Celebrity Endorsement on Multiple Products: A Comparison of High Value Versus Low Value Items

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsement is a popular attempt by the marketers to create greater recognition for the advertisement and more importantly the brand. In the Indian context, the concept of celebrity endorsement is growing rapidly in the recent years. It is a fact that single celebrity endorsing multiple products / brands in Indian context and number of such instances are growing year after year. This study makes an attempt to understand credibility endorser, who endorses multiple product categories.

A sample of 150 respondents were selected and shown television commercials of the celebrity featuring in three products. Only those responses, where the evaluations were furnished for all the three products have been used in the study.

The current study provides evidences for two product categories - low involvement and high involvement (as well as high value item / low value items) in nature. For high involvement / high value item, trustworthiness and attractiveness emerged as most significant constructs and expertise as less important. For the low involvement / low value items, trustworthiness and expertise emerged as more important factor than attractiveness.

Keywords: *Celebrity Endorsement, Multi-Product Endorsement, Confirmatory Factor analysis*

1. Introduction

Media and entertainment (M&E) sector in India is expected to reach INR 1.2 Lakh Crores by the 2015 (Business Line, 2011), with a growth rate of 13.2 percent. The advertising spending across all the media accounted for INR 266 billion for the year 2010, which is about 41 percent of the overall revenue of M&E sector with a growth rate of 17 percent over 2009. Particularly the television industry added almost 100 million viewers during the year 2010 and taken the tally to 600 million viewers with 550 channels (KPMG, 2011).

Endorsement is age old concept in marketing and advertising theory. Endorsement creates familiarity to advertisements. Celebrity endorsers are portrayed several ways in the advertisements; commonly noticed endoresements include celebrities, typical consumers, professional experts and company presidents (Friedman, Termini and Washington, 1976). The celebrity endorser is defined as any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (McCracken, 1989). Two different schools of thoughts emerged in celebrity endorsements; one school of thought emphasises on source credibility, while the other on source attractiveness. These schools of thought brought out various research perspectives on celebrity endorsement. As an endorser, the person fulfils various objectives set forth by the sponsors, which includes creating familiarity for the brand, creating a link between the brand and the audience, transfer his values to the brand / sponsor and finally develop differentiation for the brand from other brands.

Indian celebrity endorsement for various product / services centres around Bollywood actors such as Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, and cricket players such as Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni. In the recent times, a school of thought developed in the Indian retail industry on celebrity endorsers. In particular, the advertising industry started preferring the stars from film industry over cricketers due to the fact that their recognition surpasses one hit or a flop film, unlike the cricket players whose brand value changes with each tournament and sometimes with matches.

A study by Jain et al (2010) based on content analysis of Indian television commercials for the period 1995-2007, for about 556 advertisements, 56 celebrities, showed that multiple products / brands are endorsed by the same celebrity endorsers. For instance, the popular Bollywood film star Amitabh Bachchan is seen to endorse

brands like Cadbury, State Bank of India (SBI), Pepsi, Dabur, and Nerolac; Pepsi is endorsed by Aamir Khan, Aishwarya Rai, Sachin Tendulkar, Vijay and Rahul Dravid. Another supporting results on multiple product endorsement was brought out by Patra and Datta (2010); the authors pointed out that in the year 2008, leading Hindi movie stars from Bollywood such as Shah Rukh Khan was endorsing 42 brands, Hrithik Roshan was endorsing 20 brands, Juhi Chawla was endorsing 17 brands and Amir Khan was endorsing 10 brands while the leading cricketers such as Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid were endorsing more than 15 brands each. Thus, it is very evident that the Indian media and entertainment industry, particularly the television commercial sector is in the process of engaging the single celebrity endorser for multiple product categories. This research work envisages bringing out the differences in the evaluations of single celebrity endorsing a high valued item/brand and low valued items/ products by the audiences.

