European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 08 Issue 01
January-2020

Celebrity Endorsement and Undergraduates' Purchasing Behavior

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ABSTRACT

In the present era of technological advancement and media influence, advertisement plays a vital role in changing the consumers' perception and also the consumption pattern. Especially celebrity endorsements play an vital role in the current advertisements. Nowadays, consumers are exposed to thousands of voices and images of celebrity endorsers in advertisements every day. This study focused on analyze the influence of celebrity endorsement on undergraduates' purchasing behavior. The major objective is to explore the impact of celebrity endorsement on undergraduates' purchasing behavior. Hence findings of this study would be used to identify how celebrity advertisements influence the undergraduates' purchasing behavior and to effectively design the advertising campaigns to promote the brand. The study framework was developed as the celebrity endorsement as independent variable and purchasing behavior as dependent variable. Study population is undergraduates of Eastern University, Sri Lanka and by using convenience sampling 100 undergraduates were selected as sample of this study. Structured questionnaires were used to collect the primary data and the data have been analyzed based on both descriptive analysis method. The study results revealed that, there is a significant relationship between the sources of celebrity endorsement and undergraduates' purchasing behavior.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, purchasing behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

After 21 century, the globalization has been expanded all over the world and it affects the current marketing and communication strategies in the present era. Nowadays marketers always searching for new ways to reach their target market. In the hyper competitive marketing environment, if a product or a service wants to be fast known to consumers, it must rely on strong advertising campaigns to make consumers memorize product messages. However, at present a consumer contacts a lot of advertisements per day. Hence, which advertising methods can really catch consumers' preference and influence their buying decision is important to marketers.

Nowadays it appears that advertising endorser is one of the important methods that attract many business advertisers' attention. Advertising endorsers are often famous celebrities or experts who hold expertise, awareness and attractiveness. Celebrity endorser is an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed. Celebrities draw more attention to the

ISSN: 2235-767X
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advertisements they appear in and brands they are aligned with when compared with advertisements that do not take advantage of an individual's celebrity status. In this way, celebrity endorsers help advertisements break through the surrounding and otherwise busy clutter. More importantly, celebrities bring their own distinctive images to an advertisements and its associated brand and can create, enhance, and change brand image.

Celebrity endorsements imply that the celebrity uses the product or service that he or she is endorsing, and prefers it above others of its kind. For this reason, brands will often target celebrities who appear to reflect whichever effects the advertisement is promising. They can transmit product messages to catch consumers' eyesight in a short time and further enhance consumer purchase intention. Thus, celebrity endorsers become one of major advertising strategies in the present advertising plans. When consumers' familiarity of a product increases, consumers' confident and their product preferences and attitudes on will also rise. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify how the celebrity endorsement influences on the undergraduates' purchasing behavior.

B. Problem Statement

The academic literature in advertising provides ample evidence of the positive effects of using celebrities on both advertisements and brand evaluations. A widely accepted explanation for celebrity endorser effects has been that celebrities bring credibility to advertising messages. With their high profile, wide recognition, and unique qualities, celebrities in general are perceived as more credible than non-celebrity endorsers, exerting greater influences on consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intention.

Nowadays marketers have recognized the value of using celebrities in their advertisements due to highly competitive and rapidly changing marketing environment. When it comes to choose which star will be used for a new advertising campaign, companies choose according to what quality they want to engender in the market. The choices will also reflect whether the company is looking it irrespective of the celebrity-brand fit. The marketers hire well known personalities to convey the message about their products. Presently, many international as well as local brands are associated with famous personalities. Organizations spends huge amount of money for such personalities because they try to select individuals whose characters will maximize message influence.

Why do companies spend huge money to have celebrities appear in their advertisements and endorse their products? They think endorse have stopping power. Marketers think a popular celebrity will favorably influence consumers feelings, attitudes, purchase behavior. While choosing a celebrity to endorse, the credibility of the person should be considered since any mishap can affect the buying behavior of customers (McCracken, 1989). Therefore this study focuses on identify the "Influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behavior with special reference to undergraduates in Eastern University of Sri Lanka".

C. Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of celebrity attractiveness on the consumer purchasing behavior with special reference to undergraduates in Eastern University of Sri Lanka.
- To examine the impact of celebrity credibility on the consumer purchasing behavior with special reference to undergraduates in Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

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- To examine the impact of celebrity likability on the consumer purchasing behavior with special reference to undergraduates in Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Celebrity endorsement and its' characteristics such as attractiveness, credibility and likability are the independent variables and consumer buying behaviors the dependent variable of this study.

