

ROLE OF CELEBRITY – BRAND CONGRUENCY IN BUILDING BRAND IMAGE

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Abstract: *Celebrity endorsement has been established as one of the most popular communication tools of advertising in recent time. It has become a trend and perceived as a winning formula for product marketing and brand building. The reason is that the advertisers strongly believe that consumers appropriate brand symbolism that comes from celebrity endorsement to construct and communicate their self-concepts. It is easy to choose a celebrity but it is tough to establish a strong association between the product and the endorser. While the magnitude of the impact of celebrity endorsement remains under the purview of gray spectacles, this paper is an effort to analyze the impact of celebrity endorsements on brands. While communicating brand to consumers, advertisers need to study the culturally defined expectations about celebrity endorsements. In order to measure celebrity endorsement, 25 statements were constructed for celebrity endorser, celebrity features, brand - endorser match and celebrity endorsements. These statements were divided into five factors using exploratory factor analysis and the factors were named as celebrity expertise, trustworthiness, congruence, familiarity, and physical attraction.*

Keywords: *Celebrity endorsement, source of attractiveness, match – up hypotheisi and brand image.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsement or celebrity branding is a type of branding, or advertising, in which a celebrity's social status is used to promote a product, service or charity. Celebrity branding can be of several different forms, from a celebrity simply appearing in advertisements for a product, service or charity to a celebrity attending PR events, creating his or her own line of products or services, and/or using his or her name as a brand.

The latter part of the 80s, the new trend has emerged in India that the marketers started to use Hindi film and TV stars as well as sportspersons to endorse their prominent brands. For example, featuring stars in advertisements like Tabassum

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(Prestige pressure cookers), Jalal Agha (Pan Parag), Kapil Dev (Palmolive Shaving Cream) and Sunil Gavaskar (Dinesh Suitings) became very common.

After some time the advertisers have begun to quantify and qualify the use of celebrities in their marketing campaigns, by evaluating their awareness, appeal, and relevance to a brand's image and the celebrity's influence on consumer buying behavior. Celebrity branding is a global phenomenon and it assumes a paramount importance in developing countries like India, where celebrities are given the status of Demi Gods by the masses. So the marketers do believe that there is a strong correlation between successful celebrity branding and brand endorsements.

In the present marketing scenario, we had the Shah Rukh- Santro campaign with the objective of mitigating the impediment that an unknown Korean brand faced in the Indian market. The objective was to garner faster brand recognition, association and emotional unity with the target group. Star power in India can be gauged by the successful endorsement done by Sharukh for three honchos- Pepsi, Clinic All Clear and Santro. Similarly, S Kumars used Hrithik Roshan to re-launch their mid-segment ready to use brand Tamarind and the firm spent 40 - 50 per cent less on media due to the sheer impact of using Hrithik. Ad recall was as high as 70 per cent, and even the normally conservative trade got interested.

In the Indian context, it would not be presumptuous to state that celebrity endorsements can aggrandize the overall brand. We have numerous examples to exemplifying this claim. A standard example here is Coke, which, till recently, didn't use stars at all internationally. In fact, in India coke used Aamir Khan as a spokesperson for their brand. The recall value for Nakshatra Diamond advertising is only due to the sensuous Aishwarya. The Parker pen brand, which by itself commands equity, used Amitabh Bachchan to revitalize the brand in India. According to Pooja Jain, Director, Luxor Writing Instruments Ltd, post Bachan's stint as brand ambassador, Parker's sales has increased by about 30 per cent.

Celebrities are people, who enjoy public recognition and who often have distinctive attributes such as attractiveness and trustworthiness. (McCracken 1989; Silvera and Austad 2004). According to Stafford et al., 2003 celebrity endorser as, "a famous person who uses public recognition to recommend or co-present with a product in an ad".

The celebrity can be an individual who is familiar to the public, such as actors, sport persons, entertainers and others for their achievements in their respective areas apart from their endorsing role (Friedman and Friedman, 1979:63), and Kamins (1989). (Miciak and Shanklin, 1994) argues that not necessarily the celebrity should be a popular personality; celebrity may also be an animated character like Fred Flintstone or an animal.