2. Literature Review

Celebrity endorsement has been extensively researched for several decades. Relationship between a product class and endorsement components was studied by Friedman and Friedman (1976). They provided evidence that the use of celebrity endorser would improve believability of the product class, which has high psychological or social risk. Moreover, a comparison across experts or typical consumer endorsers concluded that purchase intention was high when the product was endorsed by a celebrity. However, interesting evidence was found in a study on technology-oriented products (Biswas and Das 2006); the results were quite opposite. Expert endorsement were found to be more effective in perceived risk reduction than by using a non-celebrity endorsement or celebrity endorsement. Expert celebrity endorsement, in general, associated with high technological product categories; an expert celebrity endorser, would lead a customer to perceive the product category more favourably than other category of endorser.

Physical attractiveness in celebrity endorsement is addressed by Kahle and Homer (1985). In their study attractiveness was viewed along with likability and based on the studey they concluded that the informational cue of attractiveness of the celebrity endorser would have been travelled through a central route to the customers than through a peripheral route. For instance, it is argued that a stunningly attractive celebrity endorser, who claims to use a beauty product, will reach the viewer more quickly than other information presented in the communication.

In a study, Saleem (2008) compared single celebrity endorsement and multiple celebrities' advertisement on purchase intentions, attitude towards advertisement and demographic characteristics like gender and age. He concluded that no significant differences across the gender or age groups. Lee and Thorson (2008) explored the involvement conditions with celebrity endorsement and concluded that endorsement works more favourably for higher product involvement than low product involvement. They established the necessity for a match between the chosen celebrities and products. Marshall et al (2008) added further insight to the work of Lee and Thorson (2008). The authors brought out the importance of congruence between the ideal image / real image of the endorsers and advertisement communication and stressed that real image should not be too away from the target market for maintaining a sustained relation.

A study by Chandy et al (2001) on the issue of ad cues effect on consumer behaviour in the context of new versus well-established markets. They concluded that young consumers prefer advertisements which have argument-focused appeal, expert sources and negatively coined information appeals.

In a study on examination of celebrity expertise in Indian context, Gupta and Dang (2009) concluded that celebrity endorsement is useful to develop attitude towards the advertisements. Further no evidences on the relationship between the expertise factor and attitude towards brand and purchase intentions were found. Another study in the Indian context by Jain et al (2010) attempted to capture the way the celebrities are portrayed in the ads and the study results showed that implicit portrayal is more popular than explicit or imperative

modes. Also the authors reported a lack of fit between the celebrities presented in the ads and the categories endorsed. Brajesh and Gouranga (2011) in their work on celebrity endorsements for Fast Moving Consumer Goods category provided evidence that celebrity acts as an important factor to create interest in the minds of viewers rather than various components in the advertisements such as message, background set etc.

Studies also addressed the significance of negative information of the celebrity endorsers and its impact on brands endorsed. Till and Shimp (1998) found a strong associative link of the chosen celebrity and the product endorsed failed to recognize the negative information presented about the celebrity endorser. Further they found that celebrity evaluation and product evaluation are in direct relationship with each other; if the celebrity is evaluated more favourably, resulted in more favourable evaluations for the product category he/she endorsed and vice-versa.

Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000) research efforts added the dimension of corporate credibility and attitude on advertisement / brand on the literature of celebrity endorsements. Celebrity endorsement works through the route of 'Attitude on Ad' and in turn 'attitude on ad' influence on other variables. In contrast, corporate credibility works through all of the advertising effectiveness variables, even when all the theoretically supported causal linkages are incorporated into the model. Banyte, Stonkiene and Piligrimiene (2011) studied the role of sport celebrity in non-sport product advertisement in Lithuanian context. They argued that the endorsement by a celebrity is valuable with a proportion of risk as well. To overcome it, they advised the firms to place a moral clause in the contracts they entered with these celebrities, which would control the behaviour of the celebrity to certain extent.

Research gap, not addressed by the previous research works, is a direct comparison of high value items and low value items endorsed by the same celebrity endorser. Thus, the research work proposed tests the model on credibility of celebrity endorser for two different categories of products viz., high value items versus low value items.

