

# Communication using celebrities in the non-profit sector

## Determinants of its effectiveness

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Nowadays celebrity endorsement has become a popular marketing technique in the non-profit sector. However, there is still a degree of light and shade as regards the determinants of the effectiveness of this communication strategy. Taking into account the significant lack of studies in this particular field, the current research presents a causal model with nine hypotheses, which analyse the sequence of relationships that cover from the background of celebrity credibility, to the determinants of the attitude towards adverts and the intention to collaborate. We surveyed 329 adults, who rated a fictitious ad with a celebrity without perceived experience in the non-profit area. As a result, it is observed that the celebrity's credibility depends on the fit perceived, the attribution of altruistic motivation, the celebrity image and the general attitude towards celebrity activism. Furthermore, it is found that a credible celebrity has a strong influence on the attitude towards the advert and, indirectly, on behavioural intentions.

### Introduction

Many things have changed since Kotler (1979, p. 38) said 'Third Sector administrators must begin to think like marketers', in the sense that the same tactics and strategies employed to market goods and services can be used to sell social ideas (Hill & Moran 2011). Nowadays, the non-profit sector is becoming a very competitive and a fast-growing advertising area (Wheeler 2009), and organisations are positioning themselves, communicating their values and struggling to raise funds through communication (Becker-Olsen & Hill 2006). In this sophisticated environment of fundraising competition, conceptual and empirical guidance is needed when designing charity appeals (Chang & Lee 2010) in order to maximise the impact of the communication strategy.

In this context, the use of celebrities in advertising is a very common practice worth studying. Specifically, a celebrity endorser has been defined as any individual who enjoys public recognition (actors, athletes, entertainers, models, politicians and singers, among others) and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advert (McCracken 1989). This definition reflects the main line of research so

far, i.e. the analysis of the effects and determinants of success of celebrity endorsements within the context of manufacturing organisations and consumer brands. However, and despite the fact that nowadays the relationship between celebrities and social causes has no precedents, there is an important gap with regard to the impact and effectiveness of these endorsers on the non-profit sector (Samman *et al.* 2009; Wheeler 2009; Van den Bulck *et al.* 2010).

The idiosyncrasy of this sector makes this line of research interesting. Specifically, non-profit organisations (NPOs) rely on celebrities because they are very effective fund-raisers; they have skills in mass communication, so they may reach a wide audience, attract people's attention, raise awareness of social issues and even access the upper echelons of political power, among other issues (Samman *et al.* 2009; Wheeler 2009; Dominguez 2010). For these reasons, NPOs look for celebrities who are prepared to get involved in their causes while, in turn, celebrities seek to join an NPO or create their own foundations. They do not receive money for that, but other rewards. According to Dominguez (2010), celebrity activism can be explained by the globalisation of communication, their growing autonomy to promote their own personal brand, and the need to differentiate themselves, gain publicity and promote their image. Apparently with this collaboration both celebrities and organisations win; however they must be careful because the activism may be as effective as questionable, and this alliance may cause resistance and scepticism on the part of the consumer with regard to the real motives – selfish versus altruistic – of the celebrity (Petty *et al.* 1983). This duality may have repercussions for consumer response.

Taking into account these issues and the lack of studies in this particular area, the objective of the paper is to go more deeply into the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising campaigns for humanitarian aid organisations. Specifically, the paper presents a causal model with nine hypotheses, and analyses the determinants of the attitude towards advertising with celebrities and the influence of this strategy over intentional behaviour. The research considers the perceived fit between celebrity and social cause (Kamins & Gupta 1994; Lynch & Schuler 1994), the motivation attribution (Folkes 1988; Becker-Olsen *et al.* 2006), the attitude towards the celebrity (Choi & Rifon 2007; Samman *et al.* 2009), and the general attitude towards the involvement of celebrities in social causes – general perceived fit – as potential antecedents of endorser credibility. Moreover, it is expected that both celebrity credibility and the credibility of the organisation influence the attitude towards advertising (Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999; Goldsmith *et al.* 2000) and the intention to collaborate (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; Ranganathan & Henley 2007). All these relationships will be measured and analysed with a structural equations model.

## **Review of the literature and hypothesis for research**

### *Celebrity and corporate credibility as direct antecedents of the attitude towards an advertisement*

Celebrities are traditionally considered to be sources with high persuasive power. NPOs try to influence individuals through the emotions, so these endorsers can be very effective

due to their power of attraction, and their ability to produce feelings and emotional responses (Assael 1984). In the non-profit sector, and according to the results of Samman *et al.* (2009), most people consider that celebrity involvement in charity can be beneficial. However, this must be handled carefully because celebrity activism is also criticised, in the sense that many people are sceptical about the real motives of the alliance and question celebrities' sincerity or legitimacy, and their opportunistic behaviour (Samman *et al.* 2009). Taking into account these issues, celebrity credibility becomes, more than ever, a key variable for the success of communication.

