



A Study in Role of Celebrity Endorsements on Consumer Buying Behaviour

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Abstract

Celebrity Endorsement has become one of the most popular tools of advertisement in marketing; used by most of the major organizations these days. The meaning of celebrity endorsement is “a form of brand or advertising campaign that involves a well-known person using their fame to help promote a product or service”. The study has been performed using a qualitative approach and using exploratory research techniques. An extensive review of literature has been done and based on that a conceptual framework has been proposed. According to the study, the desirable qualities of a celebrity required for celebrity endorsement are Congruency, Flexibility, Expertise, Attractiveness, and Longevity & Likeability.

Keywords: *Celebrity Endorsement; Congruency; Expertise; Longevity & Likeability.*

Introduction

Celebrity Endorsement has become one of most popular tools of advertisement in marketing used by most of the major organizations these days. This strategy is being increasingly used by organizations day by day and it has become the winning formula as it increases the brand's popularity which results in greater sales numbers for the investing company.

What is a Celebrity?

According to Friedman & Friedman (1979), the term celebrity refers to an individual (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) who is known to the public for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed.

What is a Celebrity Endorsement?

A form of brand or advertising campaign that involves a well-known person using their fame to help promote a product or service. Manufacturers of perfumes and clothing are some of the most common business users of classic celebrity endorsement techniques, such as television ads and launch event appearances, in the marketing of their products.

Celebrity endorsement refers to a marketing strategy whose purpose is to use one or multiple celebrities to advertise a specific product or service. The primary goal, in this

case, is to reach a greater audience, represented by the celebrity's fan base.

What is a Buying Behaviour?

It is the sum of the attitudes, preferences, beliefs, and decisions regarding the consumer's behaviour when purchasing a product or service in a market.

Background of the Study

It is not a new idea in marketing; celebrity endorsements sell products, and while not all the brands subscribe to the celebrity endorsement theory, it is based on a simple logic that audiences adore celebrities, so when popular faces are seen in advertisements promoting a new product, audiences are prompted to buy them and associate themselves with the person endorsing the advertisement.

There are various iconic celebrity advertisements in our country, some of them include Aamir Khan in COCA COLA, TITAN, TATA SKY etc.; Amitabh Bachchan in REID & TAYLOR, CADBURY, ONE PLUS advertisements; Sachin Tendulkar in PEPSI, LUMINOUS; MS Dhoni in REEBOK, MASTERCARD, NETMEDS advertisements.

Research Gap

Despite a high number of research work on this topic has been done by various renowned researchers, a conceptual framework for qualities of a celebrity affecting the consumer buying behaviour was not been formed, this research focuses on such conceptual framework.

Objective of the Study

Design a conceptual framework of qualities of a celebrity affecting the consumer buying behaviour.

Literature Review

Ahmed *et al.* (2015) concluded that the celebrity ads are more eye-catching than the non-celebrity ads. Consumers also said that the top medium for watching the ads is TV and then the Internet. Results indicate that the celebrity endorsement has sound impact on customers as per their attitude and buying

intention. Celebrity ads increase the sales and purchase of product.

Randhawa & Khan (2014) studied that significant number of consumers believe that celebrities are not using those products which they themselves advertise on TV. Most of the respondents believe that regular changes in celebrity for advertising the product negatively affect the purchasing decision of customers. Well-known personalities are playing key role in creating an impact than sports personalities and other film stars.

Mukherjee (2009) stated that celebrities' availability, acceptability, popularity, regional appeal factors, image, belief system and attractiveness are some of the vital influencers of celebrity endorsement on brands. In case of multiple brands endorsed by a celebrity, the success depends solely on the power of the brand. Association of the celebrity with a dispute or ill-behaviour can cause negative impact on the brands image in the minds of the consumers.

Parwal, Jain & Agarwal (2016) found that celebrities ensure high degree of brand recall if the products are endorsed by celebrities. Most respondents are certain that celebrities are endorsing one brand and using the other.