Hypotheses and Proposed Model

Perceived expertise, Trustworthiness, and Attractiveness have been identified as the domain of source-credibility by Ohanian (1990). Kahle and Homer (1985) brought out the significance of attractiveness of the celebrity endorsers; they argued that involvement level superseded by the physical attractiveness factor in attitude changing process and attractiveness is positively related to credibility of the endorser.

Alba and Hutchinson (1987) defined Expertise as "ability to perform product-related tasks successfully". McCracken's (1989) research defined expertness as perceived ability of the source to make valid assertions. This expertise dimension was further explored by Biswas and Das (2006); they concluded that the expertise is useful in reducing perceived risk. However, non-expert non-celebrity endorser did not seem to be as effective as an expert endorser. Gupta and Dang (2009) study related the expertise with advertisement attitude; expertise is related positively with attitude towards the ad and useful in developing positive attitude towards the credibility of celebrity endorser.

Trustworthiness is defined as "the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions" McCracken (1989). Tripp, Jensen, and Carlson (1994) studied the likeability and trustworthiness with knowledge of the celebrity endorser; the authors concluded that irrespective of number of products endorsed no significant differences were observed in the perceived relationship between these two attributes vis-à-vis knowledge. However, another argument was brought out from the study findings of Priester and Petty (2003); it is argued that the celebrity expertise status will be diluted since he/she endorses many products irrespective of the merits of the products. Some concerns were expressed by Banyte et al (2011) in using sport celebrities to endorse non-sport goods; in this context, the target market respondents / audiences may give higher importance for trust and respect rather than physical attractiveness component and suggested that trustworthiness in positive relation with endorser's credibility.

The proposed model (figure 1) exhibits these hypotheses.

3. Methodology

Commercials of the three brands were considered for the study purpose; a jewellery shop commercial [high value item], a packaged Atta brand, marketed by a well-known Indian company and a 'papad' brand, marketed by a popular south Indian company, [both belong to low value product category]. These television commercials [which are approximately 20 second duration] are endorsed by the same celebrity endorser, who is a south Indian film star, Sneha, who endorses Idhayam's DOTS papad [Marketed by Idhayam group], Aashirvaad atta [marketed by ITC] and Jos Alukkas [a popular jewellery retail outlet]. The researcher showed all three television commercials of the selected product categories to the randomly chosen respondents through a 'laptop'. Then the respondents furnished their evaluations about the credibility of the celebrity endorser who appeared in the endorsement ad of product after seeing each product immediately.

3.1 Measures

The measures for source credibility endorsement constructs were adopted from the study of Ohanian (1990); source credibility measure encompasses three constructs, namely, endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. These measures have a fairly high level of reliability values, which are in the range of 0.89 to 0.90. Research investigating source expertise in persuasive communication generally indicates that the sources perceived expertise has a positive impact on attitude change. A considerable body of research in advertising and communication suggests that physical attractiveness is an important cue in an individual's initial judgment of another person. These three domains are identified as measures for celebrity endorser's credibility.

3.2 Sample and Profile

This study aims to bring out the differences in evaluations of source credibility, if any, in a single celebrity endorser, while endorsing multiple products / brands by consumers, the questionnaires were given to 150 people; 102 usable samples - that is, those respondents, who furnished evaluations for all the three products given

to them, were used in the analysis. The data were collected from the Vellore town of Tamil Nadu.

Out of the 102 respondents, 30 per cent of them were male and majority of them belonged to the age group of 15 - 39 (85 percent). Nearly 90 percent of the respondents reported that they watch television for about 2 hours daily.

4. Results

The proposed model was tested by LISREL 8.72; 'unweighted least square' procedure was used for each of the product category. The model fit for each product category was assessed by the Chi-square test (x^2) (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1988), the goodness-of-fit indices and examination of the contribution of the individual constructs. Table 1 summarizes the results.

The figures - 2, 3 and 4 portray the fitted model with contribution of each construct and contribution of each latent construct to the model for measuring celebrity endorsement credibility.

