

Do Vampire Bites Really Hurt? The Relative Vampire Effect of Celebrities on Ad Attention and Downstream Ad Processing

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Celebrity endorsements are used to increase ad attention and transfer image. However, there is a debate that they can overshadow the brand, causing the "vampire effect." In two eye-tracking experiments using static ads in an eMagazine (N = 48) and video ads on YouTube (N = 112), we investigate the vampire effect and its impact on downstream ad processing. We find that celebrity ads receive more attention, while attention to brand elements remains unaffected. Instead, a *relative vampire effect* emerges, where a greater share of attention is allocated to the celebrity. This effect is moderated by involvement: browsers exhibit relative attention shifts, while searchers remain unaffected. Importantly, the relative vampire effect does not harm downstream outcomes. While brand recall remains unaffected, celebrity ads elicit more favorable attitudes and higher purchase intentions. These results challenge concerns about celebrities overshadowing the brand and highlight their persuasive value.

Keywords: *celebrity endorsers, vampire effect, eye-tracking*

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