CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN TELEVISION CELEBRITY USE IN THE UNITED STATES AND LEBANON

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ABSTRACT

Jagdish and Kamakura (1995) argued that celebrity endorsement has become a prevalent form of advertising in the United States. Approximately 20% of all television commercials feature a famous person, and approximately 10% of the dollars spent on television advertising are used in celebrity endorsement advertisements (Advertising Age 1987; Sherman 1985). The purpose of this study is to compare the use of celebrity endorsement between the United States and Lebanon in terms of two fundamental cultural dimensions: 1) low versus high context, and 2) individualism versus collectivism. This study investigates differences and similarities regarding celebrity characteristics in the U.S. and Lebanon.

INTRODUCTION

Jagdish and Kamakura (1995) argued that celebrity endorsement has become a prevalent form of advertising in the United States. Approximately 20% of all television commercials feature a famous person, and approximately 10% of the dollars spent on television advertising are used in celebrity endorsement advertisements (Advertising Age 1987; Sherman 1985). Schickel (1985) stated that American society is fascinated with celebrities and individuals from various fields such as, politics, sports, entertainment, business, fashion, and others are often elevated to celebrity status. Shimp (2000) estimated that around one-quarter of all commercials screened in the United States include celebrity endorsers. Celebrities have been able to generate millions of dollars in endorsement deals to appear in advertisements. Erdogan (1999) postulated that companies invest large sums of money to align their brands and themselves with endorsers. For example, Nike signed a $100 million, five-year contract with Tiger Woods for his endorsements (Choi et al. 2005).

There are several reasons for the extensive use of celebrities in advertising. Research findings show that celebrities make advertisements believable (Kamins et al., 1989), enhance message recall (Friedman and Friedman 1979), aid in the recognition of brand names (Petty,
Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983), create a positive attitude towards the brand (Kamins et al. 1989), and create a distinct personality for the endorsed brand (McCracken 1989). Because it is believed that celebrity endorsements are likely to generate a greater likelihood of customers choosing the endorsed brand (Heath, McCarthy, and Mothersbaugh 1994; Kahle and Homer 1985), business are willing to pay high prices to obtain it.

Choi, Lee and Kim (2005) argued that the celebrity phenomenon is not limited to the United States and appears to be universal. In spite of the universality of this phenomenon, Choi et al. (2005, p. 85) state, "No research to date has empirically examined the assumption that the celebrity endorsement strategy is used in a similar fashion from country to country, or that consumers around the world respond to it in a similar way." Most of the celebrity research that has been conducted has been about the United States. We believe that in order to develop a general understanding of such a universal phenomenon, research efforts must be broadened to cover more parts of the world.

The Arab world is one of the regions historically ignored in advertising research. Abernethy and Franke (1996) found 40 out of 59 content analysis studies dealt with the United States media and concluded, "Much less is known about advertising information in other countries. For example, no study has examined the advertising information in any African nation, any part of the Middle East other than Saudi Arabia, or any of the 'economies in transition' associated with the former USSR" (p. 15). Elbashier & Nicholls (1983, p. 68) stated that, "it is perhaps somewhat surprising that academics have not gone further and attempted to examine the impact of cultural differences in Arab countries on Marketing, as there is a considerable field of literature suggesting that several aspects of "the marketing mix" are culturally sensitive". In response to this, the purpose of this study is to compare the use of celebrity endorsement between the United States and Lebanon in terms of two fundamental cultural dimensions: 1) low versus high context, and 2) individualism versus collectivism. This study will investigate differences and similarities regarding celebrity characteristics in the U.S. and Lebanon.

