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# The impact of celebrity endorsements on the buying behavior of Rowan University students age 18-24

Reginald Esangbedo

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**THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON THE BUYING  
BEHAVIOR OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AGE 18-24**

by  
Reginald Esangbedo

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Public Relations  
College of Communication  
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at  
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Thesis Chair: Professor Joseph Basso



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## **Abstract**

Reginald Esangbedo

THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOR  
OF ROWAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AGE 18-24

2011

Dr. Joseph Basso

Public Relations

The purpose of this study was to determine the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsements on the purchase decisions of Rowan University students age 18-24, with specific regard to digital media players. The hypothesis of the study is that majority of Rowan students age 18-24 are persuaded to buy digital media players that are endorsed by celebrities they view favorably.

The information gathered in the secondary research was used to develop questions for focus groups. The author of the study conducted two pre-test focus groups, after which the questions were modified. Once the questions were refined and finalized, the author conducted eight eight-person focus groups.

Upon reviewing the results from the focus groups, the author found that most Rowan University students are not persuaded to purchase digital media players that are endorsed by celebrities they view favorably. The hypothesis was rejected.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

A celebrity endorsement is a channel of brand communication in which a celebrity acts as the brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claim and position by extending his/her personality, popularity, stature in the society or expertise in the field to the brand (Roll).

The use of celebrity endorsers to promote consumer goods is a marketing tactic that dates back to the mid-nineteenth century. In 1854, Queen Victoria lent her face to one of Cadbury's print ads, and in the 1880s, Pope Leo XII's image was used in an ad for Mariani Wine.

Over the years, the use of celebrity endorsers has increased exponentially and has now become common practice among marketers. According to market research firm Millward Brown, at least one celebrity appears in more than 15% of advertising in the United States; in India and Taiwan, at least one celebrity appears in 24% and 45% of advertisements, respectively (Crutchfield). Also, acquiring celebrity endorsers constitutes approximately 10% of all television advertising expenses (Agrawal and Kamakura).

Nike, the world's largest manufacturer of sports equipment and athletic wear, is one of the biggest purchasers of celebrity endorsements. In just an eight-month period in 2004, the company spent \$192 million on acquiring new celebrity endorsers. The company entered \$90 million and \$15 endorsement deals with basketball stars and then-rookies LeBron James and Carmelo Anthony, respectively. It also entered into a \$45 million endorsement deal with basketball star Kobe Bryant, a \$40 million deal with tennis star Serena Williams, a \$1 million deal with then-fourteen-year-old soccer star Freddy Adu and a \$1 million deal with Canadian hurdler Perdita Felicien. In addition to these

new deals, Nike had existing endorsement deals with golfer Tiger Woods, football star Michael Vick, baseball star Derek Jeter, track star Marion Jones and soccer player Mia Hamm (Klaus and Bailey). The deal with Vick was eventually dropped when he became embroiled in the dog fighting scandal of 2007; Woods, on the other hand, got to keep his deal despite his infidelity scandal of late 2009.

Many would deny that they are persuaded by celebrity endorsements and some marketing experts might even describe them as ineffective; however, there is abundant evidence that indicates otherwise. Recent studies show that sales for some brands increased by up to 20% after execution of a celebrity endorsement campaign. And, according to Anita Elberse, associate professor at Harvard Business School, “some companies have seen their stock increase by 0.25% on the day the deal was announced” (Crutchfield).

There are more than a few iconic endorsement deals that show just how much a brand could gain from a celebrity endorser. In 1984, after the success of his blockbuster album, *Thriller*, Michael Jackson signed on as the new face of Pepsi; this historic deal led to a spike in Pepsi’s sales and an increase in market share (Herrera).

Another great example is George Foreman’s endorsement deal with Russell Hobbs, Inc., manufacturers of the Lean Mean Fat-Grilling Machine, better known as the *George Foreman Grill*. Foreman’s endorsement transformed the then-unknown product into a household staple. Since signing on as the face of the product in 1995, over 100 million units have been sold (Port).

The use of celebrity endorsements has been so fruitful that it has become an industry unto itself. There are now marketing firms that are specialize in appraising the

stock value of public figures and helping brands match their products with the appropriate celebrity. These include Davie Brown Entertainment and Marketing Evaluations, Inc.; the latter is solely dedicated to celebrity appraisal.

#### Statement of the Problem:

Communicators are always looking to find out what tactics are most effective for the brands they represent. While there is extensive research that shows that consumers are generally responsive to celebrity endorsements, it is unclear what impact a celebrity endorsement would have on many specific types of products. Therefore, in order to enrich the body of knowledge available to communicators, there is a need to conduct research on the impact of celebrity endorsements on specific types of products.

In an era where media is increasingly being sold in digital format, research on the impact of celebrity endorsements on the sales of digital media players is very useful. However, so far, no research has been done on this topic.

#### Situational Analysis:

The first digital media player was created in 1979 by Kane Kramer. It was called the IXI and was never made available to the public. Kramer would later be hired by the Apple, Inc. as a consultant (*KANE KRAMER - The Inventor of the Digital Audio Player*).

The first digital media player to reach the market was Listen Up, released by Audio Highway in 1997 (Ha). A few other players were released by Compaq and Diamond Multimedia in the following years (Yoshida and Quan; Menta).

In 2001, Apple, Inc. released the iPod. The product would go on to become a major success for the company and undisputed leader in the digital media player market.

Today, the iPod accounts for 73.8% of the digital market; and, as of September 2009, over 225 million iPods had been sold (Delahunty).

Overall, there has been relatively little use of celebrity endorsers in the digital media player market. Apple executed a campaign featuring silhouettes of U2 and Mary J. Blige, but other than that, there have been no notable ad campaigns featuring celebrity endorsers in the digital media player market.

#### Procedure:

The author conducted focus groups to determine the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchasing decisions with regards to digital media players.

For benchmarking purposes, the author conducted secondary research on celebrity endorsements as it relates to other consumer products.

#### Purpose of the Study:

The author sought to determine the impact of celebrity endorsements on the buying decisions of consumers with regards to digital media players. The subjects for this study were Rowan University students age 18-24.

The author believes this study will give marketers a better idea of what tactics to employ when marketing digital media players to young adults.

#### Hypothesis:

H1 – It is expected that the majority of Rowan University students age 18-24 are persuaded to buy digital media players that are endorsed by celebrities they view favorably.

Assumption:

- The author assumes that it is impossible to verify whether or not consumers are subconsciously persuaded to make purchases by celebrity endorsers.

Significance of the Study:

The author hoped to gain insight on the impact of celebrity endorsements on the buying decisions of consumers age 18-24 as it relates to digital media players. More insight on this topic will set the stage for more detailed research on this topic in the future. It will also help give manufacturers and marketers of digital media players a better idea of what attributes matter most to consumers in the age group being studied.

Definitions:

*Celebrity:* A famous or celebrated person (“Celebrity”).

*Digital Media Player:* A portable electronic device that plays audio and video (“Portable Media Player”).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Over the years, many have offered theories on what makes a celebrity endorsement successful. In addition to the various theories offered, many have also conducted studies aimed at identifying all the factors that play a role in celebrity endorsements and what impact they have on consumer behavior.

According to business and brand strategist Martin Roll, the three essentials of celebrity endorsements are the attractiveness of the celebrity endorser; the credibility of the celebrity endorser; and meaning transfer between the celebrity endorser and the brand.

Roll explains that a celebrity endorser should have qualities that the target audience for the endorsed product find attractive. These qualities could be in relation to physical appearance, intellectual capabilities, athletic competence or lifestyle, among other things (Roll).

Roll defines credibility as the celebrity endorser's perceived expertise and trustworthiness. He maintains that "as celebrity endorsements act as an external cue that enable consumers to sift through the tremendous brand clutter in the market, the credibility factor of the celebrity greatly influences the acceptance with consumers" (Roll).

When he speaks of meaning transfer, Roll is referring to the compatibility between the brand and celebrity in terms of identity, personality, position in the market, and lifestyle. He explains, "When a brand signs on a celebrity, these are some of the

compatibility factors that have to exist for the brand to leverage the maximum from that collaboration” (Roll).

Roll maintains that even though these three essentials are necessary for the maximization of a celebrity endorsement deal, it might be difficult to find any celebrity that satisfies all three criteria for a single product. Therefore, depending on the nature of the brand and the kind of product being endorsed, companies can selectively emphasize one factor over the other (Roll).

#### The Meaning Transfer Model:

Anthropologist and corporate consultant Grant McCracken created a three-stage model to help explain meaning transfer as it relates to celebrity endorsement deals. In his model, the first stage is where audiences associate a set of meanings with a famous person. The second stage is where the set of meanings move from the famous person to the product or brand via endorsement. In the third and final stage, the brand’s meaning is acquired by the consumers when they purchase the product (Schlecht).

#### The Match-Up Hypothesis:

The match-up hypothesis states that celebrity endorsers are more effective when they are congruent with the product being endorsed. According to a research article by University of South Carolina professor Brian Till and Cabrini College professor Michael Busler, this theory comes from advertising research that “examined the differential impact that different types of endorsers, often celebrities, have on the endorsed brand” (2).

