

Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Behaviour: Study from Indian Context

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Abstract: *Over time, the prevalence of celebrity endorsements has grown. It is becoming an integral part of the advertising industry, particularly in India. In India, celebrity endorsement has become a multibillion dollar industry. Marketers utilise celebrity endorsements to influence consumers' purchase decisions in order to grow sales and expand market shares. This prompted the author to investigate the influence of celebrity endorsements on customer purchasing behaviour. This article examines the perceptions of Indian consumers towards celebrity endorsements, the celebrity traits most likely to influence consumer buy intentions, and the impact of celebrity endorsements on customers' purchase intentions. The study demonstrates that celebrity endorsements have a favourable effect on customer purchasing intent.*

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement

I. INTRODUCTION

In magazines, newspapers, billboards, internet, radio, and television, customers are exposed to hundreds of voices and images on a daily basis. Every brand seeks to steal at least a fraction of a person's time in order to inform him or her of the product's remarkable and unique qualities. The problem for the marketer is to come up with an attention-grabbing hook. Use of celebrity endorsing is a widely used marketing approach for achieving this objective.

People tend to disregard commercials and advertisements while reading publications and newspapers or watching television in the present era. Even so, the glitter of a celebrity is rarely overlooked. Thus, celebrity endorsement in advertising and its effect on the brand as a whole are of enormous importance. In this method, firms recruit celebrities from a specific field to appear in their advertising campaigns. Matching the advertising features and pictures of the product with a celebrity's image tends to encourage a buyer to choose one brand over another. Large sums of money are spent by businesses to associate their brands and themselves with endorsers. These endorsers are viewed as energetic and possessing both attractive and likeable features, and firms seek to transfer these traits to their products through marketing communications. In today's extremely congested environments, celebrities serve not just to capture and sustain attention, but also to achieve excellent recall rates for marketing communications.

Likewise, each product has a picture. The consumer attempts to consume a brand that is the best match for his or her personality/image. The celebrity endorser fits between these two interactions; he attempts to bring the product's image closer to the consumer's expectations by transferring some of the cultural connotations associated with his image to the product. In the paper, we examined the effect of celebrity endorsement on the brand-building process as a whole and attempted to define how to make celebrity endorsement a win-win situation for both the brand and the endorser. A company's most important asset is its brand.

Advertisers generally believe that celebrity and famous personality-delivered brand communication messages produce greater attraction, attention, and memory than non-celebrity-delivered messages. In today's very competitive climate, rapid message dissemination and effect are crucial. A brand should exercise caution when hiring celebrities to ensure the fulfillment of its promise, credibility, and intended effect. Celebrities have also been in demand due to their success in rising above the noise and capturing the consumer's attention and focus. They also succeed in developing a desire in the consumer's mind to obtain the product endorsed by their favorite celebrity.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Indian market is by no means an audience that is simple for advertisers to approach. The country's one billion inhabitants are diverse in terms of their beliefs, ethnicity, states, culture, language, conventions, and values. Other factors, such as the economic disparity in the country, have contributed to the country's division into a significant number of lower and upper middle class individuals and a very tiny middle class population. This reveals a significant discrepancy in purchasing power and decision-making influence, which advertising should consider. As brand-differentiating messages, memory and persuasion have been accorded a significant amount of weight in Indian advertising. (Dixit,2005).

Advertisers frequently utilise a variety of advertising techniques to influence consumer brand choosing behaviour, with celebrity endorsements being one of the most prevalent options. (Alsmadi 2006)

A celebrity is a person who gets widespread public awareness from a certain set of people and uses this popularity to promote a consumer product by appearing in advertising. (McCracken 1989).

They are typically well-known for accomplishments in fields outside than the product they advocate. This is true not only for conventional celebrities such as actors like Shah Rukh Khan, models like Milan Somen, sportsmen like Sachin Tendulkar, and entertainers like Maliaka Arora Khan, but also for less visible groups like businesspeople like the Ambanis or politicians like Rahul Gandhi.(Schlecht 2003).

As Indians have always been in awe of the stars of the silver screen, it is not difficult to understand the rise in the use of celebrities in advertisements, particularly in India. Indeed, some individuals are observed to respect, mimic, and become enamoured with their favourite celebrities, which is why celebrity endorsement is such a popular advertising strategy. (McCutcheon et.al 2013).

2.1 Celebrity versus Non-celebrity endorsement efficacy

The prevalence of celebrity endorsements in marketing campaigns is not coincidental. In comparison to other types of endorsers such as the company management, the average consumer, and the professional expert, research indicates that celebrities are by far the most effective. (Seno & Lukas, 2007)

According to Tom et al. (1992), based on the classical conditioning model, results endorsers were more effective than celebrity endorsers at creating a link to the product. This argument was based on the fact that firms had greater control over generated endorsers and designed these characters to fit the brand and target audience, as well as the fact that these characters were not permitted to promote several brands. The celebrity endorsers, on the other hand, had developed their own personas over time, and the corporation had lost control over them.

In the celebrity-endorsed and non-celebrity-endorsed conditions, there were differences in cognitive reactions, but no statistically significant differences in attitudes toward advertising or desire to purchase the endorsed brand (Mehta 1994).

In contrast, Atkin and Block (1983) and Petty et al. (1983) showed that celebrity endorsers produced more positive attitudes toward advertising and more buy intentions than non-celebrity endorsers.

III. CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AS A STRATEGY

Signing up celebrities for endorsements is a tried-and-true tactic that some of the best brands in the world, such as Nike and Pepsi, have successfully employed. Since the 1950s, HLL has also utilised Hindi film stars to promote their beauty soap Lux in India. Vimal, Thums Up, Gwalior, and Dinesh are further products that utilised celebrity endorsements in the early days of mass advertising.

