product endorsement remain largely unexplored. Endorsement researchers have applied the construct in piecemeal fashion, examining the attachment either between consumer and product or between consumer and celebrity. None of these studies have looked at both these dimensions of attachment in one study or included the attachment between the celebrity and product. The present research proposes a tripartite model

of attachment that considers all three entities of an endorsement—consumer, celebrity and product, and encompasses the flow of meaning and attachment in this triad. Inspired by attachment theory from psychology and the meaning-transfer model from endorsement, the study contributes several strategic marketing propositions about how attachment is associated with the consumer, celebrity and product to ensure a meaningful endorsement transaction.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 4

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The conceptual framework for this thesis, the tripartite attachment model, extends McCracken's meaning-transfer model to explain attachment flow in endorsements. This model also incorporates the attachment theory by explaining the primary and secondary attachment strategies of proximity-seeking, hyperactivation and deactivation, respectively, between consumers, celebrities and products. Diluted and undiluted attachment concepts are also introduced to endorsement literature in this chapter, which explain consumers' anxious and avoidant styles of attachment, but from an endorsement perspective. Finally, practical implications for the three attachment nodes are proposed which can help marketing practitioners in advertising campaigns.

## INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 5

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Now that the three attachment nodes have been explored and it has been established that consumers definitely distinguish between traditional and progenic endorsements, the final study, presented in Chapter 5, examines the overall concept of attachment. This is done in a quantitative study, wherein the endorser-types and endorsement situations described in the preceding chapters are manipulated to explore attachment levels and variation of source credibility appeals.

Chapter 5 looks at the source credibility appeals, namely, attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise that exist in all three endorsement situations in this research: endorsed, spokesperson and progenic. This helps to understand whether these endorser appeals are indeed transferred to the endorsed products, and the variance of these appeals which make the corresponding endorsed products unique from the consumers' perception. In this way, the thesis in this chapter weaves all the connected entities in the endorsement triad with attachment and finally, explores attachment between the endorser-types, which have not been described in research to date.

# CHAPTER 5: WHO IS THE ATTACHED ENDORSER? AN EXAMINATION OF THE ATTACHMENT-ENDORSEMENT SPECTRUM

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## 5.1 Introduction

Celebrity endorsement has been a widely researched field of brand management (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Ohanian 1991; Fleck et al. 2012; McCormick 2016). Celebrities are used to promote a range of products, as this leads to enhanced consumer attitudes and purchase intentions, especially when there is a congruence or match-up between the celebrity and endorsed product (Kamins 1990; Kamins & Gupta 1994; Till & Busler 2000). Match-up implies consistency between the relevant characteristics of the endorser and relevant attributes of the brand (Misra & Beatty 1990). A recent study on this topic by McCormick (2016) extends the match-up hypothesis by focusing on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions for both familiar and unfamiliar celebrities and reports significant effects of familiarity on endorsement effectiveness. While the study makes significant contributions in the match-up realm of endorsement, it falls short of explaining why positive attitudes towards the brand and advertisement do not translate into higher purchase intentions in the unfamiliar celebrity-product match. An explanation is proposed here based on Bowlby's (1969) theory of attachment and argue that, when consumers are not familiar with an endorser, they are unlikely to perceive any attachment between the celebrity and the product. Consequently, this lack of attachment not only diminishes the endorsement's credibility but is also likely to act as a barrier to purchase behaviour. Similarly, in a literature review paper examining various aspects of celebrity branding and endorsement, Keel and Nataraajan (2012) conclude that the level of involvement between the endorser and product has been ignored in many studies, and that this involvement could have moderated the findings in this area. They state, "celebrities can be more or less



involved in the development of their products, and it begs the question whether or not their involvement influences attitudes, purchase intent, sales, and longevity of the brand” (Keel & Nataraajan 2012, p.695).

The present study heeds this call for research by adopting the attachment theory from psychology and proposing attachment as the key driver of endorsement effectiveness, thereby aiming to shed light on the disparate findings in endorsement studies. The study looks at the celebrity-product link as an attachment between these two entities, symbolic of the commitment of the celebrity to the endorsed product. It is proposed here that the fundamental basis for creating a differentiation in endorser situations is the ‘attachment’ existing between the endorser and endorsed product. Attachment is important because it reflects the source credibility of the endorser—their perceived commitment to the product—and has been shown to create issues when ignored. For instance, the credibility of pop singer Jessica Simpson, who has endorsed several brands, was questioned in the media because she was found to have never worn her own clothing line and was not involved in the design of her collection. This was perceived as being a lack of attachment to her own product (Bhasin 2015).

The purpose of the present chapter is to understand the basis of attachment in the context of product endorsements created by a combination of endorsement situations, and its effect on source credibility characteristics and purchase intentions. To this effect, the study first examines the role of attachment in the context of endorsement and introduces a framework of endorsement situations. It then examines the effect of these endorsement situations on source credibility characteristics such as attractiveness (A), trustworthiness (T) and expertise (E), and proposes several research questions. Next, the study describes an empirical study in which the propositions are tested, concluding with theoretical and practical implications.

## **5.2 Review of literature**

### ***5.2.1 Relevance of attachment in endorsement***

A closer look at endorsement research reveals manipulation of different variables such as the type of celebrity and product selections (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Choi & Rifon 2012), physical attractiveness of the celebrity and degree to which the usage of the product enhances the endorser's attractiveness (Kamins 1990), and degree of celebrity-product congruence (Lee & Thorson 2008). The general findings are that a celebrity endorser's physical attractiveness and an optimum congruence between the consumer and product can lead to positive consumer attitudes and high purchase intentions (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Atkin & Block 1983; Kamins 1990; Ohanian 1991; Erdogan 1999).

Attachment between the celebrity and product can, however, explain why some celebrities who are valued for their appearance are perceived to be more attached to beauty-related products, and why endorsers who are knowledgeable and expert-like are perceived to be attached to more complex products. When an endorser can relate to a product and what it stands for, attachment creates that 'match-up' or congruence. When consumers believe the endorser truly likes the advertised product, they have favourable attitudes toward the endorsed product (Silvera & Austad 2004). Again, this reflects an aspect of the endorser's attachment to the advertised product that has not been explicitly examined in the literature.

Extant research has made indirect references to 'attachment' without actually using this term, and has often confounded it with the construct of 'involvement'. However, involvement does not constitute a relationship; rather, it is a function of an individual and product's characteristics and situational factors (Warrington & Shim 2000). It is argued in the present study that attachment is indeed an outcome of involvement. When there is high involvement, there is high attachment, and vice-versa. Attachments are a type of strong relationship that

people experience in their lives. John Bowlby, the first attachment theorist, defined attachment as a “lasting psychological connectedness between human beings” (Bowlby 1969, p.194). Although the study of attachment originated in the context of interpersonal relationships, attachment between consumers and brands or celebrities is not uncommon. The basis of this relationship is centred on human need for strong emotional attachments to others, which manifests in committed exclusive repurchase, consumer forgiveness to brands, and brand loyalty (Jimenez & Voss 2010; Grisaffe & Nguyen 2011).