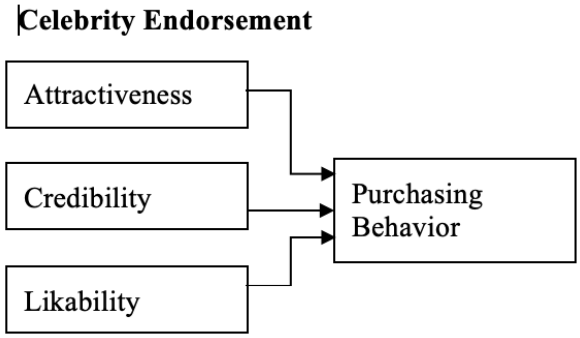


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Developed for Study Purpose

A. Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity is a person who will recognize by the people and has a good reputation in the peoples mind and society. Celebrity endorsement is a form of advertising campaign that involves a well-known person using their fame to help promote a product or service. McCraken (1989) defined celebrity endorser as "any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition ton behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. Many marketers consider that, use of celebrity endorsement in the television advertisement enhances the product evaluations and also increases the advertisement ratings (Dean & Biswas, 2001).

B. Purchasing Behavior

Consumer behavior is the decision processes and acts of people involved in buying and using products. It is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations in the selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of goods and services to satisfy needs and desires. Consumer behavior examines not only what behaviors consumers' exhibit but also the reasons for those behaviors. On a macro level, marketers are interested in demographic shifts as well as society's values, beliefs and practices that affect how consumers interact with the market place. On a micro level, consumer behavior focuses on human behavior and the reasons behind these behaviors. Thus, concepts drawn from psychology and sociology are prominently reflected in the consumer behavior literature. Consumer behavior has been always of great interest to marketers. The knowledge of consumer behavior helps the marketer to understand how consumers think, feel and select from alternatives like products, brands and the like and how the consumers are influenced by their environment. A

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consumer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Most of these factors are uncontrollable and beyond the hands of marketers but they have to be considered while trying to understand the complex behavior of the consumers.

C. Attractiveness and Purchasing Behavior

Attractiveness refers to the endorser's physical appearance, personality, likeability, and similarity to the receiver, thus to the perceived social value of the source (Solomon, 2002). Attractiveness does not mean simply physical attractiveness, but includes any number of virtuous characteristics that consumers might perceive in a celebrity endorser. Physical attractiveness suggests that a celebrity determines the effectiveness of persuasion as a result of that consumers wanting to be like the endorser and wanting to identify themselves with that endorser (Cohen and Golden, 1972). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 of this study is "Attractiveness of celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on undergraduates' purchasing behavior".

D. Credibility and Purchasing Behavior

Celebrities are generally viewed by consumers as credible sources of information about the product or firm they endorse. The credibility of a message depends upon the perceived level of trustworthiness, expertise and integrity associated with an endorser or communicator. When the receiver adopts the opinion of a credible source since customers believe information from this source is accurate. Credibility meant consumer's confidence in the source for providing information in an objective and honest manner (Ohanian, 1991). Marketers take the advantage of these set of values by employing celebrities those are most regarded as trustworthy, honest believable and dependable among their fans and people (Shimp, 1997). When the communicator was perceived to be high trustworthy, an opinionated message was more effective than a non-opinionated communication in producing attitude change. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 of this study is "Credibility of celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on undergraduates' purchasing behavior"

E. Likability and Purchasing Behavior

Likability occurs from affection for the source due to the physical appearance, behavior or other personal characteristics. When customer more likely to the endorsements automatically popular the advertisement in the market. The likability of celebrity endorsement base on similarity and lifestyle. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 of this study is "Likability of celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on undergraduates' purchasing behavior"

Table 3.1: Summary of Operationalization

Variables	Dimensions	Indicators	Measurement
Celebrity Endorsement	Attractiveness	Physical Appearance	Five-Point Likert Scale
		Respect	
		Personality	
	Credibility	Trustworthiness	Five-Point Likert

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		Expertise	Scale
		Integrity	
	Likability	Lifestyle	Five-Point Likert Scale
		Similarity	
Purchasing Behavior	Purchase Intention	Purchase Intention	Five-Point Likert Scale
	Attitude towards the Brands	Attitude towards the Brands	Five-Point Likert Scale

Source: Develop by researcher for study purpose

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Nature of the Study

This study conducted based on the quantitative research method and primary data were collected to address both dependent & independent variables. Each variable includes dimensions, each dimensions has number of indicators to investigate the study. The celebrity endorsement is independent variable of this study and measured through three dimensions such as attractiveness, credibility and likability. Purchasing behavior is the dependent variable of this study which has been measured through purchase intention and attitudes towards the brands. All variables of the study were measured by five-point Likert scale through close ended structured questionnaire. The scales of measurement for the research information as strongly disagree, disagree, moderately agree, & strongly agree respectively.

