

CELEBRITIES AS CATALYSTS: EXPLORING CONSUMER BUYING PATTERNS IN BRAND ENDORSEMENT

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Abstract: Celebrities hold a unique status in the public eye, drawing an abundance of attention and influence, sometimes to the extent that they themselves find overwhelming. Yet, for brands, this level of attention is a coveted asset. Celebrities serve as a dependable means for brands to achieve heightened visibility in the market. In today's world, gaining popularity equates to acquiring a superpower, one that enables the capacity to shape public opinion, influence minds, and earn the trust of millions. Such a position is precisely where brands aspire to be. Celebrities establish a profound connection with the public, rooted in trust, belief, affection, and a dedicated following. People often aspire to emulate their beloved celebrities, seeking an association with these iconic figures, yearning for shared experiences with their favorite stars, and envisioning a life akin to theirs. This emulation extends to celebrity-inspired attire, footwear, makeup styles, hairdos, personal grooming, and more.

Keywords: Celebrities, Branding, Influence, Public Trust, Fashion Trends

Introduction

Celebrities are always in the eyes of public and at times, so much that they are themselves not flattered about it. But brands are always flattered when they get a lot of eyes from the public. Therefore, celebrities always make a safe bet for brands to gain popularity in market. Gaining popularity today is like gaining a super power. A super power of being able to influence public, shape people's minds and be reckoned with trust from millions. This is exactly a position brands want to be at.

Celebrities have a bond with public which is made by trust, belief, liking and following. People generally want to be like their favourite celebrities. They like the association with popular personalities, they have wants to have things in common with their favourite star and desire a life alike. People adopt their style, conduct and follow their ideas. This involves celebrity inspired dress ups, shoes, make-up looks, hair styles, personal grooming, etc.

People are much more confident in doing things which are already done and liked, especially by their admired celebrity.

Celebrities are famous people, who bring attractiveness to an advertisement. Advertisement endorsed by a celebrity has an incredible appeal. When a product is packed with celebrity's images, they get recognition in a jiffy. The posters also have a huge impact which involves a celebrity endorsing a product. It gains people's attention heavily. When a celebrity talks about a brand in a tv-ad, people are very likely to believe it. When a story of film gets life by a celebrity, a brand-story also does get life from celebrity.

Celebrity endorsement is a big business in today's era. Brand promotion is an exercise that companies do rigorously to keep their brands running and flourishing in the market. Celebrity endorsement is quite a popular exercise done to promote brands.

Celebrities bring fun, entertainment, a style to the table. If brands wish to succeed they need to stand out in the market. Celebrities can play a key role in making a brand to stand out in consumer's eyes. Celebrities carry forward their self-image to brand image. The positive aspects of a celebrity account for their credibility. The more credibility there is of a celebrity, the higher is their demand to be the face of a brand. Hence, the better is the money. Therefore, the goodwill of a celebrity helps both the celebrity and the brand.

Brand image is the perception of a brand in minds of people. When there is a celebrity in an advertisement, the advertisement is better recognised and recalled by the consumers.

In this research the relationship between celebrity and brand will be studied to obtain consumer buying behaviour built around it. The study will take place by exploring various factors to determine this relationship namely, attractiveness, meaning transfer, credibility, liking, trustworthiness, image-transfer of a celebrity to the brand. To measure the relationship lets carry forward the research.

Review of Literature

• **Our day is filled with brands and products**

In the book "Essentials of Consumer Behavior" author Debra L. Stephens has explained that consumers are exposed to array of products from the market and they use them from start of the day to end of the day. Consumers choose a product out of many others from the same category. There are various reasons which influence the selection, but consumers are not taking the decisions with conscience most of the times. Because the brands in the market studying consumer's behaviour and they make them choose a product over others through their series of efforts.

- **Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Psyche** The author "Sang Min (Leo) Whang" in the book "The New Consumer Psychology" has expressly commented on the impact of celebrity endorsement for the product on consumer psyche. The product becomes special with name tags and pictures of celebrity on it.

Otherwise, its just another product. When people use products, which have been endorsed by a celebrity they are happier.

- **Consumer behaviour is the backbone of branding** The author S. Ramesh Kumar in his book "Consumer Behaviour: The Indian Context" has given this statement. It is very vital for the brands to study consumer behaviour especially for a market like India which is complex, due to its diversity, varied ethnicity, clothing, language, food etc. It is not easy to persuade people and put them under one umbrella of a brand. With difference in attitude of people brands have to take different approach in marketing their products.