A seminal study in the development of this hypothesis was conducted in 1973 by consumer behavior experts Rabindra Kanungo and Sam Pang. Their study, which paired

male and female non-celebrity models with a selection of products, found that the effect of the models varied depending on the product with which they were paired (Till and Busler).

#### Associative Learning Theory:

According to Till and Busler, the associative learning theory is a useful framework for understanding match-up effects. Their research article describes it as “a mechanism by which links or relationships between concepts can be established” (3).

In the context of celebrity endorsements, Till and Busler explain that both the celebrity endorser and the endorsed product represent units connected to other units based on consumers’ experiences with the product and the endorser; these connections represent their association set for the product and the endorser.

Till and Busler maintain that an important variable in increasing the likelihood of an associative link is similarity. They explain, “generally, the more similar two concepts are, the more likely the two concepts will become integrated within an associative work” (3). Therefore, it is this associative link between a product and its celebrity endorser that drives “predicted endorser effects” (Till and Busler 3).

#### Co-Activation Theory of Dominant Support:

The co-activation theory of dominant support was developed by Australian marketing professors Lawrence Ang and Chris Dubelaar. Their theory holds that when a consumer sees a celebrity and a brand juxtaposed together, associations are “spontaneously activated from the nodes of both entities” (380); they refer to this as co-activation.



Ang and Dubelaar maintain that the nodes on both entities are activated in order of dominance, with the most dominant nodes being activated first. They refer to activations that are consistent in both entities as supporting activations; those that are not consistent in both entities are referred to as opposing activations.

In order to simplify the concepts of supporting and opposing activations, Ang and Dubelaar give an example where Sharon Stone has an endorsement deal with a cosmetics brand. They explain, “Sharon Stone will be a good endorser for cosmetics brands since she is attractive, which is consistent with using cosmetics”; this is the supporting activation. They continue, “However, the fact that she had plastic surgery may act in ‘opposition’ to the endorsement” (380); as indicated, this is the opposing activation.

Ang and Dubelaar maintain that the degree of fit between a celebrity endorser and a brand is determined by the ratio of supporting activations to opposing activations. They explain, “the greater the former compared to the latter, the greater the degree of fit” (380). In other words, an endorser-and-brand combination with four supporting activations and one opposing activation is a better match than a combination with three supporting activations and one opposing activation. A scenario where there are more opposing activations than supporting activations is a sign of a severe mismatch (Ang and Dubelaar).

Ang and Dubelaar caveat their theory by pointing out that not all activations are equally important. With regards to purchase intention, they maintain that “some may be more influential than others” (380).

### Balance Theory:

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Social Sciences, the balance theory is “a social psychological theory based on the assumption that individuals have a deep-rooted inclination toward consistency in their relationships and cognitions” (“Balance Theory”). The theory, developed by Austrian psychologist Fritz Heider, holds that people “constantly seek to achieve balance where social relationships enter into conflict, either by changing their sentiments or attitudes toward persons or situations, or by subjectively diminishing the importance of the conflict” (“Balance Theory”). In plainer terms, this theory holds that people are generally inclined to like their friend’s friends, dislike their friend’s enemies, dislike their enemies’ friends, and like their enemies’ enemies (“Fritz Heider’s Balance Theory”).

The balance theory can be used to explain the impact of a celebrity endorsement on a consumer’s perception of an endorsed product. For instance, a consumer might view a product more favorably if it is endorsed by a celebrity that is liked by said consumer. However, if the endorsed product is one that is already disliked, the consumer might begin to view the liked celebrity less favorably while viewing the product more favorably (“Fritz Heider’s Balance Theory”).

The latter example is a complex scenario that presents a friend’s friend who also happens to be an enemy. In such circumstances, all possible results have to be taken into consideration in order to predict the final outcome, which is usually the one that requires the least effort. Therefore, if it would be easier to befriend an enemy than to lose a friend, a person in a complex scenario will make friends with the enemy and maintain the existing friendship (“Fritz Heider’s Balance Theory”).

### Celebrity Influence:

According to a study conducted by media agency Mediaedge:cia (MEC), consumers age 18-34 are more likely to purchase a product or service based on a celebrity endorsement than older consumers (“Celebrity Endorsers Have More Impact on Young Consumers”).

The 2009 study, which surveyed over 24,000 consumers in 25 countries, found that 30% of respondents age 18-34 said they would try a product promoted by an admired celebrity, which was considerably higher than the percentage of older respondents that answered similarly.

Fourteen percent of respondents age 35-54 said they would try a product promoted by an admired celebrity; among respondents age 55 and older, 11% said they would. Based on these figures, the study concludes that interest in celebrities declines significantly as consumers get older.

When the results from each age group were combined, the study shows that 25% of all respondents would try a product promoted by an admired celebrity. The study also found that 35% of respondents believe celebrity endorsements improve a brand’s awareness, help define its personality, and generate interest. However, 53% said they have trouble remembering which celebrities are endorsing which brands and only notice a brand if it is in a product category that they are interested in.

The study showed that fashion, beauty products, luxury goods and sporting equipment benefit the most from celebrity endorsements. For most categories, celebrity endorsers ranked low among 23 other purchase influencers, losing out to other factors like pricing, TV ads and product reviews. When viewed against fashion, beauty products,

luxury goods and sporting equipment, celebrity endorsements ranked in the top 10 among purchase-influencing factors.

#### Believability of Celebrity Endorsements:

The results of a study conducted in India show that 86% of the respondents said that the most prominent ad that they remember had a celebrity in it. According to the study, which surveyed over 2019 respondents across 12 metros and small towns in India, only 3% believe that a celebrity endorsement affects their buying decision (Mahajan-Bansal).

The study shows that 78% of Indian consumers think the quality of a product is the most important factor when making a purchase. Only 22% of respondents believe that celebrity endorsers actually use the products that they endorse; 51% of the respondents believe that celebrities only endorse products for the money.

#### The Oprah Winfrey Endorsement:

No single celebrity has demonstrated a greater ability to influence consumer behavior than Oprah Winfrey. As a result, she is the ultimate celebrity endorser.

Over the course of her career, the media mogul has turned unknown brands into household names and has sent books flying to the top of the best-seller lists by simply recommending them on her daytime talk show.

In 2004, economists at Brigham Young University conducted a study using quantitative methods to determine whether a causal relationship exists between Winfrey's endorsements of books and sales of the endorsed books thereafter. Not surprisingly, they were able to confirm not only that such a relationship exists, but that individual book sales increased dramatically after an Oprah Winfred endorsement. The results of the

study also confirm that the impact of an Oprah Winfrey endorsement lasts longer than previously thought (Brigham Young University).

As part of the study, the economists examined USA Today's top 150 best-seller list. They found that out of the 45 non-children's books that Winfrey had endorsed, only 11 had made the list prior to her endorsement; and none of them had peaked higher than the 25th position on the list. They also discovered that the first 11 books she ever endorsed had never made the list before, but each debuted in the top four immediately after her endorsement (Walch).

According to Richard Butler, professor of economics and lead author of the study, "Oprah's recommendations had a bigger impact on the sales of books than anything that we have previously seen in the literature, or seen since." Butler added, "Not only did her picks rocket from obscurity, in most cases, to the top of the best-seller lists, but our statistical tests proved they generally had longer staying power on the lists than other best-selling books" (Brigham Young University).

The power of the Oprah Winfrey can also be seen outside of the publishing world. After Winfrey passively mentioned that she owned a LightWedge book light during an interview, the company saw daily revenue increase from \$3,700 to \$90,000; and within a few hours after endorsing Amazon's Kindle, the product was sold out (Pinkasovitch).

Galaxy Desserts, a confectionery based in Richmond, California, experienced a 1,000-percent growth in sales after being featured in Oprah's Favorite Things. After being featured in Favorite Things, Marie Belle Hot Chocolate increased its annual revenue from \$1 million to \$5 million (Pinkasovitch).

### Impact Beyond Sales:

Another celebrity who can lay claim to having a valuable endorsement is basketball legend Michael Jordan. His association with a brand not only increases sales but also increases the market value of the companies whose products he endorses.

According to a study conducted at Southern Illinois University, rumors of Jordan's impending return to basketball in 1995 helped increase the profitability of companies with products he endorsed. The study examined the stock market value of five of the companies with whom Jordan had endorsement deals and found that investors reacted positively to the rumors. The companies in question, General Mills, McDonald's, Nike, Quaker Oats and Sara Lee, each increased their stock market value by an average of \$1 billion (Kimmel 80).

### The Celebrity Scandal:

According to conventional wisdom, a celebrity endorser involved in a scandal can be detrimental to associated brands. However, a 2010 study conducted by Adweek Media and Harris Interactive found that 74% of Americans do not feel any differently toward a brand endorsed by a celebrity who becomes plagued by scandal (Harris Interactive).

Twenty-two percent of respondents said that they would have a negative attitude toward a brand endorsed by a celebrity who becomes involved in scandal; 5% said they feel would have a positive attitude toward such a brand.

Eighty-one percent of respondents age 55 or older, 70% of those age 45-54, 77% of those age 35-44, and 68% of those age 18-34 say celebrity scandal has no impact on their attitude toward the endorsed brand.

Nineteen percent of respondents age 55 or older, 29% of those age 45-54, 19% of those age 35-44, and 21% of those age 18-34 say celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat worse* or *much worse* about the endorsed brand.

