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SOCIAL IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON BRAND EQUITY – A STUDY FROM THE SOAP INDUSTRY IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The business environment has changed with the passage of time. In this era, marketers use several strategies for promotion purpose and for achievement of the desired goal. Celebrity endorsement is one of the effective techniques of promoting the brand. Any firm that involves celebrities to come and endorse their product, leads to change the perception of the product and increases the sales of the product. This study done to explore the effect of Celebrity endorsement on building brand equity with particular emphasis on the soap industry of Pakistan. For this, 384 respondents were selected. Data analysis techniques include Regression, Correlation, ANOVA, Chi-square. The results described that Celebrity endorsement and brand equity are positively correlated having a value of 0.475 which is highly significant. Regression analysis results revealed that Celebrity endorsement explains 22.6% of brand equity. The result of Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 which is a decent reliability of the results. ANOVA results revealed that alternative hypothesis is accepted having a value of 0.0. The research underlines that products/services endorsed by renowned celebrities tend to create more impact than otherwise.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsements, brand equity, brand loyalty, brand positioning, marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern world, positioning of a brand in customer minds has a vital role in building brand equity through advertising. Creating a certain perception or image of brand in customer minds is crucial because it helps in developing the brand equity. Brand equity concerns with brand's strength and value derives from its perception in customer's mind. If a customer has a positive perception about the brand, he will be loyal to the brand. It is necessary to know what the customer thinks about your brand or services. If they have negative perceptions about the brand due to some issues with the brand then they might never use it again, because of their previous experience. But it can be changed by reintroducing the brand with their favorite celebrity endorsing the brand and adoring it, by showing that they're getting pleasure by using certain brand, these endorsement strategies can cater those customers too who never heard of the brand but they know the celebrity very well.

This digital world has given us an effective technique of building brand equity by celebrity endorsement. By which Companies can create strong brand equity for their brands by making them unforgettable by adopting the services of different types of renowned celebrities in their brand advertisements. The Celebrity Endorsement strategy was officially used by a firm in the nineteenth century and created as a method of promoting brands due to radio and TVC making, then gradually grew up when the celebrity endorsement strategy shown in 15% of all advertisements. It was observed through past researches that endorsement made by celebrities has positively effects brand recognition, purchase intentions and purchase behaviors of customers.

Celebrity endorsement itself depends on Attractiveness, Credibility, Reputation, product matchup and Reliability. If a celebrity has such attributes people easily rely on him or her. Moreover, the message from endorser becomes more effective and trustworthy.

If the celebrity doesn't have good image in the customer minds, then they might perceive the brand same as the celebrity, it can be a difficult task to decide which celebrity can influence positively the customer to create the brand image, to make them purchase the brand, to use these brands and to get attached and be loyal to the brand.

Those companies which use celebrity endorsement gain more popularity. Firms use to spend huge amount to force celebrities for endorsement of their product.

Celebrity endorsement can be done by new ways too, such as celebrity posting and giving reviews about the brand on her/his social media accounts, websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and other social networking sites because everyone in this modern world is using these social websites to get the information and to be connected with the world and what's happening in around them. It's easy to build the brand image, spread the brand awareness and create the brand equity through the social media because it's a two-way communication platform, when you share something about the brand the customers start giving their attention and reviews about certain information about the brand. Most customers get to know about the newly introduced brand on their favorite celebrity account and make purchase decisions immediately. Most of the celebrities do paid promotions of the brands. It's a modern way of promoting the brands and sharing the after-use experience of brand with the fans, that's how the fans get to know what brand their favorite celebrities like and with what they got bad experience. This helps the customers in making the purchase decisions because of their favorite celebrity preferences.

1.1 Background

People love to buy those brands or services which are being used by their favorite celebrities. Number of firms utilizing the film stars and sports stars to promote their brands. Marketers are using this likeness of customers towards their favorite celebrities as a tool to attract their mind by showing their favorite celebrities using our brand to create a positive brand image to get high brand equity. A company with high brand equity has highly competitive advantage. Companies are spending huge amount of money in this celebrity endorsement process because this can improve and give an extreme health to a brand and the companies knows it well. Famous and renowned public figure in any brand advertisement enhances the brand equity by promoting brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, brand preferences and brand recognition. It helps in eliminating the gaps between the brand and its customers.

In modern era the celebrities are being treated as a role model. People are changing their lifestyle and admiring the lifestyle of their favorite celebrities. This act is impacting the mind of customers and has a great hand in shaping the customer perception. Having certain image in customer mind regarding the brands creates the brand equity.