**CELEBRITY AND CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD**

The appearance of celebrity in advertising dates back to the late nineteenth century (Choi et al. 2005). As stated previously, the celebrity phenomenon is not limited to the United States and appears to be universal (Choi et al. 2005). The universality of the phenomenon lies in the fact that each country has its own celebrities that seem to enjoy fame and recognition. The advancement of technology had enabled people to be more connected and aware of what others do than ever before. For example, in recent years and months the Arab world has been introduced to a variety of reality television shows that were imitation of shows aired in the United States and Britain. Previously, such shows were unheard of in the Arab world because such shows seem to cross cultural and religious boundaries and that is why some of these shows were taken of air shortly after they were introduced (BBC News, 2005).
Although celebrity fascination takes place in the Arab world, it is likely that the way people react to celebrity is different from the way people do in the U.S. due to religious and cultural factors. In spite of these cultural and religious values; however, Arab fascination with celebrity has recently increased due to more exposure to the West and particularly the United States. For example, BBC News (2005) reported that "a Saudi star of a reality TV show caused such commotion among fans in a Riyadh mall he was reportedly arrested for sparking an "indecent scene." Saudi fans tried to hug and kiss the star which is against religious and cultural values of the kingdom. This is not to say that Arabs are not fascinated with celebrity. BBC News (1970) reported that about 3 million people attend the funeral of Abdel Nasser (the former president of Egypt). More recently, BBC News (2005) reported that thousands of people attended the funeral of the Egyptian actor, Ahmad Zaki, who was covered in the Egyptian flag to honor him. Finally, NPR (2005) reported that hundred of thousands attended the funeral of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in downtown Beirut. Abdel Halim Hafez's funeral (one of the most famous singers in Egypt during the 1960s and 1970s attracted more than a 100 thousand people when he died in 1977. These are a few examples that illustrate the fascination of the Arab world with celebrities.

The previous literature indicates that Arabs provide celebrities with much more attention than regular citizens. Local and giant international companies have utilized Arab celebrities in advertising. During the 1980s, local football (soccer) star Mahmoud El-Khattib promoted razors, actress Sahar Ramy endorsed hair dye and actor Hassan Abdeen promoted soft drinks (American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt). The American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt also reported that as celebrity use has grown so too have their paychecks. While unconfirmed, superstars such as Amr Diab (a singer from Egypt) and Nawal Al Zoghby (a singer from Lebanon) may be paid over $1.1 million (approximately 6.3 million Egyptian pounds) for appearances in television commercials. Because the phenomenon of using celebrity to endorse products is increasing in the Arab world, it is important that this phenomenon be understood. As a starting point, this study focus on celebrity characteristics in Lebanon and the cultural values they manifest in television commercials. It is hoped that this study serves as a guide for future research dealing with advertising in general and television advertising in particular. It is also our hope that this study although deals with only one Arab country, it will increase interest to investigate various regions and countries in the Arab world and the Middle East. The rest of the paper is organized as follows: the cultural differences between the United States and Lebanon in which we discuss tow main cultural dimensions, low and high context and collectivism/individualism, followed by a section dealing with research questions and hypotheses, then the methodology and results.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ADVERTISING CONTENT

McCarty and Hattwick (1992) argued that culture impacts every aspect of a society including the thinking and acting of every member of a group. Thus culture has long been considered to have
a significant influence on international advertising strategy (e.g. Albaum and Peterson 1984; Britt 1974; Donnelly 1970; Douglas and Dubois 1977; Harvey 1993; Kanso 1992; Mueller 1992; Onkvisit and Shaw 1987). Srikandath (1991) referred to cultural values as the governing ideas and guiding principles for thought and action in a given society. Therefore, cultural values are important variables in advertising research. Advertisements are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any culture ever made of its entire range of activities (McLuhan 1964). Schudson (1984) viewed advertising as a window to a given culture and a mirror that reflects culture. Frith (1997) argued that consumers understand advertising messages by relating them to culture. Tse, Belk and Zhou (1989) argued that cultural values conveyed through advertising messages are considered powerful forces shaping consumers' motivations, lifestyles, and product choice. Marketers must understand cultural values of a given society to be able to select effective and appropriate advertising messages. Thus cross-cultural studies are crucial in understanding different cultural values.

Frith and Frith (1989) found significant differences in key cultural values between Western and Eastern cultures reflected in advertising such as direct and indirect discourse, individualism and collectivism, horizontal and vertical identification of personal relationships, determinism and fatalism, and logical and intuitive problem-solving. The most common cultural values manifested in advertising include individualism-collectivism (Cheng & Schweitzer 1996; Lin 1993), high and low context cultures and language (Muller 1987), power distance (Sriram and Gpalakrishna 1991; Zandpour et al. 1994), uncertainty avoidance (Sriram and Gpalakrishna 1991; Zandpour et al. 1994), and cultural preference for written versus oral communication (Unwin 1974).