As per attachment theory, the degree of emotional attachment to an object predicts the nature of an individual's interaction with the object, and consequently, the emotional and financial attachment to the object. Thomson (2006) extended this construct of attachment to human-branding and showed how consumers’ emotional attachment to human brands results in increased levels of satisfaction, trust and commitment. As a construct that describes the strength of the bond connecting the consumer with the brand, attachment is relevant from an endorsement perspective. Celebrities and brands have numerous characteristics; and, in many cases, it is unclear which attribute of a celebrity is valid for a particular brand (Lee & Thorson 2008).

As a result of the above considerations, attachment is treated as a focus in the present study, and attachment theory is the primary theory underpinning this work.

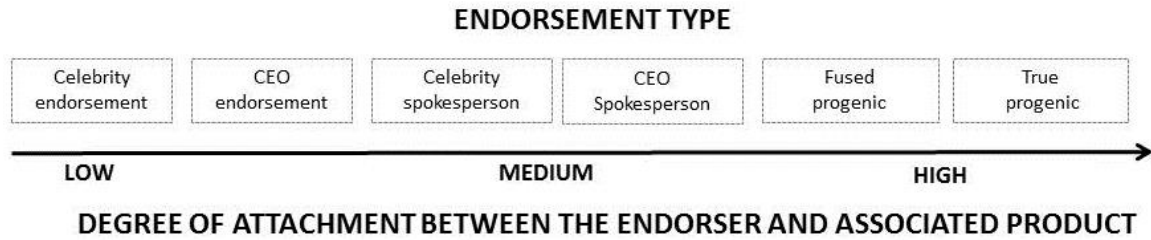
### **5.3 Degree of attachment between the endorser and the product**

Attachments vary in strength, and stronger attachments are associated with intense emotional feelings including connection, affection, love, and passion. Thomson (2006, p.105) describe the strength of attachment as “the intensity of a person's target-specific emotional bond with a human brand”. It could be argued that the degree of attachment is likely to vary when a human-brand merely endorses a product as opposed to launching and owning a product. Existing

research has already shown how the degree of attachment can predict a consumer's commitment to a brand, as it involves strong feelings about the brand and the brand's relationship to self (Thomson et al. 2005; Whan Park et al. 2010). The endorser, like the consumer, also has an attachment to the brand. Thomas and Fowler (2016) note that this level of involvement between the endorser and product could vary from mere advertising to using or creating the product. It is, therefore, suggested here that the attachment of an endorsement is likely to vary with an endorser endorsing the product versus an endorser launching and owning the product.

According to the author's knowledge, no study has described the degree of attachment between an endorser and product when the product is endorsed, spoken of or launched by an endorser. The present study categorises this degree of attachment into low, medium and high. A low degree of attachment occurs when a celebrity or CEO is selected to endorse a product or service as a one-off endorsement with no further commitment. A medium degree of attachment exists when a celebrity or CEO is associated with a particular cause, initiative or a brand exclusively and for a significantly longer duration than a one-off endorsement. The noteworthy point of distinction between the low and medium degrees of perceived attachment is that, in the 'medium degree of attachment' condition, the endorser endorses a single product exclusively for a long duration, unlike a celebrity or CEO who endorse multiple, as also dissimilar, products in the 'low degree of attachment'. When an endorser launches a product or service under his/her own name, there is a high degree of perceived attachment between the endorser and the product.

We could thus consider attachment on a spectrum (Figure 5.1), by classifying the endorsers and endorsement situations on the basis of their degree of attachment.



**Figure 5.1: Attachment-Endorsement spectrum**

### *5.3.1 The endorser type*

Endorsement literature recognises four types of endorsers – typical consumer, expert, celebrity, and CEO (Friedman et al. 1976). The typical consumer is not portrayed by an actor, but is a real person: a consumer who would normally consume that product. The expert is a recognised authority on the product endorsed whose expertise, as the result of special knowledge or training, is superior to that acquired by regular consumers. Research has shown that celebrities are more effective than non-celebrities in advertising (Erdogan 1999; Ohanian 1991), even though non-celebrity endorsement could have a few benefits (Tom et al. 1992). A CEO is considered to possess characteristics of the professional expert, and is also more likely to use the endorsed product (Ohanian 1991); while a professional expert could most likely include a non-celebrity (Friedman et al. 1976). This is why the present study considers the two most popular and frequently used types of endorser to be associated with a product: the celebrity, and the CEO. Furthermore, literature has also justified the importance of these persons in endorsement studies (McCracken 1989; Ohanian 1991; Erdogan & Baker 2000).

A celebrity is defined here as a famous, physically attractive and glamorous person, such as movie stars, sportspeople and fashion models. CEOs are high profile figureheads for their organisations who possess relevant product and managerial expertise. Both these endorser types enjoy public recognition and are professionally managed like brands (Bendisch et al. 2013). The distinguishing characteristic between the two endorsers is the ‘glamour

characteristic’, which is predominant in celebrities. While it can be argued that CEOs can be physically attractive, their greatest virtue in an endorsement situation is their product expertise instead of their physical attractiveness (Rubin et al. 1981). Now that the types of endorsers have been established, the types of endorsements are distinguished, and the six endorsement situations that eventuate from a combination of the type of endorser and endorsement are introduced.

## **5.4 Categorisation of the type of endorsement**

### ***5.4.1. Endorsement type: traditional endorsement***

We have identified endorsers as the first category of persons associated with products, whereby the endorsers could be either celebrities or CEOs. Some of the benefits of celebrity endorsers are getting attention, penetrating the commercial clutter, greater purchase intention, and a greater impact on attitude change (Atkin & Block 1983; Till 1998; Erdogan 1999; Ilicic et al. 2016). The CEO has a similar brand equity as the celebrity, in that they are most often in the public domain and, like celebrities, have image generators such as publicists and public relations staff (Hayward et al. 2004). The present research proposes that the “endorsed” type of endorsement has a low degree of perceived attachment between the endorser (celebrity or CEO) and the product-brand. This is because it is common for celebrities and CEOs to be replaced and to also endorse multiple brands and product categories at any given point in time. The temporary state of commitment between an endorser and product-brand indicates its ‘low degree of attachment’, in the present research.

### ***5.4.2 Endorsement type: spokesperson***

The present study defines the spokesperson as “an endorser (celebrity or CEO) who has spent a significant amount of time in exclusively promoting a brand, company or cause”. A

spokesperson's perceived loyalty to the brand, along with their perceived credibility, which is a function of their attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise, together wield an unique impact on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Ohanian 1991). Two reasons can be considered when identifying the "spokesperson" type of endorsement as having a medium degree of attachment between the endorser (celebrities or CEOs) and associated products. Firstly, spokespersons have not launched the brands they promote. Secondly, they are usually associated with the organisation or brand for a longer duration than endorsers, and this gives consumers the impression that they are sincere or loyal to the brand they promote.

While it is debatable that the roles of endorser and spokesperson and even brand ambassador are interchangeable, it is reasoned here that these three persons are distinct from each other. Brand ambassadors have been described as brand community members who become brand evangelists, are closely involved with brands, and can then become spokespersons (Keller 2001; Hickman & Ward 2013; Ind et al. 2013). The present study adopts the description cited by Harris and de Chernatony (2001) and Black and Veloutsou (2017), wherein brand ambassadors are employees who act as an interface between the brand's internal and external environment. It is stated here that the differentiation between the spokesperson and endorser is that the latter is associated with a brand for the shortest duration.