For the jewellery shop advertisement, the overall fit measures show an acceptable level of fit, except for RMSEA (0.095), which is marginally above the prescribed level; GFI (0.94), AGFI (0.91) and Chi-Square/DF ratio (1.904) are showing acceptability of the fitted model. Attractiveness (0.91), Trustworthiness (0.91) followed by expertise of the celebrity (0.73) are found to be important factors in creating source credibility of the celebrity endorser. For the model pertaining to 'papad' brand, the entire overall fit measures, except RMSEA (0.104) show acceptable level of fit and RMSEA is marginally above the threshold level. GFI (0.96), AGFI (0.94) and Chi-Square/DF ratio (2.091) are supporting model fit for the 'papad' brand. Trustworthiness (0.99) followed by expertise (0.86) and attractiveness (0.81) are found to be important factors in creating source credibility of the celebrity endorser for the 'papad' brand endorsement.

Similar overall fit measures are obtained for Atta brand endorsement; RMSEA is found to be marginally above the prescribed threshold level and the rest of the indices support a valid fit for the model [GFI (0.95), AGFI (0.92) and Chi-Square/DF ratio (2.323)]. Similar importance

beta measures that of the 'papad' brand, are obtained for Atta brand too; Trustworthiness (0.96) followed by expertise (0.80) and attractiveness (0.77) are found to be important factors in creating source credibility of the celebrity endorser for the 'Atta' brand endorsement.

5. Discussion

The current study provides evidence for two product categories - low involvement and high involvement (as well as high value item / low value items) in nature. Findings in source credibility studies are equivocal; for instance, Erdogan (1999) study did not provide any conclusive evidence on the set of important factors/ constructs for source credibility and what factors are more important than others in certain situations.

A notable finding from the study is that for the high involvement / high value item, the celebrity endorser credibility model suggests that Trustworthiness and attractiveness emerged as most significant constructs and expertise considered with lowest importance. For the low involvement / low value items, Trustworthiness and expertise emerged as more important rather than attractiveness. The study results are thus, in support of the Elaboration Likelihood theory proposed by Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann (1983).

As explained in the 'match-up' by Kahle and Homer (1985) further discussed by Kamins (1990), the respondents / consumers may perceive the celebrity's image as congruent with the luxury jewellery products and since use of the such products can enhance one's attractiveness and the celebrity endorser in the ad is an attractive individual. Thus, in product category such as jewellery, in which elaboration is likely, the respondent's attitude change happened through the information - attractiveness, which is felt as core of the diligent consideration.

However, when we refer attractiveness, it is not referring simply to the physical attractiveness; as referred by Erdogan (1999), attractiveness includes "any number of attributes such as intellectual skill, personality properties, lifestyle or athletic prowess that consumers might perceive in a celebrity endorser". Hence, for a high value item, attractiveness emerged as very

significant factor in credibility endorsements. Thus, the current research work supports the earlier attempt by Erdogan (1999). The logical detection is that the consumers may attach greater credence to the attractiveness of a chosen celebrity and equate attractiveness with credibility.

Tripp, Jensen, and Carlson (1994) study reported that the number of products endorsed by the celebrity and the number of exposures to the celebrity operate independently on consumers' attitudes and number of exposures to the celebrity neither enhances nor disguises the multiple product endorsement effect; moreover, the study reported that expertise would be less affected by multiple product endorsements than trustworthiness. However, in the current study, there are evidences that importance attached to expertise factor varies with product category (high value vs. low value).

In recent decades, multiple brand endorsement by Indian celebrity endorsers is common, which bring the concept of celebrity over exposure. In spite very large number of products/brands endorsed by the celebrities, the celebrities were given high acceptance rating by the respondents (Patra & Datta 2010). It is also pointed in many literatures that the endorsement of a poorly perceived brand can decrease consumers' perception of the celebrity's attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and credibility.