Synodinos, Keown, & Jacobs (1989) studied advertising practices in 15 countries and found significant dissimilarities that were attributed to cultural differences. Kan-so (1992) investigated the international advertising strategy of the largest fortune 500 corporations and suggested that advertising messages should fit the beliefs and traditions of the citizens in each country. Hornic (1980) found that, in most cases, an adaptive advertising strategy was followed when an American print advertisement for well-known American products was used in Israel. Graham, Kamins & Oetomo (1993) found Japanese and German companies to adapt their international advertisements to the foreign markets.

Lin (1993) argued that the Chinese Confucian influence in the Japanese culture orients its advertising toward respect for nature, tradition, and elders. Hong et al (1987) found Japanese magazine advertisements to include more emotional appeals and less comparative appeals than their American counterparts. Zhang and Gelb (1996) found American consumers prefer individualistic appeals while Chinese consumers prefer collectivistic appeals. They also found that a match between advertising appeals and cultural values to bring about more favorable attitudes toward the advertisement. Lenormand (1964) concluded that cultural differences such as religious beliefs, basic customs and living standards are too great to overcome.

The majority of cross-cultural advertising studies assume explicitly that culture is an antecedent to different advertising content and expressions (Al-Olayan & Karande 2000, Gilly 1988;
Hong et al 1987; Mueller 1992; Tansey et al 1990), and tremendous support has been reported for the culture-specific content of advertising. Pollay and Gallagher (1990) argued that cultural values are the core of advertising messages and typical advertisements reinforce cultural values. Finally, several empirical studies found that advertisements reflecting local cultural values are more persuasive than those that ignore them (Gregory and Munch 1997; Han and Shavitt 1994; Hong, Muderrisoghi and Zinkhan 1987; Madden, Cabellero and Matsukubu 1986).

The preceding literature indicates that there is a strong relationship between cultural values and advertising content. Cultural values play a central role in the advertising content and advertising content plays an integral role in transmitting and shaping cultural values. Therefore, the study of advertising content makes it possible for academic researchers to gain insight about the cultural values of a particular society. As cultural orientations and values differentially influence the content and style of advertising across countries, advertising techniques such as celebrity endorsement may vary accordingly. Therefore, understanding the varied use of celebrity endorsement techniques across cultures is critical.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Every culture consists of complex web of religious and cultural values, languages and consumption attitudes that impact how communications are delivered and received. Erdogan (1999) argued that as mass media permit celebrity to move beyond their national markets and gain awareness and reputation in different countries, celebrity are believed to transcend national borders and overcome cultural barriers in global marketing communication. In order for this statement to be empirically evaluated and tested, cross cultural studies are desperately needed. This adds more value to our study which looks at two different cultures (the American and the Lebanese), which are vastly different from one another.

McCracken (1989) argued that the secret of the celebrity endorsement is largely cultural in nature and that the study of celebrity and endorsement is improved by a cultural perspective. Therefore; the selection of celebrity endorsers and the creative execution of advertising strategy may mirror the fundamental cultural orientations and values of the society where they are created (Choi et al. 2005). This is probably why several studies have shown that consumers are more inclined to respond to advertisements that are congruent with their culture (Boddewyn, Soehl and Picard 1986; Buzzell 1986; Harris 1984).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current research seeks to investigate the use of celebrity in TV commercial endorsements. We seek to investigate not only the frequency of celebrity use in Lebanon and the
United States but also to compare celebrity characteristics used in each country. Therefore our first research question states:

*RQ1: Which one of the two countries (U.S. or Lebanon) uses more celebrity in television advertising?*

*RQ2: What are the types and characteristics of celebrities appearing in Lebanese and U.S. television advertising?*

Previous research (Forkan 1980; Friedman and Friedman 1979) suggests that the effective use of celebrity endorsers should depend greatly on product types. Friedman and Friedman (1979) argued that celebrities work best when endorsing products that are high in psychological and/or social risks. Choi et al. (2005, p.88) stated that, "Despite the potential variation of the use of celebrity endorsement among product types, previous research offers little information on similarities and differences across cultures in this regard," To fill this gap we seek to answer the following question:

*RQ3: What are the product types for which celebrities are commonly employed as endorsers in Lebanese and U.S. television advertising?*

**RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

**High/Low Context**

Hall's 1976 theory of high versus low context culture has been used frequently to understand and explain cultural differences (see Adir 2003; Anwar & Chaker 2003; Britt 2000; Cho, Up Kwon, Gentry, Sunkyu & Kropp 1999; Hall & Hall 1989; Lin 1993; Miracle, Chang and Taylor 1992; Mintu-Wimsatt & Gassenheimer 2000; Mueller 1987). Hall (1976, p. 91) describes the difference between high and low context cultures as:

A high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message. A low context communication is just the opposite; i.e., the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code. Twins who have grown up together can and do communicate more economically than two lawyers in a courtroom during a trial.