Less than 0.5% of respondents age 55 or older, 1% of respondents age 45-54, 4% of those age 35-44, and 11% of those age 18-34 say celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat better* or *much better* about the endorsed brand.

Among male respondents, 73% said celebrity scandal has no impact on their attitude toward the endorsed brand. Twenty-one percent said that celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat worse* or *much worse* about the endorsed brand, while 6% said that celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat better* or *much better* about the endorsed brand.

Among female respondents, 75% said celebrity scandal has no impact on their attitude toward the endorsed brand. Twenty-two percent said that celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat worse* or *much worse* about the endorsed brand, while 3% said that celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat better* or *much better* about the endorsed brand.

Seventy-five percent of respondents who live on the west coast, 74% of those who live on the east coast, 71% of those who live in the midwest, and 75% of those who live in the south say celebrity scandal has no impact on their attitude toward the endorsed brand.

Twenty percent of respondents who live on the west coast, 19% of those who live on the east coast, 26% of those who live in the midwest, and 22% of those who live in the

south say celebrity scandal makes them feel *somewhat worse* or *much worse* about the endorsed brand.

Five percent of respondents who live on the west coast, 7% of those who live on the east coast, 3% of those who live in the midwest, and 3% of those who live in the south say celebrity scandal makes them feel “somewhat better” or “much better” about the endorsed brand (“Celebrity Scandals Have Low Brand Impact”; Harris Interactive).

#### Single vs. Multiple Celebrity Endorsers:

According to a Cankaya University study, 72.5% of Turkish people prefer ads that feature multiple celebrity endorsers to ads that feature just a single celebrity endorser. Twenty-seven-and-a-half percent of Turks prefer ads with a single celebrity endorser (Ergin and Akbay).

Respondents who prefer ads with multiple celebrity endorsers said that such ads suggest that there is a consensus about the quality of the product or service, thus “increasing the level of credibility and persuasion” (Ergin and Akbay 7).

#### Two-Sided vs. One-Sided Celebrity Endorsements:

A 1989 study featured in the Journal of Advertising examines and compares the impact of two-sided and one-sided celebrity endorsements on advertising effectiveness and credibility (Kamins et al.).

The study defines a two-sided celebrity endorsement as one where “the celebrity spokesperson makes both positive and negative statements regarding the advertised product” (Kamins et al. 4), which is “designed to increase a viewer’s perception of advertiser credibility” (Kamins et al. 4). On the other hand, a one-sided celebrity endorsement is one where there is no discussion of the advertised product’s limitations.



The results of the study show that when the two types of executions are compared, two-sided celebrity endorsements elicited “significantly higher advertising credibility and effectiveness ratings, higher evaluation of the sponsor in terms of perceived overall quality of service, as well as a significantly greater intention to use the advertised service” (Kamins et al. 4).

#### Celebrity Endorsement of Beauty Products:

A study in Belgium examined the relative effectiveness of celebrity endorsements of beauty products compared to endorsements of high involvement and low involvement products. For the purpose of the experiment, a laptop and a candy bar were selected as the high involvement and low involvement products, respectively; these two products were chosen because they are day-to-day items like beauty products (Roozen).

The study, conducted by a marketing professor at Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel, surveyed 28 university students age 21-25. Forty-eight percent of the respondents were female and 52% were male.

The respondents were asked to rate celebrities in terms of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. Each celebrity got three separate scores for expertise, one for each product. The expertise scores helped determine how fitting and, thus, effective the celebrity in question is as an endorser for the product.

Thirteen female celebrities were selected as the endorsers in a set of mock ads for the laptop, the candy bar and the beauty product; each celebrity appeared in alone in three ads, one for each product.

The thirteen celebrities selected were Kim Gevaert, Maria Sharapova, a Russian Jennifer Aniston, Kate Moss, Gwen Stefani, Naomi Campbell, Scarlett Johansson, Kim

Clijsters, Paris Hilton, Mariah Carey, Angelina Jolie, Beyoncé Knowles and Sarah Jessica Parker. Out of all of them, only Kim Gevaert and Jennifer Aniston were recognized by all the respondents; the remaining respondents were recognized by as low as 57% of the respondents.

The results of the study show that the respondents ranked Naomi Campbell as being the most fitting endorser for a beauty product, followed by Beyoncé Knowles and then Jennifer Aniston.

Despite receiving lower scores, most of the remaining celebrities were seen as fitting endorsers for a beauty product; the only exceptions were Kim Gevaert and Kim Clijsters, the only athletes among the thirteen celebrities and, perhaps, the least glamorous.

None of the celebrities were seen as particularly fitting endorsers for a candy bar or a laptop, all receiving moderate scores. Gwen Stefani was seen as the most fitting for the candy bar endorsement. Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell, the only models among the celebrities, were seen as the least fitting endorsers for a candy bar; their scores were significantly lower than the scores of the rest. The third-lowest was Kim Gevaert, who is a former sprint runner.

Paris Hilton was seen as the least fitting endorser for a laptop, followed by Mariah Carey, Naomi Campbell, and then Kate Moss. Angelina Jolie received the highest compatibility score for the laptop endorsement (Roozen).

This study shows how a celebrity's public persona conditions the way consumers think of them and, therefore, how believable the celebrity is as an endorser for certain

products. This was most apparent in the expertise scores for the beauty product endorsement, where the celebrities with the most glamorous personas ranked highest.

The author of the study also tested the ads with “attractive” non-celebrity endorsers and without any endorser at all. A new sample was used for this part of the experiment; this time, 200 university students age 18-25 were surveyed. Sixty-three percent of the respondents were female and 37% were male. These respondents were also exposed to the mock ads featuring the thirteen celebrity endorsers mentioned earlier.

After seeing the ads, the respondents were asked to give scores based on their attitude toward the brand; their cognitive attitude toward the ad; their affective attitude toward the brand; and their purchase intention on a seven-point scale.

For the candy bar, results show that respondents had the most positive attitude toward the brand when the ad featured no model, followed by the celebrity ranked as the best match for the endorsement. The ad with an anonymous model received the lowest brand attitude score, even lower than the score received by the celebrity viewed as the worst match for the endorsement.

For the beauty product, results show that respondents had the most positive attitude toward the brand when the ad featured an anonymous model, followed by the celebrity ranked as the best match for the endorsement. The ad featuring celebrity viewed as the worst match came in third and the ad featuring no model had the lowest brand attitude score (Roozen).

For the laptop, results show that the ad with the anonymous model received the highest brand attitude score. The ad with no model had the second-highest brand attitude score and the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement

came in third. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match came in last with a score significantly lower than the rest.

The candy bar ad with no model received the highest affective attitude score. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match came in second and the ad featuring the anonymous model came in third. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match for the endorsement came in last; however, the range of the scores was very narrow.

The beauty product ad featuring the anonymous model received the highest affective attitude score. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement came in at a distant second place and the ad with no model came in third. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match came in last. The range between the second-highest and lowest score was very narrow.

The laptop ad featuring the anonymous model received the highest affective attitude score. The ad with no model came in second and the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement came in third. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match for the endorsement had the lowest score.

The candy bar ad with no model received the highest cognitive attitude score, followed by the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement. The ad featuring the anonymous model received the third-highest cognitive attitude score and the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match got the lowest score.

The beauty product ad featuring the anonymous model received the highest cognitive attitude score, followed by the ad with no model. The ads featuring the celebrities viewed as the worst and best match for the endorsement came in third and last,

respectively, with similar scores. This was the only instance where the celebrity viewed as the worst match for the endorsement scored higher than the celebrity viewed as the best match.

The laptop ad with no model received the highest cognitive attitude score, followed by the ad featuring the anonymous model. The ads featuring the celebrities viewed as the best and worst match for the endorsement came in third and last, respectively.

The candy bar with no model received the highest purchase intention score. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement received the second-highest score, followed by the ad featuring the anonymous model. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match came in last.

The beauty product ad featuring the anonymous model received the highest purchase intention score, followed by the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement. The ad with no model received the third-highest score and the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match for the endorsement came in last.

The laptop ad featuring the anonymous model received the highest purchase intention score and the ad with no model came in at a close second place. The ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the best match for the endorsement received the third-highest score and the ad featuring the celebrity viewed as the worst match came in at a distant last place (Roizen).

#### Celebrity Endorsements from a Child's Point of View:

Results from a study conducted by Dr. Brian Young of the University of Exeter shows that there are significant differences between the way celebrity endorsements are

perceived by children and adults. Even among children, there were differences between the way celebrity endorsements are perceived by children age 5-6 and those age 9-10 (Young).

The authors of the study surveyed 43 children age 5-6, 71 children age 9-10, and 11 adults. In order to simplify the process of evaluating the advertisements for the children, nine response statements were provided: *the celebrity is used for fun*; *the celebrity is used to grab attention*; *the celebrity is used because he likes the product*; *the celebrity was used to make you like the product*; *the celebrity was used because he was paid*; *the celebrity was used to make you buy the product*; *the celebrity was used to get you to remember the product*; *the celebrity was used because he knows about the product*; and *celebrities always tell the truth*. The respondents were asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, which 1 being *strongly disagree* and 5 being *strongly disagree*.