The advertisers choose famous stars as celebrities to associate their personality to a product or brand (Kaikati, 1987). The celebrities are widely used by advertisers with the belief that the endorser could make attitudinal and emotional changes in the

consumer mind (Kanungo and Pang, 1973) than a non-celebrity endorser (Atkin & Block, 1983; Petty and Cacioppo 1983). Therefore celebrities who are placed as models and are seen as in support of the product and / or its claim are known as endorsers (Tellis, 1998). In order to be an effective celebrity endorser, one should have the credibility to attract attention. (Miciak and Shanklin 1994), increase awareness of the endorsed product (Wilson, 1997) and influence the purchase decision of the targeted audience (Ohanian, 1991).

Early research has found that celebrities are more effective than other types of endorsers, such as, the professional expert, the company manager, or the typical consumer (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). Using celebrity endorsers, companies may easily crack into consumers' symbolic association with an operational reference group, as celebrity endorsers are perceived as dynamic, attractive and likable (Assael, 1984; Atkins and Block, 1983; Kamins, 1990).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celebrity Endorsement

The use of celebrities in advertisements is not a new phenomenon (Kaikati, 1987). Celebrity endorsement as a marketing practice has a very distinguished history. In the eighteenth century, a famous potter Josiah Wedgwood pioneered in using celebrities to his advantage. Once when Queen Charlotte began to use his products, Wedgwood capitalized on his new status by referring himself as the "Potter to Her Majesty" (Dukevich, 2004). For instance one of the early examples involves Queen Victoria's association with Cadbury Cocoa (Sherman, 1985).

The Source Attractiveness Model

"Beauty is a greater recommendation than any other introduction." This quote by Aristotle is suitable in this context of source attractiveness for appreciating the efficacy of pleasant appearance since most societies place a high premium on physical attractiveness. (Ohanian, 1991). Patzer (1985) affirms that physical attractiveness is an informational cue which involves effects that are inescapable, persuasive and subtle. (Erdogan, 1999).

(McGuire, 1968) noted that expertise and trustworthiness have been considered as important elements. Attractiveness based on 'source valence' model was identified as another dimension of source credibility. Advertisers have made choices of selecting celebrities on their foundation of their attractiveness to gain from the dual effects of physical appeal and celebrity status. (Singer, 1983).

Source attractiveness is mostly associated with physical attributes, such as familiarity, similarity and likeability and all of which are important in the individual's initial judgment of another person. (Ohanian, 1990). Similarity refers to the resemblance between the receiver and the source of the message, whereas familiarity refers to the

acquaintance of the source through exposure. While talking about similarity, it is mentioned that consumers are more likely to be influenced by a message coming from someone they feel a sense of similarity with. (Belch & Belch, 2001). The position advocated by the source is better understood and received, when the endorser and the recipient are seen to have similar needs, lifestyles, goals and interests. (Kelman, 1961). Likeability on the other hand is the fondness for the source which may be as a result of behavior, physical appearance or other personal trait and also these celebrities need to be at least well known and admired in the public eye. (Belch & Belch, 2001).

A number of attributes determine celebrity attractiveness such as intellectual skill, personality properties, lifestyle or athletic prowess that consumers might perceive in a celebrity endorser, and thus does not simply refer to physical attractiveness. (Erdogan, 1999). Kelman (1961) Identification is the process which has been used to explain how attractiveness influenced consumers. This is another of Kelman's social influence processes which occurs because of the desire to identify with such endorsers, receivers accept the attractive source's information. (Ambrose, 1992; Friedman & Friedman, 1979).

Research reveals that consumers have a tendency to form positive stereotypes about attractive individuals and also that is compared to their unattractive counterparts. Physically attractive communicators celebrities are more successful at changing beliefs (Baker and Churchill, 1977) and generating purchase intentions (Friedman et al. 1976; Kahle and Homer, 1985). A study conducted by Kahle and Homer (1985) divulged that consumers were more geared up to buy an Edge razor after seeing an attractive celebrity in a magazine advertisement than an unattractive celebrity. They also elucidated that the speed of communication occurs more promptly, when the pictures appear in advertisements than when arguments appear.