#### ***5.4.3 Endorsement type: progenic***

Progenic is a new term introduced in the present thesis to define endorsements where people launch their own products. The term is derived from the word 'progeny': something that is the product of something else; a descendant or the descendants of a person; off-spring (Oxford Dictionary, Webster). The progenic brand not only encompasses brand characteristics such as brand name, brand image, and brand identity, but also characteristics from the parent-brand, in the context of the present chapter, the endorser. In light of this, the progenic brand is defined

here as “the product or service launched by an endorser under their own name and which derives its brand equity from association with the endorser”. The progenic brand resembles a sub-brand or a product of brand extension to a certain degree of a human-brand. This endorsement type comprises both celebrities and CEOs who launch and own products, imparting their own name to the brand. When celebrities launch and own products and services, this is called a ‘fused progenic’ endorsement situation, as opposed to the ‘true progenic’ type of endorsement situation comprising brands launched by CEOs under their own name.

The present research proposes that the progenic type of endorsement has the highest degree of attachment between the endorser (celebrity or CEO) and the product-brand, because these product-brands have been launched by these endorsers. By launching the progenic brand, the celebrity or CEO has a commitment that goes beyond endorsement and is of a permanent nature with the associated product-brand. The endorser is responsible for the success of the progenic brand either directly or indirectly, and these reasons explain the ‘high degree of attachment’ between the human-brand and the progenic brand.

We further categorise endorsements into six situations based on the type of the endorser and type of endorsement (Table 5.1).



**Table 5.1 Nomenclature used in this chapter**

<p><b><u>Type of endorser</u></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrity</li> <li>2. Chief Executive Officer (CEO)</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Type of endorsement:</u></b> Refers to the role played by the endorser such as:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Endorsement (Traditional endorsement)</li> <li>2. Spokesperson</li> <li>3. Progenic</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>Endorsement situation:</u></b> This is created by the type of endorser and type of endorsement as explained in the six endorsement situations:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrity endorsement</li> <li>2. CEO endorsement</li> <li>3. Celebrity spokesperson</li> <li>4. CEO spokesperson</li> <li>5. Fused progenic</li> <li>6. True progenic</li> </ol>

## **5.5. Identification of endorsement situations**

### ***5.5.1 Situation 1 - celebrity endorsed brands***

This endorsement situation comprises brands that are only endorsed by celebrities. Typically, celebrity endorsers' main contribution to the brands' equity is their glamorous characteristic, i.e. attractiveness and likeability. These celebrities lend their image to brands (Fleck et al. 2012). Beauty products, fragrances, apparel and other products can get easily endorsed by another celebrity in time. In the event of celebrity transgressions, the only outcome is usually

the replacement of the human-brand with another endorser who possesses a similar 'attractiveness' characteristic.

#### ***5.5.2 Situation II - CEO endorsed brands***

This endorsement situation comprises brands that are only endorsed by CEOs. Previous research has shown how the perceived expertise of the source is consistently related to a positive intention by respondents to purchase the product (Ohanian 1991; Till & Busler 1998). This finding could be responsible for the increasing popularity of using CEOs of companies to endorse their products. In addition to expertise, there is some evidence to suggest that CEOs are more likely to use the product endorsed (Ohanian 1991). Like brands, CEOs create value for their companies and are usually representative of the companies they endorse, and vice-versa (Bendisch et al. 2013).

#### ***5.5.3 Situation III - celebrity spokesperson brands***

Many studies on endorser effectiveness suggest that a celebrity generally has a greater impact on attitude change and purchase intention than does a non-celebrity spokesperson, through an established credible image derived from wide recognition and popularity (Choi & Rifon 2012). The longevity of a person's role as spokesperson for a brand can increase the attachment between the spokesperson and brand. However, since the spokesperson has neither started nor founded the brand, there is a very real possibility that they could be replaced at a later point in time. This is considered the 'medium' degree of attachment between the celebrity and product.

#### ***5.5.4 Situation IV - CEO spokesperson brands***

Endorsement literature has identified the company president to be a spokesperson for a company and thus a source of communication (Frieden 1984). The CEO is perceived to have more status and prestige than an unidentified spokesperson (Rubin et al. 1981). A CEO

spokesperson need not have founded the company they promote, and this is a reason that classifies this category of product-brands as having a ‘medium’ degree of attachment between the product and CEO. The CEO can move on to another company at some point, and whilst there was a degree of attachment with the former company, because of the expertise and knowledge they possess, they can easily promote another product of a similar category.

#### ***5.5.5 Situation V - fused progenic brands***

The product-brands launched by glamorous human-brands reflect the attractiveness characteristic of these endorsers. Sugarpova, the candy brand launched by Maria Sharapova, or David Beckham’s range of apparel, reflect Maria Sharapova’s and David Beckham’s attractive and likeable personalities. Since these progenic brands retain the names of the endorsers and have been launched and usually managed by the same human-brand, it is stated here that there is a high degree of attachment between the progenic brand and the associated celebrity human-brand. These brands are referred to here as ‘fused’, because they imbue the essence of the celebrity into the product for their fans, in spite of them being aware that the celebrity is not involved in the actual production of that brand.

#### ***5.5.6 Situation VI - true progenic brands***

This last situation comprises progenic brands that are launched and owned by CEOs. Dick Smith’s products and Ben and Jerry’s ice-cream are CEO progenic brands that have been launched, respectively, by Dick Smith, and Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield. These are brands that also retain these endorsers’ names. Further, there is a high degree of attachment between these CEOs and their associated progenic brands, because they have not only been launched by these endorsers but are also a representation of their personalities. Within these six endorsement situations, there is a further proposed differentiation of endorser characteristics that affect the endorsed brands. From all of the classic and widely used endorsement models,

the Source Credibility Model is identified as most appropriate when examining the endorsers' characteristics in endorsements and their impact on attachment.

## **5.6 Classification of endorsements using the source credibility model**

Source credibility can be defined as “a communicator’s positive characteristics that affect the receiver’s acceptance of a message” (Ohanian 1990, p.41). The source credibility model was initially designed by Hovland and Weiss (1951) to understand the effect of the source in a communication process. The original model referred to the ‘expertness’ and ‘trustworthiness’ of the source, which was later modified by Ohanian (1990) to include ‘attractiveness’ to accommodate the rising trend of celebrities for product endorsements. The source credibility model has predicted that the effectiveness of a message depends on the source’s characteristics (Erdogan 1999); the source in the context of the present chapter being the endorser (celebrity or CEO), and the message being the advertisement. Research has already demonstrated that celebrity endorsers are perceived to be attractive or likable, whilst CEOs are perceived as experts (Friedman et al. 1976; Friedman & Friedman 1979). This supports the adoption of the source credibility model to explain the varying characteristics of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise associated with the two types of endorsers identified in this research. (We have depicted this variation in Appendix, Table A.2).