Among the children age 5-6, *the celebrity is used for fun* got the lowest average score; *the celebrity was used to make you like the product* and *the celebrity was used to make you buy the product* both received the second-lowest score. *The celebrity was used to get you to remember the product* received the third-lowest score and *the celebrity is used to grab attention* received the highest score.

Among the children age 9-10, *the celebrity is used to grab attention* got the lowest average score, followed by *the celebrity was used to make you buy the product* and then *the celebrity was used to make you like the product*. They gave *celebrities always tell the truth* the highest score.

Among the adult respondents, *the celebrity is used to grab attention* and *the celebrity was used to make you buy the product* also got the lowest and second-lowest scores, respectively. *The celebrity was used because he was paid* got the third-lowest score and, like the children age 9-10, *celebrities always tell the truth* got the highest score.

These results help illustrate the differences between people of different ages when it comes to perception of celebrity endorsements. The children age 5-6 were the clear outliers in the study; the ranking order in which they placed nine statements was very different from the orders of the other two groups.

Unlike the other two groups, the children age 5-6 did not give *celebrities always tell the truth* the highest score. They gave that statement the third-highest score; *the celebrity is used to grab attention* and *the celebrity was used because he was paid* received the highest and second-highest scores. Also, they were more likely to agree with any of the nine statements than the other two groups. This indicates a lack of skepticism and, perhaps, helps explain why the government tries to regulate advertisement that targets children (Young).

On the other hand, the children age 9-10 ranked the nine statements in an order that was very similar to the adult group's ranking order. The key difference is that the adult group was more likely to agree or disagree more strongly whereas the children age 9-10 gave scores that were closer to the midpoint.

The researchers also asked the respondents to select which of the nine statements they thought was the main reason for including the celebrity endorser in the advertisement. Forty-four percent of the children age 5-6 thought *the celebrity is used for*

*fun* was the main reason for the celebrity being in the advertisement; 19% of them thought *celebrities always tell the truth* was the main reason.

Thirty-nine percent of the children age 9-10 thought *the celebrity is used to grab attention* was the main reason for including the celebrity endorser in the advertisement. Twenty-three percent thought *the celebrity was used to make you buy the product* was the main reason.

Among the adult respondents, 45% thought *the celebrity was used to make you buy the product* was the main reason. *The celebrity was used to make you like the product* and *the celebrity was used because he was paid* were both thought of as the main reason by 18% each.

The author of the study explains that these results show that young children see advertisement as a source of entertainment more than anything else. He adds that at some point in middle childhood – usually between 7-8 years old – children begin to understand that advertisements are not simply meant to entertain; furthermore, they begin to understand that celebrity endorsers are used to promote products (Young).

#### Gender as it Relates to Celebrity Endorsements:

A 2008 study conducted at the University of Toledo investigated the impact of gender on celebrity endorsements. The authors, professors Nathan Klaus and Ainsworth Anthony Bailey, examined the impact of the celebrity endorser's gender on the consumer's attitude toward the celebrity and the ad as a whole, as well as the impact of the consumer's gender on his or her attitude toward the celebrity endorser and the ad.

Respondents were asked to review ads featuring female soccer player Mia Hamm and male soccer player Landon Donovan; afterwards, they were given a questionnaire



that measured their reaction to the celebrity in the ad and the ad as a whole. The authors of the study maintain that they made every effort to have everything in each ad as similar as possible, including the athletes' poses and the ad background (Klaus and Bailey).

The results of the study show that the female respondents reacted more favorably to the ad featuring Mia Hamm than the male respondents. They also reacted more favorably to Mia Hamm than the male respondents (Klaus and Bailey).

The female respondents also reacted more favorably to the ad featuring Landon Donovan than the male respondents. However, the male respondents reacted more favorably to Landon Donovan than the female respondents (Klaus and Bailey).

#### Celebrity Endorsements and their Impact on Consumers' Perception of Quality:

A 2002 study conducted at Drexel University found that there is a positive correlation between a properly matched celebrity endorsement and an increase in consumer perception of a product's quality.

The author of the study created mock ads for Billow's light bulbs and Moyer's cleaning solution; the ads were then reviewed by 450 students at two large universities on the east coast. Each ad featured pretested celebrity that was determined to be a right fit for the endorsement of the product in question (Busler).

When measured on a nine-point scale, the light bulb's average perceived quality score was 6.13 when presented without a celebrity endorser. When presented as an endorsed product, it received an average score of 6.8 (Busler).

The cleaning solution's average score for perceived quality was 6.09 when presented without a celebrity endorser. When presented as an endorsed product, that score increased to 6.51 (Busler).

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Design**

The author of the study conducted eight eight-person focus groups in April 2011. All participants in each focus group were Rowan University students age 18-24. An audio recording was made for each focus group.

The Small Business Encyclopedia defines a focus group as follows:

“A focus group is a marketing research tool in which a small group of people (typically eight to ten individuals) engages in a roundtable discussion of selected topics of interest in an informal setting” (“Focus Group”).

Focus groups are useful because they provide qualitative information, which is richer and more complex than quantitative data. Also, the group dynamic often leads to more in-depth discussion than can be gotten from other types of qualitative research.

Despite its advantages, focus groups present a major issue with regards to objectivity. This is due to the fact that some respondents might give responses that are conditioned by what other members of the focus groups said. In other words, there is always a risk of groupthink.

Another disadvantage is that focus group participants do not always say what they really think. Being in the presence of others, some people might not be willing to express views that might be considered controversial. And in many other cases, some people are generally more inhibited when put in group situations; as a result of this, focus groups can end up being dominated by one or two very outspoken participants, which skews the results.

The author of this study selected participants for the survey using a convenience sample. Respondents were recruited from all over the Rowan University, including classrooms, the library and administrative buildings.

A convenience sample is the most expedient method of sample selection. It is most useful when the researcher has limited time and resources. However, convenience samples are not representative of the population and, therefore, conclusions made in a study in which a convenience sample was used have no scientific validity.

The author conducted two preliminary focus groups that served as pretests. Some of the questions in the preliminary focus groups were based on findings in secondary research, while others were developed in order to gain insight on certain angles that have not been explored in any published research. There were 20 questions in total.

The information gathered from the preliminary focus groups was used to fine-tune the questions used in the final focus groups. There number of questions was narrowed down to five.

## Chapter 4

### Results

The author conducted two preliminary focus groups and eight final focus groups. Each focus group had eight participants, all of whom were Rowan University students age 18-24.

#### Pre-Test Focus Group #1:

Given a generic product, all participants said that a celebrity endorser's profession – be it acting, singing, athletics – does not make the celebrity more or less persuasive.

All except one participant said that it would not matter if endorsers seemed like they actually use the endorsed product. Using Alicia Keys' Proactiv Solution endorsement as an example, a participant said, "I can't call Alicia Keys and ask, 'What were the side effects? Do you think it was worth the money?'" Another added, "How do I know she isn't lying?"

When asked what non-gender-specific products they thought would be better sold by female endorsers, participants mentioned the following: food, home goods, cars, books, alcohol, cell phones and digital media players. No single item was mentioned more than once.

When asked what non-gender-specific products they thought would be better sold by male endorsers, participants mentioned the following: electronics, cars, alcohol, protein shakes and exercise products. Electronics, cars and alcohol were each mentioned by two participants; exercise equipment was mentioned by three participants.

When asked what products they are most likely to buy if endorsed by a celebrity, participants mentioned the following: clothing, bras, cars, electronics, hair products, jewelry and shoes. Clothing was mentioned three times.

When asked what products they are more likely to buy if endorsed by a white celebrity, participants mentioned computers, [mayonnaise pills], grills, cookies and cologne. If endorsed by a non-white celebrity, participants said they were more likely to buy hair products, make-up and condoms.

All eight participants said that, depending on the product, a celebrity endorser's age can affect his or her persuasiveness. A participant explained, "I wouldn't want to see Martha Stewart promoting alcohol."

When asked about other characteristics that might make a celebrity endorser more or less persuasive, participants mentioned physique, sex appeal, surgically enhanced features and standing in society. With regards to sex appeal, a participant explained, "You can't sell baby diapers with your boobs hanging out." With regards to plastic surgery, another said, "If I know you had plastic surgery, don't try to sell me a workout plan."

All except one participant said that a rumor, whether confirmed or not, could affect the persuasiveness of a celebrity endorser.

Two of the participants said that seeing a product in a movie or television show would make them want to buy it. All eight participants said that seeing a paparazzo photograph of a celebrity using a product in real life persuade them to buy or at least become interested in a product.

When asked what characteristics would make a celebrity a more persuasive endorser for a digital media player, five of the eight participants said that none would; they explained that no endorser would make them want to buy a digital media product. The remaining three said that a young celebrity, one with a career in sports or music, or one who had technological expertise would be persuasive.

When asked what specific celebrities would make them want to buy a digital media player, the aforementioned three participants mentioned Kanye West, B.o.B., Michael Phelps and Bill Gates. The participant who mentioned Bill Gates explained, “I would be persuaded by an inventor, especially one with charisma.”

#### Pre-Test Focus Group #2:

When asked if it was important for celebrity endorsers to seem like they actually use the endorsed product, five out of the eight participants said it was, while the remaining respondents said it was not. One of the participants who said that it was not important explained, “It really depends on the product. If a celebrity became the face of Wendy’s, I really don’t think it would matter at all if they ate there or not. I find it hard to believe that anyone would care enough to have it affect their decision to eat there; I definitely wouldn’t.”