Research Objectives

- To find the purchase drive celebrity endorsements create in consumer's mind
- To trace if consumers are more likely to buy a product when it is endorsed by a celebrity
- To explore the factors behind celebrity influenced product purchase

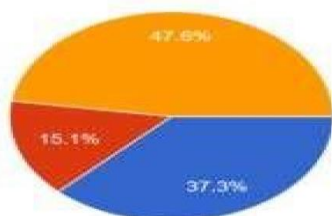
Sampling

The fact-finding was done by distributing a questionnaire which was filled by a total of 126 respondents from age group 21-50. To collect data a questionnaire was created on Google form. The survey was distributed to people who belong to urban area and the ones who comprise of earning population.

Data Analysis

Which kind of advertisements appear more genuine and appealing to you, those endorsed by Celebrities or those which are not?

126 responses

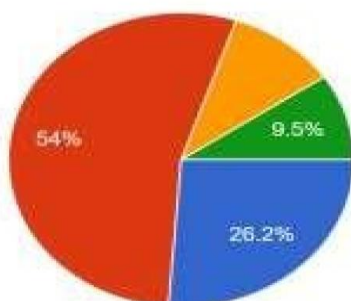


- Celebrity endorsed Advertisement
- Non-celebrity endorsed advertisement
- Celebrity / non-celebrity endorsement does not impact the appeal of an advertisement

It has been observed that while 47.6% of the respondents believes that Celebrity / non-celebrity endorsements does not impact the appeal of an advertisement, 37.3% of the respondents feels that Celebrity endorsed advertisement appears more genuine and appealing to them. Further, non- celebrity endorsed advertisement appears more appealing to merely 15.1% of the respondents.

How impactful, do you think, is the presence of a celebrity in the advertisement of a new product, so as to sway the consumers of its already existing competitive products?

126 responses



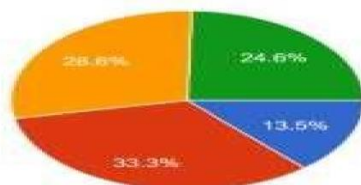
- Highly impactful
- Somewhat impactful
- Somewhat unimpactful
- Not impactful at all

It has been found that the majority of the respondents believes that the presence of a celebrity in the advertisement of a new product is impactful to certain extent so as to sway the consumers of its already existing competitive products (highly impactful – 26.2% and somewhat impactful – 54%).

In comparison, very few respondents feels that the presence of a celebrity in the advertisement of a new product does not impact the buying decisions of the consumers of its already existing competitive product [somewhat unimpactful (10.3%) or not impactful at all (9.5%)].

As a consumer, do you feel that the product endorsed by a celebrity are of higher quality as compared to the similar product endorsed by non-celebrity?

126 responses



- I Strongly feel it
- I sometimes feel it
- I generally do not feel it
- I never feel it

It has been observed that the responses to this question is majorly divided with 46.8% of the respondents strongly feeling (13.5%) or somewhat feeling (33.3%) that the products endorsed by a celebrity are of higher quality as compared to similar product endorsed by non-celebrity, while 53.2 % of the respondents generally (28.6%) or never (24.6%) feeling that that the products endorsed by a celebrity are of higher quality as compared to similar product endorsed by noncelebrity.

As a consumer, do you think the main domain of the celebrity who is endorsing a product, should be related to the product endorsed, so as to impact your decision? (Main domain can be seen as the area of expertise of that particular celebrity, for instance, Cricket for Virat Kohli)

126 responses

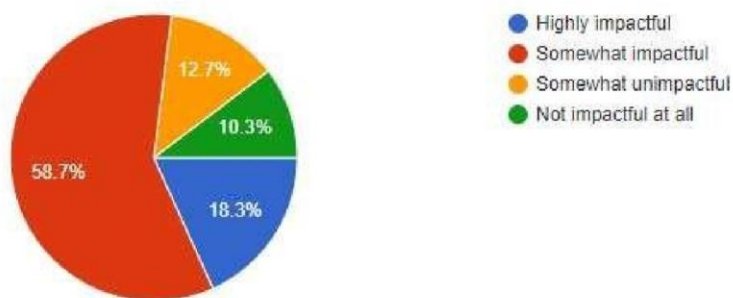


It has been viewed that the majority of the respondents have certain degree of agreement that the main domain of the celebrity who is endorsing a product should be related to the product endorsed (Strong agreement – 24.6% and Normal agreement – 54%).