### ***5.6.1 Characteristic of the endorser: attractiveness (A)***

Attractiveness of endorsers comprises both physical and non-physical aspects, namely, intellectual skills, personality, athletic prowess, friendliness, social skills, and similarity to the consumer (Ohanian 1991; Erdogan 1999; Seno & Lukas 2007). Research has shown that attractiveness is more important when endorsements feature attractiveness-related products, compared to expertise, which is more important for complex, technical products (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Kamins 1990; Till & Busler 1998). While the source credibility characteristics,

which include attractiveness, have been studied in the context of product type and whether the endorser is a celebrity or CEO, none of these studies have looked at the variation of this characteristic in the context of the role played by the endorser. The prediction in the present study of the variation of source credibility characteristics is that attractiveness will be highest in the celebrity-endorsed and fused progenic endorsement situations, because of the glamorous characteristic of the celebrities (see Appendix, Table 5.2).

### ***5.6.2. Characteristic of the endorser: trustworthiness (T)***

Trustworthiness refers to the general believability of an endorser (Silvera & Austad 2004), and has been defined as "the degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid" (Hovland et al. 1953, p.21). When consumers identify a celebrity or a person as highly trustworthy, this makes the advertisement more persuasive and improves consumer attitudes toward the advertisement and product (Ilicic, Kulczynski, et al. 2016). Trustworthiness as a characteristic is linked to credibility and genuineness. For endorsers to be credible, consumers must perceive them to be trustworthy (Miciak & Shanklin 1994), sincere and honest (Choi & Rifon 2012). While studies have shown that celebrities are perceived to be 'moderately' trustworthy because they get a fee for endorsements (Silvera & Austad 2004), endorsers who are not celebrities are perceived to be more trustworthy (Rossiter & Smidts 2012). The assumption in the present study is that, if a person is associated with a brand for a significantly long duration, then they have been in that role because they are perceived to be reliable and trustworthy. Hence, it is reasoned here that trustworthiness will be highest in the spokesperson endorsement situations (see Appendix, Table 5.2).

### ***5.6.3 Characteristic of the endorser: expertise (E)***

Expertise refers to the product knowledge of the endorser, which goes beyond the effects of trustworthiness and stems from knowledge, experience, or training in the related field (Erdogan

1999; Silvera & Austad 2004; Choi & Rifon 2012). Hovland et al. (1953, p.21) defined expertise as "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions". Examples of experts would typically include doctors, professionals or technical experts. An endorser has a high degree of expertise when they are perceived to possess knowledge and provide accurate information about the endorsed product. Consumers are more likely to buy that product when the celebrity is perceived to be an expert (Ohanian 1990). We liken the expertise of endorsers to people who are not celebrities. These persons are typically CEOs in a particular domain. Literature has shown how company presidents are perceived to be experts and thus associated with complex, technical products (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Kamins 1990; Till & Busler 1998), but only with regard to product-type and the type of endorser. This leads to the prediction here that expertise is highest in the endorsement situations that feature the CEOs, namely CEO-endorsed and true progenic situations (see Appendix, Table 5.2).

Whilst our research looks at the effect of attachment and endorser characteristics, a distinction is created amongst endorsements based on the perceived degree of attachment between the endorsed products and endorsers.

In pursuit of finding a construct that can provide clarity in endorsement, the following research questions are posed:

**RQ1:** What are the effects of the types of endorsement (endorsed, spokesperson and progenic) and the type of endorser (Celebrity, CEO) on perceived attachment between the celebrity and product?

**RQ2:** What are the effects of the type of endorsement and the type of endorser on purchase intention?

**RQ3:** What are the effects of the type of endorsement and the type of endorser on the three components of source credibility, viz. attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise?

These research questions are tested empirically, concluding the study with findings, which have theoretical and practical implications.

## **5.7 Method**

### ***5.7.1 Stimuli***

To achieve the research objective of identifying the effects of endorsement situations on attachment, source credibility and purchase intention, a 3x2 full factorial design was adopted, with the two factors being the endorsement type (spokesperson, endorsed and progenic) and the endorser type (celebrity and CEO). These factors were manipulated to measure their effect on the dependent variables of attachment and source characteristics (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) of the endorser. This survey-based experiment was conducted using the online survey platform, Prolific. A fictitious mobile-phone brand, 'Parker-Max', was used instead of a known brand, to minimise possible confounds of participants' prior brand experiences (Lee & Thorson 2008). However, the endorsers were not fictitious, as the pre-test indicated it was not possible for respondents to meaningfully answer questions relating to attachment to fictitious people. Spry et al. (2011) specify in their paper that male celebrities are usually associated with functional products. As a smart-phone can be considered a functional product, female celebrities were excluded from the present study. After a pre-test with 15 undergraduate students where potential endorsers were tested on the basis of attractiveness and familiarity, movie actor Leonardo DiCaprio and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg were chosen as the celebrity and CEO endorsers, respectively (see Appendix, Figure 5.2).

### ***5.7.2 Sample and questionnaire administration***

The population of interest consisted of people in the 18-25 age group, generally considered as millennials. The main reason to include millennials is because they possess smart-phones and are most exposed to rapid advances in technology. Endorsement studies have also used this age-group in the past (Friedman et al. 1976; Kahle & Homer 1985; Rice et al. 2012; McCormick 2016) when exploring different facets of endorsement. The respondents were randomly distributed into one of the six endorsement situations, and were asked to view a write-up of the endorsement situation they were in, followed by an advertisement. The advertisement (see Appendix, Figure 5.2) featured the endorser and the brand (Par-Max), which was changed to 'The Leo Collection' and 'The Zuckerberg Collection' to reflect the fused and true progenic situations, respectively.

Measurement scales have been adapted from past research, such as the source credibility scale (Ohanian 1990), the attachment scale (Mugge et al. 2010), and purchase intention scale (McDaniel & Gates 2001). Most of the scales are established scales generally employed in endorsement research, so the reliability of key constructs was examined using conventional methods. Participants were asked to indicate their responses for all measures on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) (see Appendix, Table 5.3).

### ***5.7.3 Initial statistical procedures***

The data were subjected to reliability checks to identify unengaged respondents and outliers. This reduced the sample from 430 to 397 respondents. Principle component analysis with Promax Rotation was conducted with all five constructs in the study: Source Credibility represented as second-order factor of attractiveness; trustworthiness and expertise; perceived attachment of endorser to product; and purchase intention. Using the eigen value greater than 1 rule, five factors were identified, with all items loading on to their respective factors, except



for one question in the expertise sub-scale. The question, 'I believe the endorser is an everyday user of the product', had a cross-loading greater than 0.4 and was therefore removed. This question did not belong to the original source credibility scale developed by Ohanian (1990), and as such its exclusion did not pose an issue. Once this item was removed, the factor loadings for the remaining factors improved. The factor scores were saved and used as composites in the subsequent analysis. The scales were also tested for internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha. The five constructs had alpha in the 0.838 to 0.918 range, indicating a high degree of internal consistency, exceeding the suggested cut-off value of 0.70 (Field et al. 2012).

## **5.8 Results**

### ***5.8.1 Effects of the type of endorser and endorsement on perceived attachment and purchase intention***

To answer the first two research questions about the effects of the six endorsement situations defined by the endorser type (Celebrity vs CEO) and endorsement type (Endorsement, Spokesperson, Progenic) on perception of attachment of celebrity to the brand and purchase intention, two separate factorial between-group ANOVA were used. Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's tests were used to evaluate the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, respectively. The latter was not supported for both ANOVA analyses; however, ANOVA is not sensitive to violations of the homogeneity of variance assumption when the samples are moderate to large and approximately equally sized, as is the case in this study.