A study by Malik & Qureshi (2017) shows that the gender of an endorser effects the buying behaviour, but to a lower extent. Responders agree that a celebrity makes an ad significantly more famous, memorable and consideration.

Gauns *et al.* (2018) stated that most influential celebrity attributes in relation to purchase intentions among state's consumers were likeability, meaning allocation, cohesion between the celebrity and the product, familiarity, and similarity. Celebrity attributes such as expertise and trustworthiness are comparatively less significant to affect the purchase decision of consumers. Respondents also said that celebrity endorsements influenced them mainly for durable products. Consumers are more attracted if the advertisement involved film celebrities rather than other celebrities.

Ogunsiji (2012) concluded about the positive correlation between the success of celebrity

endorsement of brands and the supremacy of the brand in the area. Successful celebrities find it easier to improve the marketability of the brand amongst its existing competitors. Celebrities charge high rates so the companies must be ready to spend big to afford the best available celebrities in the country.

Chan, Ng & Luk (2013) concluded that respondents were best able to recall celebrity who they thought were expressive, funny, and attractive. They identified popularity, a good image, and congruence between the celebrity's image and that of the brand as important factors for organizations to consider while selecting celebrity endorsers. Longevity of celebrity associations with one brand impresses the consumers.

Khan & Lodhi (2016) in their study showed that celebrity endorsed ad is used to create brand awareness and brand recognition to the company to connect to the target audience. Factors such as product performance, quality and brand image, personality and trustworthiness of celebrities affect buying decision of the consumer to choose the face care product of his/her choice. Consumers always try to choose the product that matches with personality.

Priyankara *et al.* (2017) stated the likability of the celebrity used in the perfume ad is highly substantial in the final buying decision of the consumer. Other factors of familiar face and lifestyle of the celebrity used in the perfume brand have been trivial in the study. The above two results came about through hypothesis testing and correlation processes.

Bhargava (2015) showed that the consumer attempts to consume a brand which suits with his/her own personality. Consumer marginally prefers a male celebrity figure rather than a female celebrity. Most of the consumers are affected by price rather than the celebrity endorsing the product.

Rafique & Zafar (2012) concluded that physical attractiveness & credibility of celebrity effect the customer's perception about the endorsed product; this result was concluded through ANOVA.

Kusi, Domfeh & Kim (2018) stated that personality check of celebrities needs to be thoroughly done before entrusting these celebrities with endorsement responsibility. Marketers must utilize celebrity advertising to enhance their psychological connect with the consumers through hypothesis and correlation. Celebrity advertising risk affects the predictive relationship between celebrity advertising role and purchase intention but does not do the same in predictive relation between celebrity personality characteristics and purchase intention.

Summary of Findings in Literature Review:

In the above given literature review, there are various findings from the past done research on this topic. Each of the findings given in the study are unique in their own way. We can say this is because the findings have not been repeated from the preceding research listed.

As there have been much research done on this very topic in the past, we can have the same findings from many of the published papers. So, the author has summarized the findings for easier understanding of the literature study. The following points show the findings of the literature review in an organized manner:

- Celebrity advertisement, the best endorsers on TV!

Almost all the studies conducted in the field echo this idea that celebrities seem to attract more consumers than the advertisement with no celebrities. Among the various mediums on which celebrities can endorse Television seems to be the one with the most popular. Although in this age of Internet, most of us will expect the top medium to be the Social Media.

- Endorsing, but not using them

Most of the quantified studies done through surveys and questionnaire have come to an observation that consumers promote their contracted product on television but do not use them in real life. For example, Famous footballer Lionel Messi advertised for TATA briefly, it is highly unlikely that he will use a TATA car ever in his life.

- More popular celebrity, more they sale!

The above-mentioned literature review lists the research papers done in various regions in India and all over Asia and Africa as well. According to a study done in Goa, sports celebrities are more popular than the Bollywood celebrities, also 2 other research papers that are done in Pakistan show that sports (mainly cricket) celebrities are popular celebrity endorsers than the others.