6. Managerial Implications

As pointed out by Tripp, Jensen, and Carlson (1994), multiple product endorsement shall have negative attitude towards advertisements, which could potentially harm the attitude towards product/brand. This study provides implications for the decision makers as well as support the earlier research works on celebrity endorsement; particularly portraying the selection of celebrity endorser according to the product category chosen; in high value product category, credibility of endorser is predicted by trust and attractiveness of the endorser while in low value items, particularly in categories like edibles trust and expertise play important role. Also, the way credibility towards celebrity endorsers formed, varied significantly with product category - for

high value items, attractiveness is considered more important than expertise.

On similar lines with the findings of Choi, Lee and Kim (2005), the marketing firms rather than placing emphasis on the celebrities' ability to endorse the products convincingly, the focus is on their ability to attract attention or render cultural meanings to the product in an implicit manner, particularly on high value items.

For the low value product categories, attractiveness is considered as low importance factors. As argued by Choi et al. (2005), rather than placing emphasis on the celebrities' ability to endorse the products convincingly, the focus may be on their ability to attract attention or render cultural meanings to the product in an implicit manner; and the appearance of celebrities as characters other than themselves might also enhance the entertainment or publicity value of the commercials. Particularly, for the low value categories, like the items investigated in the study [packaged atta brand / papd brand] which are grocery related product categories, the firms may place more emphasis on celebrity endorser's ability to endorse the brand, which is likely to produce positive brand enhancement.

Also, for the celebrity endorsers, it provides insight for the process of formation of credibility for the endorser through the product/brand endorsed. Particularly, while multiple product endorsements, when the factors affecting credibility keep on changing with respect to the product category chosen, the image / credibility of endorser in a questionable state. Moreover, the celebrity should be cautious enough with multiple endorsements, since more favourable initial attitudes towards him/her may become unfavourable with increased exposure levels; if the celebrity possesses any kind of negative attitude, this might further tamper the attitude towards the celebrity endorser.

7. Limitations

One concern is the sample size (102); this is partially attributed to the research methodology adopted, where the respondents had to watch all the three television commercials, and later have to respond to the questions. Every product, they need to respond for about 15

questions and in total, 45 questions should be answered, which consumed more of the respondent's time. Many respondents initially showed greater degree of reluctance to watch the entire advertisements and to fill the questions, since they have already watched commercials many times. The study has used only two products/ brands, from low value items and one in high value category; thus, the generalization of the findings beyond certain product ranges before undertaking series of such studies is limited.

8. Future Research Directions

Indian media industry, particularly the television advertisement sector is witnessing exponential growth in the recent decade. Very limited research work has been taken up in the Indian context to understand the celebrity endorsements, in spite of growing celebrity endorsement. Range of celebrity endorsers, including sports stars across different product categories may be studied to get better understanding of the celebrity endorsers. Another research input, more valuable for the industry is those advertisements which are modified only on the audio tracks; a specific study on this kind of advertisement shall bring down the production cost considerably, provided if it address on attitude towards sponsor organisations, cultural differences of ad context and attitude towards advertisement and brand.

9. Conclusion

The source credibility model - consist of celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, and celebrity attractiveness - captures the differences in celebrity source effects, among the product/ brand categories and identified the most influential components for each product categories of the celebrity endorser. Particularly, in the Indian context, in recent years, the single celebrity endorsing multiple product categories is growing. The study findings shall be useful for the decision makers, who are planning for celebrity endorsements.

Further, despite the growth in the Media and Entertainment industry, very limited study attempts have been made in the Indian context to comprehend the credibility models; this study findings provide insights in terms of low value versus high value items and brought out the differences. For the high value

items [like the one chosen in the study], the attractiveness factor emerged more important than expertise dimension whereas for the brands, [Atta and Papad brands], attractiveness considered as low importance dimension in credibility of celebrity endorsers.

The advertising agencies and marketers often portray the celebrity endorsers for the brands like Atta brand or 'Papad' brand as spokespersons in the Indian context; they are expected to deliver factual information on product in an explicit manner, which is very popular in low-context communication style characteristics of the United States (Choi et al; 2005.), the findings also supported by the emergence of expertise as more important than attractiveness dimensions (Table 2).

