

Celebrity endorsement efficacy questioned

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British and Swiss researchers have found advertisements featuring celebrity endorsements might be less effective than those featuring ordinary people.

Scientists at the University of Bath and the University of St. Gallen say that's because keeping up with the Joneses, rather than with famous people, is the main motivation behind many people's choice of which products to buy.

The researchers showed 298 undergraduates a magazine ad for a digital camera. Some ads included an endorsement by a fictional student who said the camera was "hot," while other ads included an invented testimonial from a German celebrity.

"Our research questions whether celebrities are the best way to sell products," said Professor Brett Martin of the University of Bath. "This is because many people ... like to make sure their product is fashionable and trendy among people who resemble them, rather than approved by celebrities."

But Martin added, "What is also important in our study is that people who aren't bothered about having the trendiest goods pay more attention to the technical details of a product and ignore endorsements by anyone, celebrity or not, and advertisers should bear that in mind, too."

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