Celebrity endorsements: Investigating the interactive effects of internalization, identification and product type on consumers' attitudes and intentions

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ABSTRACT

In line with Kang and Herr's work (2006), this research questions the ELM's contention that celebrity credibility serves foremost as a peripheral element in a persuasive communication context. Nevertheless, in a different light to the Kang and Herr's 'either-central-or-peripheral-role' of a source characteristic, this research advances that celebrity credibility plays concomitantly central and peripheral roles in a persuasive message context depending on product involvement and brand-purchase motive. Particularly, this research uses the notions of 'source internalization' and 'source identification' (Kelman, 1961) to theorize that source credibility can have a concomitant dual role (peripheral and central) in a persuasion context. More precisely, this research investigates the interactive effects of source identification and internalization with product involvement as well as brand-purchase motives on consumers' attitudes and intentions. Source internalization is predicted to have persuasive effects in the contexts of high-involvement as well as informational products. Source identification is predicted to have persuasive effects in the context of low-involvement as well as transformational products. The findings of two experiments show that celebrity credibility acts through only a single route (i.e., only internalization has persuasive effects) uniformly across different product involvement levels and brand-purchase motive types. We interpret these results with the lens of the 'match-up' hypothesis (Kamins, 1990).

1. Introduction

Beyond the stopping-power of celebrities in ads as well as the awareness, recognition, and recall a brand may enjoy because of its association to a given source, celebrity endorsements significantly influence the company's bottom-line. In fact, the immediate or short-term sales effects of celebrity endorsements are well-established by several studies dealing with the financial impact of celebrity endorsements (e.g., Chung et al., 2013; Elberse and Verleun, 2012; Farrell et al., 2000; Garthwaite, 2014). In a similar vein, celebrity endorsements have a direct bearing on customer-based brand equity (Seno and Lukas, 2007) and brand valuation in the long run (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995; Farrell et al., 2000). It is thus no wonder that companies allocate considerable amounts of money in order to hire celebrities to endorse or be associated with their products and brands.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Petty and Cacioppo (1979) lays the theoretical foundation for academic research dealing with celebrity (or source) credibility effects on consumers' attitudes and intentions. The ELM, albeit its multiple role postulate, treats source credibility most often as a peripheral element in the persuasion process (cf. Kang and Herr, 2006; Kruglanski and Thompson, 1999). That is, source credibility is more likely to influence persuasion outcomes in low-involvement conditions. Several academic studies provide evidence supporting the ELM's prediction by demonstrating that indeed source credibility influences consumers' attitudes and intentions in low-involvement situations (e.g., Johnson and Scileppi, 1969; Mazursky and Schul, 1992; Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; Petty et al., 1981a,b; Rhine and Severance, 1970). However, several other studies suggest that source credibility also has persuasive effects under high-involvement conditions (e.g., Dean et al., 1971; Homer and Khale, 1990; Kang and

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Herr, 2006; Yilmaz et al., 2011). In another vein, Kruglanski and Thompson (1999) introduce the unimodel and question the ELM's qualitative distinction between the central and peripheral routes. The unimodel refutes the notion that people could be influenced by either a central or a peripheral route. The unimodel suggests that the persuasion process is uniform, in the sense that there is a functional equivalence between the message arguments and the peripheral cues (e.g., source characteristics)—both of them are evidence used by a recipient in a persuasive setting to reach or draw conclusions.

Although celebrity endorsements research is abundant, the mixed findings identified in the extant literature and the questionable ELM's routes make another study investigating the role(s) of source credibility on attitudes change and formation a legitimate one. In fact, '*there are a few attempts, if any, to address the contradictory results of source effects*' in a persuasive communication context (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2016, p. 649). The storyline of the current research is that the inconsistent findings are due to the conceptualization of source credibility itself (we will dicuss this issue in the conceptual development). The research's main prediction is that source credibility may *simultaneously* play a central *and* a peripheral role in a persuasive communication context.

Two recent studies on celebrity endorsements and celebrity credibility have been published in the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. McCormick (2016), using the 'match-up' hypothesis as a theoretical backbone, investigated the effects of celebrities' unfamiliarity on millennials' attitudes and purchase intentions. Saldanha et al. (2018) focused on the role of 'attachment between the endorser-product' on consumers' attitudes and intentions. In the current research, following the match-up logic adopted by McCormick (2016), we use the notion of source internalization (Kelman, 1961) and investigate its effects on consumers' attitudes and intentions. Internalization implies that an audience evaluates a persuasive message based on inferences related to the source's competence, expertise, and trustworthiness (Chebat et al., 2007). Following Saldanha et al. (2018), but embracing another perspective, we consider the role of attachment between the endorser-consumer on consumers' attitudes and intentions. Particularly, the attachment component in the current research is operationalized through the notion of source identification (Kelman, 1961). Identification implies that a recipient is likely to be attuned to a persuasive message because of the actual or potential similarities between herself/himself and the source of the message (Chebat et al., 2007). More specifcally, this research uses the notions of internalization and identification to predict a central role of the former and a peripheral role of the latter, in influencing consumers' attitudes and intentions in the realm of celebrity endorsements. This approach to investigating source effects in a persuasive setting is a novel way that deviates from the traditional reliance on expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. This perspective of investigating the simultaneous effects of internalization and identification would help resolve the puzzle of the inconsistent findings on source credibility effects and could offer new contributions to theory and practice.

Notwithstanding, Kang and Herr (2006) are the first who systematically demonstrated the multiple-roles of source characteristics in a persuasion context and set the boundaries as to when source characteristics play a central or a peripheral role. However, the focus of their study was only on one single source characteristic (i.e., source attractiveness); this represents, in fact, a reductionist view of the myriad of source characteristics alluded to in the extant persuasion literature. The current research builds on Kang and Herr's work by re-emphasizing the source effect multiple-roles, and extends it by considering a more

comprehensive list of source characteristics commonly used in the extant source effects literature. Furthermore, the current research extends Kang and Herr's work by delineating the source characteristics that are likely to play a central role from the ones expected to act as peripheral cues. In the same vein, the current research mainly theorizes that the very same persuasive variable is likely to concomitantly play central and peripheral roles whereas Kang and Herr's theorizing and findings demonstrate that a persuasive variable (i.e., source attractiveness) plays either a central or a peripheral role, but not both roles simultaneously.

To examine the central tenet of this research, we first conduct a comprehensive review of the literature dealing with the construct of source credibility in persuasive settings. Particularly, we point to the worthiness and relevance of Kelman's source credibility conceptualization in reconciling the inconsistent findings of source credibility effects. Second, we articulate two hypotheses theorizing how source credibility can simultaneously have a dual effect (i.e., central *and* peripheral) by considering the moderating effects of product involvement. We then describe Study 1 designed to test the two first hypotheses. Further, in order to replicate and extend the findings of Study 1, we articulate two other hypotheses regarding the dual simultaneous impact of source credibility by focusing on the moderating effects of purchase motive. We then describe Study 2 and report its findings. Finally, we close with a general discussion outlining the theoretical contributions and managerial implications of this research, along with the limitations and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical background and conceptual development

2.1. Conceptualizing source credibility

Researchers mainly identify three major aspects in defining and measuring source credibility, namely: (1) source expertise, (2) source trustworthiness, and (3) source attractiveness (cf. Amos et al., 2008; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Yoon et al., 1998). These three credibility aspects are invariant across different cultures and important in influencing consumers' attitudes and intentions (Yoon et al., 1998). Source expertise is generally related to the competence, qualification, and authoritativeness of the source (McCroskey, 1966; Whitehead, 1968). In a celebrity endorsement context, the celebrity expertise could be, for instance, reflected by the degree of congruence between the celebrity's background and the product category (Bergkvist et al., 2016; Till and Busler, 2000). Trustworthiness has to do with the honesty, reliability, integrity, and believability of the source (Dholakia and Sternthal, 1977; Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1990). Source attractiveness is generally viewed in terms of the source's physical attractiveness (Wright, 2016). In a broader view, source attractiveness reflects the extent to which the source is familiar to, similar to, and likable by the target audience (McGuire, 1985).

