



Facial width-to-height ratio and celebrity endorsements



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ABSTRACT

This study hypothesized that the facial WHR of celebrity endorsers is associated with their endorsement income. Our sample consisted of the top 100 male and female celebrity endorsers (male = 50 and female = 50) in Seoul. The average annual total endorsement income of celebrity endorsers in 2012 was \$1,691,924 for male endorsers and \$1,684,474 for female endorsers. A statistical analysis demonstrated a significant negative correlation between celebrity endorsers' facial WHR and their endorsement income in 2012 among male ($r = -.390, p = .007, n = 47$) but not among female ($r = .166, p = .248, n = 50$) endorsers. Our findings imply that males with narrower faces are more popular among the media as well as among advertisers. Our study is the first to explore the relationship between physical features, such as facial WHR and monetary income in the entertainment industry.

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1. Introduction

Celebrities enjoy nationwide or worldwide popularity, and this allows them to wield power in a variety of spheres. Celebrities serve as role models, implicitly offering personal fulfillment to those who imitate them (Fowles, 1992; Gamson, 1992). Their names and images are used to market a variety of products and services, and their influence extends to business, politics, culture, and social movements. For example, Michael Jordan was estimated to add \$1 billion USD to the stock value of companies whose products he endorsed (Mathur, Mathur, & Rangan, 1997), \$1 billion USD to Chicago's local economy (Ryan, 1993), \$10 billion USD to the US economy (Johnson & Harrington, 1998), and \$53 million USD to other teams in the NBA (Hausman & Leonard, 1997). Thus, celebrities have wide popular appeal.

It has been well established that, as "social animals," human beings seek social approval and status. Thus, many celebrity hopefuls compete to reach stardom, but only a few finally attain that status. Although these hopefuls make their own decisions about which career to pursue, their success depends on the chemistry between genetic and developmental factors. Celebrities usually experience fame for a relatively short period of time, and their success can be measured in terms of financial compensation, primarily from appearance fees and endorsements. A wide range of genetic

and developmental variables probably influences the career choice and career success of celebrities.

Testosterone and facial width-to-height ratio (facial WHR), an index of testosterone in men, have been associated with career choices and career success. Whereas facial WHR is associated with testosterone in men, this correlation is absent in women (Lefevre, Lewis, Perrett, & Penke, 2013), although facial WHR is not a sexually dimorphic trait (Lefevre et al., 2012). In fact, low-dose testosterone treatment leads to craniofacial growth in boys (Verdonck, Gaethofs, Carels, & de Zegher, 1999). An intrinsic variable, testosterone may influence a celebrity's path to stardom. Indeed, testosterone is associated with occupational choices, including those of actors and ministers (Dabbs, de La Rue, & Williams, 1990), with the creation of new ventures (White, Thornhill, & Hampson, 2006), and with decisions about the type of law to practice (Dabbs, Alford, & Fielden, 2005). Furthermore, prenatal androgen influences interest in working with things versus with people (Beltz, Swanson, & Berenbaum, 2011). Facial WHR is positively associated with achievement drive in US presidents (Lewis, Lefevre, & Bates, 2012), baseball performance (Tsujiyama & Banissy, 2013), self-fulfilling selfish behaviors (Haselhuhn, Wong, & Ormiston, 2013), and financial success in firms with cognitively simple leadership teams (Wong, Ormiston, & Haselhuhn, 2011).

Testosterone is positively associated with money-making and risk-taking in finance (Apicella, Dreber, Campbell, Gray, Hoffman, & Little, 2008). Facial WHR is closely associated with making money. Wider facial WHR (Wong et al., 2011) is positively associated with financial risk-taking, which may result in larger returns.

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Specifically, higher facial WHR is positively associated with monetary income.

In addition to career choice and career success, testosterone is also likely to influence facial shape (Penton-Voak & Chen, 2004), which is likely to influence the career success of celebrities. Physical features associated with testosterone are likely to influence the selection of celebrity endorsers and their career success. Different body parts tend to elicit varying perceptions (Turnbull, Lovett, Chaldecott, & Lucas, 2014). Faces contribute to perceptions of male and female attractiveness (Perrett, May, & Yoshikawa, 1994; Puts, Jones, & DeBruine, 2012; Wells, Baguley, Sergeant, & Dunn, 2013) and interpersonal characteristics (Zuckerman, Miyake, & Elkin, 1995). Popular preferences for facial and body features change across social economic conditions (Pettijohn & Jungeberg, 2004) and contexts (Little, Connely, Feinberg, Jones, & Roberts, 2011).

