

Analysis of Conor McGregor Based on Celebrity Endorsement Theory

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Abstract. The paper was drawn closer from the point of view of an athlete to endorse a nonathletic product. To understand how a famous athlete--Conor McGregor succeed in this nonathletic product, the paper used the celebrity endorsement theory. This Paper reviewed the constitution of celebrity endorsement theory attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. This paper analysis Conor's endorsement from 4 perspectives which are strength, weakness, opportunity, and threats by using SWOT analysis. The result showed that Conor's trustworthiness is the main cause of consumers' purchasing intention. The ways Conor showed off and emphasized his trustworthiness during the press conference and on social media is the key to success. The paper concluded that Conor's attractiveness and expertise are relatively less influential than his trustworthiness in this case.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, SWOT analysis, Conor McGregor.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Famous athletes influencing fans to purchase certain products have become a common way of vendition. Beats by Dre, Monster Energy, Reebok, Burger King, and Bud Light are just some of the companies who have signed on as Conor McGregor's sponsors. Conor's sponsorship arrangements in 2017 totaled \$7 million, thanks in large part to the big buying of fans [1]. However, different athletes or celebrities have different effects of influence onto consumers.

1.2 Research Gap

The theory of celebrity approval is often used in the newspaper about movie stars and beautiful models that are supporters of some company brand products. In the sports field, things like supplements, and sporting goods were endorsed by athletes. Other research has shown that the product is easier to be accepted by consumers if the image product could fit the athlete himself or herself. The higher level of congruence between athletes and the product, the more likely will make the advertised product to be favored [2]. For another instance, a study investigated the reactions to celebrity promotion activities. The study contains sports, entertainment/media, fashion, and culture [3].

Based on celebrity endorsement theory, articles have discussed a lot about athletes endorsing sports products, how athletes or celebrities affect consumers to purchase the endorsed products, or analyzing causes of celebrities that helped to increase consumption from four different aspects.

However, what's unknown is how Conor McGregor could establish a whiskey brand and sells well. It seems unconventional for an athlete to start a whiskey business other than most athletes endorse athletic products. He endorsed a product that is in a different field from his athlete career and this product has a direct interest in him. The question is how Conor makes his fans intend to purchase his brand of whisky. The significance of this article is that the paper detected how Conor made such business value by making his fans purchase his Irish whiskey brand---Proper Twelve.

1.3 Fill The Gap

In order to solve the question of how Conor could arouse fans' purchase intention so that they could purchase the Proper Twelve which is a nonathletic product. In the next part of the research, this paper will first review and organize the theory of celebrity endorsement, clarify the relationship

between its basic definition and influencing factors, and then the article will carry out a SWOT analysis of the investigation object, and finally get the relevant corresponding conclusion and further discussion on them.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and Development

Friedman and the others concluded that it is beneficial for advertisers to use endorsements for their products, rather than using similar advertisements without endorsements involved. Thus, Friedman and the others suggested that advertisers should try to promote their products by exploiting endorsers [4]. Celebrity endorsement is based on the reaction of consumers. Depends on whether the source of information is trustworthy. Advertisers exploit celebrities to make their products seem to be successful, reliable, and more appealing. Factors that could drive consumers' purchase intention are attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. Consumers' attitude toward endorsement is based on the endorser himself or herself. The brand and the advanced image of the brand after celebrities influence the brand. Researchers looking into the phenomena of celebrity promotion discovered that spokespersons had little impact on customers' expectations of the price or veracity of promises made about sangria wine [5].

2.2 Important Results

In the twenty-first century, everyone is likely to be affected by promotions, especially when the promotions involve their favorite celebrities. It is called celebrity endorsement.

In terms of attractiveness, many researchers have discovered that attractiveness has a positive effect on consumers' purchasing intentions. Celebrities are the supporter and the reminder of advertisements for consumers. For example, celebrities' jewelry advertisements will be remembered by people for their grace, and beauty. The occurrence of celebrities will be more compelling as long as marketers choose beautiful celebrities to appear in jewelry advertisements [5]. Due to celebrities' beauty image.

From another perspective, consumers' cognition of brands can be affected by a psychological phenomenon that are endorsed by their favorite celebrity figures. Previously, Pradhan and the others have suggested that celebrities who have the same personality as the brand will be chosen as the endorser, and this approach increases the attractiveness of the brand [6, 7]. Researchers also discovered that if the brand's personality consumer perceived is the same as the endorser's personality, the consumers are willing to purchase this brand's products [8].