In the domain of social influence, Kelman (1961) distinguishes between three types of influence: (1) internalization—acceptance of the message based on the source's knowledge *and* trustworthiness—, (2) identification—going along because the recipient identifies himself or herself with the message source—, and (3) compliance—consenting due to the source's power over the recipient. In the advertising and celebrity endorsements domain, internalization and identification are deemed of particular interest (Briñol and Petty, 2012; Chebat et al., 2007; Petty and Briñol, 2008). Interestingly, Kelman's framework (1961) can be instrumental in providing a comprehensive and parsimonious

conceptualization of the source credibility concept that literally captures all the various credibility aspects or dimensions identified in the extant persuasion and social psychology research. It is worth noting that the number of source credibility dimensions, in the extant literature, varies from one dimension (e.g., Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999; Spry et al., 2011; Sternthal et al., 1978) to five dimensions (e.g., Clow et al., 2008; Rossiter and Smidts, 2012).

The current research borrows the internalization and identification dimensions[1] from Kelman's framework (1961) to conceptualize source credibility. The various dimensions of source credibility adopted by persuasion scholars, namely, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness are captured, to a greater extent, by Kelman's conceptualization. In fact, internalization effects in a persuasion context occur when a message's recipient forms his/her attitudes based on the source's competence, expertise, and trustworthiness (Briñol and Petty, 2012; Chebat et al., 2007). Persuasion effects are also likely to occur because of the match between the message source and the recipient in terms of similarity (e.g., same values, same cultural background, etc.), attractiveness, and likability; this corresponds to the identification aspect in Kelman's source credibility typology (Briñol and Petty, 2012; Chebat et al., 2007).

Although three source credibility dimensions have been predominantly used in the extant literature on source effects and celebrity endorsements, we believe that the internalization and identification notions provide a more nuanced conceptual approach to investigating source effects in advertising contexts. The next sections articulate the rationale behind this conceptual choice.

Research shows that a message endorsed by an expert and trustworthy source would induce a higher message agreement as compared to an expert or a trustworthy source, or even more, a source with conflicting expertise and trustworthiness (i.e., low in expertise and high in trustworthiness or high in expertise and low in trustworthiness; see Mors et al., 2006). Thus, the source expertise and trustworthiness would jointly produce more persuasion, as compared to instances with either expertise or trustworthiness. From a practical standpoint, advertisers are well-advised to rely on spokespersons or endorsers with high levels of expertise and trustworthiness (Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). Considering the persuasive effects of source expertise independent of source trustworthiness and vice versa are reductionist views of source effects in persuasive settings (Priester and Petty, 1995; Wiener and Mowen, 1986). Furthermore, people integrate information on source expertise and trust in the face of persuasive attempts (McGinnies and Ward, 1980; Mowen et al., 1987). Conceptually speaking, the internalization notion within Kelman's framework perfectly captures the concepts of expertise *and* trustworthiness at the same time.[2] Source internalization is a broader construct that encompasses both expertise *and* trustworthiness and would ultimately provide an integrative and parsimonious approach

to investigating source effects (Chebat et al., 2007).

Source attractiveness produces persuasive effects in low-involvement situations via a liking mechanism—the recipient develops a positive attitude toward an object because s/he liked the attractive source—(cf. Miller and Allen, 2012). Nevertheless, an individual may like a source for other reasons. In a persuasive setting, a source can be liked because of his/her qualification, success, values, and conduct (McGuire, 1969). In the same vein, the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979) suggests that an individual may like a source when s/he thinks or perceives that s/he has a common ground with the source and when the latter serves as a role model for the former. The multitude of ways by which source liking may occur implies that the source attractiveness construct per se is very limited in scope and does not fully capture the various elements causing source liking in persuasive settings. Source identification is a comprehensive concept that, along with source attractiveness, includes other aspects that trigger source liking and represents as such a better alternative to the mere use of source attractiveness.

Source attractiveness is generally viewed as a cue or peripheral element in a persuasion setting (e.g., Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995; Choi et al., 2005). Nevertheless, research shows that when source attractiveness is related to the central merits of the endorsed object or product (e.g., beauty products, public image of a restaurant), it acts exactly as a message argument (Briñol and Petty, 2009; Teeny et al., 2017). That is, depending on its relatedness to the endorsed product, source attractiveness can play two different roles (i.e., cue vs. argument) in a persuasive setting. The extent to which source attractiveness is related or not to the advertised product can be conceptually captured through the theoretical notions of internalization and identification. When source attractiveness is not related to the endorsed product, attitude change occurs as a result of an identification mechanism (i.e., a consumer can have a positive attitude toward the advertised product because s/he simply likes the attractive source of the message). When source attractiveness is relevant to the endorsed product, its persuasive effect is the outcome of an internalization process (i.e., a consumer relies on the source attractiveness as evidence to evaluate the endorsed product). That is, when it is related to the endorsed product, the recipient can use the source attractiveness as an indicator of the expertness of the source (and should be inherently linked to internalization rather than identification). We believe that mapping the source attractiveness onto identification or internalization can be instrumental in resolving the seemingly inconsistent findings regarding the effects of source attentiveness. In fact, source attractiveness is found to both increase and decrease persuasion (Briñol and Petty, 2012, 2009; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Also, it is unclear whether its effects are transitory or consequential (Briñol and Petty, 2012, 2009). In this regard, Kelman's framework had some parallels to the 'peripheral' versus 'central' distinction of the ELM (Briñol and Petty, 2012). According to the ELM, attitude change is persistent over time and more predictive of behavior when the central route rather than the peripheral route is followed. In Kelman's framework, the persistence of any influence varied as a function of the mechanism involved. In the case of internalization (e.g., source attractiveness is related to the product), the attitude change would tend to persist over time. Whereas with identification (e.g., source attractiveness is not related to the product), its influence tends to be ephemeral.

2.2. Can source credibility play a peripheral and a central role concomitantly?

According to the ELM, the effects of source credibility are contingent

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[1] The current research focuses only on identification and internalization for several reasons. Fist, compliance as a form of influence, in comparison to internalization as well as identification, does not involve an internal change and the individual is merely going along with a powerful other who has control over resources (Petty and Briñol, 2008). Second, in contrast to compliance, internalization and identification are deemed applicable to celebrity endorsements (cf. Chebat et al., 2007; Petty and Briñol, 2008). In fact, in advertising settings, the celebrity or endorser cannot exert power over consumers. Third, most of the various source characteristics identified in the advertising literature can overwhelmingly be mapped onto the internalization and identification dimensions rather than compliance (see Appendix A).