Celebrities mostly gave great impact on perception of choosing any product. If our favorite celebrity is using a brand, we start having a positive image that if they're using it then it must be a quality product that's how we get the signals in our mind with certain brand image and after using that brand if that turns out to be quality product, we start relying on our favorite celebrity choices and end up buying those products constantly. That's how brand equity is being developed by celebrity endorsement.

Olay, relatively unknown at the time, made waves by having Ashwariya Rai Bachan in their advertisement. There are many other brands like Ariel Washing Powder relatively unknown at the time of starting but having Wasim Akram in their advertisement the brand got very high attention and brand recognition sometimes it often happens that the brand can also be recognized by the celebrity many customers do not know the brand name or even brand properties or characteristics, but they buy it because of the celebrity.

For example, Pepsi is endorsed by Fawad Khan nationally, Kendall Jenner, Lionel Messi and Britney Spears internationally. Coca Cola endorsed by Ahad Raza Mir, Maya Ali, Sheheryar Munawar and Mahira Khan nationally. Head & Shoulders endorsed by Shahid Afridi nationally, Karina Kapoor in India. Kashmir Banaspati, Huawei, Lux, Metro Shoes, Nestle Pure Life, QMobile, Nestle Nesvita and Tuc television commercials endorsed by Mahira Khan Ufone, Olpers, National, Lemon Max, Lifebuoy, Nestle and Pepsi endorsed by Sanam Saeed Harpic Powder, Phoenix Batteries, Tarang, Bank Al Habib, QMobile, Kolson, Servis Shoes, Voice Mobiles and Lemon Max Bar are endorsed by Fahad Mustafa.

In the end, it is the credibility that make it believable and we will fall for the celebrity endorsement. A substandard product with availability issues will not sell, no matter who endorses it.

1.1.2 Industry Brief

The history of soap industry dates way back from more than 2000 years. Soap manufacturing industries were started in America (North). Early from the European colonies history. Some American entities with present famous names were started 50 –200 plus years ago.

People knew about the product soap nearly 200 years back 70 A. D when Mr. Pllny and Mr. Elder evidentially discovered the soap. This product was foaming and had cleansing character. Soap making main ingredients were taken from animal and nature that is fats. By mixing salts, fat and oils (vegetable oils like castor, olive & coconut). Producing soap by cold process method is popular in recent era while hot process which is historical is also being used by some soap makers.

Different types of soaps are there, such as handmade, homemade, industrial and commercial use soaps. Soaps which are used for washing clothes, dishes and cars, pets, child etc.

1.2 Research Problem

In modern era every company invests a lot of money on the communication mediums to communicate with its consumers for the sake of branding and promotion of their brand. Celebrity branding is also way of promotion. We need to find the effectiveness of this marketing tool to examine the influence of celebrity endorsement in building consumer-based brand equity.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of Celebrity endorsement on customer attitude?
2. What is the relationship between purchasing behavior and celebrity endorsement?
3. Does celebrity endorsed products get more successful than those without celebrity endorsement?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To reveal the connection between celebrity endorsement and brand equity.
2. To identify the effect of Celebrity endorsement on brand equity.
3. To understand the impact of Celebrity endorsement on consumer attitude.
4. To know what type of Celebrity endorses effectively.

Thus, the aim of this study is to compare the impact of celebrity endorsement on the brand equity.

1.5 Limitations

The research is concise to study impact of celebrity endorsement on building brand equity. Data was collected from different cities of Pakistan mainly Karachi. The sample size was 384 male and females of different age and preferences. The major limitation for this research was time.

1.6 Scope

This research has examined that how celebrities are effective for endorsing the brands and how firms can make their brand equity and its image more powerful in their customer's mind through this communication and advertising tool. It will be useful to soap industries, researchers, marketers and practitioners by exploring the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on brand equity.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Celebrity Endorsement was firstly explained by McCracken (1989). It is a fast and valid channel to attract the customers by using celebrities that have huge fan following, good credibility and reputation. If such personality comes out and promote a particular product then it will create a positive image of product, product's recognition and product's value. (McCracken, 1989) Basically, marketers use this strategy in their advertisement to generate more sales and for making valuable reputation of product which positively influence on customers buying behavior. Companies use celebrity's attractiveness, credibility, and qualities to occupy a valuable place in customer's mind regarding the product.