However it was suggested by Caballero et al., (1998) and Ohanian (1991) that though attractiveness might result in positive feelings towards advertising and products, it is not necessary that this feeling should necessarily translate into actual behavior, cognitive attitudes and brand image.

It is indicated by both Till and Busler (1998) and Ohanian (1991) that more than physical attractiveness, the expertise of the endorser is more important in affecting attitude towards the endorsed brand.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

To measure the celebrity endorsement, celebrity expertise, trustworthy, congruency, familiarity, and physical attraction were assumed to be an influencing factor.

Questionnaire Design

The study is descriptive in nature and a survey method was employed in it. The data were collected through structured non disguised questionnaire. The questionnaire

consists of two construct. The first construct measured the demographic characteristics of respondents like age, qualification, income, marital status. The second construct includes 25 statements to measure the celebrity endorsement. These statements were related to the celebrity expertise, trustworthy, congruency, familiarity and physical attraction. They were measured with five point scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree.

Sampling Method and Selection of Samples

The primary data were collected by using convenience sampling method and the sample size of 118 was selected for the study.

Pilot Test

A pilot study was performed with 30 respondents to check the obstacle in the questionnaire. This proved to be beneficial as it helped unveil that the interview questions needed to be rephrased in a simpler language to make it comfortable for the interviewees and the jargons and some unknown marketing terms present in the questionnaire were to be done away with. Also the pilot test helped the researcher to get at ease with the entire data collection process, as the researcher was a novice. It gave an introductory idea of the responses and helped in reframing the questions and changing their order, which would encourage more continuity in thinking.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The first part of the questionnaire contains personal information about the respondents. Table 1. Explains the demographic profile of the total respondents.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the respondent

<i>Sample Characteristics</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1. Age category		
< =20	24	20.3
21 – 30	59	50.0
31 – 40	17	14.4
41 – 50	11	9.3
> 50	7	5.9
2. Gender		
Male	72	61
Female	46	39
3. Occupation		
Students	56	47.5
Jr. Level Officers	3	2.5
Sr. Level Officers	18	15.3
Professionals	41	34.7

The data represented in the above table show that, out of 118 respondents, 50 respondents (50%) fall between the age group of 21 to 30 and 24 respondents (20.3%)

are less than or equal to 20, whereas in gender 72 (61%) respondents are male and 46 (39%) are female. And also it is inferred that, out of 118 respondents, 56 (47.5%) are students and 41 (34.7%) are professionals.

The following table explains the factor analysis of statements constructed for the measurement of celebrity endorsement:

Table 2
Factor Analysis

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Factor Loadings</i>	<i>Eigen Values</i>	<i>Total Variance Explained</i>	<i>KMO Value</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
Expertise	1. Celebrities are sound enough in explaining the product information	.781	4.668	13.337	0.650	0.798
	2. A Celebrity who is endorsing the product have more knowledge of that product	.643				
	3. A Celebrity who is endorsing the product have special experience with the product	.745				
	4. Celebrity are expert in the product that they endorsing	.710				
Trustworthiness	1. Celebrity credibility influences the effectiveness of endorsement	.755	3.149	8.997		0.768
	2. Celebrity trustworthiness improves product value	.644				
	3. I prefer to buy a product if the celebrity endorser is trustworthy person	.765				
	4. I think celebrities bring credibility to advertising messages	.812				
Congruence	1. Celebrity helps me to understand more about the brand	.729	3.064	8.755		0.789
	2. Celebrity is totally appropriate for the brand	.818				
	3. Brand and celebrity are good matches	.630				
	4. The perceived fit between product & endorser influences the endorsement effectiveness	.618				
	5. Celebrities value define, and refresh the brand image	.734				
Familiarity	1. Being familiar with a celebrity is enough for me to purchase celebrity endorsed product	.763	2.759	7.883		0.794
	2. I think celebrities influence my style	.748				
	3. Social status of celebrities attracts me more	.778				
Physical attractiveness	1. I prefer to watch advertisements with physically attractive (beautiful, elegant, classy) endorser	.822	2.363	6.752		0.776
	2. Feminine celebrities are expected to be physically attractive	.806				
	3. Attractiveness has a direct impact on the brand/product	.678				

KMO and Bartlett’s test is conducted for the purpose of studying sample adequacy and suitability of data for factor analysis. From the above table, the KMO value (0.650) is more than 0.6 is acceptable. For suitability, chi square value (0.00) is significant at 0.05.