[2] From a methodological standpoint, manipulating internalization (low vs. high) offers a parsimonious approach in comparison to factorial designs involving manipulation of both expertise and trustworthiness. In the current research, proceeding with a-two level manipulation (low vs. high) of expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and product involvement (or purchase motive in Study 2) would have resulted in 16 experimental conditions for each study.

upon the receiver's level of involvement[3] (Petty et al., 1983); source credibility effects are more pronounced in low-involvement situations. The major premise of the ELM is that a recipient in a persuasion setting is likely to follow one of two routes in the process of attitude change, either a central route or a peripheral one. In the context of advertising, when a consumer is highly involved in the object of the communication (be it the ad or the product), he/she is likely to follow the central route. In such a high-involvement situation, the consumer is likely to form attitudes and make judgments about the advertised object based on relevant arguments and facts related to that object (Petty et al., 1983). In other words, in a high-involvement condition, consumers tend to process information diligently and make their decisions upon the relevance of the arguments presented in the ad (Petty and Cacioppo, 1979; Petty et al., 1983). Conversely, a consumer is likely to follow the peripheral route when his/her level of involvement in the advertised object is low. The peripheral route mirrors the reliance of the recipient on a set of heterogeneous cues such as elements of the message itself (e.g., number and/or ordinal position of arguments) as well as elements related to the source of the message (e.g., expertise, attractiveness, likability, aspirational similarity with the recipient). That is, in a low-involvement situation, consumers are likely to develop and change their attitudes based on peripheral elements rather than on the arguments' quality (Chaiken, 1980; Petty et al., 1981a,b).

The ELM foremost views source credibility as a peripheral element, in a persuasion context. Abundant empirical research supports this assertion (e.g., Johnson and Scileppi, 1969; Mazursky and Schul, 1992; McGarry and Hendrick, 1974; Petty et al., 1981a,b; Petty et al., 1983). However, several studies show that source credibility, as a source characteristic, also influences consumers' attitudes in high-involvement situations (e.g., Dean et al., 1971; Homer and Khale, 1990; Roozen and Claeys, 2010; Yilmaz et al., 2011). That is, source credibility may also play a central role in the persuasion process, and could ultimately be treated as a persuasive argument.

The current research advances that the mixed findings regarding the role (i.e., an argument or a peripheral cue) of source credibility in the persuasion process are mainly due to the different conceptualizations adopted by researchers to operationalize source credibility. That is, conceptual and methodological differences may account for the differences in the findings. As mentioned above, there is a general agreement that source credibility is a multidimensional construct that can be inherently captured through three main sub-dimensions. These are trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. However, scrutiny of

prior research indicates that these three sub-dimensions were independently used/manipulated to measure source credibility. That is, some studies have just used expertise and/or trustworthiness to capture source credibility (e.g., Goldsmith et al., 2000; Grewal et al., 1994; McGinnies and Ward, 1980), and other studies have only focused on source attractiveness (e.g., Kang and Herr, 2006). Some studies have treated source credibility at an aggregate level (e.g., Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999; Spry et al., 2011), while other studies have treated expertise (e.g., Rossiter and Smidts, 2012), trustworthiness, and attractiveness (e.g., Eisend and Langner, 2010) as separate unrelated variables. Accordingly, the current research proposes that it is very critical to simultaneously (and parsimoniously) consider all the dimensions reflecting the concept of source credibility to gain a more nuanced understanding of the role(s) of source credibility in the persuasion process. In fact, the multidimensional nature of the source credibility concept in itself upholds its potential multiple roles in the persuasion process. Ironically, following the ELM logic, this research predicts that source internalization[4] (i.e., expertise *and* trustworthiness) is likely to be considered as a sound argument for consumers in a high-involvement situation. In such a case, source credibility is likely to play a central role in consumers' attitudes formation and change. On the other hand, source identification[5] may play a persuasive role in a low-involvement situation. In such a situation, source credibility is likely to play a peripheral role in the persuasion process.

A couple of empirical studies support somewhat this theorizing suggesting that source credibility may play concomitantly a central as well as a peripheral role. In fact, Yilmaz et al. (2011) find that source credibility (i.e., internalization) affects consumers' attitudes toward the ad and the brand only in a high-involvement situation. Likewise, Kirmani and Shiv (1998) find that a high fit between the celebrity's expertise and the endorsed product (i.e., internalization) influences brand evaluations, only in high involvement conditions. In the same vein, Lee and Thorson (2008) show that the congruence between the source attractiveness and the endorsed product category (i.e., internalization) influences consumers' responses more so in high involvement conditions. Similarly, Shavitt et al. (1994) show that in a high-involvement situation when the source attractiveness is related to the endorsed product (i.e., internalization), consumers positively evaluate the product.

Kahle and Homer (1985) find that source attractiveness (e.g., identification) persuasive effects did not vary between low- and

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[3] Zaichkowsky (1985) defines involvement as '*a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests.*' This research adopts Zaichkowskys' definition of consumer involvement and focuses on consumers' involvement with the product category. The product category is a key determinant of enduring involvement and motivation for consumers (Celsi and Olson, 1988). In fact, '[c]*ognitive resource availability is determined not only by ability and situational motivation but also by product category-induced motivation (enduring involvement).*' (Kang and Herr, 2006, p.129). Empirical evidence demonstrates that consumers with higher product involvement tend to process an advertisement more elaborately than those with lower product involvement (Muehling et al., 1993; Petty et al., 1983). Product involvement is also higher for durable goods, which tend to be higher priced and imply a greater risk for consumers leading them to engage in more systematic processing (Winterich et al., 2018). As such, this research uses the involvement in the product category as a proxy for the manipulation of personal involvement in terms of motivation and cognitive ability. In fact, the ELM advances that in high-involvement settings (e.g., when the recipient is concomitantly motivated and cognitively able to process the information), the recipient, in his/her quest of making a judgment, exerts effortful information processing and inherently pursues the central route which corresponds to the processing of the message's arguments. In low-involvement settings, reflected by the absence or lack of motivation and/or cognitive ability of the recipient, the peripheral route will be rather followed in making an evaluative judgment.

[4] Considering the persuasive effects of source expertise independent of source trustworthiness and vice versa are reductionist views of source effects in persuasive settings. People integrate information on source expertise and trust in face of persuasive attempts (Mowen et al., 1987; McGinnies and Ward, 1980; Wiener and Mowen, 1986). Internalization is a broader concept (in comparison to expertise) that encompasses expertise and trustworthiness simultaneously. Accordingly, we are not using source expertise and source internalization interchangeably.

[5] It is worth noting that, in our research, source attractiveness does not equate source identification. An individual does not necessarily identify himself or herself with another one because of the physical attractiveness of the latter. Source identification can be manifested through various aspects. A recipient identifies herself/himself with a source when s/he thinks or perceives that s/he has a common ground with the source (in terms of shared values) as well as when the latter serves as a role model for the former. That is, although in certain situations source attractiveness can lead the recipient to identify herself/himself with the source, source identification is a broader concept that encompasses, among others, source attractiveness. Furthermore, when related to the endorsed product, source attractiveness can be viewed as expertise and should be inherently linked to internalization rather than identification. The scope of the source identification construct is larger than that of source attractiveness, on the one hand. On the other hand, depending on its relatedness to the endorsed product, source attractiveness can be mapped onto both identification and internalization. Accordingly, we are not using source attractiveness and source identification interchangeably.

high-involvement conditions. Also, Yilmaz et al. (2011) find that source likability (e.g., identification) positively influences attitudes toward the advertisement and purchase intentions in both high- and low-involvement conditions. Nevertheless, Shavitt et al. (1994) show that when the source attractiveness is not related to the product being endorsed (e.g., identification), consumers positively evaluate the product only in a low-involvement situation. Another study examining the interactive effects of an ad endorser's ethnicity and product involvement on attitudes toward the product indicates that the use of endorsers to whom consumers feel similar (e.g., identification) enhances attitudes only for low involvement products (Torres and Briggs, 2007). Despite the mixed findings regarding the persuasive effects of source identification, empirical evidence suggests that source identification works better in low-involvement situations. The current research predicts that both source internalization and identification interact with product involvement to affect consumers' responses to celebrity endorsements. More specifically, the two following hypotheses are posited:

H1. In a high-involvement situation, source internalization has a greater impact on attitudes toward the ad and brand as well as purchase intention[6] than source identification.