Marketers feel that celebrity endorsements have multiple benefits, the most important of which are establishing credibility, encouraging trust, and attracting attention, all of which can result in increased brand sales. So how does one determine whether or not to include a celebrity in an advertisement? This should ideally be governed by the communication concept. MG Executive Director of FCB UlkaParmeswaran states, "As advertising specialists, we promote the use of celebrity endorsements when the situation warrants it." There are numerous instances in which the usage of a celebrity is required to break through category congestion. Occasionally, celebrity endorsement is utilised to enhance the legitimacy of a brand's offering.

Most analysts agree that using celebrity endorsements strategically can be an effective marketing tactic. According to Mohammed Khan, Chairman of Enterprise Nexus, "using a celebrity on their own is not a terrible concept if done correctly." And there are several examples of both positive and negative celebrity usage.

Some businesses, such as Parker Pens and ICICI Home Loans, have used Amitabh Bachchan's Big B image exceptionally well, but others have failed to do so. We employed sportsmen like Rahul Dravid for Castrol in an effort to stand out from the crowd and impart a sense of dependability on the brand, according to Parmeswaran. However, there are some who put little faith in celebrity endorsements. Adrian Mendonza, Executive Vice President and Creative Director of Rediffusion DY&R, does not promote celebrity endorsements because he believes that for a company to be truly successful, it must have its own distinct identity. It should preferably not attempt to acquire success by riding on the fame of a celebrity.

IV. CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS: KEY TO MARKETING SUCCESS

People may or may not believe you when you claim that a product or service can assist them. After all, selling your services is in your best interest. However, when celebrities claim that a product or service has helped them and can help others, people prefer to listen and believe them. After all, the majority of individuals believe "he wouldn't say it if it weren't true."

Melissa St. James, a doctorate fellow and marketing instructor at The George Washington University, researched the influence of celebrity endorsements and found, "Studies demonstrate that incorporating celebrities can raise consumers' awareness of the ad, catch [their] attention, and make advertising more memorable."

V. EFFECT OF CELEBRITY BRANDING ON CONSUMERS

It is common knowledge that the most effective endorsements strike a balance between the product (brand) and the celebrity. Giving a brand a 'face' is more than a marketing technique to generate sales or acquire market share; it is a decision that has the potential to alter the brand's future for all time.

Consequently, the choice of the celebrity is of the utmost importance and is typically based on a variety of characteristics, including attractiveness, appearance, popularity, or even a fictional figure to endorse a business.

In today's extremely competitive markets, major brands are in direct competition when it comes to products, each offering a product that is comparable to that of a rival. Where does a brand obtain its competitive edge - through advertising, service, or a promise of trust? Advertising appears to be the ideal platform for firms to compete on, from employing the best advertising agencies to recruiting the most prominent celebrities. What then would the formula for success be? Well, a strong creative agency, a sizable promotional budget, and a famous celebrity endorsing your brand would give a brand management team a sense of confidence, success, and victory over a competitor's brand. This technique has gained pace over the past decade or so, as seen by the significance of a celebrity-brand match and their diverse responsibilities as brand associates.

India is a country where people are star-struck by film stars, cricketers, politicians, and even criminals. Why? Populations of 1 billion and ticking, ordinary people need something or someone to look up to. A sense of security, admiration, comfort, familiarity, and, most importantly, someone they secretly strive to be. A savvy marketer capitalises on this celebrity appeal and successfully completes his work by providing the brands with profit, market share, and even brand memory. However, how much star power is excessive? A six-year-old asked her mother, "Does Amitabh actually use Tide?" Her mother chuckles and replies, "Absolutely not; it's a gimmick." How does this affect the brand?

Now, despite the potential benefits of celebrity endorsements, they increase a marketer's risk and should be handled with the utmost care and skill. A brand should exercise caution when utilising celebrities to verify the veracity of its claims and the achievement of its intended effect. The endorsement of a celebrity cannot ensure success. The celebrity endorsement approach must be coordinated with the features of the target market and the other components of the marketing mix, including product design, branding, packaging, and pricing. Additionally, the celebrity's message delivery must be crystal clear and focused. This can be accomplished through connecting the spirit of the brand with the product or by using a celebrity, as this assures that people will notice and hopefully remember what the brand is saying.

To better understand how celebrity endorsements improve sales and affect brands over time, it is essential to consider the consumer's social and cultural context. Celebrities are typically an excellent illustration of a reference group appeal. This is especially advantageous for a marketer and brand that can capitalise on the star's success and thereby promote their brand. Therefore, individuals who idolise their superstars have a predisposed love for the business their idols advocate. As time passes, people assume that adopting the brand that their celebrity endorses makes them more like the celebrity. There are four uses for celebrities: testimonial, endorsement, actor, and spokesman.

VI. CONCLUSION

People in India prefer to live in their dreams. They venerate celebrities. This may include cricket players like as Sachin Tendulkar and Mahendra Singh Dhoni or film stars such as Shah Rukh Khan and John Ebrahim. They see them as divine. Marketers use this proposition to impact whether their target clients are current or prospective. For this, they employ these superstars and pay them astronomical sums of money. They feel that by doing so, their items will be associated with their target consumers. The term for this is celebrity endorsement.

Now, despite the potential benefits of celebrity endorsements, they exponentially increase a marketer's risk and should be handled with great care and skill. A brand should exercise caution when utilising celebrities to verify the veracity of its claims and the achievement of its intended effect. The increasing prominence of mythical characters as celebrities and their influence over the target segments are enough evidence of the public yearning for role models. As celebrities transition from a purely commercial presence to endorsements of public welfare messages, a whole new dimension is added to this process, allowing us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the influence celebrities have on all spheres and segments through their well-acquainted endorsements.

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