The body shape of endorsers is an important factor determining attitudes toward the brand in question (D'Alessandro & Chitty, 2011). Thus, the major criteria for selecting a celebrity endorser are credibility, familiarity, likeability, and gender (Knott & St. James, 2004). The effectiveness of celebrity endorsers is moderated by attractiveness, credibility, and several other factors (Erdogan, 1999), and attractiveness and credibility are associated with facial WHR (Geniole, Keyes, Carre, & McCormick, 2014; Stirrat & Perrett, 2010; Valentine, Li, Penke, & Perrett, 2014). Advertisements featuring celebrity figures produce consistently more favorable effects than do advertisements without celebrities (Atkin & Block, 1983). The impact of celebrity endorsements on stock returns is positive, and celebrity endorsement contracts are generally viewed as worthwhile investments in advertising (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995).

The physical features of celebrities are likely to influence their career choices and career success. Celebrities can attract endorsement contracts by exploiting their popularity, which is determined, at least to some extent, by their own physical features. Thus, this study explored the relationship between testosterone-moderated physical features and the endorsement income of celebrities. Specifically, we hypothesized that the facial WHR of celebrity endorsers is associated with their endorsement income. This study operationalized testosterone-moderated physical features in terms of facial WHR and operationalized income as the endorsement income of celebrities. We examined how physical traits influence the selection of celebrity endorsers.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

We hypothesized that the facial WHR of celebrity endorsers is associated with their endorsement income. Our sample consisted of the top 50 male and female celebrity endorsers (male = 50 and female = 50) from one of the largest modeling agencies in Seoul because the names of these individuals were widely recognized in Korea and their endorsement income was more than \$70,992 (80 million Korean won: \$1 = 1126.88 Korean won in 2012 according to the Bank of Korea) per endorsement deal in 2012. The modeling agency allowed us to use these proprietary data for research purposes only. Our final sample included 47 males and 50 females because three male celebrities were under contract not to endorse products or services. The mean ages of the men and women in the sample were 33.44 ± 5.56 (range: 44–24 years) and 30.04 ± 4.70 (range: 42–19 years old), respectively.

The majority of the sample were film stars. Among male endorsers, 41 were movie and television actors, three were singers, two acted in musicals, and four were television actors. Among female endorsers, 41 were movie and television actresses, five

were singers, two were television actresses, and two were sports stars. We found that the annual income and the fee-per-endorsement-deal earned by the top 50 celebrities changed slightly as a function of their changing popularity in 2012–2013. Between 2012 and 2013, 10 male and 11 female celebrities joined the ranks of celebrity endorsers (see Table 1).

Most celebrities had multiple endorsement contracts with advertisers, whereas a few celebrities had no endorsement contracts in a specific year. The highest-earning male celebrity endorser earned \$6,211,841 through 10 multiple endorsement contracts, whereas 10 male celebrities had no contracts with advertisers because of their military service or other reasons. The highest-earning female celebrity endorser earned \$8,874,059 through 10 multiple contracts with advertisers, whereas three female celebrities had no endorsement contracts. Celebrities usually attract endorsement contracts after appearing on television and in films (see Table 2).

2.2. Procedure and measures

The modeling agency maintains a list of all potential celebrity endorsers and, acting as their agent, negotiates endorsement contracts with advertisers. Advertisers ask the modeling agency to select celebrity endorsers appropriate for their products or services, and the agency usually recommends several candidates to advertisers who are suitable for their budget. Every year, the agency determines the endorsement fee for each celebrity in advance and tends to select celebrity endorsers based on a variety of factors, including their popularity and their endorsement income during the previous year. Additionally, the agency evaluates the potential value of some instant celebrities and other people in terms of advertisers' demands. Endorsement fees are determined by considering a variety of factors, including popularity, fee for a movie or television drama, movie viewership, television ratings, and record sales. Advertisers usually pay this fee because the endorsement market in Korea favors sellers.

The dependent variables in our study were the endorsement income from a single contract and the total. Thus, we explored whether celebrity endorsers' facial WHR and their endorsement income were related. We obtained photographs of celebrity endorsers from the modeling agency to measure their facial WHR. When we could not obtain front-side photos from the agency, we acquired them from the celebrities' social networking services (SNS) (e.g., Facebook or Twitter). Almost all photos were of non-smiling faces looking forward, but several individuals did not have a neutral expression (i.e., some were smiling). We collected 71 photos from the modeling agency and 29 photos from their SNSs. Based on the procedure followed by Weston, Friday, and Lio (2007), we used Photoshop CS6 to measure the distance between the lip and brow (height of the upper face) and the left and right zygion (bizygomatic width) of the digitized images. The measurement was made with a Photoshop ruler measuring to .01 mm. We turned on the grid to measure more accurately. For purposes of reliability, a second independent rater also measured facial WHRs. The inter-rater correlation for the two measurements

Table 1
Classification of endorsers by job category (2012).

	Male	Female
TV or movie actor/actress	41	41
Singer	3	5
Musical actor/actress	2	0
TV actor/actress	4	2
Sports star	0	2

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