H2. In a low-involvement situation, source identification has a greater impact on attitudes toward the ad and brand as well as purchase intention than source internalization.

3. Study 1

Study 1 was designed to test H1 and H2. To create the material for the main experiment of Study 1, a pilot study was first conducted.

3.1. Pilot study for celebrities' selection

The pilot work is a precursor to a follow-up experiment that tests the two hypotheses articulated above. Its purpose was to select celebrities to be included in the main experiment of Study 1.

Product Involvement. Two products were considered, namely a car and a shampoo. The choice of these two products in terms of consumers' involvement levels is guided by the Rossiter-Percy (RPS) grid (Rossiter and Percy, 2017; Rossiter et al., 1991). Generally speaking, a car is a more involving product category than shampoo. Two main print ads were created, including fictitious branded products. 'Curly Girly' Shampoo and 'Avant sports' car ads were designed to respectively reflect low and high involvement branded products. Mock ads, including fictitious brand names, have been used to rule out any confound due to subjects' prior knowledge and established attitudes toward familiar brands.

Celebrities' selection and Pretest. A focus group (5 females and 4 males) was first conducted to generate an initial pool of celebrities for both the car and shampoo products. Real celebrities were used in order to enhance the ecological validity of the study. The informants were asked to nominate celebrities for the four designated conditions involving the internalization and identification dimensions (e.g., high internalization and high identification, low internalization and high identification, etc.). There were no restrictions on the number of nominations per the designated cell. The informants were asked to nominate (as many as

they can) potential celebrities related to the experimental cell at stake freely. The focus group generated fifteen celebrities for the car's case and seven celebrities for the shampoo scenario. In the case of the car, for three out the four experimental cells, four celebrities were initially nominated (expected to fulfill the requirements of the planned experiment). Except for one experimental condition (i.e., low identification and high internalization), only three celebrities were nominated by the informants.

A celebrities' pretest was then carried out for the car (N = 30; 45% are males) and shampoo (N = 26; 100% are females) products using participants recruited from the same population of the main experiment of Study 1. It is worth noting that, during the focus group, we have observed that only female informants have been involved in the nomination of potential celebrities for the shampoo endorsement. This led us to consider only female participants in the pilot and experimental studies related to the shampoo product. This is likely to minimize any potential bias due to a disinterest of male participants in the shampoo category.

Based on a within-subject design, the pretest was conducted to select celebrities for the main experiment. Fifteen corresponding print ads were designed to relate to the fifteen celebrities generated by the focus group in the case of the car. All the advertisements had identical layouts and spacing. The same message is communicated in each ad copy, but obviously via different celebrities. A picture of the selected celebrity was prominently placed in the ad along with his/her name, the endorsed product, the brand name, and a tagline, as per the current practice regarding the design of print ads in the Middle-East. The participants were told that they would be evaluating test advertisements involving celebrity endorsements for brands that had not yet been introduced and were asked to complete a questionnaire. Seven measurement items were used on seven-point semantic differential scales to measure source identification and internalization (cf. Chebat et al., 2007; Ohanian, 1990). Participants were asked if the celebrity is 'likable/unlikable', 'attractive/unattractive', 'have a similar/dissimilar cultural background', 'feel proud/not proud to see the celebrity in the ad', 'the claim mentioned by the celebrity is believable/unbelievable', 'reliable/unreliable', and 'considered as qualified/disqualified to endorse the brand'. The four first items were used to measure source identification, and the three remaining items were used to measure source internalization. Both identification and internalization scales were reliable (Cronbach alphas were .82 and .88, respectively). Based on the mean scores of internalization and identification resulting from the celebrities' pretest as well as our judgment, four out of the fifteen initial nominated celebrities were retained to carry out the final experiment for the sports car endorsement.

Regarding the celebrities' selection for the shampoo, as indicated earlier, seven celebrities were nominated by the participants in the focus groups. The same pretest procedures used with the car product and discussed above were adopted in the shampoo case. Accordingly, seven print advertisements were designed and pretested with a sample of 26 female students. Based on the mean scores of internalization and identification resulting from the celebrities' pretest as well as our judgment, four out of the seven initial nominated celebrities were retained to carry out the final experiment for the shampoo endorsement.

3.2. Main experiment: experimental design and participants

Unless otherwise noted, the procedures and stimulus development for the main experiment are identical to those in the pilot study. A 2 (identification: high vs. low) X 2 (internalization: high vs. low) X 2 (consumer's product involvement: high vs. low) between-subjects experiment was designed to validate the two predictions of Study 1. These experimental conditions were implemented through eight corresponding print advertisements. Participants were exposed to an ad booklet that included a branded product endorsed by a celebrity (for a description of the ad copy and images, see Appendix B). Data were

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[6] Lutz (1985) defines attitude toward the advertisement as the *'predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion'* (p. 49). Mitchell and Olson (1981) define attitude toward the brand as the consumer's overall evaluation of the brand, whether it is good or bad. Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch (1983) define purchase intention as how likely the consumer is going to consider buying the advertised product. In this study, we adopt these three definitions to measure the study's dependent variables, namely attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions.

collected from 315 students at a major university in the Middle-East. Participants were randomly assigned to complete a questionnaire related to one of the study's eight experimental conditions (see Table 1). Twenty-two incomplete questionnaires were removed from the sample. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 40 years old; however, the majority (80.5%) was between 18 and 23 years old. Only female participants have been recruited in the shampoo scenario, whereas 46.5% of the sample are males in the case of the car.

Dependent variables. We adopted well-established measurements with good psychometric properties from prior research. Participants were asked to answer seven questions using seven-point semantic differential scales measuring their attitudes toward the advertisement, their attitudes toward the brand, and their purchase intentions of the brand being endorsed. Three items ('badly executed/well-executed', 'unfavorable/favorable', and 'unattractive/attractive') were adopted to measure attitudes toward the advertisement (cf. Chebat et al., 2007). Two items ('unfavorable/favorable' and 'unsatisfactory/satisfactory') were used to measure participants' attitudes toward the brand (Bruner and Hensel, 1992; Goldsmith et al., 2000). Two items ('unlikely/likely' and 'impossibly/possibly') were used to measure the likelihood to purchase the endorsed brand (e.g., Newell and Goldsmith, 2001; Zhi Yang et al., 2020; Yi, 1990). Scale reliability scores for the three constructs were satisfactory with Cronbach alpha of .90, .87, and 0.87 for attitudes toward the ad, attitudes toward the brand, and purchase intention, respectively.

Manipulation checks. To validate the product involvement's manipulation, participants were asked to rate their level of involvement in the assigned product based on seven-point semantic differential items adapted from Zaichkowsky's personal involvement inventory (1985) (Cronbach alpha = .72). The results indicated that the participants reported low involvement in the shampoo ($M = 3.86$; $SD = 1.52$) compared to the sports car ($M = 5.01$; $SD = 1.17$). The means difference is statistically significant [$F_{(1,293)} = 51.50$; $p < .001$]. Therefore, the manipulation of product involvement was deemed successful.

The questionnaire also included the same items used in the pilot study to measure source internalization and identification in order to check the manipulations' effectiveness of these two variables. The Cronbach alpha of the summated items measuring identification was 0.79 and 0.89 for internalization items.