Buttle, Raymond & Danzigen, (2000), argue that celebrity branding or Celebrity Endorsement play a vital role to create brand loyalty and add value to product. Usually public like and rely on celebrities and get impact by their endorsement. Customer's more attention and interest in advertisement is just because of celebrity endorsement.

Ratneshwar and Chiaken (1991) opined that Celebrity would be a credible source if he or she has an expertise in a particular field such a footballer or cricketer endorsing shoes. For example, Cristiano Ronaldo is endorsing Nike or Adidas shoes. A brand equity phenomenon is consisting of two aspects. One is Financial which is all about ROI, markup, profitability and all financial decision. Second is marketing strategy aspect which defines product strength, value, customer's attention towards product and all about marketing strategy. (Keller, 1998)

Farquhar (1989) said that Value added features and additional value of brand is brand's equity. He identified that following pros and cons of celebrity endorsement:

Merits

- It helps customer to try or purchase the product.

- It helps the brand to be different over a brand that does not use any celebrity.
- Celebrities in advertisement make advertisement more noticeable and attract the customer's attention towards the brand.
- Celebrity endorsement helps failing brand and creates more interest in customer.

Demerits

- Celebrity Endorsement does not always give a favorable impact on brand, sometime due to some celebrity's scandal in past will create negative perception and may exploits the good will of brand.
- Celebrity Endorsement sometime reminds consumers only the celebrity than the product by overshadow of celebrity.
- If a celebrity appears in several advertisements, he lost his credibility which may affect the brand.

2.1 Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity Endorsement is a marketing technique used by organizations to attract the target audience for building strong brand image and position. In addition, it is the type of advertisement which involves a famous and well-known personality to promote a particular brand or services. Many product initiates without celebrity but honestly a brand or product without celebrity never get more attention or liked. Celebrity endorsement has ability to impress customers repurchase and make them loyal to brand. (Mela et al.1997). Khatri (2006) stated that in celebrity-based advertisement companies use celebrity's name and fame as promotional tool for any product.

Celebrity Endorsement declared as effective tool of promotion in this era.

2.1.1 Celebrity's Credibility and Reputation

Hovlard et al. (1953) opined that Celebrity must have the quality of being trusted and believed in. By this the message of advertisement from celebrity becomes effectiveness.

2.1.2 Celebrity's Attractiveness

McGuire (1985) stated about it, celebrity's physical attractiveness and class influence on brand. Top brands emphasize on attractiveness because they generate to recall the brand.

2.1.3 Celebrity-Product Matchup

It is mandatory for effectiveness of TV commercial; there should be compatibility between product and endorser in order to make sense.

2.2 Brand Equity

Brand Equity concern with brand's strength and value. These values are identified by customer views and experience with that brand. If a person thinks more about brand, it means positive brand equity. Having positive brand equity, organization can charge more prices. When brand is under disappointments or he recommends to avoid the brand, it has negative value and equity.

Aaker (1991) stated about brand equity that a collection of assets and liabilities which are interlinked to the brand which creates value for customer as well as for firm. Above said collections are categorized in five dimensions. Brand loyalty, Brand awareness, Brand quality, Brand association and other brand propriety assets.

If a product has best quality and is recognizing easily it means the product has created equity. Having brand equity, brand has successfully distinct itself from competitor. By developing brand equity company may enjoy more profit as have more customers. It will help companies to expand product line. Brand equity measured by Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Brand Image, Brand Positioning, Brand Loyalty, Perceived Quality, Point of Difference and Point of Parity.

2.2.1 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness concerns with the ability of customers through which they determine and recall the brand. Those products which focus on high level of brand awareness enjoy more sales.

2.2.2 Brand Loyalty

Dick and Basu (1994), advocate that Customer's priority to a product is brand loyalty. Brand loyalty considered when customer choose the brand as primary choice and do not think to switch off in case of unavailability of product. Customer's commitment to repurchase a product on daily basis or situational basis when he or she needs the product influenced by product's value-added features. They further stated that Every firm's goal is to generate and keep customer's loyalty towards their brand. Aaker (1991) also opined that Consumer's attachment and commitment shows his loyalty towards brand.

2.2.3 Brand Positioning

Aaker (1991), acknowledge that brand positioning to be defined as "to occupy the distinct and valued position in the mind of customer". According to him, Brand positioning is an art of designing company's image and efforts.