The theory of low versus high context captures a culture's reliance on context in communication and information processing (Hall 1976). There are significant differences between high and low context cultures. Low context cultures tend to be clear, confrontational (Cutler and Javalgi 1992; Miracle et al 1992) and provide detailed information in their communication (Lin 1993). High context cultures rely primarily on non-verbal communication (Simintiras and Thomas
1998), often drawing conclusions from informal interactions and other non-verbal variables such as values, status, and associations (Keegan 1989).

Hall (1976) suggests that high-context culture would convey messages in an abstract, implicit, and indirect manner, and that meanings are interpreted based on the intuition and contemplation of the audience. Therefore, the communication style is embedded in the context of the message, and the listener must understand the contextual cues in order to interpret the meaning of the message. In the high context cultures, brevity of expression is desirable and speeches that have few words but carry a full meaning are considered to be the best speeches. Thus high context cultures do not require a great deal of information. In contrast, the low context cultures rely on clear verbal and unambiguous messages to communicate. Because the interpretation of the message is dependent on the explicit and unambiguous message, a great detail of information is required to achieve effective communication. The high context culture relies on the contextual cues while the low context cultures rely on words to communicate. These contextual cues include individual's background, social status, associations, and values.

The theory of high versus low context has been used extensively in advertising research. Effective communication in advertising and in advertising messages is crucial. Hall's theory allows marketers to choose the communication style that improves the effectiveness of the message. Line (1993) found advertisements in low-context cultures to be more informative compared to high-context cultures. Low-context cultures were found to use a hard-sell approach (Mueller 1987, 1992) and a direct and confrontational appeal (Cutler and Javalgi 1992) and stress breadth rather than depth brand image perceptions (Roth 1992). In contrast, advertisements in the high-context cultures use emotional appeals (Biswas et al 1992), use a more of a soft-sell approach (Cutler and Javalgi 1992) and stress depth brand image perceptions (Roth 1992).

The Arabic language is one of the richest languages in both context and code (Kanso 2001). The Arabic language holds a high place among the Muslim believers because it is the language of the Koran and the language used in prayers throughout the Muslim world. The Arab culture is high context, meaning the communication style is embedded in the context of the message, therefore the listener must understand the contextual cues in order to interpret the meaning of the message. Emotions are an important part of the Arab communication style (Anwar & Chaker 2003). In the Arab culture, although the language is rich with many adjectives per word, brevity of expression is desirable and speeches that have few words but carry a full meaning are considered to be the best speeches. The Arabic audience does not require a great deal of information from advertising or explicit details of the product being presented (Biswas et al 1992). Al-Olayan and Karande (2000) argued that because the Arabic society is a high collectivist, people do not depend as much on ads to get information about a product but rather use other sources such as extended family members, friends, etc.

On the other hand the American culture is low-context. U.S. customers rely more on direct communication. According to Biswas et al (1992) and Mueller (1987), because American consumers
are interested in more information and details, the American consumer seeks more information from ads. The American communication style requires clarity of communication which is evidenced by the many expressions such as: "Say what you mean," "Don't beat around the bush," and "Get to the point." Hall (1976, p.98) point out an interesting difference between high and low context cultures by stating:

People raised in high-context systems expect more from others than do the participants in low-context systems. When talking about something that they have on their minds, a high-context individual will expect his interlocutor to know what's bothering him, so that he doesn't have to be specific.

Hall (1976) pointed out that in high-context exchanges much of the burden of meaning fall on the audience, while in low-context cultures the burden falls on the speaker to accurately and thoroughly convey the meaning in the message. Al-Olayan and Karande (2000) found that Arabic magazine ads contained fewer information cues compared to American magazine ads. Lin (1993) and Mueller (1987) found ads in low-context cultures included more information than high-context cultures. Thus:

H1: Lebanese Celebrity will be more likely to convey less information compared to their U.S. counterparts due to the high context nature of the Lebanese culture.