As mentioned above, for each product, four celebrities were carefully selected based on the pilot study. Each celebrity was initially selected in terms of the manipulations of internalization and identification. The data collected for the main experiment of Study 1 confirmed the appropriateness of the selected celebrities. In fact, an ANOVA indicated that source internalization perception varied with the celebrity name ([$F_{(7,285)} = 11.746$; $p < .001$]. A Tukey post hoc analysis generated two homogenous subsets of celebrities (see Table 2). Perceived internalization scores did not differ between the members of the same subset. As expected, four celebrities were classified as having low internalization ($p = .969$, NS). The other four celebrities represent a homogenous subset of celebrities that were perceived as high in internalization ($p = .600$, NS).

An ANOVA indicated that source identification perception varied with the celebrity name ([$F_{(7,285)} = 7.492$; $p < .001$]. A Tukey post hoc analysis generated two homogenous subsets of celebrities. Perceived identification scores did not differ between the members of the same subset. In line with the planned design, four celebrities were classified as having low identification ($p = .739$, NS), and the four other celebrities represent a homogenous subset of celebrities perceived as high in identification ($p = .333$, NS). Therefore, the eight selected celebrities and two products, already pretested in the pilot study, adequately reflect the planned experimental design for Study 1 (see Table 3).

Hypotheses testing. To test hypotheses H1 and H2, a MANCOVA was performed, controlling for both age and gender. The two covariates did not show any significant effects on the dependent variables. The results indicated that there is no significant interactive effects of source identification and involvement on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F_{(1,293)} = 1.874$; $p = .172$, NS], attitudes toward the brand [$F_{(1,293)} = 2.039$, $p = .154$, NS], and purchase intention [$F_{(1,293)} = 1.195$, $p = .254$, NS]. Similarly, there is no significant interactive effects of

Table 1
Final experimental conditions of study 1.

Experimental Conditions					
Condition (Sample size)	Celebrity	Product Involvement	Identification	Internalization	Celebrity Bio
Condition 1 (N = 37)	Betty Saadeh	High 'Avant Sports Car'	High ($M = 5.1419$, SD = 1.06154)	High ($M = 4.7928$, SD = 1.47270)	37 years old, born in Mexico and living in Ramallah, and a member of the female Palestinian motor racing team in the West Bank called the Speed Sisters. She achieved success by being ranked in the top ten racers in Palestine.
Condition 2 (N = 34)	Osama Al Said	High 'Avant Sports Car'	High ($M = 4.4853$, SD = 1.20438)	Low ($M = 3.5196$, SD = 1.66402)	Born and raised in Egypt, he is an expert and the most famous cooking figure in the middle east. He has several cooking shows known as 'Ma Osama Atyab' and 'Bil Hanna Wa Shiffa' on Dubai TV.
Condition 3 (N = 37)	Emerson Fittipaldi	High 'Avant Sports Car'	Low ($M = 3.4595$, SD = 1.30506)	High ($M = 4.6306$, SD = 1.56305)	70 years old Brazilian professional car racer, he was the youngest driver to win the Formula One World Championship in 1972 for the first time and in 1974 for the second time.
Condition 4 (N = 36)	Ahlam	High 'Avant Sports Car'	Low ($M = 3.8264$, SD = 1.56261)	Low ($M = 3.2222$, SD = 1.64462)	Emirati singer deemed as 'The Queen', began her career in 1995 and became one of the Middle East's most famous artists. Through her career life, she was able to produce 11 successful albums.
Condition 5 (N = 39)	Myriam Faris	Low 'Curly Girly Shampoo'	High ($M = 4.5385$, SD = 1.12907)	High ($M = 4.7265$, SD = 1.45472)	Lebanese singer known as 'The Queen of the Stage', started her career in 2003 and released her first album 'Myriam' featuring the best hit 'Ana Wel Shoq' followed by 'Nadini' album in 2005.
Condition 6 (N = 35)	Raya Abi Rashed	Low 'Curly Girly Shampoo'	High ($M = 4.7714$, SD = 1.04384)	Low ($M = 3.1524$, SD = 1.39641)	39 years old TV presenter, celebrity journalist, and producer. She is the presenter of Arabs Got Talent and Scoop shows on MBC channel).
Condition 7 (N = 37)	Diana Ross	Low 'Curly Girly Shampoo'	Low ($M = 3.8784$, SD = 1.39645)	High ($M = 5.2793$, SD = 1.26568)	Born and raised in Michigan, 72 years old singer and actress who formed the 1960s trio the supreme with her friends before embracing the solo and acting career.
Condition 8 (N = 38)	Omneyah Solyman	Low 'Curly Girly Shampoo'	Low ($M = 3.9342$, SD = 1.25025)	Low ($M = 3.3158$, SD = 1.63106)	An Egyptian singer used to perform in the opera house in Egypt. She released her first album 'Mesh Howa' in 2011.

source internalization and involvement on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,293) = 0.001$, $p = .970$, NS], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,293) = 2.722$, $p = .100$, NS], and purchase intention [$F(1,293) = 0.017$, $p = .897$, NS]. However, there is a significant main effect of source internalization on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,293) = 12,018$, $p < .001$], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,293) = 9,966$, $p = .002$] and purchase intention [($F(1,293) = 15,008$, $p < .001$]. In a low-involvement condition, internalization has an impact on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,148) = 5.546$, $p = .020$; $M_{High\ internalization} = 4.640$; $M_{Low\ internalization} = 4.032$], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,148) = 11.510$, $p < .001$; $M_{High\ internalization} = 4.733$; $M_{Low\ internalization} = 3.972$], and purchase intention [$F(1,148) = 5.976$, $p = .016$; $M_{High\ internalization} = 4.776$; $M_{Low\ internalization} = 4.1027$]. Similarly, in a high-involvement condition, internalization has an impact on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,143) = 7.359$, $p = .008$; $M_{High\ internalization} = 5.315$; $M_{Low\ internalization} = 4.719$] and purchase intention [$F(1,143) = 9.804$, $p = .002$; $M_{High\ internalization} = 5.459$; $M_{Low\ internalization} = 4.721$]. Nevertheless, there was no significant effect of internalization on attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,143) = 1.360$, $p = .246$, NS; $M_{High\ internalization} = 5.358$; $M_{Low\ internalization} = 5.114$].

However, source identification has no significant main effect on consumers' attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,293) = 1,046$, $p = .307$, NS], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,293) = 1,870$, $p = .173$, NS], and purchase intention [$F(1,293) = 0.264$, $p = .608$, NS].

3.3. Summary of study 1

To sum it up, the results indicated only the main effects of source internalization were significant regardless of the consumer's level of involvement in the product. These results suggest that consumers are likely to form their attitudes and intentions in a persuasive message based solely on source internalization regardless of the product category. Internalization is found to have significant effects on participants' attitudinal responses in both contexts of high-involvement products (i. e., car) and low-involvement products (i.e., shampoo). These findings suggest that internalization influences participants' responses regardless of the nature of the product category. By splitting the data based on

gender, the same pattern of results (i.e., only internalization has significant effects) has been observed across the female and male groups in the car's case. However, in contrast with the study's prediction, the effects of identification are insignificant. Particularly, the insignificant effects of identification in the low-involvement situations are very interesting though unexpected. This finding prompted the design of another experiment (Study 2) by considering only low-involvement products. The following section will further discuss the rationale of Study 2 and present its findings.