2.2.4 Perceived Quality

Zeithaml (1988), suggest that perceived quality is all about customer's judgment, feelings, relationship and bonding based on product's entire performance and efficiency. Mostly customer chooses a brand due to value added services and valued quality. It concerns with consumer's opinion and view regarding brand's entire performance and superior qualities.

2.2.5 Point of Difference

Kamins, M.A. (1990), identify this as to what benefits and value-added service you are giving to customers while others are not giving that thing. This makes you differ from your competitor. It is a competitive advantage for any product. In this case you are providing unique thing.

2.2.6 Point of Parity

Kamins (1990) suggests that this means your excess in something over your competitor. But in this case uniqueness is not necessary. It refers to the process and the way in which an organization's product provide similarity in features with its rivals within an industry.

2.2.7 Brand Association

Kamins (1990) also provides for brand association as the qualities and features of brand come in customer's mind when someone is talking about that brand. Brand associations are images, symbols that are linked with a brand. Anything, which is deep, settled in customer's mind about a brand known as brand association.

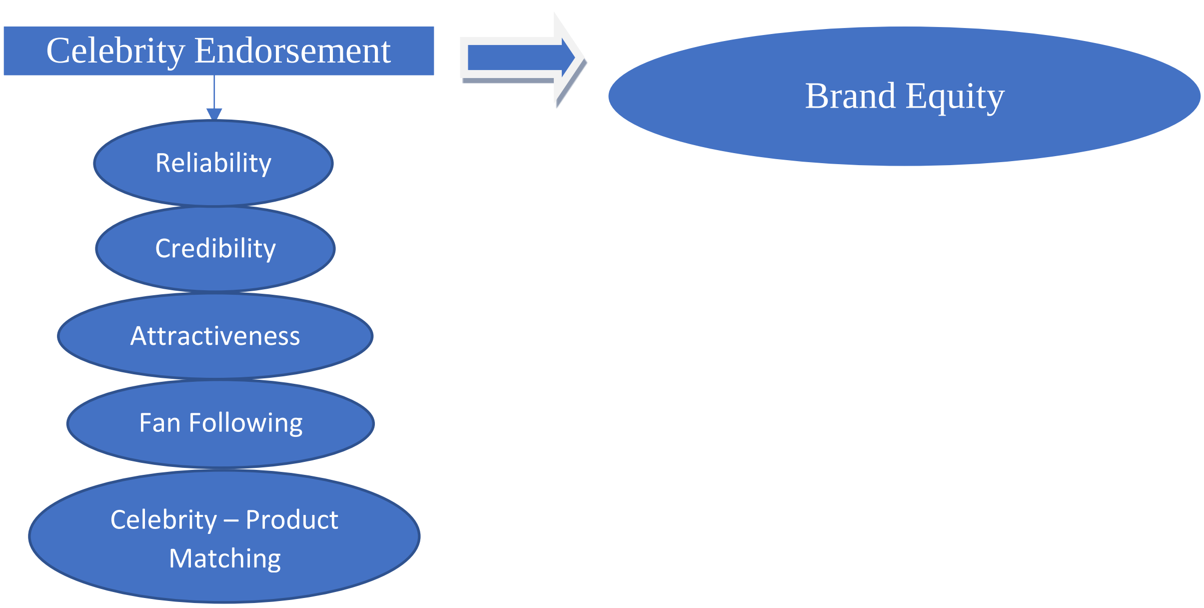
2.2.8 Brand Image

Sharma, K., & Kumar, S. S. (2013), suggest brand image as a set of beliefs which a customer hold about product is its image. It is all about what customer think and view about brand.

2.2.9 Brand Recognition

Sharma, K., & Kumar, S. S. (2013), entail that customer become closely bound with brand and recognize it in a shop or elsewhere.

2.2 Conceptual Framework



3. RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This research is quantitative and hypothesis testing in nature. Primary data will be collected by questionnaires and secondary data sources are literature review for this research.

3.2 Procedure

Questionnaires will be the way of data collection and data will be collected by surveyed questionnaire filled by university students of Karachi.

3.3 Population

The population of this study is soap consumers in residents of Karachi, Pakistan.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Methods

The sample size for this research is 384 respondents to examine the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand’s equity. Convenience sampling has been used for data collection.

3.5 Instrument selection

Questionnaires will be distributed on the above said topic. The questionnaire will be given to the sample population in order to identify the consumer’s perception due to celebrity endorsement regarding the brand to measure the brand equity based on those variables which we discuss ahead. Those variables are measure via asking questions and using Likert scale.