Appendix
Table-1 Model Fit indices

Model Fit Parameters	Jeweller shop ad	Branded Papad product	Packaged Atta brand
Chi-Square	165.66	181.92	202.11
Degrees of Freedom	87	87	87
Chi-Square /DF Ratio	1.904	2.091	2.323
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.94	0.96	0.95
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.91	0.94	0.92
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.095	0.10	0.11
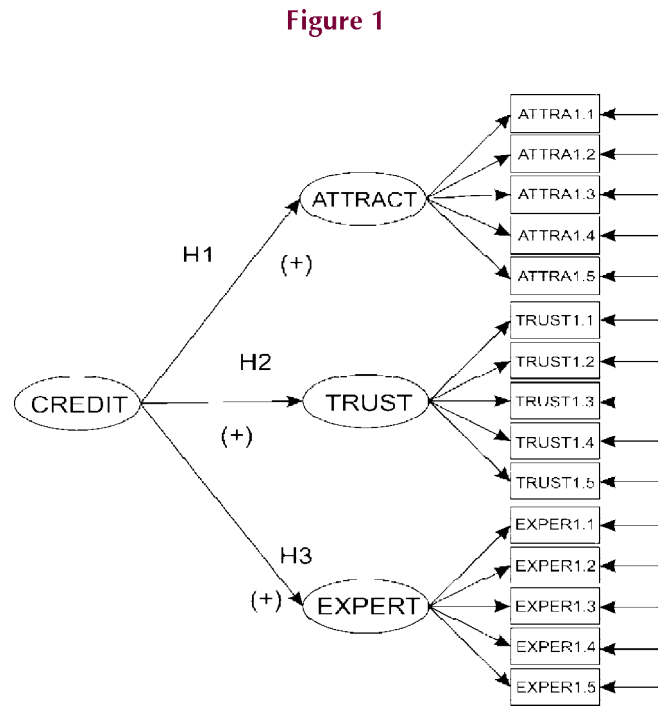
Figure 1

Figure 2
### Fitted Model for Jeweller shop Ad
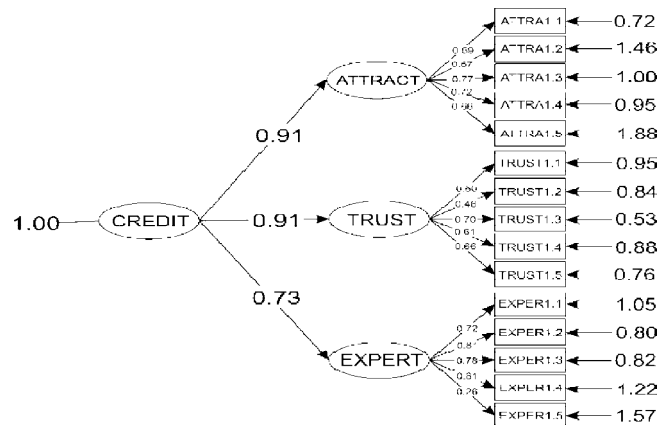
Chi-Square=165.66, df=87, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.095