Credible endorsers enhance advertising effectiveness (Eisend & Langner 2010) because, when their credibility is high, consumers are more likely to accept arguments presented in the ad, whereas they tend to reject arguments coming from a source with a low degree of credibility (Grewal *et al.* 1994). Specifically, the credibility of the source is composed of two dimensions: expertise and trustworthiness (Hovland *et al.* 1953). 'Expertise' is a cognition-based attribute (Eisend & Langner 2010), derived from knowledge of the subject, and it refers to skill and competence in the communication topic, whereas 'trustworthiness' refers to the honesty and believability of the source when expressing an objective opinion on the product (McGinnies & Ward 1980). This model of source credibility has been the most widely used in the research on this topic, although there are other proposals that include attractiveness as a third dimension (Ohanian 1990).

The direct influence of endorser credibility on advertising effectiveness and attitudes towards ad has been extensively proven in the profit sector (Goldberg & Hartwick 1990; Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999; Stafford *et al.* 2002), but not in the NPO area. In fact, research has shown that celebrity credibility, and therefore its effectiveness, varies by product (Stafford *et al.* 2002). It is interesting, therefore, to analyse the product 'social cause', and the relationship between endorser credibility and attitude towards the ad. Taking into account the lack of literature on this issue, we consider the previous arguments and the results obtained in the profit area in order to propose that:

**H1:** In the non-profit sector, celebrity credibility is directly and positively related to the attitude towards the advertisement.

Together with the endorser, the company can be considered another source of the message (Newell & Goldsmith 2001). When consumers are familiar with a company (due to information and experience acquired over time) they develop perceptions about its credibility, and these perceptions and thoughts will make up part of the information individuals use to evaluate new information received on it – for example, ads – (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; Goldsmith *et al.* 2000). Specifically, what consumers think about a brand directly influences their attitudes towards the brand's ad, in the sense that firms with good credibility are in a better position to get people to respond positively and believe their advertising claims (LaBarbera 1982; Goldberg & Hartwick 1990). Lafferty and Goldsmith (1999), Goldsmith *et al.* (2000) and Lafferty *et al.* (2002) found precisely that corporate credibility – composed of two dimensions: perceived expertise and trustworthiness – positively influences attitudes towards an ad. More specifically, these authors

describe the causal relationship that exists between corporate and endorser credibility and attitude towards an ad, resulting in the Dual Credibility Model. Despite the lack of studies focused on the non-profit sector, we consider these arguments totally valid for this sector, and take into account the Dual Credibility Model when proposing the second research hypothesis:

**H2:** In the non-profit sector, the credibility of the organisation is directly and positively related to the attitude towards the advertisement.

### *The determinants of celebrity credibility as indirect antecedents of the attitude towards the advertisement*

Celebrity credibility is a key variable in the success of communication, so we devote this section to analysing its determinants. Specifically, we study four potential antecedents, both direct (celebrity–social cause fit and motivation attribution) and indirect (attitude towards the celebrity and general perceived fit).

#### *Direct antecedents of celebrity credibility: fit and motivation attribution*

One of the main variables with influence over the success of advertising communication with endorsers is match, fit or congruence (Kamins & Gupta 1994; Lynch & Schuler 1994; Amos *et al.* 2008), referring to the degree of similarity and compatibility that consumers perceive between a social cause and an endorser (Lafferty 2007). In this sense, the fit can be, on the one hand, functional, if there is similarity between the functions of the product and the event or social cause supported (Gwinner 1997; Lafferty *et al.* 2004), or between the advertised product and the celebrity – for example, an energy bar appropriate for physical training and a renowned athlete (Till & Busler 2000) – or, in the non-profit area, the case of Michael J. Fox, a Parkinson's disease victim, supporting a Parkinson's disease association, an example used in the Wheeler (2009) research. On the other hand, there is image congruence when the two parts of the alliance share the same image or the same core values. This type of compatibility is more symbolic (Bigné *et al.* 2009) and it represents the consumer's perception that the pairing is acceptable for reasons different from the link with the product's characteristics, overriding any functional incompatibility triggers (Trimble & Rifon 2006). Of the two types, the latter one is the more determinant (Gwinner & Eaton 1999; Lafferty *et al.* 2004) and, in fact, it is advisable that the advertising agency or company first determines the symbolic values of the product, and then chooses a celebrity who represents those relevant symbolic properties (Byrne *et al.* 2003). In the non-profit sector the image fit is, in our opinion, more prominent because, as we mentioned previously, nowadays it is common for celebrities to support a cause, regardless of their functional fit. We will therefore focus the study on this type of congruence.

