Celebrity Endorsements and Donations: Empirical Investigation of Impact on Philanthropic Giving

Nicole Peterson¹
Elizabeth Tripoli¹
Kalie Langenbach¹
Raj Devasagayam¹

Abstract
This study investigates the effects of celebrity endorsers on donations and views of non-profits. Celebrity endorsers and their relationships with non-profits evoke a series of emotions that greatly affect how people perceive and donate to non-profit organizations. Past research demonstrates the tremendous growth in individual philanthropy, as well as, the importance of celebrities as influencers on social media. Data was obtained from a random sample of 277 individuals and subjected to statistical analyses. By studying two different celebrities that come from a different race, gender, and background, we found that our findings and significance values changed depending on which celebrity was tested. Overall, our findings indicated that ads that evoke positive emotions are more likely to convert to donations. Demographic characteristics such as, age, gender and income also effect donations. In some cases, the non-profit’s cause and advertising message was powerful enough to override the impact of the celebrity. Our findings can help marketing managers style their ads to evoke certain emotions, by using celebrity endorsers that will help them increase donations. Furthermore, understanding what drives donors will help non-profits tailor marketing strategies through the use of a celebrity that will appeal to their desired donor base. It is expected that by targeting their donor base effectively, not-for-profits will then witness an increase in donations.

Keywords
Non-profits, philanthropy, marketing strategy, celebrity endorsements, celebrity scandals

¹ Siena College, Loudon Road, Loudonville, New York, USA

Corresponding Author:
Raj Devasagayam, Siena College, Loudon Road, Loudonville, New York. USA
Email: - devasagayamp@oldwestbury.edu