Table-2 Measurement Model Fit indices

| Construct	Measure	Jewellery shop advertisement			Papad Advertisement			ATTA Advertisement		
		Beta (t-Value)	Standard-ized Beta	Beta (Standard-ized Beta) (t-Value)	Beta (t-Value)	Standard-ized Beta	Beta (Standard-ized Beta) (Sig.)	Beta (t-Value)	Standard-ized Beta	Beta (Standard-ized Beta) (Sig.)
Attractiveness	Attractive-unattractive	0.59	0.57		0.74	0.57		0.71	0.50	
	Not classy-Classy	0.67 (8.88)	0.49	0.91			0.81	0.70	0.66	0.77
	Ugly-Beautiful	0.77 (8.99)	0.61	(0.91)	0.85 (9.04)	0.71	(0.81)	0.87 (8.56)	0.67	(0.77)
	Plain-Elegant	0.72 (8.64)	0.59	9.74	0.85 (9.44)	0.64	21.65	0.77 (7.56)	0.53	19.87
	Not sexy-Sexy	0.66 (8.24)	0.43		0.46 (5.77)	0.34		0.61 (7.13)	0.38	
Trustworthiness	Undependable-Dependable	0.50	0.45		0.98	0.80		0.88	0.62	
	Dishonest-Honest	0.46 (6.95)	0.45	0.90	0.83 (15.37)	0.69	0.99	0.90 (13.45)	0.700.96	
	Unreliable -Reliable	0.70 (8.06)	0.69	(0.91)	0.76 (14.71)	0.59	(0.99)	0.96 (13.57)	0.69	(0.96)
	Insincere-Sincere	0.61 (7.53)	0.54	8.99	0.78 (14.51)	0.61	19.92	0.84 (12.14)	0.66	19.74
	Untrustworthy-Trustworthy	0.66 (7.59)	0.60		0.52 (11.58)	0.45		0.74 (11.19)	0.55	
Expertise	Not an expert-Expert	0.72	0.58		0.90	0.65		0.58	0.46	
	Inexperienced-Experienced	0.81 (9.30)	0.67	0.73	0.86 (13.07)	0.74	0.86	0.82 (6.23)	0.36	0.80
	Unknowledgeable-Knowledgeable	0.78 (9.51)	0.65	(0.73)	0.95 (13.85)	0.74	(0.86)	0.79 (6.24)	0.60	(0.80)
	Unqualified-Qualified	0.61 (7.95)	0.48		0.78 (12.44)	0.61		0.96 (6.31)	0.70	
	Unskilled-Skilled	0.26 (4.58)	0.21	11.08	0.55 (10.36)	0.40	20.01	0.71 (5.65)	0.49	20.86

Figure 3
Fitted Model for Papad Brand Ad
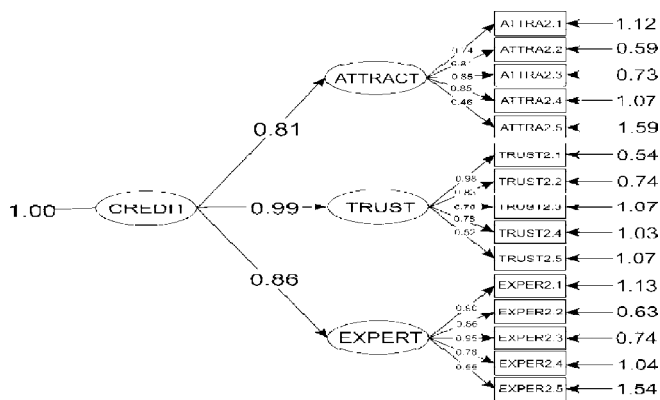
Chi-Square=181.92, df=87, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.104

Figure 4
Fitted Model for Atta Brand Ad
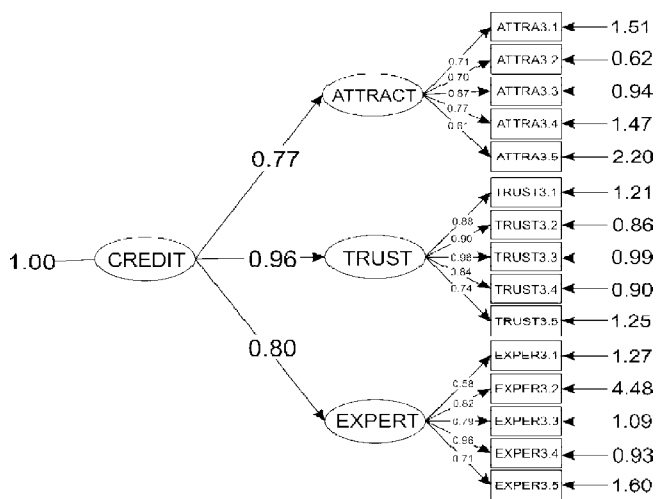
Chi-Square=202.11, df=87, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.114

End Note

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