In general, a good fit enhances celebrity credibility, and consequently the effectiveness of communication – an affirmation supported by the Schema Theory (Rumelhart 1980). According to this theory, individuals use categories – schemas – to organise and structure the information in the memory. These schemas become an instrument that makes it

possible to process and store a large amount of data in the memory without a great cognitive effort (Gwinner & Eaton 1999), guiding perception and consumer thinking. For example, celebrities can make up schemas since they are well known to consumers due to their work and frequent appearances in the media, so individuals have pre-established knowledge and attitudes towards them, even before they appear in advertising (Choi & Rifon 2007). When new information or a new stimulus (e.g. the social cause) is linked to a pre-existing schema (e.g. the celebrity), this will produce different effects on people, depending on the perceived fit between them (Lynch & Schuler 1994). Specifically, when there is a good connection between consumers' experience and cognitive consistency with their existing schemas, they are more likely to perceive the endorser as having more skills and experience when it comes to associating them with the cause (Bigné *et al.* 2009), moreover producing feelings of sincerity that increase the credibility of the endorser (Becker-Olsen *et al.* 2006). In contrast, when there is no fit, consumers will engage in more elaboration on the ad in an attempt to resolve the perceived incoherencies (Lynn & Schuler 1994; Gwinner & Eaton 1999), trying to assimilate the new information in the pre-existing schema. Consumers value consistency and respond negatively to lack of it; therefore their thoughts will include negative feelings towards any observed disconnectedness, resulting in unfavourable attitudes towards both partners (Becker-Olsen *et al.* 2006) and poorer evaluation of company credibility (Webb & Mohr 1998). Therefore, it can be said that the perception of the credibility of the source is a function of the congruence of the image of the spokesperson in relation to the product image (Kamins & Gupta 1994), an affirmation especially valid in the non-profit sector. This argument leads to Hypothesis 3:

**H3:** In the non-profit sector, a good image fit between celebrity and social cause is directly and positively related to celebrity credibility.

Second, a very important determinant of credibility in the non-profit area may be the motivation attribution (Kelley 1973), whereby consumers will try to understand why companies (or celebrities) link themselves with social causes (Folkes 1988; Becker-Olsen *et al.* 2006). Specifically, the recipients will perceive altruistic or intrinsic motives if they consider that the brand/endorser is supporting a cause because he/she wants to benefit society or raise awareness for that specific cause. On the other hand, consumers will perceive selfish or extrinsic motives if they think that the company/endorser is seeking only to make a profit, increase sales, boost their image (Moore *et al.* 1994; Drumwright 1996; Becker-Olsen *et al.* 2006) or, in the specific area of celebrities and NGOs, to obtain their own publicity and self-promotion (Samman *et al.* 2009). When people attribute selfish motivations to brands – or celebrities – they react badly because they perceive that they are being manipulated or deceived (Forehand & Grier 2003), and the endorser will be less credible (Mowen & Brown 1981; Sparkman 1982; Moore *et al.* 1994). By contrast, attributing an altruistic motive to the sponsor of the social cause is an indicator that helps individuals to evaluate honesty, sincerity and the good faith of the endorser (Webb & Mohr 1998), positively influencing credibility (Rifon *et al.* 2004; Ellen *et al.* 2006;

Bigné *et al.* 2009). These arguments are in line with traditional literature on persuasion in social psychology (Hovland *et al.* 1953), according to which a source without apparent self-interest in the promoted message will be more credible. All these arguments lead to Hypothesis 4:

**H4:** In the non-profit sector, the attribution of altruistic motivations to the celebrity is directly and positively related to his or her credibility.

Finally, a direct relationship is expected between the fit perceived and the motivation attribution. In the profit sector, consumers are likely to understand that companies need to make a profit to survive (Rifon *et al.* 2004), so it is expected that, to a certain extent, individuals link the social initiatives of firms with a marketing strategy mainly motivated by corporate self-interest (Speed & Thompson 2000). However, the sponsor is hoping that consumers, when exposed to the message, will react with minimal perception of these extrinsic motives, in order to achieve more effective communication. For this reason, the congruence or fit between a sponsor and the cause will be one of the key elements. This fact, which can be extrapolated to the relationships between celebrities and social causes, is explained by the Schema Theory. Specifically, and just as has been mentioned previously, a lack of fit would stimulate the elaboration of the message, and this greater cognitive production would make consumers scrutinise in greater depth the reasons that have led the brand – or in the case analysed, the celebrity – to associate him or herself with social causes (Menon & Hahn 2003; Bigné *et al.* 2009). As a result, this is likely to raise consumer doubt and scepticism as to their real motives (Petty *et al.* 1983), inferring selfish attributions on the part of the brand (Hastie 1984; Speed & Thompson 2000) or celebrity. In contrast, a high degree of congruence may not generate as many elaborations, which could minimise the consumer's judgement about endorser motives. In such cases individuals rely on peripheral persuasion routes and express opinions on the basis of heuristic clues, such as endorsers who are congruent with the company/product and so valid in evaluating the firm (Ahluwalia & Gürhan-Canli 2000). This lower elaboration of information favours individuals inferring altruistic motives on the part of the endorser (Rifon *et al.* 2004). All these arguments lead to the following hypothesis:

**H5:** In the non-profit sector, a good image fit between the celebrity and the social cause is directly and positively related to the attribution of altruistic motivation of the celebrity.