The main effect of endorser type on attachment was not found to be statistically significant,  $F(2, 391) = 3.01, p = .08$ . However, the main effect of endorsement type,  $F(1, 391) = 22.62, p = .000$  and its interaction  $F(1, 391) = 3.774, p = .02$  with endorser type were both found to be statistically significant. Post-hoc analysis showed that, within the types of endorsements, progenic had a significantly higher level of attachment than endorsement

( $p=000$ ) and spokesperson ( $p=000$ ), with no significant difference between the latter two ( $p=.732$ ). There is some evidence of interaction between one level of each factor, namely, Spokesperson and Celebrity, in that the level of attachment is higher when a celebrity is a spokesperson for the brand rather than a mere endorser of it. No other interactions were observed.

The main effect of endorsement type on purchase intention was also statistically significant,  $F(1,391) = 6.309$ ,  $p=.002$ , although the effect size was marginal,  $\eta=.031$ . The post-hoc test indicates a statistically significantly higher purchase intention for progenic characteristic compared to endorsement ( $p=002$ ) and spokesperson ( $p=.05$ ) characteristics, but no difference between endorsement and spokesperson characteristics. There was no significant effect of the type of endorser or its interaction with endorsement type on purchase intention.

### ***5.8.2 Effects of the type of endorser and endorsement on source credibility characteristics***

To answer RQ3, MANOVA was used to examine the influence of type of endorsement (Endorsement, Spokesperson, Progenic) and the type of endorser (Celebrity, CEO) on the three components of the source credibility, viz. attractiveness, trust, and expertise. The data were first examined to ensure they met the underlying assumptions of MANOVA. Univariate and multivariate normality were assessed with Shapiro-Wilk tests and boxplots, respectively, and could be assumed. Correlations between the three dependent variables were not excessive, thus ruling out multicollinearity as a concern. Finally, Box's M was non-significant at  $\alpha=.001$ , indicating that homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices could be assumed.

The MANOVA findings reveal that the combined dependent variable of source credibility was significantly affected by the endorser type,  $F(3, 389)=212.6$ ,  $p=000$ ,  $\eta=.62$ , but not by the type of endorsement,  $F(6, 780)=1.07$ ,  $p=.6$ ,  $\eta=.008$ , or by the interaction of the two factors,  $F(6, 780)=.961$ ,  $p=.451$ ,  $\eta=.007$ . Subsequent analysis was therefore restricted to

the endorser type factor. Analysis of the dependent variables individually shows that all three components, i.e. Attractiveness ( $F=280$ ,  $p=000$ ,  $\eta=.417$ ), Trustworthiness ( $F=13.37$ ,  $p=000$ ,  $\eta=.033$ ) and Expertise ( $F=145$ ,  $p=000$ ,  $\eta=.272$ ), varied significantly across the endorser types. In terms of effect size, however, Attractiveness had the most impact, followed by Expertise, with Trustworthiness having the minimal impact as indicated by its  $\eta$  value. Posthoc Bonferroni pairwise comparison of marginal means shows that the distinguishing factor between CEOs and Celebrities regardless of type of endorsement was that Celebrities were rated significantly higher than CEOs on Attractiveness and Trust, whereas CEOs were rated significantly higher on Expertise. Attractiveness followed by Expertise were the most distinguishing characteristics, followed by Trustworthiness. This provides partial support for our proposition on variation of source credibility characteristics across the six endorsement situations (see Table 5.2 in the Appendix). If the endorsement has a celebrity associated with it, then it will be perceived to be more attractive compared to expertise which is associated with an endorsement by a CEO. However, as the interaction effect was not significant, no conclusions can be drawn about the precise variation of the source credibility characteristics for each of the six specific combinations of endorsement situations.

## **5.9. Discussion, implications and conclusion**

The preceding analyses show that attachment plays an important role in the endorsement process. Perception of endorser attachment to a brand largely depends on the type of endorsement, regardless of the type of endorser or even the endorsement situation. In this regard, traditional endorsements based on testimonials and spokespersons fare poorly compared to progenic type appeals in creating a sense of attachment. This is an important finding, as progenic endorsements were also linked to significantly higher purchase intention over the traditional forms of endorsement. The present study thus makes an original

contribution by showing the link between endorsement type, attachment and purchase intention: the higher the perceived attachment of the endorser to the product, the higher the purchase intention. The results suggest that progenic endorsements, which are currently under-represented in product endorsement ads, are an effective and inexpensive source of creating endorsements which can influence actual purchase decisions. It is therefore recommended here that the 'true progenic' endorsement situation be encouraged, particularly among CEOs and start-up owners who launch products and services of significance to the public. Furthermore, instead of using celebrities for a one-off endorsement or tying them in long term exclusive contracts as spokespersons, companies would be better off creating a fused progenic brand with the celebrity.

In terms of endorser types, while attachment does not differ vastly between a celebrity and CEO, there is some evidence of interaction between the two, in that attachment is enhanced when a celebrity assumes the role of spokesperson instead of a traditional endorser. This result is consistent with earlier research on multiple endorsements (Mowen & Brown 1981; Tripp et al. 1994; Bergkvist & Zhou 2016) which have found negative brand evaluations and overall negative endorsement effectiveness when a celebrity endorsed multiple unrelated brands (Cheng-Hsui Chen et al. 2013). This result also confirms the present study's conceptualisation of the 'spokesperson' type of endorsement in which the endorser has an exclusive association with the brand over a longer duration than in traditional endorsements. Given that there is no existing literature on the differentiation in endorsement types, the present research contributes to brand literature by introducing the endorsed, spokesperson and progenic types of endorsement.

Integrating the above findings with the existing source credibility model in the endorsement literature, the present study demonstrates how source credibility appeals of the endorsers are affected by differing levels of attachment. The MANOVA results showed a

variation in the source credibility appeals of the endorsers in different types of endorsements. Celebrities were perceived to be more attractive than CEOs, who in turn were perceived to be more expert-like regardless of the type of endorsement. This is consistent with findings in the literature on source credibility appeals of endorsers which have associated the attractiveness appeal with celebrities and expertise appeal with CEOs (Friedman & Friedman 1979; Till & Busler 1998; Spry et al. 2011; Bergkvist & Zhou 2016).

Trustworthiness, a subset of source credibility (Spry et al. 2011; Fleck et al. 2012), was found to have minimal effect compared to attractiveness and expertise in differentiating between the endorser types. This finding poses a conundrum for the practitioner, as the main reason for using an endorser is because of their perceived credibility as an independent source of information about the product. Ohanian (1991) explained the low levels of trustworthiness for celebrities in her study as a consequence of the large sums of money being paid for endorsements. Seno and Lukas (2007) found an indirect effect of trustworthiness through attractiveness, whereas Joseph (1982) and Ohanian (1991) assert that ‘attractiveness’ of the celebrity does not translate into ‘trustworthiness’. It is conjectured here that the importance of trustworthiness would depend on the nature of product abstraction. When consumers are able to objectively judge the quality of the product, a mobile phone in the present study, trust would play a lesser role, than when the product is abstract, for instance a service. It is also possible that trustworthiness would be inherently higher for progenic type endorsements, as the act of lending one’s name to a product would in itself raise the trustworthiness of the ad.