4. Study 2

Lord and Putrevu (2009) have shown that celebrity characteristics have differential persuasive effects depending on consumers' purchase motives. More precisely, their study indicates that trustworthiness and expertise (i.e., internalization) have persuasive effects in the context of products characterized by informational motivation. On the other hand, attractiveness (i.e., identification) has persuasive effects in the context of products typified by transformational motivation. It should be noted that informational motives can be satisfied by providing consumers with decision-relevant information, which might include, for example, hair appearance improvement in the shampoo case. The transformational motives are rather associated with positively enhancing consumers' sensory, mental, or social state, which might include, for example, anticipated sensory gratification in the case of chocolate. This provides somewhat an explanation to the finding of Study 1 as to why only internalization had persuasive effects in the shampoo scenario. In other words, the unexpected insignificant effects of identification in the case of shampoo could be due to the product's informational nature. In line with Lord and Putrevu's theorizing, Study 2 predicts that identification is likely to have more persuasive effects in the context of products with a transformational purchase motive. Reversely, internalization is likely to have more persuasive effects in the context of products with an informational purchase motive. The preceding discussion leads to putting forward the two following hypotheses:

H3. In a low-involvement informational purchase situation, source

Table 2
Internalization Manipulation Checks/Tukey post-hoc analysis of internalization means.

Celebrity Name	N	Homogeneous subset 1: Low-internalization celebrities[a]	Homogeneous subset 2: High-internalization celebrities[a]
Raya Abi Rashed	35	3.1524	
Ahlam	36	3.2222	
Omneyah Soliman	38	3.3158	
Osama Al Saeid	34	3.5196	
Emerson Fittipaldi	37		4.6306
Myriam Fares	39		4.7265
Betty Saadeh	37		4.7928
Diana Ross	37		5.2793
Sig.		.969	.600

[a] Mean scores for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Table 3
Identification manipulation checks/Tukey post-hoc analysis of identification means.

Celebrity Name	N	Homogeneous subset 1: Low-identification celebrities[a]	Homogeneous subset 2: High-identification celebrities[a]
Emerson Fittipaldi	37	3.4595	
Ahlam	36	3.8264	
Diana Ross	37	3.8784	
Omneyah Soliman	38	3.9342	
Osama Al Saeid	34		4.4853
Myriam Fares	39		4.5385
Raya Abi Rashed	35		4.7714
Betty Saadeh	37		5.1419
Sig.		.739	.333

[a] Mean scores for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

internalization has a greater impact on attitudes toward the ad and brand as well as purchase intention than source identification.

H4. In a low-involvement transformational purchase situation, source identification has a greater impact on attitudes toward the ad and brand as well as purchase intention than source internalization.

In order to test H3 and H4, Study 2 was designed to investigate the potential interactive effects of the two dimensions underlying the source credibility construct and consumer's purchase motive for only low involvement products. Study 2 replicates and extends Study 1. Following the same procedures of Study 1, two fictitious branded products were used to carry out the pilot work and main experiment of Study 2. The same ads of the 'Curly Girly' shampoo of the main experiment of Study 1 were retained. In study 2, new print ads were designed only for the chocolate product under a fictitious brand name—'Memento'. A chocolate bar has been chosen to see (1) whether the results obtained with the shampoo scenario can be replicated with the chocolate product since both products are classified as low-involvement products, and (2) to test the focal prediction of Study 2: in case of transformational products like chocolate, identification is likely to have significant persuasive effects. The choice of these two products is guided by the RPS grid, which categorizes products into products with an informational brand-purchase motive and products with a transformational brand-purchase motive.

4.1. Pilot study

Similar to Study 1, a pilot study was first carried out to validate the eight experimental treatments of Study 2. Otherwise noted, the same procedures used in the pilot study for the experiment of Study 1 for celebrities' selection and pretest have been used in the pilot study for the experiment of Study 2. Based on the mean scores of identification and internalization and our judgment, four celebrities were retained to carry out the final experiment for the chocolate endorsements. The same four shampoo advertisements used in the main experiment of Study 1 were adopted in Study 2.

4.2. Main experiment: experimental design and participants

Unless otherwise noted, the procedures and stimuli development for the main experiment are similar to those in the pilot study. Data were collected from a new sample of 310 students at another major University in the Middle-East (not the one where the pilot study and final experiment of Study 1 were conducted). Only females participated in the shampoo condition, whereas 42% of the participants are males in the chocolate condition. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 40 years old; 76.1% are between 18 and 23 years old, and 20.9% are between 24 and 29 years old.

Participants were randomly assigned to cells of a 2 (identification: high or low) X 2 (internalization: high or low) X 2 (purchase motive: informational or transformational) between-subjects experimental design (see Table 4). Participants were exposed to an ad booklet that included a product ad endorsed by a celebrity (for ad copy description, see Appendix C). Participants then completed a questionnaire. Thirteen incomplete questionnaires were removed from the data analysis leaving

Table 5
Internalization manipulation checks/Tukey post-hoc analysis of internalization means.

Celebrity Name	N	Homogeneous subset 1: Low-internalization celebrities[a]	Homogeneous subset 2: High-internalization celebrities[a]
Raya Abi Rashed	35	3.1524	
Justin Bieber	37	3.2523	
Omneyah Soliman	38	3.3158	
Ann French	35	4.0095	
Myriam Fares	39		4.7265
Martha Stewart	37		5.2162
Diana Ross	37		5.2793
Frank Haasnoot	39		5.3932
Sig.		*.145*	*.447*

[a] Mean scores for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Table 4
Final experiment of study 2.

Experimental Conditions					
Condition (Sample size)	Celebrity	Purchase motive	Identification	Internalization	Celebrity Bio
Condition 1 (N = 37)	Martha Stewart	Transformational 'Memento Choclate'.	High (M = 4.6419, SD = 0.87309)	High (M = 5.2162, SD = 1.18690)	American chef tycoon, well known for her cooking TV program 'The Martha Stewart Show' and magazine 'Martha Stewart Living'.
Condition 2 (N = 37)	Justin Bieber	Transformational 'Memento Choclate'.	High (M = 5.0068, SD = 0.90425)	Low (M = 3.2523, SD = 1.55834)	23 years old Canadian pop star, well known for his album 'My World' and his song 'what do you mean?'
Condition 3 (N = 39)	Frank Haasnoot	Transformational 'Memento Choclate'.	Low (M = 3.1090, SD = 1.40229)	High (M = 5.3932, SD = 0.9908)	Dutch pastry chef based in Hong Kong with more than 20 years of experience. In 2011, he was the winner of the world chocolate masters.
Condition 4 (N = 35)	Ann French	Transformational 'Memento Choclate'.	Low (M = 3.8714, SD = 1.37783)	Low (M = 4.0095, SD = 1.58317)	32 years old British model who started her career at the age of 23 through signing with Tyne Tees models agency (Farrell et al., 2000).
Condition 5 (N = 39)	Myriam Faris	Informational 'Curly Girly Shampoo'.	High (M = 4.5385, SD = 1.12907)	High (M = 4.7265, SD = 1.45472)	Lebanese singer knowns as 'The Queen of the Stage', started her career in 2003 and released her first album 'Myriam' featuring the best hit 'Ana Wel Shoq' followed by 'Nadini' album in 2005.
Condition 6 (N = 35)	Raya Abi Rashed	Informational 'Curly Girly Shampoo'.	High (M = 4.7714, SD = 1.04384)	Low (M = 3.1524, SD = 1.396410	39 years old TV presenter, celebrity journalist, and producer. She is the presenter of Arabs Got Talent and Scoop shows on MBC channel.
Condition 7 (N = 37)	Diana Ross	Informational 'Curly Girly Shampoo'.	Low (M = 3.8784, SD = 1.39645)	High (M = 5.2793, SD = 1.26568)	Born and raised in Michigan, 72 years old singer and actress who formed the 1960s trio the supreme with her friends before embracing the solo and acting career.
Condition 8 (N = 38)	Omneyah Solyman	Informational 'Curly Girly Shampoo'.	Low (M = 3.9342, SD = 1.25025)	Low (M = 3.3158, SD = 1.63106)	An Egyptian singer used to perform in the opera house in Egypt. She released her first album 'Mesh Howa' in 2011.