When asked if a celebrity endorser’s age makes the celebrity more or less persuasive, all except two of the participants said it does not matter. One of the two who said it mattered explained, “If an old, ugly guy like Donald Trump endorsed sneakers, I don’t think young guys would be rushing to the stores to buy them.” One of those who said it did not matter responded, “It depends on how old the celebrity is and what they are trying to sell.”

When asked if there were any specific characteristics that would make a female celebrity more persuasive, seven of the eight participants mentioned either sex appeal or class; only the male respondents mentioned sex appeal. One of the female participants elaborated, “An ad that comes to mind is one for Halle Berry’s perfume. I saw it and wanted to buy the perfume right away; she’s classy and mysterious and beautiful. She is also very smart.” The only participant who did not say anything about sex appeal or class said she could only be persuaded by someone she identified with in some way.

When asked if there were any specific characteristics that would make a male celebrity more persuasive, five of the eight participants mentioned athleticism, charisma and intelligence. One of the five, a female, explained, “I like it when a male celebrity is smart and articulate. I feel like there is this macho, unthinking persona that most are expected to live up to; I find it very off-putting and I’m usually drawn to someone who comes across as a thinker.” Of the remaining three, two – both male – said that there were not any specific characteristics that would make a male celebrity more persuasive. The last of the remaining three, a female, explained, “I don’t know if I can pinpoint any specific characteristics, but I would have to be attracted to a male celebrity in order to find them persuasive.”

When asked what products they are most likely to buy if endorsed by a celebrity, only one participant was able to mention a product. The participant explained, “I tend to buy specific brands of sports drinks when they’re endorsed by an athlete that I like.”

When asked what products they are more likely to buy if endorsed by a white celebrity, only one participant mentioned a product. The participant elaborated, “I think a

golf club ad would be more believable if it had a white celebrity endorser. Yes, Tiger Woods is a huge golf star, but I think golf is still a categorically white sport.”

When asked what products they are more likely to buy if endorsed by a non-white celebrity, five of the eight participants mentioned body lotion, hair products and clothes; the remaining three did not mention any products. One of the five who mentioned products, a black female, explained, “Honestly speaking, I don’t pay much attention to ads that don’t have black people in it because I find that so many of the ads with white people in them are for things I can’t use. For instance, I cannot use the stuff white women use on their hair on mine; it would ruin my hair.”

When asked what non-gender-specific products they thought would be better sold by male endorsers, four of the participants mentioned sports equipment, bikes and book bags. The rest did not mention any specific products.

When asked what non-gender-specific products they thought would be better sold by female endorsers, one participant mentioned condoms while the rest could not mention a specific product. A female participant explained, “I think I’m more likely to buy any given product if it is endorsed by a female celebrity because it all comes down to how much I can relate with the endorser.” Another female participant agreed.

Half of the participants said that a rumor – confirmed or not – would affect the persuasiveness of a celebrity endorser; the other half maintained that rumors do not matter. One participant explained, “I wouldn’t buy anything that was endorsed by Charlie Sheen,” while another said, “I’m not going to stop using a product because it’s endorsed by someone who’s cheating on their wife. If it works for me, I’m going to keep using it.” One of the participants who had said that rumors do not matter added, “I guess it depends



on what the rumor is; if the rumor has to do with them hurting someone, I might rethink my next purchase of the endorsed product. Of course, I would only have to rethink the purchase if the brand hasn't already gotten rid of the celebrity endorser in question."

Three of the eight participants said that they would be more likely to buy a product if they saw a paparazzo photograph of a celebrity using a product in a candid setting. All eight participants said that they were more likely to buy a product if they saw it in a movie or television show. One explained, "I have definitely bought quite a few things after seeing them in movies or TV shows."

When asked if a celebrity endorser could ever make them want to buy a digital media player, half said yes and the other half said no. Among those who said yes, one explained, "I think I'd be drawn to an electronic with multiple endorsers. I remember wanting the T-Mobile Sidekick really bad after seeing the ad with tons of celebrities in it. I mean, yes, I was only 15 years old at the time, but I think that would appeal to me." Another said, "If a celebrity I really liked endorsed it, I'd totally buy it. For instance, if Trey Songz, who I have the biggest crush on, were to endorse it, I might buy it just to feel like I have stuff in common with him." Among those who said no, one explained, "Celebrity endorsements don't matter at all to me when it comes to electronics; the features are all that matter." Another added, "It's too expensive of a purchase to have celebrity endorsements matter."

### Focus Group #1:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned LeBron James, Barack Obama, Charlie Sheen, Mel Gibson, Jake Gyllenhaal, Peyton Manning, David Wright, the Situation, Pauly D and Desean Jackson. A female participant explained, “I like a celebrity that is attractive and has personality. And if the person is a comedian or just a funny person in general, I’d like them to be smart. I like different things about different celebrities; I wouldn’t react the same way to the silly things that Pauly D says if Barack Obama said them.” Another respondent said, “I like a celebrity with swagger.”

The mention of Mel Gibson’s name prompted a discussion about celebrities involved in major scandals and what impact it had on the way the participants perceived them. The participant who had mentioned Mel Gibson as a celebrity he likes said, “I don’t care that much about celebrities; I pretty much live under a rock. Also, I tend to separate how I feel about the celebrity’s work from how I feel about their character.” Another participant interjected, “I think most people say that they separate what they think of a celebrity’s work from how they feel about their character, but I don’t think they actually do.” When other participants mentioned the incidents where Mel Gibson had made anti-Semitic and racist comments, the participant who had said he liked him claimed that he had not heard of those incidents. Another participant continued, “Mel Gibson is loony tunes. I don’t separate at all; if I don’t like something a person did or said, I will not listen to their music or watch their movies.”

The conversation about celebrities caught in scandal moved from Mel Gibson to Tiger Woods. The participant who had referred to Mel Gibson as “loony tunes” said, “Tiger Woods doesn’t bother me that much; maybe it’s because I’m not that into golf, but

I generally don't care that much about infidelity and other sex-related scandals." Three of the participants mentioned that they thought the coverage of the Tiger Woods sex scandal was a little extreme. Another interjected, "I feel bad for celebrities in general; they get tarred and feathered for things that so many people do." She continued, "I actually separate who they are from what they do professionally. A perfect example is Michael Vick; I think he's a horrible person for what he did to the dogs, but I also think he's an amazing athlete. I guess it could be because I'm a huge Eagles fan." She added that Donovan McNabb was the complete opposite: a great person, but a poor athlete.

The conductor then asked the participants for their reactions to scandals involving racially charged comments. The participant who had referred to Mel Gibson as "loony tunes" said, "If there's anything thing that really bothers me, it's that." All participants agreed that racially charged comments had a negative impact on the way they viewed celebrities.

Two of the eight participants said that they would not buy a product if it was endorsed by a celebrity they did not like. One of the two explained, "It would have to be someone I really hate and a product that I could do without. For example, if Tony Romo endorsed a new product, I definitely wouldn't even try it. I know it sounds crazy, but die-hard sports fans like me hate rival teams and their players."

When asked if there were certain products that they were more likely to buy if endorsed by a celebrity, two participants mentioned sports equipment. One explained, "If an athlete I admire endorses a functional piece of equipment that the person uses in their sport, I would definitely be interested in buying it." The other added, "When I was young, I wanted to be just like Bruce Irons. I would buy every magazine he was featured

in and buy the exact same surfboard he used. And every time it broke, I would go back and buy the exact same surfboard.” One of the remaining participants mentioned that he buys certain good items when someone he admires is endorsing it or featured on the packaging. He explained, “I bought Powerade a little more often when Ryan Howard endorsed it. Also, I started buying Wheaties more often when Peyton Manning was on the box.”

When asked if there were any celebrities that would make them want to buy a digital media player, three of the participants mentioned Steven Hawkins, Christopher Walken, Justin Long and Mark Zuckerberg. One explained, “I thought Justin Long was great in the MacBook commercials; he’s recognizable, but he’s not huge, so it kind of gives you a sense of comfort.” Speaking of Mark Zuckerberg, another said, “He’s the new, young, electronic-age genius. He has taken over from Steve Jobs and Bill Gates If he were to come out and say.” The other two agreed, with one saying, “He’s a powerful icon.”

Five of the eight participants said that a celebrity was unlikely to have any impact on their decision to buy a media player. One explained that he was only interested in what was cheap and worked well. He was echoed by another participant who said, “These things are expensive. I might be persuaded to buy a hockey stick or a pair of soccer cleats; they’re pricey, but they’re not \$700 investments.”

## Focus Group #2:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Usher, Trey Songz, Chris Brown, Alicia Keys, Bobby Valentino, Melanie Fiona, Marsha Ambrosius, Gabrielle Union, Halle Berry, James McAvoy, Rihanna, Keri Hilson, Will Smith, Mary J. Blige, Jadakiss, Fabolous, Snoop Dogg, Nate Dogg, Miguel, Kevin Hart, Boris Kodjoe, Ice-T, Chris Tucker and Anthony Hamilton. One participant explained that she liked the way Trey Songz sings and that she thought he looked cute; she also said that Halle Berry is classy and a great role model. Another said, “I think Will Smith is gorgeous, funny and a great actor,” and added that she liked Rihanna because she identified with her as a fellow West Indian.