In comparison, very few respondents have some level of disagreement to this question [Normal disagreement – 17.5% and Strong disagreement - 4%].

As a consumer, do you think the trustworthiness of the celebrity as perceived by the public in general, is impactful on the your decision towards the product endorsed by that celebrity? (Trustworthiness can be seen as the faith general public puts on the words of the celebrity in question)

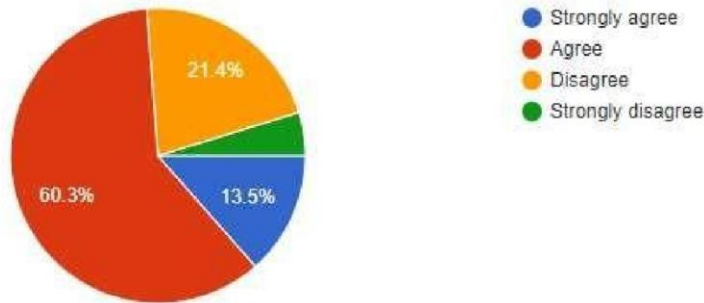
126 responses



Similar to relation of main domain of the celebrity with the product endorsed, it has been observed that the majority of the respondents also believes to certain extent that the trustworthiness of the celebrity is impactful (highly impactful – 18.3% or somewhat impactful 58.7%) on their decision towards buying a product endorsed by the said celebrity. In comparison, very few respondents believes otherwise [somewhat unimpactful – 12.7% or Not impactful at all- 10.3%].

Whether the similarity between a celebrity endorser and a consumer, influence the purchase decision of such consumer towards the product endorsed. (Similarity can be seen as the sense of similarity the consumer perceives between his and celebrity's nature or taste)

126 responses



Likewise to trustworthiness of a celebrity, it has been noted that the majority of the respondents also agree to certain extent that there should exist some similarity between a celebrity and a consumer, so as to influence the purchase decision of that consumer towards the product endorsed by the said celebrity (Strong agreement – 13.5% and normal agreement 60.3%).

On the other hand, a handful of respondents believe that the similarity between a celebrity endorser and a consumer is not an influencing factor on consumer's buying decision (strong belief – 4.8% and normal belief – 21.4%).

As a consumer, do you think that when your favourite celebrity switches endorsement from one product to another competitive product, will result in you also switching to that competitive product?

126 responses



It was observed that the switch of endorsement by a celebrity from one product to another competitive product generally did not result in their fan- base also shifting to that competitive product. Highest number of the respondents (42.1%) here feel that they would trust the product they are already using, irrespective of their favourite celebrities switching endorsement to

another competitive product. Further, a fair chunk of respondents believe that they do not get influenced by celebrity endorsements in first place.

In contrast, only 9.5% of the respondents are interested to make a definite switch. However, 15.9% of the respondents are likely to make a switch only of

they see no material difference in the quality of the products in question.

Findings and Conclusion

- On the basis of data received and hypothesis tested, conclusion can be made at this final stage of research project. It is concluded that the presence of celebrity in an advertisement influences buying behaviour of consumers. A product is more easily recalled and recognised when a celebrity is associated with it.

- Although, for most people the presence of a celebrity does not impact the perception on products or service's quality. Only few people think that celebrity endorsement adds to quality of product or a service. When talking about entry of a new product in market, celebrity endorsements help the brand gain positive response from consumers. On the contrary, people do not differentiate between quality of products on basis of celebrity endorsement.

- of a celebrity transfers to a brand image is interesting. When a celebrity endorses a product of his own domain, the advertisement becomes instantly more impactful. The trustworthiness of a celebrity is also an important factor which helps in the growth of impact and positive image of a product, service or brand.

- For most people, the brand image, reputation and fan following of a celebrity directly influences the image of brand in consumer's mind. Celebrities transfer self-image to brand and product image. The personal image, lifestyle, sex, age, habits shape a perception about brand they endorse in consumer's minds.

- The philanthropic acts done by a celebrity will not have much impact in uplifting the image of a brand they endorse. It is also concluded that when people see similarities between them and celebrity, they are likely to purchase the product or brand they endorse.

- In comparison to competitive products, the quality is not questioned whether or not brand is endorsed by celebrity or not. If two similar brands are there in market then people are not willing to pay an

extra premium price to see a celebrity endorse that brand.

- To sum up, it can be seen that celebrity endorsements do play an important role in influencing the buying decisions of majority of consumers and therefore, it is quite essential to factor the celebrity endorsements from varied and dynamic angles while advertising for a product.

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