Table 6
Identification manipulation checks/Tukey post-hoc analysis of identification means.

Celebrity Name	N	Homogeneous subset 1: Low-identification celebrities[a]	Homogeneous subset 2: High-identification celebrities[a]
Frank Haasnoot	39	3.1090	
French Ann	35	3.8714	
Diana Ross	37	3.8784	
Omneyah Soliman	38	3.9342	
Myriam Fares	39		4.5385
Martha Stewart	37		4.6419
Raya Abi Rashed	35		4.7714
Justin Bieber	37		5.0068
Sig.		.061	.692

[a] Mean scores for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a final sample of 297 participants. The questionnaire included the same items used in Study 1 measuring the dependent variables along with other items measuring product involvement, source identification, and internalization for manipulation checks purposes. Scale reliability scores were satisfactory with Cronbach alpha of .89, .85, and 0.84 for attitudes toward the ad, attitudes toward the brand, and purchase intention, respectively. The Cronbach alpha of the summated items measuring identification was 0.76, 0.88 for internalization, and 0.80 for product involvement items.

The results of the manipulation checks provided evidence of the effectiveness of the source internalization and identification manipulations. An ANOVA indicated that source internalization perception varied with the celebrity name ($[F(7,289) = 18.075; p < .001$). As indicated in Table 5, a Tukey post hoc analysis generated two homogenous subsets of celebrities; four celebrities were classified as having low internalization ($p = .145$, NS) and the other four celebrities represent a homogenous subset of celebrities perceived as high in internalization ($p = .447$, NS).

An ANOVA indicated that source identification perception varied with the celebrity name ($[F(7,289) = 10.469; p < .001$). As indicated in Table 6, a Tukey post hoc analysis generated two homogenous subsets of celebrities; four celebrities were classified as having low identification ($p = .061$, NS) and the four other celebrities represent a homogenous subset of celebrities perceived as high in identification ($p = .692$, NS).

Also, the results indicated that there is no significant difference between the two considered products regarding the participants' level of involvement [$M_{Shampoo} = 3.85$, SD = 1.39; $M_{Chocolate} = 3.99$, SD = 1.45; $F(1,296) = 0.681; p = .410$, NS].

Hypotheses testing. A MANCOVA, with age and gender as covariates, was performed to test the effects of source credibility dimensions on the dependent variables by considering the moderator role of brand-purchase motive. The two covariates did not show any significant effects on the dependent variables. The results indicated that there is no significant interactive effects of source identification and purchase motive on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,296) = 0.820; p = .366$, NS], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,296) = 0.998, p = .319$, NS], and purchase intention [$F(1,296) = 3.115, p = .079$, NS]. Similarly, there is no significant interactive effects of source internalization and purchase motive on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,296) = 2.472, p = .117$, NS], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,296) = 2.613, p = .107$, NS], and purchase intention [$F(1,296) = 2.883, p = .091$, NS].

There is a significant main effect of source internalization on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,296) = 24.388, p < .001$], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,296) = 43.601, p < .001$], and purchase intention [$(F(1,296) = 26.827, p < .001$] in both transformational and informational conditions. In the transformational (i.e., chocolate) condition,

internalization has an impact on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,147) = 21.873, p < .001$; $M_{High internalization} = 4.907$; $M_{Low internalization} = 3.782$], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,147) = 31.591,; p < .001$; $M_{High internalization} = 4.993$; $M_{Low internalization} = 3.756$], and purchase intention [$F(1,147) = 25.377, p < .001$; $M_{High internalization} = 4.914$; $M_{Low internalization} = 3.701$]. Similarly, in the low-involvement informational condition (i.e., shampoo), internalization has an impact on attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,148) = 5.670, p = .019$; $M_{High internalization} = 4.808$; $M_{Low internalization} = 4.032$], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,148) = 11.690, p < .001$; $M_{High internalization} = 4.793$; $M_{Low internalization} = 3.972$], and purchase intention [$F(1,148) = 6.111, p = .015$; $M_{High internalization} = 4.776$; $M_{Low internalization} = 4.102$].

However, source identification has no significant main effect on consumers' attitudes toward the advertisement [$F(1,296) = 1.608, p = .206$, NS], attitudes toward the brand [$F(1,296) = 0,995, p = .319$, NS], but it has a significant impact on purchase intention [$F(1,296) = 6.598, p = .011$]. A post-hoc ANOVA indicates that source identification has a significant impact on purchase intention only in the case of chocolate [$F(1,147) = 9.627, p = .002$; $M_{High identification} = 4.716$; $M_{Low identification} = 3.932$].

4.3. Summary of study 2

The purchase motive interacts with source identification and internalization to influence only purchase intentions. More precisely, source identification was found to influence purchase intentions significantly, only in the transformational condition and not in the informational condition. Expect of this result, the same results' pattern of Study 1 was replicated in Study 2. The results indicated that source internalization and identification did not interact with the purchase motive to influence consumers' attitudes toward the ad and the brand. The results also revealed insignificant main effects of source identification. Only the main effects of source internalization were significant regardless of the consumers' purchase motive. By splitting the data based on gender, the same pattern of results (i.e., only internalization has significant effects) has been observed across the female and male groups in the chocolate case. Overall, these results of Study 2, similar to Study 1, suggest that consumers are likely to form their attitudes and intentions in the face of a celebrity endorsement message solely based on source internalization regardless of the brand-purchase motive.

5. General discussion

5.1. Summary and implications

In contrast to ELM's predictions, prior research suggests that source credibility has persuasive effects under high- and low-involvement conditions. The storyline of the current research is that the inconsistent findings regarding source credibility effects are due to the conceptualization of the concept of source credibility itself. This research uses a more comprehensive and richer conceptualization of celebrity credibility that succinctly considers all its underlying dimensions alluded to in the extant literature. Embracing this conceptualization would enable investigating if celebrity credibility may play simultaneously a central and a peripheral role in a persuasion context. Particularly, drawing on Kelman's work, this research treats celebrity credibility as a multidimensional construct consisting of two underlying dimensions, namely identification and internalization. This research posits that celebrity credibility plays concomitantly central and peripheral roles in a persuasion context. Specifically, the current research investigated the effects of celebrity credibility (identification and internalization) on persuasive outcomes (consumers' attitudes and intentions) by focusing on the moderator role of involvement in the product category in Study 1 as well as the moderator role of the brand-purchase motive in Study 2. On the one hand, the internalization dimension is predicted to have persuasive effects in the contexts of high-

involvement as well as informational products; hence the central role of credibility. On the other hand, the identification dimension is predicted to have persuasive effects in the contexts of low-involvement as well as transformational products, playing as such a peripheral role in the persuasion process.

The results of Study 1 indicated that there are no interactive effects between product involvement and the two source credibility dimensions. In other words, product involvement did not act as a moderator to indicate whether the source credibility dimensions were processed as central or peripheral elements in the persuasion process. More precisely, the results showed that only source internalization has persuasive effects in terms of positively influencing participants' attitudes toward the advertisement and the brand as well as in inducing purchase intentions for the endorsed brand in both high- and low-involvement conditions. However, regardless of the product involvement, source identification did not significantly influence consumers' attitudes toward the ad, the brand, nor their purchase intentions.