The mention of singer Miguel’s name prompted one of the participants to speculate that he could be gay. The conductor then asked participants if rumors about a supposedly straight celebrity being gay would have any effect on the way they view said celebrity. All eight participants said it would have no effect.

The conductor then asked participants if rumors about drug use affect the way they view a celebrity. All participants said it had no effect; the general consensus was that celebrities get harsher scrutiny for doing things that so many members of the general public do. One participant said, “I don’t judge,” which was echoed by two other participants; another said, “Everybody does drugs.”

The conversation moved from drug use to rumored devil worship and membership in secret societies. Three of the eight participants said that they were suspicious of some celebrities because there are many of such rumors surrounding them.

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants mentioned Gucci Mane, Waka Flocka Flame, Nicki Minaj, Melanie Fiona, Trey Songz, Justin Bieber and Lady Gaga. One participant explained, “Melanie Fiona made a song where she is begging an ex-boyfriend to take her back. I think it sends the wrong message to young girls”; she also said, “Trey Songz sounds like he is crying when he sings.” Another said, “Some of Nicki Minaj’s songs don’t make any sense and she imitates so many people. She copies Lil’ Kim a lot and tries to dress like Lady Gaga. She also raps like Lil Wayne.” Speaking about Lady Gaga, a participant said, “She is over-the-top and her videos always cross the line,” which was echoed by a few other participants, with one adding, “She scares me.”

All eight participants said that an endorsement by a celebrity they did not like would not make them not want to buy a product. They all also said that no other celebrity, including the ones they liked, could make them want to buy any product. One participant explained, “As a college student, I am on a tight budget. I’m not going to spend my money on anything because a famous person got paid to sell it to me.” Another said, “Personal testimonies or any scientific data showing that a product is better means more to me than anything else. I think celebrity endorsements only work on little kids.”

### Focus Group #3:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Charlie Sheen, LeBron James, Keri Hilson, Kim Kardashian, Shakira, Kobe Bryant, Russell Crowe, Larry King, Paul Wall, Katt Williams, Mike Epps, Kevin Hart, Aziz Ansari, Dave Chappelle, Barack Obama, Kanye West, Katy Perry and Nicki Minaj. Speaking about Charlie Sheen, a participant said, “he’s crazy and he’s really funny.” A female participant said that she loved Kim Kardashian and Keri Hilson’s style; a male participant mentioned that he thought Kim Kardashian was sexy.

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants mentioned LeBron James, Dwyane Wade, Charlie Sheen, Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Kobe Bryant, Diddy, Jennifer Lopez, Bill Gates, the cast of *The Jersey Shore*, Jamie Lynn Spears, Lindsay Lohan, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jackson, Beyonce and Britney Spears. One participant said, “Charlie Sheen is a drug addict that sleeps with everybody and gets paid for it”; speaking about Beyonce, Oprah Winfrey and Michael Jackson, the participant said, “I tend to not like people who seem too powerful and seem to be loved by everybody. I can’t explain why, but that’s just how I am.”

Six of the eight participants said that rumors about a supposedly straight celebrity being gay would not change the way they view said celebrity; the remaining two said it would. A female participant explained, “I think it’s more acceptable for girls to be homosexual in our society; we see girls making out everywhere, but we rarely ever see two men making out. Gay people don’t bother me at all, but I’m definitely caught off guard every time I see guys kissing”; she was echoed by a male participant who had also said that gay rumors would not change his perception of a celebrity. One of the two who

had said that gay rumors would change their perception said that he would stop buying a product if its celebrity endorser – one that he liked – was suddenly discovered to be gay.

The conductor then asked the participants if they would ever not buy a product because they did not like its celebrity endorser. Seven of the eight participants said that an endorser they did not like would not affect their decision. The only exception was the one who had said he would stop buying a product endorsed by a gay celebrity; he elaborated on his position, “It would only matter if the gay celebrity was endorsing a clothing item. Otherwise, I might not care.”

Three of the eight participants said that rumors about devil worship or membership in secret societies would change their perception of a celebrity.

All eight participants said that drug rumors would change their perception of a celebrity. One participant explained, “Kids copy their favorite celebrities; I have a little sister and I would hate it if someone she admired turned out to be on drugs.” She continued, “It’s partly why I hate Lady Gaga, I read somewhere that she said it’s okay to use cocaine every now and then. That’s absolutely ridiculous!”

None of the participants said that an endorsement by a celebrity they liked would make them buy a digital media player. One explained, “I have definitely bought things because Kim Kardashian endorsed them. I went to her store in Miami to buy clothes and I’m now thinking about buying those Skechers sneakers she endorses; the only thing holding me back is that I don’t wear sneakers.” She continued, “That being said, I don’t know that a celebrity could make me buy a digital player, but I’m sure Kim Kardashian would at least get me interested.” A male participant echoed her last statement, saying that he would show some interest in anything endorsed by Kim Kardashian.



#### Focus Group #4:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Lecrae, Mariah Carey, Barack Obama, Bruce Springsteen, Jay-Z, Beyonce, Kanye West, Brad Pitt, Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Luther Vandross, Justin Timberlake and Vin Diesel. Speaking about Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway, a participant said, “I like the fact that they are not media whores.” Speaking about Lecrae, another said, “I love his story. He came from a very rough neighborhood and I can relate with that. I can also relate with him as someone who is a born-again Christian.”

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants mentioned Lindsay Lohan, Lady Gaga, Charlie Sheen, John Boehner, Glenn Beck, Peyton Manning, Britney Spears, Kanye West and Jay-Z. Speaking about Lindsay Lohan, a participant said, “She is a media whore. I think she is one of those people that does everything for attention.” Another added, “I couldn’t tell you a single thing that Lindsay Lohan was in, but I know that she has been in and out of jail. That’s all I know about her.” The participant who had mentioned that she was a born-again Christian said she did not like Jay-Z and Kanye West because she suspected them of being devil worshippers. She explained, “I used to be a fan of Kanye West, but some of the lyrics in his new songs confuse me.”

After listening to the discussion about rumored devil worship, one participant mentioned that finding out that Tom Cruise was a scientologist changed his perception of him. He explained, “I guess him being a scientologist is not really a rumor since he’s open about it, but I’ve heard lots of crazy rumors about the practices of the Church of Scientology. I honestly don’t think of scientology as a real religion.”

Four of the eight participants said that rumors about drug use would change the way they viewed a celebrity.

When asked about other rumors and how they affected their view of celebrities, one participant mentioned that rumors of Naomi Campbell's wild and petulant behavior made her see the supermodel in a less positive light. Another participant said that rumors about Courtney Love having murdered Kurt Cobain have always made him distrustful of her; he said, "I think she did it, so I've always had that in the back of my mind."

Seven of the eight participants said that they would still buy a product even if it was endorsed by a celebrity they did not like. The remaining participant said, "I like her music, but I wouldn't buy Britney Spears' perfume because I don't like her as a person. I think she is a horrible mother." She continued, "This is not to say that she could affect my decision to buy every product, but her behavior over the past five years or so is the reason why I have not bought any of her perfumes."

All eight participants said that an endorsement by a celebrity they liked would have no effect on their decision to buy a digital media player. One explained, "That doesn't really influence me. I have to see the product for myself and make sure that I like it." Another said, "Celebrity endorsements don't matter to me because they're just part of the company's strategy."

### Focus Group #5:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Tom Hanks, Kanye West, Beyonce, Alicia Keys, Wale, Jeff Bridges, J. Cole, Lupe Fiasco, Denzel Washington, Will Smith and Eminem. Speaking about Tom Hanks, a participant said, “I think he is a great actor. Some actors just play the same role over and over again, but he never does; he has a very diverse body of work.” Speaking about Kanye West, another participant said, “I like his style and his attitude. I also love the lyrics of his songs.” Another said, “I love Lupe Fiasco’s new album and I agree with the political messages in his songs,” and speaking about Denzel Washington, one said, “I think he’s versatile and I respect the fact that he has lasted so long in the movie industry.”

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants mentioned the cast of *The Jersey Shore*, Soulja Boy, Travis Porter, Lady Gaga, Wiz Khalifa, Paris Hilton, Kim Kardashian, Lindsay Lohan, Britney Spears, Charlie Sheen and Kanye West. Speaking about the *Jersey Shore* cast members, a participant said, “They have such false fame. They party, get drunk and sleep with random strangers, and then get paid \$100,000 per episode.” Another spoke about Wiz Khalifa, saying, “I just can’t listen to a rapper that only raps about weed. There’s so much more to life than that.” One of the others said that he didn’t like celebrities like Paris Hilton and Kim Kardashian because he thinks they are famous for being famous; he said, “They just do whatever they want without having to suffer any repercussions. What’s more annoying is that they get paid for a lot of the stupid shit they do.” He was echoed by another participant, who said, “Paris, Lindsay and Britney need to get out of sight”; she continued, “Britney is bat-shit crazy. She drove with a kid on her lap. She needs to be taken away, so young girls don’t think any of that kind of behavior is appropriate.” Speaking about Kanye West, a participant said, “I like

his music, but he became too full of himself”; two others agreed, with one saying, “He walks around with a sense of entitlement for no reason.”