The managerial implications are that, when it comes to the choice of celebrities, even for progenic brands, the celebrity has to be attractive. Their expertise or even trustworthiness comes second to attractiveness. This is especially relevant for endorsement of beauty- and attractiveness-related products which rely on celebrity endorsements. For technical and more complex products, the CEO should be seen as an expert, someone who is an entrepreneur and

involved in the development of the product rather than someone who just manages the business. Companies, who might have hesitated in using their CEO because of their lack of attractiveness or trustworthiness, can be assured by the findings of the present study that attractiveness and trustworthiness are not impediments to an effective endorsement for these product-types.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that consumer evaluations of ads do differ along the attachment-endorsement spectrum and that practitioners should not consider all endorsements to be one and the same.

### **5.10 Limitations and future research**

The generalisability of the study is limited by the sample profile of millennials and the type of endorsers and endorsements used. Older consumers' attitudes toward endorsements and endorsers could vary from those of millennials, especially since the former may not be heavily influenced by social media. The low levels of trustworthiness found in this study, suggest that the results may be influenced by the nature of the product. A smart-phone is a functional product, thus consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions could vary with a hedonistic product and endorsement types associated with that type of product.

Another limitation of the present research lies in employing the fictitious brand. This decision was made to gain greater construct validity by minimizing possible confounding of participants' prior brand experiences such as familiarity or likeability as shown in extant research (Lee & Thorson 2008). Although the utilisation of the hypothetical brand, in our context, such as Parker-Max was helpful in addressing the desired research problem, the sacrifice of ecological validity to some extent appears to be inevitable.

Future research could expand to test the effect of different samples and endorsement situations, particularly the use of a low involvement, beauty-related product with female endorsers. The construct of attachment could be explored further in the context of

endorsements by looking at different types of attachments that can occur in the endorsement situation, such as between the triad of consumers, products and endorsers. The interplay of attachment with other established endorsement constructs such as source credibility and authenticity could also be explored.

## Appendix: Figure and Tables



**Figure 5.2** The advertisements for the CEO endorsed and True progenic endorsement situations, respectively



**Table 5.2 Classification of product characteristics based on the endorser type and endorsement type of situation**

<b>Endorser type</b>	<b>Endorsement type</b>		
	<i>Endorsed</i>	<i>Spokesperson</i>	<i>Progenic</i>
Celebrity	Celebrity Endorser	Celebrity spokesperson	Fused progenic brand
CEO	CEO Endorser	CEO spokesperson	True progenic brand

- A (Attractiveness) E (Expertise) and T (Trustworthiness)

**Table 5.3 Questionnaire**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>SOURCE CREDIBILITY APPEAL: ATTRACTIVENESS</b>					
1. I find the endorser attractive	1	2	3	4	5
2. I find the endorser classy	1	2	3	4	5
3. I find the endorser good-looking	1	2	3	4	5
4. I find the endorser elegant	1	2	3	4	5
<b>SOURCE CREDIBILITY APPEAL: TRUSTWORTHINESS</b>					
5. I find the endorser dependable	1	2	3	4	5
6. I find the endorser honest	1	2	3	4	5
7. I find the endorser reliable	1	2	3	4	5
8. I find the endorser sincere	1	2	3	4	5
9. I find the endorser trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
<b>SOURCE CREDIBILITY APPEAL: EXPERTISE</b>					
10. I believe the endorser is knowledgeable about this phone	1	2	3	4	5
11. I believe the endorser is an everyday user of this phone	1	2	3	4	5
12. I believe the endorser is qualified to endorse this phone	1	2	3	4	5
13. I believe the endorser is an expert on this phone	1	2	3	4	5
14. I believe the endorser is skilled to endorse this phone	1	2	3	4	5
<b>ENDORSER AUTHENTICITY</b>					
15. The endorser is genuine	1	2	3	4	5
16. The endorser seems real to me	1	2	3	4	5
17. The endorser is authentic	1	2	3	4	5
<b>BRAND CREDIBILITY</b>					
18. The brand has the ability to deliver what it promises	1	2	3	4	5
19. The brand's product claims are believable	1	2	3	4	5
20. This brand doesn't pretend to be something it isn't	1	2	3	4	5
21. This endorsement is authentic					
<b>ENDORSER'S ATTACHMENT TO PRODUCT</b>					
22. I can see that the endorser is committed to maintaining a relationship with this phone	1	2	3	4	5

23. It appears that this phone has a great deal of personal meaning to the endorser	1	2	3	4	5
24. It appears that the endorser is proud to be associated with this phone	1	2	3	4	5
<b>CONSUMER'S ATTACHMENT TO PHONE</b>					
25. I think I could form an attachment with this phone in time	1	2	3	4	5
26. I find I have a bond with this phone	1	2	3	4	5
27. I feel emotionally connected to this phone	1	2	3	4	5
<b>CONSUMER'S ATTACHMENT TO CELEBRITY</b>					
28. I would like to purchase other products endorsed by the endorser	1	2	3	4	5
29. I would like to keep myself updated about the endorser at all times	1	2	3	4	5
30. I feel emotionally connected with the endorser	1	2	3	4	5
31. I would purchase the endorser's products over other competing products	1	2	3	4	5
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARD AD</b>					
32. I have a favourable attitude towards this ad	1	2	3	4	5
33. I like this ad	1	2	3	4	5
34. This ad does not irritate me	1	2	3	4	5
35. I find this ad interesting	1	2	3	4	5
<b>ATTITUDE TOWARD BRAND</b>	<b>Please turn over</b>				
36. I find this brand is good	1	2	3	4	5
37. I like the brand very much	1	2	3	4	5
38. I find the brand to be pleasant	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PURCHASE INTENTION</b>					
39. I would definitely buy this phone	1	2	3	4	5
40. I would probably buy this phone	1	2	3	4	5
What is the major role played by the endorser in this ad?	<b>Tick one of the below options</b>				
	Celebrity	CEO	Spokesperson		
What do you think this study is about?	<b>Answer freely in words</b>				

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 5

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The final study of this thesis explored the overall interaction of the endorser-type and endorsement situation on attachment in endorsements. The attachment theory, as in the preceding chapters, was also employed in this study along with the source credibility theory from endorsement. This quantitative study showed how the progenic endorsement situation reflected the highest attachment, compared to the endorsed and spokesperson types of endorsement situation. While the endorser type had no effect on purchase intention, the progenic endorsement situation showed a weak but statistically significant effect on purchase intention. Finally, celebrity endorsements had the highest attractiveness, while CEO endorsements had the highest expertise. Trustworthiness had no significant impact. This study not only has practical implications but also contributes to endorsement research, with the identification of six endorsement situations and the attachment-endorsement spectrum; explaining the low, medium and high attachment levels beginning with the endorsed, spokesperson and progenic endorsements, respectively.

## CHAPTER 6: THESIS CONCLUSION

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### 6.1 Summary of research background

The objective of this thesis was to examine the role of attachment in endorsements; more specifically, to understand the interplay of attachment between the three entities in any endorsement, consumer, celebrity and product, on consumer perceptions and overall endorsement effectiveness. Celebrity endorsement is helpful in creating differentiation among products and services, especially in highly saturated industries and markets. Celebrity endorsers, by promoting products and services, influence consumers' attitudes.