***Indirect antecedents of celebrity credibility: the attitude towards the celebrity and the general fit***

Taking into account the importance of the fit, it is interesting to analyse its determinants, which become indirect antecedents of celebrity credibility. In the non-profit sector, a good strategy may be to achieve the commitment of the celebrity to the cause off-camera – that is, genuine support (Magnini *et al.* 2008) – as people usually respect celebrities they feel are genuinely committed to the causes they support (Samman *et al.* 2009). In these cases,

and over the long term, people can get used to linking the celebrity with the social cause, and the fit can develop in a natural way.

In the short term, it is accepted that, in many situations, consumers may not be able to evaluate the fit of the celebrity objectively, and make inferences using known information (Huber & McCann 1982), overall impressions (Boatwright *et al.* 2008) or even the attractiveness of the source (Kahle & Homer 1985; Till & Busler 2000). Specifically, the variable 'attractiveness' is usually measured with items such as 'sexy', 'elegant', 'classy' or 'beautiful' (Ohanian 1990), so its use may not be appropriate in the case of the non-profit sector (Wheeler 2009). However, and going more deeply into these issues, attractiveness also includes non-physical variables, such as similarity, familiarity and likeability (Kahle & Homer 1985), charisma or grace (Langmeyer & Shank 1994), and it can be viewed as positive attitude or affect towards the endorser (Silvera & Austad 2004). Nowadays, celebrities are well known to consumers due to their frequent appearances in the media, so consumers already have pre-established knowledge and attitudes towards them before they appear in advertising (Choi & Rifon 2007). This perception or image of the celebrity can influence the response to endorsements (Alperstein 1991), an argument supported by Samman *et al.* (2009) in the non-profit area.

There are no specific studies that measure the direct influence of the celebrity image on perceived fit in the non-profit sector, however there is enough evidence to consider that attitudes and feelings towards celebrities, resulting from their behaviour both professionally and in their private lives, may influence the assessment of the endorsement and condition other issues – for example, his or her image fit. This is particularly important in the first stages of the strategy – that is, when people are not yet used to linking the social cause with the celebrity, and when the functional fit is not evident. All the above leads us to propose Hypothesis 6:

**H6:** In the non-profit sector, the attitude towards the celebrity is positively related to the perceived fit between the celebrity and the social cause.

The last variable analysed is the general attitude towards this type of endorsement in the non-profit sector. With regard to this, there are hardly any empirical studies that measure public opinion on the phenomenon of celebrity activism, with the exception of Samman *et al.*'s (2009) and Van den Bulck *et al.*'s (2010) studies. In spite of some suspicions, Samman *et al.* (2009) conclude that, in most cases, people feel this collaboration is good and beneficial for the causes celebrities support. In the same vein, Van den Bulck *et al.* (2010) observes that a majority of respondents believe NPOs can benefit from using celebrities, in the sense that organisations can get their messages across more successfully. These results lead us to think that, if people are in favour of using celebrities in the communication of social causes, due to the associated benefits or other reasons, they will feel in general more predisposed to consider any celebrity appropriate to represent a non-profit organisation. The general attitude towards this strategy or general perceived fit has not been considered in previous studies, however in this field it is reasonable to propose that:

**H7:** In the non-profit sector, the positive attitude towards the involvement of celebrities in social causes is directly related to the perceived fit between the celebrity and the social cause.

### *Determinants of behavioural intentions*

A determinant of purchase intention is the attitude towards the ad (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; Goldsmith *et al.* 2000; Lafferty *et al.* 2002). According to Shimp (1981), it is important to produce positive attitudes towards advertisements in the minds of individuals in order to influence customer choice behaviour. This relationship is seen to a greater extent when affective responses are evoked (Petty *et al.* 1983) – for example, in the communication of social causes. In this sense, Ranganathan and Henley (2007) prove that a favourable attitude towards an advertisement has a positive influence over the intention to donate to charity. With regard to the use of celebrities, these ‘stars’ transmit emotional feelings, and theoretically can encourage individuals to get personally involved in a cause, e.g. by donating money (West & Orman 2003). Although people claim not to feel personally influenced by these (Samman *et al.* 2009; Van den Bulck *et al.* 2010), Van den Bulck *et al.* (2010) observed that celebrity-based campaigns seemed more successful in creating support. Therefore, it can be said that:

**H8:** In the non-profit sector, the attitude towards the advertisement is directly and positively related to behavioural intentions.