Six of the eight participants said that rumors about a supposedly straight celebrity being gay would have no effect on the way they view said celebrity. One of the six participants said, “I can’t judge anyone based on unconfirmed rumors.” One of the remaining two said, “It really depends on who it is, but yes, gay rumors would change the way I view a celebrity. It would bother me if I found out that Trey Songz was gay. I wouldn’t be able to listen to his music anymore because I would be imagining that his lyrics are about a man.”

When asked about rumors relating to drug use, five of the eight participants said they would not view the celebrity in question any differently. One of the five said she was not bothered by rumored drug use because, in her words, “it comes with fame.” One of the remaining three said, “It depends on the person’s position in life. If it’s a celebrity with kids, I’ll definitely view them more negatively.” Another one of the remaining three said, “It would definitely matter to me if a politician was a rumored drug user because they are supposed to set good examples.”

The conversation about rumors led to a discussion about allegations that certain recording artists have falsely claimed songwriting credit for some of their hit songs. One of the participants said, “I don’t know them personally, so I can’t make a complete judgment about their character, but that is definitely the kind of rumor that would knock a celebrity down a few notches in my book.”

One of the eight participants said he would not buy certain products if they are endorsed by a celebrity he dislikes. He used the new Ugg campaign featuring Tom Brady

as an example, saying, “I wouldn’t buy Uggs either way, but the fact that Tom Brady is endorsing them guarantees that.”

Four of the eight participants said that they would buy certain products if endorsed by celebrities they like. When asked what types of products they would buy because of a celebrity endorsement, they all mentioned either clothing or alcoholic beverages, or both. One said, “Whatever alcoholic drink rappers rap about is what I usually go for; Ciroc, Nuvo, you name it.”

All eight participants said that a celebrity endorsement would not persuade them to buy a digital media player. One said, “It really all depends on the price.” The others agreed, with one saying, “Celebrities don’t really influence me. Their endorsements are a complete non-factor when I’m shopping for stuff.”

### Focus Group #6:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Chelsea Handler, Kevin Hart, Beyonce, Barack Obama, Britney Spears, Katt Williams, Elton John, Allen Iverson, Martin Lawrence, Adam Sandler, Justin Timberlake and Will Smith. Speaking about Chelsea Handler, a participant said, “I think she’s very funny. I like how she talks about drinking; I think she’s unapologetically honest and says whatever comes to her mind. She has a similar sense of humor to mine.” Another spoke about Katt Williams, saying, “I feel like he speaks straight from the heart”; he also spoke about about Elton John, saying that he always tried to imitate him when learning to play the piano as a child. Speaking about Allen Iverson, another participant said, “I love his competitive spirit.”

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants mentioned Lady Gaga, Gene Simmons, Justin Timberlake, Steven Segal, Avril Lavigne, Paris Hilton, Chris Christie, the cast of *The Jersey Shore*, Charlie Sheen, Peyton Manning, Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, John Boehner and Sarah Palin. Speaking about Lady Gaga, a participant said, “I hate her, I hate her costumes and I hate all the things she does. I want it to be all about the music. She claims to be about the music, but she’s really all about shocking people. I cannot stand her.” Another echoed, saying, “She tries way too hard to brand herself as some kind of political activist. It’s so transparent.” One spoke about Steven Segal, saying, “He’s such a terrible actor.” Another spoke about the cast of Jersey Shore, saying, “They all annoy me and I don’t understand how anyone can make that much money for acting so stupid.”

Seven of the eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity's sexuality do not affect the way their perception of the celebrity in question. The single participant with a differing response said, "It all depends on who it is." The participant then said that he was more bothered by straight celebrities pretending to be gay, citing Russian pop duo t.A.T.u., who pretended to be lesbians and were later discovered to be heterosexuals.

All eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity's drug use did not affect their opinion of the celebrity in question. One said, "If the person is messing up their life, it makes me sad." Another said, "Everybody has their own issues in life. I can't bring myself to judge anyone for making mistakes. We all have skeletons in our closets." And another said, "I generally don't have a high opinion of celebrities nor do I consider them beyond the surface, so I don't really care. As long as they are only hurting themselves and no one else, I can't be bothered."

All eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity treating people poorly would change their perception of the celebrity in question. One said, "I used to be a waitress and I get very mad whenever I hear about celebrities treating waiters bad. I also think less of a celebrity when I hear that they're a bad tipper."

All eight participants said that allegations of domestic violence affect their perception of a celebrity. Speaking about singer Chris Brown, one said, "That really changed the way I saw him. I bought his first albums, but since the incident with Rihanna, I haven't bought any of his stuff."

Seven of the eight participants said that they would buy a product even if it was endorsed by a celebrity they did not like. Only one of the participants responded differently, saying, "It would only matter if there was a close substitute. If there were two

products that were very similar and one was endorsed by someone I can't stand, I'd definitely go for the other one."

Three of the eight participants said that they would buy a product if it was endorsed by a celebrity they liked. One said, "It depends on the product, but yes, I would definitely buy something if someone I like endorses it." Another said, "I bought a pair of soccer cleats years ago because they were the same pair that David Beckham used."

All eight participants said that no celebrity endorsement would have any impact on their decision to buy a digital media player. One said, "It wouldn't get me to buy it, but it might get me to at least look at the features." Another agreed, said, "I might not buy it, but an ad featuring a celebrity I like would definitely get my attention."



### Focus Group #7:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Beyonce, Mariah Carey, Michael Jackson, Tom Hanks, Barack Obama, Larry King, Taylor Swift, Cee Lo Green, Halle Berry, Anne Hathaway, Seth Rogen, Andy Samberg, Rachel Maddow, Keith Olbermann, Bethenny Frankel, Kesha, Dwayne Johnson, Lindsay Lohan and Oprah Winfrey. A participant explained, “I love Beyonce because she is the ultimate entertainer; she sings, writes, produces and acts. Her live performances are the best in the business. And on top of that, she is extremely beautiful.” Another said, “As far as I’m concerned, Mariah Carey is the best musician alive. She is only second to Michael Jackson, and since he’s dead, she now has the throne. She is such an amazing singer and songwriter.” Speaking about Oprah Winfrey, one said, “Her life story is so inspiring. The fact that a poor black girl born in the south in the ‘50s grew up to be one of the richest and most powerful people in the world lets me know that anything is possible.” Speaking about Dwayne Johnson, another said, “I find him very sexy.”

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants mentioned Bill O’Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, Tiger Woods, Lady Gaga, Bob Dylan, Eminem, Charlie Sheen, Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Donald Trump, Paris Hilton, Kim Kardashian, Peyton Manning, Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, Johnny Depp, Paul Rudd and George Clooney. A participant said, “I think Bill O’Reilly, Rush Limbaugh and the rest of the conservative pundits spread a message of hate. They are destroying the country.” Another said, “I can’t stand George Clooney because he strikes me as arrogant and everything that comes out of his mouth is extremely condescending. His interviews are unbearable to watch, and every time he pays people compliments, it’s always very

patronizing. He irritates me.” One spoke about Johnny Depp, saying, “He is the most pretentious actor in all of Hollywood. He goes out of his way to seem like he doesn’t love media attention, but I’d venture to say he loves it more than your average celebrity. She continued, “And, somehow, even though he was born and raised in Kentucky, he has a European accent. He is as fake as they get.” Speaking about Eminem, another said, “I don’t like that his primary selling point is the fact that he’s white. I don’t think people would like or even care about him if he wasn’t white and I think he is very aware of that and exploits his whiteness. I really don’t believe he’d even have a record deal if he wasn’t white.” He continued, “I also think it is pretty lame that he’s always feuding with female artists.” Another participant agreed, saying, “Yeah, he hates women. He’s also very homophobic.”

Seven of the eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity’s sexuality had no effect on their perception of the celebrity in question. The participant with a different position said, “I don’t have a problem with gay people, but finding out that someone I thought was straight is actually gay would change how I see them, especially if it’s a guy I was attracted to. Even when it’s unconfirmed, it still changes how I see them a little bit.”

Five of the eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity using drugs have an effect on their perception of the celebrity in question. One of the five said, “It depends on who it is.” Another agreed, saying, “Yes, it definitely does. If the rumors are about someone who had an edgy image to begin, it wouldn’t make a difference, but if they’re about someone with a squeaky clean image, I would look at them differently.” She continued, “This is not to say that I would hate them or like them any less, it just means

that I would think of them differently.” One of the remaining three participants said, “I don’t drug people for using drugs. Often times, there’s a bigger issue that makes them use drugs. The last thing they need is judgment.”

Five of the eight participants said that would buy a product even if it was endorsed by a celebrity they did not like. One of the remaining three said, “I would definitely stop buying or supporting anything that was associated with someone I absolutely hate.” She continued, “If Glenn Beck suddenly became the face of a product I usually buy, I would definitely stop buying it until he is no longer under contract with the brand.”

Half of the participants said that they would buy a product if it was endorsed by a celebrity they liked. A member of this half said, “It would have to be something cheap. I’d totally buy candy that was endorsed by someone I like.” Another said, “A celebrity endorsement could definitely make me buy clothes or shoes. Of course, the celebrity would have to be someone I really respect.”