For trustworthiness, many researchers have shown that a positive effect would be shown on consumers' purchase intention. Airlines, for instance, pay celebrities millions of dollars year in exchange for promotional endorsements of their brands. In this approach, the influence of celebrity endorsement is paramount in convincing customers to book a flight. [9]. An additional illustration is grounded on the concept of credibility-generating mechanisms. According to the study's authors, consumers' perceptions of celebrities' trustworthiness would shift as their reputation increased. [10]. The more credible someone is, the more trustworthy they come across. [10].

For expertise, a common idea is that expertise can make a positive effect on consumers' purchase intention. As an example, the public might be influenced by a celebrity's expertism in a certain field. The influence of less beautiful celebrity endorsers with poor skill might even deteriorate with time, yet when the celebrity is more handsome, competence is incredibly powerful. [11]. Consumers' propensity to buy might be piqued by a celebrity endorser's high profile and respect. [12].

2.3 Summary

This paper hypothesizes that fan consumers of Conor are attracted by Conor's Arrogant and domineering character and their admiration of Conor as a result stimulates the purchasing intention.

From another perspective, proper twelve is an Irish whiskey and Conor is a patriotic fighter who is from Ireland. People naturally assert his product is authentic Irish whiskey.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

For this study, the paper uses SWOT analysis to gain insights into celebrity endorsement in Conor's case. SWOT analysis is widely used in various fields of management. SWOT analysis's biggest advantage is that it can grasp the core factors that can most affect the strategy for analysis [13]. In this way, the paper has a concise and specific version toward Conor's business.

This paper could highlight weaknesses before making any statements by asking questions under each category which in the end will provide a visualized overview the advantages and disadvantages of any proposal. Thanks to SWOT analysis has specific, concise and clear characteristics, strength and weakness could help researcher show internal conditions while opportunities and threats would help researcher show external conditions. SWOT analysis helps researcher emphasize critical points which will have great influences toward strategy. As a result, the paper will be able to analyze Conor's fan consumers well.

3.2 Conor McGregor

Conor McGregor is an Irish professional mixed martial artist who was named the World's Best Paid Athlete by Forbes in 2021, winning \$180 million declared [1]. Conor is a former Ultimate Fighting Championship double champion in featherweight and lightweight. He is the man who has headlined five out of the six highest-selling UFC pay-per-view events [1]. UFC 229, which sold 2.4 million pay-per-view (PPV) copies, is the most telling example. The Ultimate Fighting Championship 229 was the biggest MMA event ever [1]. He fought Mayweather in a boxing bout that was the second most-watched pay-per-view event in North American history, with 4.3 million buys. [1]. Endorsement deals signed in 2017 will earn him \$7 million. [1]. Conor McGregor's Proper Twelve Irish whiskey business started in Ireland and the United States in 2018. In the same year, In late 2018, McGregor had sold "hundreds of thousands" of bottles since the launch, and plans were to restock in the United States in December 2018 [1].

3.3 SWOT Analysis

3.3.1 Strength

Conor is an articulate, charismatic person who has acting talent, high business value arrogant personality.

In his personal social platform, there are more than 55000 thousand followers in Twitter and Instagram and all of them are his potential consumers. Conor is also good at showing people through uncompromising scenes, like luxury yachts, supercars, extravagant parties and gifts. Proper Twelve always hanging on to the concept of high-end life in his twitter and Instagram and Proper twelve has become synonymous with all kinds of noble life. In this way, consumers would be more convincing to buy his product. Conor also received positive feedback from his fans in the comments from twitter and Instagram.

During press conference of the boxing match when Conor fought against Floyd Mayweather which recorded as the second highest pay-per-view buy rate in history. This match is the second most in combat sports history. Conor energetically promote proper twelve, he even drunk during the press conference. The main event of UFC 229 was billed as a fight between Conor McGregor and Khabib Nurmagomedov [1]. As the largest mixed martial arts pay-per-view event ever, Ultimate Fighting Championship 229 features the biggest bout in UFC history. This is the highest grossing pay-per-view for an MMA event in history [1]. During the press conference, Conor's abused languages and aggressive character attracted many fight fans again. He even offered Khabib Nurmagomedov who

is a muslim to drink his whiskey and invited Dana White who is the president of the Ultimate Fighting Championship to taste a glass of his Irish whiskey with him during press conference. Enormous cheers from the audiences at the press conference has shown that the population of his Proper Twelve greatly increased.

The brand's story is about Conor's early life. The whiskey was named after the Crumlin neighborhood in Dublin 12, where McGregor grew up. When he was poor and lived at Crumlin, Dublin twelve [14]. which would be regard as a meaningful number to fans who supported him along with.

Local specialty is also significant for Proper Twelve success. Conor is representative figure for fight fans to comprehend Irish whiskey. Every time when Conor McGregor have a fight event, he represents his country and bringing his whole country with him. He is an image of a patriotic Irishman in the octagon. As a result of halo effect, people are easily to be convinced when Conor strongly recommended his Proper Twelve, authentic Irish whiskey from his homeland.

