

## **The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour of Alcohol in the South African Market**

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**ABSTRACT** The purpose of this paper is to determine the influence celebrity endorsements have on consumers to purchase alcohol products. Focus was placed on the alcohol producer's television advertisements within the context of the South African alcohol industry. The researchers adopted a mixed method research approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The respondents for this research comprised of 110 consumers of alcohol in the Western Cape province of South Africa and eight senior marketing executives working for the alcohol producer. The research enabled an insight into the use and effectiveness of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool for advertising alcohol. The findings of the research revealed that effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is based on who is portrayed to advertise which product or service. The responses from the interviews indicated that the company had selected celebrity endorsements for advertising their power brands based on the gender and characteristics of the selected brand and the notion that brand ambassadors are successful in increasing purchase behaviour and brand awareness but they had conducted no research to support their advertising strategy. The major findings have revealed that celebrity endorsements are not always a successful method of advertising especially for alcohol products even if the brand ambassador is famous, local or liked. The results of the findings led to the development of criteria that would enable the selected alcohol producer for this research to be able to decide on the type of celebrities that would be suitable for its target markets.