3.6 Hypothesis

- H1: Reliable celebrity influences brand equity.
- H2: Celebrity’s credibility has influence on brand equity.
- H3: Attractive celebrity in advertisement influences brand equity.
- H4: Celebrity-Product Matching develops more brand equity.
- H5: Having massive fan following, celebrity influences brand equity.

4. DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

This research concerns with impact of celebrity endorsement on building brand equity. The data collected through online questionnaire from people who consume soaps. The sample size was 385 according to Uma Sekaran's sampling formulation. The correlation analysis done to examine the relationships of variables is linked or not. Regression analysis performed to know the impact of celebrity endorsement (Independent Variable) on brand equity (Dependent Variable). We analyze reliability test to determine responses and results accuracy.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.720	.726	19

This is fundamental tool to know the reliability of data. Minimum reliability of any research is 0.6 or 60%. We asked 19 questions in which 8 questions was regarding IV and 11 questions were about DV and value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0.720 which revealed highest level of consistency in our responses.

Correlations

		BE	CE
Pearson Correlation	BE	1.000	.475
	CE	.475	1.000

Sig. (1-tailed)	BE	.	.000
	CE	.000	.
N	BE	320	320
	CE	320	320

The correlation matrix shows the relationship between IV & DV. Both values are 0.000 less than the value of probability 0.05. It means that both variables are highly connected and has positive relationship.

5. Linear Regression

Regression Model Summary:

Co-Efficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	16.404	.953		17.219	.000					
	CE	.420	.044	.475	9.625	.000	.475	.475	.475	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: BE

Regression applied to analyze the impact of Celebrity Endorsement on building Brand Equity of soap industry in Pakistan. We select 95% confidence interval and 5% error margin. Value of t in regression must be greater than 1.96. The value of t is 9.625 which shows the strongest relationship and impact of IV on DV.

Dependent Variable = Constant + bx

Brand Equity = 16.404 +.420(Celebrity Endorsement)

T test value should be greater than +2, higher the value from 2 the better the results. Sig. value should be less than .05 to make statistical results significant. They are significant, so our alternative hypothesis is accepted.

R is the correlation between predictor variable and dependent variable. Our predictor variable is

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.475[a]	.226	.223	4.532	.226	92.639	1	318	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), CE

b. Dependent Variable: BE

celebrity endorsement that means we have a correlation of .475 between celebrity endorsement and brand equity variable.

Whereas adjusted R – square helps in explaining the effect predictor variable have on the dependent variable. From our model summary we can illustrate that celebrity endorsement explain 22.6% of brand equity in soap industry of Pakistan. Whereas there are various other factors that also explains the brand equity.

Significance of Model

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1902.912	1	1902.912	92.639	.000[b]
	Residual	6532.076	318	20.541		
	Total	8434.988	319			

a. Dependent Variable: BE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CE

ANOVA stands for analysis of variance; this also helps in gauging our statistical result. It measures the mean variance between our predicator and dependent variable. The sig. value less than .05 explains that our alternative hypotheses are accepted.

6. CONCLUSION

The celebrity endorsement enhances the consumer attention towards product and change the perception of customer about that brand or product. Celebrity endorsement enhance the brand recognition, brand image and brand association which leads to brand equity. In this research independent variable is celebrity endorsement and dependent variable is brand equity.

Researcher asked 19 questions in which 8 questions were for celebrity endorsement and rest 11 questions were asked for brand equity. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.720 explains the highest level of consistency in responses.

Correlation analysis defines the relationship of IV and DV. Both variables are strongly connected with each other. Correlation value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 shows positive relationship of variables.

Regression performed to examine the impact of celebrity endorsement on brand equity of soap industry in Pakistan. We select 95% confidence interval and 5% error margin in which value of t statistics must be greater than 1.96 or 2. In this research value of t is 9.625 which show that result is better.

5.1 Recommendation

This research shows the importance of celebrity endorsement and its impact on building brand equity. Study recommends organization and marketers to involve celebrity in their advertisements for branding purpose and increase brand equity. We recommend organization to increase budget for celebrity endorsement.

5.2 Areas of further research

The scope of study focuses on Celebrity based advertisement to attract the customers, to change the perception about product, to build the brand equity. Celebrity endorsement has ability to build certain brand equity of any product. The further research could be conducted by changing the soap industry to cosmetics products or apparel brands. It can be conducted by adding moderating variable like impact of celebrity endorsement on building brand equity through social media.

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