All eight participants said that no celebrity endorsement would have any impact on their decision to buy a digital media player. A participant said, “They’re too expensive for me to even think about anything but the price and the features.” All of the other participants agreed.

### Focus Group #8:

When asked what celebrities they liked, participants mentioned Will Smith, Justin Bieber, Jay-Z, Beyonce, Oprah Winfrey, Rihanna, Mo’Nique, Steven Tyler, B.o.B., Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Venus Williams, Serena Williams, Donald Glover, Cain Velasquez, Lil Wayne, Chris Rock, Wendy Williams, Janet Jackson, Mary J. Blige, Ben Stiller and Robert De Niro. Speaking about Venus and Serena Williams, a participant said, “I think they are such amazing players. They endure so much hate and yet keep smiling. I love them.” Speaking about Jay-Z, another said, “He’s the greatest rapper of all time in my book.” Another spoke about Chris Rock, saying, “He is the smartest comedian out there. He is so good at breaking down the most complex topics into such tiny pieces that any dumbass would be able to understand them.” He also spoke about Angelina Jolie, saying, “She is drop-dead gorgeous.”

When asked what celebrities they did not like, participants said Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift, Chris Brown, Eminem, Justin Timberlake, Brock Lesnar, Matt Hughes, Roy Nelson, Katherine Heigl, Mel Gibson, Charlie Sheen, Yelowolf, Kim Kardashian, Clint Eastwood, Jessie James, John Mayer, Sarah Palin, Donald Trump and Perez Hilton. One participant said, “I think Brock Lesnar is a douchebag and a racist. I also think he’s a crappy fighter.” Another said, “I never got over how Justin Timberlake sold Janet Jackson out during the fallout from their Super Bowl performance; I’ve hated him ever since.” Speaking about Yelowolf, one said, “I saw an interview where he was defending the Confederate flag.” She continued, “It was the craziest thing I’ve ever seen: a white guy who makes black music was actually defending one of the biggest anti-black symbols there ever was. What made this even crazier was that the interview was on

B.E.T.” Speaking about Sarah Palin, another said, “She’s as dumb as dirt.” She also spoke about Perez Hilton, “He is a huge hypocrite and does a major disservice to the gay community.”

Five of the eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity’s sexuality had no effect on their perception of the celebrity in question. One of the five said, “I can’t be bothered about the sexuality of someone I’m not sleeping with.” One of the remaining three participants said, “It definitely changes things when you find out that a celebrity’s sexuality is not what you thought it was. People can pretend it doesn’t change the way they view the celebrity, but it does.” She continued, “You process people’s actions differently when you know or have heard certain things about them.”

Three of the eight participants said that rumors about a celebrity using drugs have an effect on their perception of the celebrity in question. One of the three said, “Those types of rumors definitely have an effect on how I view celebrities. In some cases, hearing that a celebrity uses drugs might make me like them a little more, not because I like drugs but more so because it humanizes them.” She continued, “Some celebrities seem too perfect and knowing that they fuck up sometimes or at least have some vices makes them more relatable.” Another one of the three agreed, saying, “It also makes me feel better about myself.”

Six of the eight participants said that they would buy a product even if it was endorsed by a celebrity they did not like. One of the six said, “I don’t think I hate any celebrity enough to do that.” One of the remaining two said, “If a celebrity said some racist shit, I wouldn’t buy anything they endorsed.” He continued, “Right now, there isn’t anything Mel Gibson could sell to me.”

Two of the eight participants said that they would buy a product if it was endorsed by a celebrity they liked. One of the two said, “I regularly choose sports gear based on what my favorite athlete wears.” The other said, “Consciously, I have bought alcohol based on what I hear in rap songs.” She continued, “Subconsciously, I’m sure there a tons of other things I buy because they were endorsed by celebrities.”

All eight participants said that no celebrity endorsement would have any impact on their decision to buy a digital media player. A participant said, “I have no way of finding out my subconscious reasons for buying an mp3 player, but celebrity endorsements are a non-factor in my conscious decision-making process.”

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Evaluation and Interpretation: Hypothesis I:

Hypothesis I posited that the majority of Rowan University students age 18-24 are persuaded to buy digital media players that are endorsed by celebrities they view favorably. The results of the study show that an overwhelming majority of the respondents said that a celebrity endorsement would have no effect on their decision to buy a digital media player. Therefore, Hypothesis I is rejected.

Many of the respondents said that digital media players are too expensive for celebrity endorsements to be considered when making a purchase decision. However, some said that a celebrity endorsement might make them more interested in a digital media player.

The majority of the respondents said that celebrity endorsers were unlikely to have any effect on any of their purchase decisions. However, among the minority, celebrity endorsers were likely to persuade them to make purchases for clothing, snacks, sporting gear and alcoholic beverages; many of them stressed that celebrity endorsements were more persuasive with cheaper products.

The majority of the respondents said that they would buy a product even if it was endorsed by a celebrity they did not like. A very small minority said they would not buy a product that was endorsed by a celebrity they viewed unfavorably; endorsements by star players of rival sports teams and people they viewed as bigoted were most likely to make them not buy a product.

### Contributions to and Practical Influence on the Field of Public Relations:

This study provides some insight about the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers age 18-24. It shows that celebrity endorsements rank very low on the list of factors that consumers in that age range consider when shopping for digital media players. It also shows that consumers in that age range are generally not persuaded by celebrity endorsements.

The information gathered in this study will help refine future efforts to promote digital media players. It will help public relations practitioners focus their efforts on other parts of their promotional strategy when targeting consumers age 18-24. And even when making use of celebrity endorsements, the information found in this study will help them use celebrity endorsers in a way that maximizes returns.

### Limitations:

The study does not investigate where celebrity endorsements rank relative to other factors that could influence a purchase decision. The study also does not gather information about the effect of multiple celebrity endorsers compared to a single celebrity endorser.

The only demographic information included in the study was the age group of the respondents. Therefore, there is no investigation of possible differences between races and genders with regards to reactions to celebrity endorsements.

Due to time constraints, the author of the study conducted only qualitative primary research. As a result, the study does not contain any scientific data and, subsequently, no statistical analysis.



### Recommendations for Further Research:

The author of the study recommends the inclusion of additional demographic information. By doing so, it will be possible to determine whether certain responses correlate with gender, race or socio-economic status.

Future research on this topic should ask respondents about all of the factors they take into consideration when shopping for digital media players. It should also ask where celebrity endorsements rank on the list of factors.

Future research on this topic should also include quantitative research. This will allow for statistical testing and analysis, which would be helpful in spotting patterns and, ultimately, gaining more insight into the buying behavior of consumers age 18-24.

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## Appendix A: Pre-Test Focus Group Questions

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| <p><b>Type of Celebrity</b></p> <p>Are you more or less likely to buy a product depending on the type of celebrity who endorses it? (i.e. are you more persuaded by an actor than a singer, or more so by an athlete, etc.)</p> <p>Is it important for a celebrity to “seem” like they would actually use the product?</p> <p>What non-gender-specific products would female celebrities be more persuasive at endorsing?</p> <p>What non-gender-specific products would male celebrities be more persuasive at endorsing?</p> <p>Does a celebrity’s age make him/her more or less persuasive?</p> <p>Are there any other characteristics that might make a female celebrity more or less persuasive?</p> <p>Are there any other characteristics that might make a male celebrity more or less persuasive?</p> | <p><b>Type of Product</b></p> <p>Are there certain types of products that you are more likely to buy if endorsed by a celebrity?</p> <p>Why are these products more appealing when endorsed by celebrities?</p> <p>Are there certain types of products you are more likely to buy if endorsed by a white celebrity? If so, what are some of these types of products?</p> <p>Are there certain types of products you are more likely to buy if endorsed by a non-white celebrity? If so, what are some of these types of products?</p> <p><b>Paid Endorsement vs. “Unpaid Endorsement”</b></p> <p>Are you more persuaded to buy a product if you see it being used by a celebrity in a movie or television show rather than in a commercial?</p> <p>Are you more persuaded to buy a product if you see it being used by a celebrity in a candid setting (e.g. when you see them using it in a paparazzi photo) rather than in a commercial?</p> |
| <p><b>Media Coverage of Celebrity</b></p> <p>Do rumors about a celebrity – confirmed or not – have any impact on their persuasiveness?</p> <p>Does your perception of a celebrity change when you hear rumors about his/her sex life? How so?</p> <p>Does your perception of a celebrity change when you hear that he/she makes outrageous demands everywhere he/she goes? How so?</p> <p>Does your perception of a celebrity change when you hear that he/she has a drug habit? How so?</p>   | <p><b>Consumer Electronics</b></p> <p>What effect, if any, would a celebrity endorser have on your decision to buy a digital media player?</p> <p>What characteristics would make a celebrity a persuasive endorser for a digital media player?</p> <p>Would you ever buy a digital media player because of a celebrity endorsement? If so, which celebrities would make you do so?</p>  |

## **Appendix B: Final Focus Group Questions**

What celebrities do you like? Why do you like them?

What celebrities do you dislike? Why do you dislike them?

What effect do rumors have on your perception of celebrities?

Would you ever not buy a product because you dislike its celebrity endorser?

Are there any products you would buy or have bought because of a celebrity endorsement?

Would a celebrity endorsement make you buy a digital media player? Why or why not?