The main focus of this thesis was the construct of attachment and its relevance in the context of progenic type endorsements. Attachment as a construct originated in psychology and was gradually adapted to numerous disciplines, including marketing. This psychological concept was developed to explain a child's proximity to their mother or primary care-giver (Thomson et al. 2005). The thesis described *attachment* as being instinctive, and not only psychological but also emotional, which comprises a deep, long-lasting connection between two or more persons or entities. Extant marketing research has already examined attachment between consumers and products (Thomson et al. 2005; Albert et al. 2008; Grisaffe & Nguyen 2011; David & Bearden 2017) and between consumers and human-brands such as celebrities (Thomson 2006; Chung & Cho 2017; Loroz & Braig 2015; Escalas & Bettman 2017). Endorsement has always attracted attention from researchers delving into the type of endorser, endorser's appeals and congruence or match-up between the endorser and product. However, the construct of attachment impacting on endorsement effectiveness has been unexplored. The closest and most recent endorsement research has only briefly discussed the level of involvement by the celebrity in the role of the endorsement, without examining or exploring

its overall impact on endorsement and, finally, on the consumer's purchase intentions (Keel & Nataraajan 2012; Thomas & Fowler 2016).

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the role of attachment in endorsements and how the differences in perceived attachment between the endorser and the product create differences in endorsement situations. By examining the background of endorsement theories and types of endorsers, the attachment theory from psychology was selected as the primary theoretical underpinning of this thesis. The present research expanded the distinction in the types of endorsers, which has previously been limited to traditional celebrity endorsers, expert endorsers (CEOs), professional experts, regular consumers, and created or fictitious and animated endorsers. The 'progenic' endorsement type was introduced in the thesis to describe those products launched by endorsers, naming these after themselves, as being truly distinct from the traditional gamut of endorsers. Furthermore, the progenic endorsements were perceived to have the highest level of perceived attachment between the endorser and brand.

The attachment theory was adopted in this thesis for the endorsement context to describe attachment between the three entities in any endorsement: consumer, endorser and product. According to the attachment theory, there is an intense, proximity-seeking type of attachment, also known as the primary attachment strategy, which occurs when attachments are threatened. When individuals are anxious, hyperactivation sets in; while the other secondary attachment strategy of deactivation surfaces when individuals are avoidant. The thesis describes the attachment that results from either hyperactivation or deactivation as 'diluted attachment', while 'undiluted attachment' exists if the consumer is attached to either an endorser or product or both.

Popular endorsement theories such as meaning-transfer, source-credibility, source-attractiveness, match-up and ELM (elaboration likelihood) were examined in the literature reviews of the thesis. Conflicting results from these models justify the use of the attachment

theory to explain inconsistencies across studies and results. While the primary theory for the present research was the attachment theory, the meaning-transfer and source credibility models are the supplementary theories which were also adopted in this thesis.

The first study in this thesis, Chapter Three, examined consumers' perceptions of endorsements using the attachment lens. A qualitative study consisting of detailed interviews with projective techniques discovered that attachment in the endorsement triad, that is, attachment between the consumer-celebrity, consumer-product and between the celebrity-product, consisted of concepts or themes that contributed to the primary attachment concepts. Consumers attributed product-involvement, self and social goals and identities, explained through self-consciousness, self-brand connections and sense of belonging, as reasons for their perceived attachment to brands. Consumers attributed the celebrity-type and celebrity personality as reasons for their attachment to celebrities. Through Kelman's social processes of identification, consumers clearly distinguished celebrities' perceived attachment to products in traditional versus progenic endorsements.

Using the meaning-transfer model, the *tripartite attachment model* was conceptualised in Chapter Four, as the primary framework underpinning the thesis. This model resulted from the qualitative inputs generated in the previous study, Chapter Three. The three attachment nodes identified in the qualitative study were explored further in the tripartite attachment model. According to this conceptual framework, attachment in addition to meaning flows between the three attachment nodes which are proposed to exist in all endorsements: attachment between the celebrity-product, attachment between the consumer-celebrity and finally, attachment between the consumer-product. The attachment-endorsement perspectives that emerge from the qualitative research include concepts that directly/ indirectly impact attachment in the endorsement triad. Furthermore, product-involvement, self-consciousness, self-brand connection (SBC) and sense of belonging, in particular, are peripheral concepts and

more relevant to the product-type in question, which in turn affects attachment. The stimulus in the quantitative study was a smart-phone, which is very different from perfumes in the context of social approval, self-consciousness and product involvement. The conceptual framework in Chapter 4 is an extension of the meaning-transfer model. The proposed tripartite attachment model focuses on the endorsement triad and not on factors that either directly/indirectly impact attachment.

With the identification of the three primary attachment nodes and flow of attachment between these nodes in endorsements, the final study contextualised the construct of attachment in the context of existing theories of endorsement, such as the source model. This was achieved by the quantitative study employed in Chapter Five, which examined the interaction of the endorser-types and endorsement situations. Using the source credibility model, ‘attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise appeals’ were introduced to differentiate among products in the six categories of endorsement situations. The celebrity endorsed type refers to those endorsements where the product-brands are endorsed by celebrities, and the fused progenic brand type refers to those endorsement situations where the product-brands are launched and owned by celebrities. Both these endorsement situations comprise brands that possess the attractiveness appeal but vary in their degree of attachment between the individual and the progenic brand. The CEO-endorsed type is that endorsement situation where the product-brand is endorsed by a CEO renowned for their expertise in a particular domain. The true progenic type is that endorsement instance where the brands are launched and owned by CEOs also with an expertise appeal but also involving a high degree of attachment with these individuals who launch and own these product-brands. Both the CEO-endorsed and true progenic endorsement situations comprise brands that possess expertise but, again like the celebrity type, vary in their degree of attachment for the associated individuals. Celebrity and CEO spokesperson endorsement situations represent those product brands and services that feature celebrities and



CEOs speaking for and promoting a brand. This category of endorsement is suggested to have a medium degree of attachment between the products and individuals, but primarily includes products which comprise trustworthiness as a major appeal. Finally, the findings support earlier research on multiple endorsements (Mowen & Brown 1981; Tripp et al. 1994; Bergkvist & Zhou 2016) which found negative brand evaluations and overall negative endorsement effectiveness when a celebrity endorsed multiple unrelated brands (Cheng-Hsui Chen et al. 2013).

Using the attachment theory, the difference in attachment was best described by the identification of three degrees, namely low, medium and high, that exist in the endorsed, spokesperson and progenic brand situations, respectively. Endorsed brands are those products that are endorsed by individuals who can however be replaced with time, which categorises them in the 'low' degree of attachment. Spokesperson brands are those products that feature individuals who speak on behalf of a product or service; whom the consumers usually perceive as having a moderate level of attachment with the associated product. The 'progenic brand' category was introduced in this thesis which describes a product that has not only been launched by an individual but also possesses that person's name and brand equity. Progenic brands launched by individuals have the highest degree of attachment. Celebrities and CEOs are the two types of individuals considered when classifying product-brands and the degrees of attachment.