The above table illustrates Loading value, Eigen value and total variance explained for each factor. Loading value is nothing but correlation value. They are all sorted based on size and loading value less than .45 are suppressed.

In order to measure reliability of questions in the questionnaire, the amount of confidence coefficient has been calculated by the method of Cronbach’s alpha. The Cronbach’s alpha for expertise, trustworthiness, congruency, familiarity and physical attractiveness respectively is 0.798, 0.768, 0.789, 0.794 and 0.776. All of the values meet the required criteria of 0.7, which demonstrate that the applied questionnaire enjoys confidentiality or in other words the necessary reliability.

Regression is applied to find out the influence of independent variables (Expertise, Trustworthiness, Congruency, Familiarity and Physical attractiveness) on dependent variable (brand image).

Table 3
Regression Analysis
Model Summary^b

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>	<i>Durbin-Watson</i>
1	.836 ^a	.756	.765	.55399	1.830

a. Predictors: (Constant), Expertise, Trustworthiness, Congruency, Familiarity and Physical attractiveness
b. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

R square explains the level of variance of dependent variable (brand image) is explained by the independent variables (Expertise, Trustworthiness, Congruency, Familiarity and Physical attractiveness). In our case, 76.5 percentage of brand image variance is explained by variables such as Expertise, Trustworthiness, Congruency, Familiarity and Physical attractiveness as independent variables. Adjusted R square is R square adjusted with degrees of freedom. Durbin Watson statistics is used to determine whether regression is spurious. Generally 1.75 to 2.25 is acceptable limit.

ANOVA^b

<i>Model</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
1	Regression	6.089	5	1.218	6.771	.000 ^a
	Residual	28.235	157	.180		
	Total	34.323	162			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Expertise, Trustworthiness, Congruency, Familiarity and Physical attractiveness
b. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

		Coefficients ^a				
<i>Model</i>		<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>		
		<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	(Constant)	2.916	.222		13.133	.000
	Expertise	.182	.038	.367	4.773	.000
	Trustworthiness	-.062	.041	-.112	-1.505	.034
	Congruency	.177	.060	.195	2.926	.004
	Familiarity	.049	.034	.112	1.467	.144
	Physical attractiveness	-.436	.131	-.256	-3.330	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Image

The above table indicates both standardized and unstandardized coefficients of regression. The influence of all independent variables is significant except familiarity that is greater than 0.05.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper is to study the role of celebrity endorsement on brand image. The effects of a celebrity endorser on respondents' assessments about advertisements and brands endorsed by celebrities have been studied previously. Attitude towards a celebrity endorser has a direct positive effect on attitude towards advertisement. Attitude towards advertisement has important effects on attitude towards brands, too and its effect is comparatively stronger than the effect of celebrity endorser. But the effect of attitude toward celebrity endorser on brand image is not considerable.

The results of this study demonstrate that the celebrity endorsement has a direct effect on brand image. This result confirms outcomes of the previous research by Agarwal and Kamakura (1995), Till and Busler (1998), and White et al (2008). When there is a "fit" between the endorser and the endorsed product, endorser's image helps construct the image of the brand in consumers' minds. In fact, using an attractive endorser has a positive impact on consumer attitudes towards a brand, because attractive endorsers have a tendency to get more attention than less attractive ones. On the other hand, the experience of celebrity's negative information can have an undesirable effect on the endorsed brand. We have considered familiarity of artists because people have a more positive attitude towards artists. So, they distribute attitude towards artists to attitude towards endorsing the brand.

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