➤ No switching parties

The celebrities who are switching regularly between products, mainly in the same category are not getting the results wanted by their owners. For example, Salman Khan has been strongly associated with the brand of Thumbs up (a Coca Cola product), but people may find it difficult to associate him with Pepsi (the main rival of Coca Cola in the country).

➤ No controversies please

The image of the celebrities plays an important role in selling of the product. If there is any controversies here and there, the brand image of the company goes to waste.

➤ Not the main criteria

Although celebrity ads are more popular than the non-celebrity ones, there is one slight problem, Factors such as needs, quality of product, price of the product are the factors that are given more importance than the celebrity itself.

➤ Deeper pockets, best celebrities

The company who really want to promote their product through this method of celebrity must be ready to spend big in the market as the more popular the celebrity the higher they charge to associate themselves with the brand.

➤ Thorough check up

Personality check of celebrities needs to be thoroughly done before entrusting these celebrities with endorsement responsibility. Also, as contracts of these celebrities cost a fortune to the organization, they need to do perform background check of these celebrities.

➤ Characteristics of celebrities affecting the purchase intention of the consumer:

- Trustworthy
- Emotional connect with the audience
- Familiarity
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Congruency with the product
- Attractiveness
- Expertise in their area

Research Methodology

It refers to the systematic procedures, methods and techniques applied in business research for identifying problem, designing, research, collecting and analyzing data to take decision, to solve any problem or to develop a new concept and explore existing ideas.

The study undertaken is exploratory in nature which is based on extensive literature review. Research conducted in the similar area has been referred as the source of secondary information.

- Research Approach:

The study is Qualitative in nature, as it is an approach which does not give an exact outcome and instead gives an outcome in terms of quality based on people's perspective.

- Design:

Considering the nature of the study an exploratory research design has been found most appropriate for the purpose. As the outcome of this study is based on the extensive review of literature and to suggest a conceptual framework, the design has been found most suitable.

Discussion

Literature reveals one common outcome that celebrity ads are better than non-celebrity ones. There has been considerable amount increase in the amount of attention these ads get as compared to non- celebrity ads. Contrary to popular belief, the most popular and preferred medium for the consumers is the television rather than the social media (Priyankara et al. 2017). Although the usage of social media has increased by leaps and bounce these days, the people still associate

ads with television rather than the internet with radio coming a distant third. Many of the respondents believe that the products or brand endorsed by the celebrities are not being themselves. This was an outcome from the research done in Pakistan. We can rule out the fact that this view might be limited to a particular region as other research papers do not share this outcome. Literature review contains papers from different areas in India and from other countries. The preference to a particular type of celebrity might be a factor as can be seen from the 3 surveys conducted in different areas [Hong Kong (China), Goa (India), Karachi (Pakistan)]. Football being the more popular in Goa so survey there shows people preferring sports celebrity endorsements compared to other types celebrities, also this outcome is there in the research done in Karachi with cricket being the more dominant sport than movie Industry in Pakistan. So, from these two examples it can be said that region might be factor which influences the opinion of the consumers.

The more popular the celebrity the easier it is for the brand to generate sales using that celebrity in their ads. Also, another important factor to consider is that these celebrities charge high amount of fees for signing their respected contracts. It becomes imperative for the organization hiring to be more careful while doing so, a thorough background check of individual is certainly required, this view also shared by the respondents in the research. Other effects of this high price charged by the celebrities might be product being pricier for the consumers to buy! I am not happy about this outcome that gender is a factor, but it is true that in some region's consumers prefer a male celebrity to a female celebrity with relation to endorsements (Randhawa & Khan, 2014). This might not be valid in all regions. Although it also depends on the type of product which is being endorsed, for example sporty brands such as NIKE, ADIDAS mostly prefer male sport celebrities to endorse their ads.