Individualism/Collectivism

Traindis (2004) concluded that the dimension of individualism/collectivism is the most important dimension in studying culture. This dimension has extensively been used and investigated in many disciplines (Cukur, De Guzman & Gustavo 2004; Gudykunset et al 1996; Han and Shavitt 1994; McCarty and Hattwick 1992; Mueller 1987). Hofstede (1984, p. 225) defined individualism and collectivism based on the strength and breadth of ties between the individual and society. Perhaps the importance of this dimension stems from its ability to provide an objective assessment of culture, which is otherwise a fuzzy concept (Gouveia, Clemente & Espinosa 2003). This construct modeled the perceptions and behaviors of people in the individualistic culture differently from those in the collectivistic culture (Triandis, 2004). Hofstede (1984) described individualism as the assumption that individuals should take care of themselves. In collectivistic societies, people are integrated into strong and cohesive in-groups which care for them in exchange for a high degree of loyalty. Collectivists are more willing than individualists to sacrifice their personal goals for group's goals (Perea & Slater 1999). Additionally, social norms are very important in guiding the behavior of individuals in collectivist societies (Prior & Whalen 1997). In individualistic cultures, it is expected that people will try to gain attention for themselves and get credit for their achievements. In individualistic cultures, strong ties exist only with familiar others, while in collectivistic cultures; strong ties exist with a more diffuse group. A high individualism ranking indicates that individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society, while a low individualism ranking typifies
societies where the rights of the society are paramount. Thus, these cultures tend to be high in power distance. Uncertainty avoidance and collectivism also tend to covary with collectivistic cultures using relationships to avoid discord with peers and superiors and to reduce uncertainty (Tsai & Levinson 1997). Those from an individualistic society frequently question ethical standards established by their societies, while members in collectivist cultures tend to accept them (Singhapakdi & Rawas 1999). Individualistic cultures emphasize personal fate, personal achievement, and independence from the in-group (Perea and Slater 1999). Consumers in individualistic cultures place their own needs, desires and wants before those of the group (Perea and Slater 1999). In individualistic societies the individual is the center of attention and autonomy and self reliance are emphasized in these societies. Individuals in these societies are most likely to dislike being dependent on other people or having other people dependent on them.

A consumer who is living in a collectivistic society might be expected or required to adhere to what the group decides and not just to what he/she decides. The individual is expected to consider how a decision will impact not only his life but the lives of those around him. Thus, collectivism generally refers to: 1) society-centered orientation, 2) emphasis on sharing, cooperation, and group harmony, and 3) concern for group welfare. In contrast, individualism generally refers to: 1) self-centered orientation, 2) emphasis on self-sufficiency and control, and 3) emphasis on individual accomplishment. Advertisements in individualistic cultures are oriented toward individuality, independence, success and/or self-realization, and stress the benefits to one's own self. In contrast, advertisements in collectivistic cultures reflect interdependence, family integrity, group well-being, concern for others, and group goals (Belk and Bryce 1986; Han and Shavitt 1994; Miracle et al 1992; Mueller 1987).

Hofstede (1991) reported that the United States was the most individualistic country among the 53 countries analyzed, with a score of 91 on a 100-point scale. The Arab world; however, scored 38 on this individualistic dimension. Members of Arab culture have a high need for affiliation and value mutual dependence (Yousef, 1974). Success is measured by what one does for his family rather than individual earnings or achievement. Consequentially, loyalty to one's primary group is an integral part of Arab culture. This sense of loyalty is exemplified by this Arab proverb, "I against my brother; my brother and I against my cousins; I, my brother, and my cousins against the outsider" (Bates & Fratkin, 2003, p.272). The negative perception of outsiders is evidenced by the fact that Arab societies are not very culturally or racially diverse. Hofstede (2001) argued that the Arab culture is a collectivistic culture where members of the Arab society tend to depend on each other. Thus:

H2: Lebanese celebrity will be more likely to employ collectivism appeals compared to their U.S. counterparts due to the collectivistic nature of the Lebanese celebrity.
METHODOLOGY

Sampling Procedure

A sample of 8 hours of programming was videotaped in the U.S. and Lebanon. The times chosen for taping were 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday. The samples were collected during October 2005. Two guidelines were followed in selecting television channels to be taped: 1) the channel had to be broadcast nationwide, and 2) the network is accessed for free and no subscription of any kind is required. Based on these conditions LBC in Lebanon and CBS in the U.S were selected. 102 television advertisements were used from the U.S. and 106 from Lebanon.