3.3.2 Weakness

Due to Conor's arrogant personality, he is vulnerable to be abused on the internet from haters. Although this is good for him to increase his brand awareness, his disrespect actions and words have made him lost those potential consumers in Russian. From another perspective, Conor McGregor himself doesn't know much knowledge about Irish Whiskey. In the home page of Proper Twelve, Conor acted unskillful and unmatrue in the picture which shows "Our founder and Master Distiller" [14].

3.3.3 Opportunity

Proper Twelve has the opportunity to make an expansion to enter the Asian market. Proper Twelve's home page claims that Proper Twelve is currently available in Ireland, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Russia, Poland, and even South Africa. Proper twelve is lack Asian markets which could have made a huge profit for the brand. If Conor could seize the opportunity, Proper twelve would reap the Asian market later. From another perspective, Conor's two partners are Audie Attar and Ken Austin, the former one being the founder of Paradigm Sports Management, the agency that manages Conor McGregor, and the latter one a well-known entrepreneur and founder of the Tequila Avi3n brand. Their involvement and participation can not only increase the credibility of Proper Twelve but also provide marketing strategies and knowledge of spirits in this way, Conor's brand could benefit from their operation.

3.3.4 Threats

The threats that Proper Twelve would face are poor evaluation from buyers and the competition in the Irish whiskey market. The former one such as feedback from consumers negative feedback on Twitter which will affect the purchasing intention of consumers and will harm the brand's reputation. And the latter one is the competition from other classic whiskies, such as Jameson, Bushmills, Redbreast. Comparison with other classic whiskies may affect consumers' choices while making decisions.

4. Results & Discussion

This is an important finding in the understanding of the celebrity endorsement of athletes endorsing nonathletic products. Overall, Conor's advantages are his exclusive personality, and the proper time and places he chose to advertise his Proper Twelve. He can observe and utilize controversial subjects like religious muslim doesn't drink alcohol. Conor Shows off his rich life on social media while appearing on Proper Twelve. The persona Conor kept is the key to success. Without his arrogant, emulative, unfettered, humorous personality and patriotic character, he can't attract such a great amount of people to keep following him and purchasing Proper Twelve which Conor endorsed. However, Conor himself is insufficient in Whiskey knowledge. From his speeches about Proper

Twelve during press conferences, and the Twitter messages about the way he enjoys a glass of Proper Twelve. Conor's biggest contribution is to arouse millions of fans' attention to his Proper Twelve by offering his reliable trustworthy impression to people for so long.

Conor's trustworthiness, credibility, and expertise from his two experienced partners are the three main factors that aroused his followers' purchase intention. Bringing his noble life and sharing his story and the brand's orientation to the table for his fans are great ways to advertise. Conor's attractiveness and expertise are relatively less influential than his trustworthiness in this case. To make consumers more willing to buy his product. This paper's suggestions for Conor are imparting knowledge about Irish whiskey including the ways of tasting, the history of Irish whiskey, and improvements about the unique and special blend created by his master distiller for Proper Twelve in his social media or during talk shows and press conferences. In order to reduce the negative comments which, impact consumers' purchasing, Conor should make several interview videos with sommeliers to analyze the flavor of Proper Twelve for fans.

5. Conclusion

This research analyzed how the team Arsenal can increase the number and loyalty of its abroad fans and the issue comes as the pandemic has made offline viewing impossible. After that, this paper exploits the case analysis suggestion way to analyze this problem. Finally, the passage puts forward several suggestions to solve this problem.

This paper is based on the background of a famous athlete---Conor McGregor, building his Irish whiskey brand. Celebrity endorsement theory is used during the investigation. The paper analyzes the question of how Conor's nonathletic product, a whiskey brand, could make such great success in three aspects: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. SWOT analysis is utilized in this study which offered a clear view of its internal and external advantages and disadvantages of Conor. As a result, we break the question into two dimensions. Conor's advantages and disadvantages in his endorsement process and the Proper Twelve's strengths and weaknesses in spirit market. The paper concludes from different resources that personal trustworthiness and credibility of Conor and the expertise Proper Twelve owned by two senior partners contributed the most to Proper Twelve's purchase amount. This paper contributes to the review of celebrity endorsement theory. Providing a new version of celebrity endorsement theory that the partnership could play a role in making up for the deficiencies of the endorser. However, on the minus side, this paper lacks sufficient historical data support. Readers can't measure how fast Proper Twelve spread and the growth of its popularity of Proper Twelve. The result of this paper would be beneficial for Conor's future endorsement. When Conor's product is faced with threats and opportunities, he can take serious of effective measures to cope with his current situation.

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