Similar to the findings of Study 1, the results of Study 2 suggest that, in a persuasive message, consumers are likely to form their attitudes and intentions solely based on source internalization regardless of the brand-purchase motive. The results indicated that source internalization and identification did not interact with the purchase motive to influence consumers' attitudes toward the ad and the brand. Again, the results revealed insignificant main effects of source identification. Only the main effects of source internalization were significant regardless of the consumer's purchase motive. The purchase motive interacts with source identification and internalization to influence only purchase intentions. More precisely, both source internalization and identification were found to significantly influence purchase intentions only in the transformational condition and not in the informational condition. This result may be attributed to the nature of the transformational product used in Study 2 (chocolate), which may have stimulated consumers' senses and triggered among them a desire to buy. Except for this result, the findings of Study 2 closely paralleled those of Study 1.

The results are inconsistent with the view that there are two relatively distinct routes to persuasion. Instead, the results of the current research suggest that a receiver uses source internalization as relevant evidence to form attitudes toward the advertised object regardless of the type of product in terms of involvement level and purchase-motive.

The 'source credibility model' (Hovland et al., 1953) and the 'match-up hypothesis' (Lynch and Schuler, 1994; Kamins, 1990) go hand in hand with the current research findings, which point out that the endeorser's expertise (i.e., the match between the endorser's image and the image of the endorsed product or brand) and trustworthiness, in comparison to other source variables, account mostly for persuasive outcomes. The results are also in tune with Wright (2016) recent findings, which indicate that when there is a match between the endorser and product (i.e., internalization), brand attitudes were more favorable compared to when there is no match. In the same vein, Lee and Koo (2016) find that the congruence between the celebrity attractiveness and endorsed product (i.e., internalization) significantly influences consumer responses regardless of the level of involvement. The significant internalization effects can also be explained based on the unimodel (Kruglanski and Thompson, 1999). In fact, the unimodel contends that persuasion is formed due to perceived evidence relevant to a specific case in the form of an 'if … then' syllogism. That is, the relevance between source characteristics and the advertised product is considered as relevant evidence for consumers' persuasion. In that sense, celebrity internalization (i.e., a trustworthy expert) was regarded as a quality argument by consumers to form their attitudes toward the advertised object, regardless of their level of involvement. However, the insignificant effect of identification cannot be interpreted from the unimodel lens.

The findings regarding the insignificant effects of celebrity identification contradict the 'source attractiveness model' advanced by McGuire (1985), which emphasizes the persuasive effects of the physical attractiveness, likability, and similarity of the source with the target audience. The insignificant main effects of celebrity identification are intriguing since prior research demonstrates that celebrity identification is instrumental in eliciting positive attitudinal and behavioural responses (Brown and Basil, 2010). Of particular note, celebrity identification mitigates the negative effects of celebrity transgressions (Um, 2013). Furthermore, an attractive source 'could bias processing … by making positive interpretations of ambiguous information more likely than if the source were not attractive' (Petty and Wegener, 1998, p. 343); that is, 'heuristic processing can bias systematic processing' (Chaiken and Maheswaran, 1994, p. 462). Following this same logic, one can argue that source identification may bias source internalization perceptions. Future research can investigate the possibility that source internalization may mediate the link between source identification and persuasive outcomes. This possible mediation can be grounded in McCracken (1989) meaning transfer model. In this vein, one can argue that meaning transfer might be manifested in the recipient's identification with the celebrity or endorser. This transfer could ultimately trigger or activate thoughts or inferences about that celebrity (e.g., internalization), which might, in turn, affect attitudes and intentions (cf. Miller and Allen, 2012).

The findings of Study 2 clearly differ from the predictions derived from the study of Lord and Putrevu (2009). In particular, the results provide no support for the prediction that celebrity identification leads to persuasive effects in the context of transformational products. The current research demonstrates that only internalization has persuasive effects regardless of the purchase-motive (i.e., informational or transformational). It is worth noting that Lord and Putrevu (2009) have not manipulated celebrity expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness to examine their effects on consumers' attitudinal and intentional responses. To conclude on the moderating effects of the purchase-motive in the relationships between the three source's characteristics and the persuasive outcomes, the authors should have manipulated (rather than measured) the source's characteristics.

The current research was conducted in a Middle-Eastern context. Consumers from the Middle-East are generally considered as collectivists. Consumers with a collectivist mindset tend to think about information relationally (Kwon et al., 2015; Oyserman et al., 2009). That is, collectivistic consumers, as opposed to individualistic ones, think about and process the different elements of an ad in relation to one another. Consequently, they would notice the fit between the endorser and the message/product (Kwon et al., 2015). They are more sensitive to the fit between the endorser and product or service being endorsed. They have more favorable attitudes toward the ad and the endorsed product in high fit conditions than in low fit conditions. In contrast, participants with an individualistic mindset do not differ in their evaluations of the ad and the endorsed product in both conditions of high- and low-fit. This may explain why only internalization has significant effects in the current research. A cross-cultural study investigating the effects of internalization and identification on persuasive outcomes across different countries in terms of Hofstede's individualism-collectivism dimension may present a fruitful line of research to pursue.

Both studies demonstrate that only internalization has positively influenced consumers' attitudinal and intentional responses regardless of their involvement with the product category and brand-purchase motives. The results also suggest that celebrity identification is not an important factor when weighing the value of a celebrity's endorsement, while celebrity internalization is significantly critical to the endorsement's impact. It seems to be more imperative to appreciate possible connections between prospective endorsers and endorsed products regardless of the product category and purchase motives.

5.2. Limitations

This study has some limitations that may offer opportunities for future research. First, a limited number of product categories were used

in the current research. In the same vein, the products used in Study 2 were selected based on their assumed appropriateness for the cells in the RPS grid, in the sense that informational and transformational motives are implicit in the nature of products (i.e., some products are informational, and others are transformational; Rossiter and Percy, 1987), but informational and transformational motivations have not been measured directly. Future research that considers other product categories and direct measurements of informational and transformational purchase motives would be beneficial. Second, 80.5% of the participants in Study 1 and 76.1% in Study 2 are between 18 and 23 years old, and all the participants are college students. Although this age group is often a target market for the type of products used in this research, and endorsement studies have also used this age-group in the past (Kahle and Homer, 1985; McCormick, 2016; Saldanha et al., 2018), this sample is clearly well-educated, and this may explain why source internalization had a significant impact on their attitudes. Additional studies with general adult populations are needed to enhance the generalizability of the current research findings. Third, the sample is skewed toward females. This is due to the fact that only female participants have been recruited in the case of the shampoo category. Nevertheless, in the case of the sporty car and chocolate products, well-balanced mixed samples in terms of gender (car: 46.5% are males; chocolate; 42% are males) have been used. The statistical analyses also show that gender had no significant effects on the dependent variables, when included as a co-variate. In the same vein, splitting the data sets in both Study 1 and Study 2, based on gender, shows that the same pattern of results (i.e., only internalization has significant effects) has been observed across the female and male groups regardless of the product category. Although gender did not affect the current research findings, future research focusing on more representative samples is needed to enhance the generalizability of the obtained results. Fourth, although the use of fictitious brands in the present research was a deliberate choice intended to minimize potential confounds of participants' prior brand awareness and knowledge, the sacrifice of ecological validity to some extent appears to be inevitable. Additional work is needed to replicate the current findings by considering actual brands.

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Appendices A,B,C. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102260.

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