Coding Procedure

Two graduate students coded the U.S. ads and two bilingual Lebanese students coded the Lebanese ads. All coders were trained prior to coding and were provided with a detailed description and operational definition of each coding category. The percentage of agreement among the coders was calculated. The number of times coders were in agreement was divided by the total number of ads coded. The inter-rater reliability was calculated using the percentage of similar classifications for all ads. All intercoder reliabilities were above 0.7.

RESULTS

The first research question was to examine whether the U.S. or Lebanon uses more celebrity advertising. To answer this question, frequencies of celebrity appearance was calculated. Data analysis revealed that 16 (15.1%) out of 106 commercials in Lebanon featured a celebrity compared to 13 (12.9%) out of 101 commercials in the U.S. featured a celebrity. It should be noted here that according to the World Factbook (2007), the population of Lebanon 3,925,502 is much smaller compared to 301,139,947 of the United States. This is also reflected in that the number of celerities in the U.S. is much larger compared to the number of celebrities in Lebanon which makes this finding even more significant. This indicates the heavily reliance of the Lebanese advertising media on the use of celebrity compared to the United States. It is possible that the reason for such reliance is the lower cost of using celebrities in Lebanon compared to the United States.

The second research question was to examine the celebrity endorser characteristics in the U.S. and Lebanon. Male and female celebrities appeared evenly in Lebanese television commercials, while U.S. commercials featured more female (66.6%) than male (33.3%). In the U.S. sample, ages of the celebrity ranged from teenagers to fifty or older. In the Lebanese sample, however, celebrity age ranged from twenties to fifty or older. Both countries appear to use celebrities in their twenties more than any other age. 56.3% of the celebrities used in Lebanon were actors/actresses compared
to 28.6% of the U.S. sample. Athletes (28.6%) were just as prevalent as actors/actresses in the U.S. sample, while athletic endorsements were much less common (6.3%) in the Lebanese sample.

The third question was to investigate which products employ celebrities in the U.S. and Lebanon. In the United States sample, cosmetics and hair care products were found to employ more celebrities than any other type of product in the sample. This is in line with Friedman and Friedman (1979) suggestion that celebrities work best when endorsing products that are high in psychological and/or social risks. In the Lebanese sample, celebrity's use varied among product types.

**HYPOTHESES TESTING**

Hypothesis 1 stated that Lebanese celebrities will be more likely to convey less information compared to their U.S. counterparts due to the high context nature of the Lebanese culture. To test hypothesis 1, a t-test was performed to assess the mean difference between the U.S. and Lebanon regarding information cues which included 14 categories (see table one for details). Collectively, there was no significant difference between information cues provided in the Lebanese sample and the U.S. sample. Contrary to what was expected; however, the Lebanese sample included significantly more information cues regarding price, quality, performance, components, company research and availability. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that, Lebanese celebrity will be more likely to employ collectivistic appeals compared to their U.S. counterparts due to the collectivistic nature of the Lebanese celebrity. T-test showed that there was no significant difference between the 2 samples; therefore, hypothesis 2 was not supported.

**CONCLUSION**

The main purpose of this study was to compare the use of celebrity endorsement between the United States and Lebanon in terms of two fundamental cultural dimensions: 1) low versus high context, and 2) individualism versus collectivism. This paper is also an attempt to find out which country (USA or Lebanon) uses more celebrity and identify the characteristics of celebrities used and the products their use is associated with.

Although Lebanon has a population that is only about 1.3% of the population of the United States and has a much smaller number of celebrities compared to the United States, more celebrities appeared in the Lebanese sample compared to the U.S. sample. Although it is hard to accurately predict why this is so, we think that the cost of celebrity use might be a factor. There was no significant difference between the ratio of males verses females in U.S. and Lebanese samples.

In the United States sample, cosmetics and hair care products were found to employ more celebrities than any other type of product in the sample. This is in line with Friedman and Friedman (1979) suggestion that celebrities work best when endorsing products that are high in psychological
and/or social risks. This study reveals that advertising in Lebanon may not necessarily stick to the wide common cultural values of the Arabs. For example, the Arab culture is known for its high context but our sample did not reflect that. This could be due to the influence of the west particularly France on the Lebanese culture.

REFERENCES