It is not necessary that if an organization is hiring a celebrity to endorse a product, they can be rest assured about their success. NO. Still the consumers give more important to other factors such as price, quality, level of

necessity to buy the product etc. Celebrities who are going from endorsing one brand to the other are seen in good view by the consumers. Here, the stronger of the two brands prevail. So, the importance of celebrity in ad becomes negligible. It does not matter if your favorite celebrity is endorsing a product and you will buy it for sure. It is necessary and almost imperative for the consumer to be able to associate the product with the celebrity endorsing the ad.

Note: Further other factors will be seen in conceptual framework.

Relationship between variables-

From the literature review we can shortlist the following variables:

- Likeability (Positively effects consumer behavior)
This means how much the celebrity is popular in his field or if a clean image he or she has in the society whom people of all age groups can look up to.
Therefore, if the likeability is high for a celebrity, more and more people see the advertisement, and it increases the chances of positively affecting the buying decision of the consumer.
- Attractive (Positively effects consumer behavior)
It is defined as the level to which the consumer behavior is forced to see the advertisement of the celebrity.
Therefore, if a celebrity is attractive, more and more people see the advertisement which increases the chances of positively affecting the buying decision of the consumer.
- Longevity (Positively effects consumer behavior)
It is defined as for how much time the celebrity is associated to a particular brand. If the celebrity is trustworthy then he /she is associated with a particular for longer periods, and consumer value longevity according to research paper in literature review.
So, people start to associate the celebrity with that endorsed brand.

Therefore, longevity positively effects the buying decision of the consumer.

- Expertise (Positively effects consumer behavior)

It is defined as how much the celebrity has achieved in his field. Also, according to research papers in the literature review, successful celebrities find it easier to promote the brand, and it results in better brand image also better sales.

Therefore, expertise of the celebrity positively affects the buying affects the buying decision of the consumer.

- Flexibility (Positively effects consumer behavior)

It is defined as to how much the celebrity is to perform in multiple brands of the same organization. This feature helps in making the deal for profitable for both the celebrity and the organization as the celebrity finds a stable source of income and the organization has a stable marketing strategy in place.

Therefore, flexibility of the celebrity positively affects the buying affects the buying decision of the consumer.

- Congruency (Positively effects consumer behavior)

It is defined as how much the consumer can relate the product being endorsed with the celebrity who is endorsing it. Also, according to various research papers congruency is given a mention.

Therefore, congruency positively affects the buying affects the buying decision of the consumer.

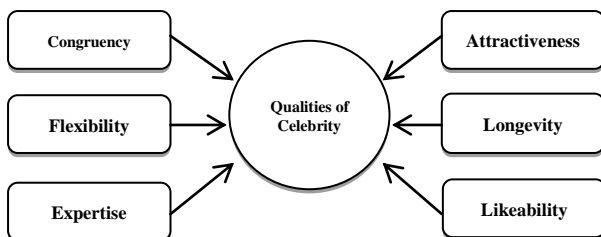


Fig. 1 Conceptual Framework (Based on Findings from the Literature) Source: Authors Compilation

Limitations:

The research type is exploratory, so there is no one outcome unlike in the case of descriptive research where empirical analysis could have been performed. Furthermore, the conceptual framework given might not be applicable in all scenarios across all geo-demographic profile. In addition to these, the number of variables undertaken might not be exhaustive for the purpose.

Scope of Future Study:

Future empirical study on wider geo-demographic profile with a greater number of variables could generalize the findings better.

Conclusion

Celebrity ads are more eye-catching than the non-celebrity ads. Most of the respondents believe that regular changes in celebrity for advertising the product negatively affect the purchasing decision of customers. A significant number of consumers believe that celebrities are not using those products which they themselves advertise on TV. The conceptual framework depicts that; the most desirable qualities of a celebrity should be Likeability, Attractive, Longevity, Expertise, Flexibility and Congruency.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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