Finally, it is extensively accepted that the attitude towards the brand has a direct and positive influence on behavioural intentions (Goldsmith *et al.* 2000; Lafferty *et al.* 2002), and advertiser credibility acts as a central processing clue in all the process (MacKenzie & Lutz 1989). This relationship has also been proved in the non-profit sector (Ranganathan & Henley 2007), so it can be said that:

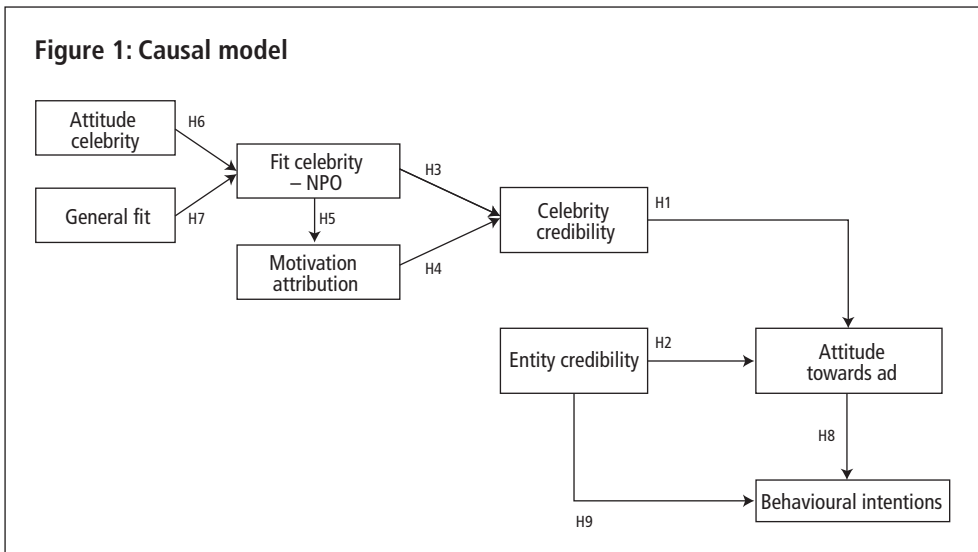
**H9:** In the non-profit sector, the credibility of the organisation is directly and positively related to behavioural intentions.

The global causal model to be tested is represented in the Figure 1.

## **Methodology**

The hypotheses are contrasted with a causal model, analysing the relationships between the variables through a Structural Equations Model (SEM) with the software EQS 6.1. Compared to other papers reporting on experiments with student samples and organisations, often fictitious (Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999; Lafferty *et al.* 2002; Silvera & Austad 2004; Wheeler 2009), we designed a causal model, a methodology that tests and analyses a system of relationships, and the simultaneous and causal sequence established (Goldsmith *et al.* 2000).





Specifically, we measured adult individual perceptions of a realistic but fictitious and, therefore, unfamiliar ad, with a real celebrity and a real NPO. In our research, the fit is a variable of the model, both independent (because it explains other constructs) and dependent (because it is explained by other variables). We thus followed the Currás *et al.* (2009) methodology, presenting to those surveyed two ads with different congruence, in order to average the endorser fit value in the set of final data and ensure the variability needed to check the hypothesis in the causal model. The research was focused on the effectiveness of the endorsement strategy in the short term – that is, before people had learned to associate the celebrity with the social cause. We thus ensured that people had no knowledge of the endorsement beforehand.

UNICEF (the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) was chosen as the NPO as it is a very popular global brand. The quantitative study was designed in the form of a personal questionnaire for adults; consequently it was necessary to analyse a familiar organisation to ascertain which individuals had information and held specific beliefs. UNICEF is a well-known organisation, a characteristic that a priori rules out the adverse effects of delegitimation as the result of a bad social reputation (Dean 2003).

Subsequently, a pretest was carried out to identify the more appropriate NPO–celebrity combinations. Forty people aged between 20 and 40 participated in the study. It was important that the combination was realistic but unfamiliar, so we asked about both the congruence perceived between the celebrity and the social cause, and about the knowledge of the endorsement. As a result, we finally decided to carry out the research into the combination UNICEF–Pau Gasol as the endorsement with the best fit and UNICEF–Penélope Cruz as the one with the poorest fit (the *t*-test for related samples confirmed the significant difference between the means,  $t = 4.19, p < 0.01$ ). The ads showed a colour picture of the celebrity in close-up, along with the UNICEF logo and the headline ‘We

need your aid'. There was a call to action, with the text 'Join us, collaborate', and the web address was given at the bottom of the ad. Each advert was identical, with the exception of the celebrity, and both were produced by a graphic designer.

The study population comprised Spanish people over 18 years old. The sample was chosen by convenience, although age and gender were controlled. The sample size was 329, once those indicating knowledge of the collaboration between the celebrity and the organisation had been ruled out (specifically, 162 people evaluated the UNICEF–Pau Gasol combination, and 167 people the UNICEF–Penélope Cruz endorsement). The questionnaire included 20 questions, related to previous collaboration with NPOs, awareness of the entity and the celebrity, evaluation of the ad, the celebrity and the entity, involvement with the social cause, perceived fit (specific and general), motivation attribution, behavioural intentions, personality traits of the respondent and demographic issues.