## **6.2 Contributions: Theoretical**

The present research makes a number of theoretical contributions. While prior work has only looked at a superficial role of the celebrity's involvement with the product (Keel & Natarajan 2012), attachment as a construct is introduced to further clarify previous inconsistencies in

endorsement findings. It is this psychological concept of attachment that can explain the transfer of meaning, values and culture in an endorsement triad.

The thesis introduces and identifies the endorser-type who launches products named after them, imbuing their values and ideals in the products in the overall endorsement process. This endorsement situation, termed “progenic”, has not been addressed in academic literature to date and is a major theoretical contribution to both endorsement and marketing literature. Furthermore, the thesis also succeeds in clearly distinguishing endorsement situations, which again has not been examined. The qualitative study conducted in the third chapter confirms that match-up and source models (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) are relevant for all brand-types including beauty-related products. This study also described consumers’ perceptions of endorsements using the attachment lens, which showed a differentiation in the perception of traditional versus progenic endorsements. This becomes another theoretical contribution which shows that consumers perceived the endorsers and the overall endorsement in progenic endorsements to be more trustworthy and credible compared to traditional endorsements. The final theoretical contribution from Chapter 3 was the identification of primary and secondary attachment concepts, which again has not been identified in research so far.

Next, the present research introduces *three attachment nodes* existing in any endorsement: attachment between the celebrity-product, attachment between the consumer-celebrity and attachment between the consumer-product. This is a major theoretical contribution, since endorsement literature has not explicitly examined attachment between the celebrity and product. By linking existing attachment theory concepts, the thesis theoretically describes how attachment styles and strategies are as relevant in endorsement as they are in psychology. In Chapter 4, the hyperactivation and deactivation attachment strategies and the diluted and undiluted attachment styles for endorsements are proposed, which is another

theoretical contribution to endorsement literature. The *tripartite attachment model* extends the existing McCracken (1986) meaning-transfer model, thus contributing to both endorsement and marketing research.

Next, this is the only research that, to the author's knowledge, combines products that are affected by an endorser's appeals and the degree of attachment between the individual and the product. This thesis identifies the three endorsement situations, i.e. endorsed, spokesperson and progenic, which had not been identified to date. Progenic endorsements are not only perceived to have the highest level of attachment between the endorser and product, but also higher perceived purchase intention compared to traditional endorsements. The quantitative study in the last chapter, Chapter 5, thus makes an original contribution by showing the link between endorsement type, attachment and purchase intention: the higher the perceived attachment of the endorser to the product, the higher the purchase intention.

### **6.3 Contributions: Practical**

From a practitioner's point of view, this research will assist in carefully selecting the right type of individual with a specific product-type. The present research suggests that well-established and reputed brands should refrain from using celebrity endorsers on a frequent basis, because loyal consumers tend to have negative perceptions toward such endorsements. Furthermore, consumers could tend to switch brand loyalties. It is recommended that companies encourage celebrities who have an expertise or skilled in a particular craft to launch products using their own names, given that consumers have more positive perceptions of such endorsements compared to regular traditional endorsements. Even though there is a surge in the employment of 'influencers' as a new endorser trend, particularly on social media platforms, it is advisable that companies encourage such endorsers to launch progenic products. In this way, influencer-

endorsed products can be perceived as more effective than regular endorsements by such individuals.

Celebrities and endorsers, who are perceived to possess a high match-up or congruence with particular product-types, should be encouraged to launch products related to themselves. This positively impacts the flow of meaning and attachment from the celebrity-product. Celebrities, who are famed for being connected to their consumers, should also be encouraged to launch progenic products so that attachment can positively flow from the consumer-celebrity. It is helpful if companies provide as much information as possible in situations of negative publicity or controversy involving either the product or celebrity, so that the anxious and avoidant-style consumers can have access to the right information and accordingly make their purchase choices. Celebrities and endorsers should aim to launch progenic products for those product-types that are already perceived to have high brand loyalty, for example, sports-shoes and apparel, gadgets and electronic devices, kitchenware, cosmetics and high-end jewellery among other product-types.

Next, the identification of priority of product appeals amongst the three endorsement types will enable managers to differentiate the product-types when considering endorsements. Companies are encouraged to employ those individuals who have a specific expertise or reputation in that area to launch products associated with their knowledge, since consumers perceive higher attachment between these endorsers and products. This affects their attitudes and purchase intention in a positive manner.

Regardless of the endorsement-type, all celebrities, including those employed for progenic brand endorsements, must be attractive. Their expertise and even trustworthiness come second to attractiveness. However, companies who might have hesitated in using their CEO because of their lack of attractiveness or trustworthiness can be assured that attractiveness

and trustworthiness do not impede effective endorsements for complex and technical product-types. Their expertise is paramount to the overall endorsement effectiveness.

The thesis establishes that endorsements differ on the attachment-endorsement spectrum and practitioners should consider these important differences when making strategic marketing decisions.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A1 : Scales used in the thesis

Attractiveness (Source Credibility Scale) (Ohanian 1990)	
	I find xxx attractive
	I find xxx classy
	I find xxx beautiful
	I find xxx elegant
	I find xxx sexy
Trustworthiness (Source Credibility Scale) (Ohanian 1990)	I find xxx dependable
	I find xxx honest
	I find xxx reliable
	I find xxx sincere
	I find xxx trustworthy
Expertise (Source Credibility Scale) (Ohanian 1990)	I find xxx to be an expert on the phone
	I find xxx to be experienced with the phone
	I find xxx to be knowledgeable about the phone
	I find xxx to be qualified to endorse the phone
	I find xxx skilled to endorse the phone
Consumer's attachment to the product (Mugge et al. 2010)	This phone has no special meaning to me
	This phone is very dear to me
	I find I have a bond with this phone
	This phone does not move me
	I am very attached to this phone
	I feel emotionally connected to this phone
Celebrity's attachment to the product (Developed in the thesis)	I can see that xxx is committed to maintaining a relationship with the phone
	It appears that the phone has a great deal of personal meaning to xxx
	It appears that xxx is proud to be associated with the phone

Consumer to celebrity (Developed in the thesis)	I like to purchase all products endorsed by xxx
	I prefer xxx products over other endorsers
Attitude toward the ad (Developed in the thesis)	I have a favourable attitude towards the ad
	I like the ad
	I find that the ad does not irritate me
	I find the ad to be interesting
Attitude toward the brand (Developed in the thesis)	I find the brand is good
	I like the brand very much
	I find the brand pleasant
Purchase Intention (McDaniel & Gates 2001)	I would definitely buy the phone
	I would probably buy the phone

### Appendix A2 Pre-Test 3: Endorser Selection

S No						
1	Do you know this individual?	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>		
2	How familiar is this individual to you?	<b>Very familiar</b>	<b>Familiar</b>	<b>Not so familiar</b>		
3	Where have you heard about this individual?	<b>Social media</b>	<b>Movies</b>	<b>TV series</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Others</b>
4	Rate the extent to which you like this individual	<b>Like this person a lot</b>	<b>Like this person a little</b>	<b>Do not like this person</b>		
5	Name any product or brand that you associate with this individual					
6	For which product category could these individuals be used?					
7	Name any five products that you cannot live without					

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