

## **Millennials and non-profit organisations: Does celebrity-endorsed advertising work?**

A drastic increase in organisations offering similar solutions has resulted in intense competition, in not only the profit sector but the non-profit sector too. There are currently more than a hundred thousand registered non-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa alone, as of 2017. Amidst the intense competitive rivalry between NPOs, there has been a drastic increase in the use of celebrity endorsements in their advertising campaigns, in an attempt to increase patronage toward social causes. Some scholars have however, highlighted their scepticism around celebrities' perceived credibility as sources of information in such advertising campaigns, whilst others have questioned whether celebrity endorsements are a suitable solution to one of NPOs' major challenges - resources. A third of the world's population is accounted for by millennials, who have been identified as having higher disposable income than preceding generations, yet this market remains hugely untapped for NPOs and social causes.

A study was conducted by Hugh Mupfunya, a Master's student in the Department of Marketing Management, to examine the influence of celebrity endorsers' source credibility (specifically the dimensions of trustworthiness and expertise) on the attitude of millennials towards celebrity-endorsed NPO advertisements, and its subsequent influence on millennials' donation intention toward the endorsed NPOs.

After analysing the data gathered from 272 respondents, findings revealed that celebrity endorsers' source credibility, both in terms of their trustworthiness and expertise has a positive influence on the attitude of millennials towards celebrity-endorsed NPO advertisements. Furthermore, it was found that these attitudes of millennials also has a positive influence on millennials' donation intention to these NPOs. Not only do these findings add to the limited literature on celebrity endorsers' credibility within a non-profit context, but it does so from a millennial perspective too.

It is therefore imperative for marketers of NPOs to engage and subsequently make use of celebrities who are perceived to be trustworthy and experts in charity work in their advertisements targeted at millennials. This is likely to yield favourable attitudes

amongst millennials toward such celebrity-endorsed NPO advertisements, which has consequently shown to have a bearing on donations to these endorsed NPOs.

*This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2019 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Hugh Mupfunya under the supervision of [Mrs. Jade Verbeek](#).*