### *Scales*

All items used in the study were measured on a 7-point Likert scale considering previous papers (see Appendix 1, which presents detail of the scales and the literature taken into account). Before carrying out the SEM and testing the research hypotheses, we checked the reliability and validity of all the concepts by means of a confirmatory analysis (Anderson & Gerbing 1998). Previously, we had calculated second-order factors with the constructs 'celebrity credibility' and 'NPO credibility'. We proposed that the two types of credibility measure expertise and trustworthiness, which was confirmed, since all dimensions converged appropriately on those factors. The results indicate good reliability and the convergent validity of all the scales studied globally, and goodness of fit indexes exceed the 0.9 threshold, which confirms the suitability of the model presented (Table 1). Discriminant validity was evaluated using the confidence intervals for pairs of latent concepts. None of the confidence intervals calculated for the pair-wise comparisons of the model variables included unity, so the proposed measurement model is correct.

### **Results**

The proposed hypotheses were tested with a structural equation model. Goodness of fit indexes confirm the validity of the global model (BBNFI = 0.93; BBNNFI = 0.96; CFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.96; RMSEA = 0.05).

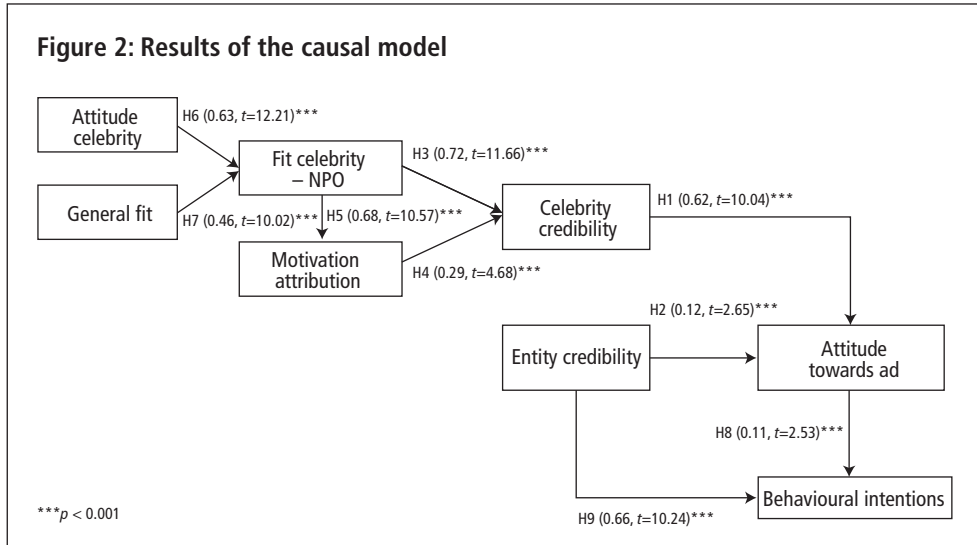
The conceptual model provides support for the entire hypothesis (Figure 2). First, it is observed that the attitude towards the ad is directly conditioned for NPO credibility but, above all, for celebrity credibility, so Hypotheses 1 and 2 cannot be rejected. The effect of celebrity on the evaluation of the ad is stronger than the effect of perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the organisation, a result which confirms that, both in the profit and non-profit sectors, celebrities are powerful transmitters of feelings, and exert a strong influence over consumers through peripheral persuasion routes. However, it is important to take into account that the celebrity must be credible in order to be effective. In this sense, credibility is directly conditioned by the perceived fit between the source and the NPO

**Table 1: Confirmatory factor analysis of the final model**

Latent variable	Measured variable	Standard lambda	R <sup>2</sup>	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Celebrity credibility	EXPCEL	0.89	0.79	0.91
	TRUCEL	0.93	0.87	
Entity credibility	EXPCEL	0.90	0.82	0.91
	TRUCEL	0.91	0.83	
Attitude towards the ad	AGOOD	0.91	0.83	0.96
	APOSITIVE	0.97	0.93	
	AFAVOR	0.96	0.92	
Attitude towards the celebrity	CEGOOG	0.88	0.78	0.98
	CEPOSITIVE	0.91	0.82	
	CEFAVOR	0.93	0.86	
	CENICE	0.97	0.94	
	CEPLEA	0.96	0.93	
	CELIKES	0.95	0.92	
Perceived fit	COHE	0.91	0.83	0.96
	COMPATIB	0.94	0.90	
	SENSE	0.90	0.80	
	MATCH	0.93	0.88	
General perceived fit	GCOHE	0.91	0.83	0.96
	GCOMPATIB	0.93	0.90	
	GSENSE	0.96	0.80	
	GMATCH	0.94	0.88	
Motivation attribution	INTEREST	0.79	0.62	0.92
	ALTRUI	0.94	0.90	
	SOCIAL	0.95	0.91	
Behavioural intentions	COLABO	0.73	0.53	0.92
	ENCOUR	0.88	0.77	
	SPEAK	0.92	0.85	
	ADVIS	0.95	0.90	

Goodness of fit indices: BBNFI = 0.94, BBNNFI = 0.97, CFI = 0.98, IFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.04

(Hypothesis 3 accepted), and for the motivation attribution (Hypothesis 4 accepted). In fact, the fit perceived is a key variable in the model because, on the one hand, the better the fit, the more the expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity is perceived. On the other hand, the perceived fit enhances the attribution of social motivations (Hypothesis 5 supported). When individuals perceive high congruence between the celebrity and the NPO, they attribute more social and altruistic motives to his/her behaviour as opposed to self-interested motives, and this is important, as the motivation attribution also influences celebrity credibility. In this context, the fit is mainly explained by the attitude towards the celebrity (Hypothesis 6 supported). Celebrities are not used to being experts in social causes because that is not their usual work, but they can be credible and very persuasive.



Specifically, their powers of persuasion derive from their image, from the attitudes and feelings people have about them. The more people like them, the better the fit perceived with the social cause and so the more effective will be the advertising communication. The general attitude towards celebrity activism also has a positive influence over the fit perceived (Hypothesis 7 supported), although to a lesser extent. This result means that people who approve the link between celebrities and social causes will tend to value the endorsement strategy more favourably.

It is interesting to observe that the attitude towards the ad has a significant influence over behavioural intentions (Hypothesis 8 supported). Nevertheless, this variable is mainly explained by central processing clues, such as the organisation's credibility (Hypothesis 9 supported). Therefore, the NPO must pay particular attention to its behaviour in order to reflect expertise and trustworthiness, and so be credible.

## Discussion

This paper tries to contribute to the development of the research line of communication with celebrities in the non-profit area. Specifically, a causal model was carried out, and nine hypotheses were proposed regarding the determinants of celebrity credibility and the effectiveness of communication using these endorsers. As a result, we can prove that behavioural intentions are mainly explained by the NPO credibility. Therefore individuals take into account mainly central persuasion routes when they have to make a decision regarding buying or, in this case, collaborating. Organisations must therefore be honest and transparent, and work seriously in their field, communicating the work they do through the media and, for example, public relations campaigns.

In this sense, an increasingly common strategy is to enlist the support of celebrities in

advertising campaigns. Taking into account the results of the model, it can be said that individuals trust central routes when making certain evaluations, but they are also carried away by emotions, so a valued celebrity may have a positive effect on a social organisation through his or her impact on attitudes towards the ad. Celebrities persuade through peripheral routes. They are very popular, and possess special features, with outstanding performances in their field, and enviable lifestyles that turn them into symbolic and admired figures. However, not all of them are effective. The key question is celebrity credibility and, above all, his or her image.

On the one hand, the better the fit, the more credible will be the celebrity. If people perceive some type of link between the celebrity and the social cause, the expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity will not be questioned. As a result, the endorsement will be effective. This fit is mainly conditioned by the attitudes towards the celebrity. When people perceive celebrities as supporting a social cause more for selfish motives rather than social ones, their credibility will fall off and, therefore, they will have a negative impact on individuals' responses. This motivation attribution is directly determined by the fit, and indirectly by attitudes towards the celebrity. Therefore, image is the key to 'opening other doors', at least in the short term and in the case of celebrities without previous experience in this field.

Celebrity activism has been criticised, but a lot of people are conscious of the benefits of this link for NPOs. Due to the benefits perceived, these individuals can be more favourably predisposed to these endorsements, and this strategy will be less questioned and thus more effective. In order to arouse these feelings the link has to be taken seriously for both parties, as people usually respect celebrities they feel are genuinely committed to the causes they support (Samman *et al.* 2009).

### *Limitations and future research*

This paper is not exempt from limitations, which therefore open the field to some future lines of research. First, the findings are limited to the context analysed. We used well-known celebrities and social organisations that usually carry out campaigns with popular individuals who become 'Goodwill Ambassadors'. Featuring other NPOs and different combinations would extend the scope of the findings.

Second, we have analysed the data globally. It would be interesting to evaluate the model with multisample analysis, taking into account greater or lesser involvement with social causes, different features of personality for those involved, or demographic variables. For example, it may be expected that individuals very involved in social causes trust peripheral routes in a minor extension and, therefore, the celebrities have less impact in the behaviour process. This argument needs further investigation.

Third, celebrities can also benefit from the endorsement. In this same vein, it would be interesting to analyse how supporting a social cause enhances celebrity image. Finally, the data have been analysed globally to achieve variability in the causal model. Other studies with the two celebrities separately could be carried out, in order to analyse the specific contribution of each one to the NPO.

**Appendix 1 (scales)**

Celebrity credibility	EXPCEL	The celebrity (X) is right because he/she has experience in the social area (X) is qualified to represent an entity of this type (X) is knowledgeable about social problems	Ohanian 1990; Wheeler 2009 Ohanian 1990; Wheeler 2009 Ohanian 1990; Wheeler 2009
	TRUCEL	(X) is reliable (X) is sincere (X) is honest in his/her declarations	Ohanian 1990; Wheeler 2009 Ohanian 1990; Wheeler 2009 Ohanian 1990; Wheeler 2009
	EXPENT	The entity (Y) has a great amount of experience in the social area (Y) is skilled in what they do (Y) has a great expertise in the social area	Newell & Goldsmith 2001 Newell & Goldsmith 2001 Newell & Goldsmith 2001
Entity credibility	TRUENT	(Y) is trustworthy (Y) is honest (Y) makes truthful claims	Newell & Goldsmith 2001 Newell & Goldsmith 2001 Newell & Goldsmith 2001
	AAD1	Good impression	McKensie & Lutz 1989; Lafferty <i>et al.</i> 2002; Klaus & Bailey 2008
	AAD2	Positive impression	Davis 1995
Attitude towards the ad	AAD3	Favourable impression	Davis 1995; McKensie & Lutz 1989; Lafferty <i>et al.</i> 2002
	ACEL1	I have a good image of (X)	McKensie & Lutz 1989; Lafferty <i>et al.</i> 2002; Klaus & Bailey 2008
	ACEL2	I value (X) positively	Davis 1995
Attitude towards the celebrity	ACEL3	My attitude towards (X) is favourable	Davis 1995; McKensie & Lutz 1989; Lafferty <i>et al.</i> 2002
	ACEL4	(X) is likeable	Tripp <i>et al.</i> 1994; Wheeler 2009
	ACEL5	(X) is nice	Tripp <i>et al.</i> 1994; Wheeler 2009
	ACEL6	I like (X)	Tripp <i>et al.</i> 1994; Wheeler 2009
Perceived fit	FIT1	The link between (X) and (Y) goes together	Till & Busler 2000
	FIT2	The link is meaningful	Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009
	FIT3	The celebrity and the social cause are compatible	Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009
	FIT4	The celebrity and the social cause fit together	Till & Busle 2000
General perceived fit	GFIT1	The link between celebrities and social causes goes together	Till & Busler 2000
	GFIT2	The link is meaningful	Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009
	GFIT3	Celebrities and social causes are compatible	Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009
	GFIT4	Celebrities and social causes fit together	Till & Busler 2000
Motivation attribution	MA1	(X) is motivated by interest in society (not by self-interest)	Strahilevitz 2003; Becker Olsen <i>et al.</i> 2006; Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009
	MA2	(X) has altruistic motives (not selfish)	Strahilevitz 2003; Becker Olsen <i>et al.</i> 2006; Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009
	MA3	(X) seeks social objectives (not individual objectives)	Strahilevitz 2003; Becker Olsen <i>et al.</i> 2006; Bigné <i>et al.</i> 2009

Behavioural intentions	BEHINT1	It is likely I collaborate with (Y) in the future	Lafferty & Goldsmith 1999; Wheeler 2009
	BEHINT2	If I wanted to collaborate with any entity, I would turn to (Y)	Zeithaml <i>et al.</i> 2006
	BEHINT3	I could say positive things about (Y)	Zeithaml <i>et al.</i> 2006
	BEHINT4	I would recommend (Y) if somebody asked my advice	Zeithaml <i>et al.</i> 2006

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire examples

7-point scales (1 = total disagreement; 7 = total agreement)

### Celebrity credibility

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about Pau Gasol/Pen lope Cruz and his/her link to UNICEF in this advertising campaign ...

Pau Gasol/Pen�lope Cruz is qualified to represent an entity of this type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### Entity credibility

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about UNICEF:

UNICEF has a great amount of experience in the social area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### Attitude towards the ad

What has been your general impression on seeing this ad, with the Pau Gasol/Pen lope Cruz–UNICEF link? ... Rate your opinion:

... good impression	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### Attitude towards the celebrity

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about Pau Gasol/Pen lope Cruz:

I have a good image of Pau Gasol/Pen�lope Cruz	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### Perceived fit

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the link between Pau Gasol/Pen lope Cruz and UNICEF:

The link between Pau Gasol/Pen�lope Cruz and UNICEF goes together	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### General perceived fit

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the link between celebrities and social causes (in general terms):

The link between celebrities and social causes goes together	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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### Motivation attribution

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements about the motivations of Pau Gasol/Pen lope Cruz to join an organisation like UNICEF:

Pau Gasol/Pen�lope Cruz is motivated by interest in society (not by self-interest)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

### Behavioural intentions

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

It is likely I will collaborate with UNICEF in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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