B. Population and Sampling

Total number of students in Eastern University of Sri Lanka is the population of this study. Convenience sampling method has been used to select 100 respondents as a sample from covering all the internal students in faculty wise from Eastern University of Sri Lanka.

Table 3.2: Sample

Number	Faculties	Sample size
01	Faculty of Agriculture	30
02	Faculty of Arts and Culture	24
03	Faculty of Commerce and Management	22
04	Faculty of Science	14

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05	Faculty of Technology	10
	Total Sample size	**100**

Source: Develop by researcher for study purpose

C. Data Analysis

The data has been analyzed using mathematical techniques to identify and validate the theory that is to be justified. Primarily descriptive analysis and Pearson's correlation techniques of data analysis were mainly used in this study. The collected data have been analyzed through SPSS which is prominent data analyzing software. Descriptive analysis has been carried out for the calculation of mean and standard deviation of the variables. Pearson's correlation analysis has been carried out to measure the strength of the linear relationship between two variables.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table: 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

	Attractiveness	**Credibility**	**Likability**
Mean	3.8925	3.7312	3.5484
Std. Deviation	1.02642	1.10473	1.11819

Source: Survey Data

Mean value of attractiveness of the celebrity endorsement is 3.8925 with the standard deviation of 1.026. It shows attractiveness is a significant contributor to the celebrity endorsement and respondents are very familiar for the attractiveness of the celebrity endorsements.

Credibility of the celebrity endorsements has the mean value of 3.7312with the standard deviation of 1.104. It indicates credibility is significant contributor to the celebrity endorsement and the respondents are believe the celebrity endorsements are credible sources for get right idea regarding endorsements.

Likability of the celebrity endorsements has the mean value of 3.5484 with the standard deviation of 1.118 which indicates that likability is also one of the important contributor to the celebrity endorsement.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient test was conducted to identify the sensitiveness and the responsiveness between the variables in this research and to classify its significance and direction of the relationships.

Table 4.2: Correlation Analysis

ISSN: 2235-767X
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		Attractiveness	Credibility	Likability
Purchasing Behavior	Pearson Correlation	**.259(**)**	**.332(**)**	**.256(**)**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.004	.000	.002
	N	100	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: Survey Data

There is a positive relationship between celebrity attractiveness and purchasing behavior. The correlation value is 0.259 and it is significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, this study supports the Hypothesis 1: "Attractiveness of celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on undergraduates' purchasing behavior".

It can be identified through, that there has a positive relationship between credibility of celebrity endorsements and purchasing behavior. The correlation value is 0.332 and it is significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, this study supports the Hypothesis 2: "Credibility of celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on undergraduates' purchasing behavior".

The likability of celebrity endorsements and purchasing behavior also indicates a positive relationship. The correlation value is 0.256 and it is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, this study supports the Hypothesis 3: "likability of celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on undergraduates' purchasing behavior".

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying behavior with special reference to the undergraduates' of Eastern University of Sri Lanka. This study revealed that the buying behavior of undergraduates' should change through the celebrity attractiveness, credibility and likability according to influence in celebrity advertisement. Descriptive and correlation analysis proved that there is a positive relationship between the sources of celebrity endorsement on the undergraduates' purchasing behavior. Further hypothesis tests also proved the significant relationship between sources of celebrity endorsement on the undergraduates' purchasing behavior. Here the notable thing is some of factors of variables highly influence on purchasing behavior such attractiveness of celebrity endorsement has the high mean value than other two factors. So it is very important for the advertising agencies and the companies to decide celebrities with relevant factors when build a positive attitude regarding their brands.

When customers buy the products or services in the market they remember the related advertisements. Mostly remember the celebrity endorses used in the advertisements because of they are very familiar with them. Use celebrities in advertising, because of high attractiveness can help the undergraduates' to remember the brand during shopping, and using celebrities can get more attention than the non-celebrity advertisements. That's way marketers should try to involve celebrity endorsements for their advertisements then automatically get more attention for their brands.

Attractiveness of the celebrity endorsement is the most effective one for the undergraduates' purchasing behavior. Celebrity endorsements have good personality; good physical appearance and they is respected person for the society. 60% of the majority peoples are

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highly accepted the celebrity endorsements have the high attractiveness than the non-celebrities. Using of an attractive endorser has a positive impact on undergraduates' attitudes towards a brand and builds up the purchasing intention, because attractive endorsers have a tendency to get more attention than less attractive ones.

Also people highly consider about the credibility of people. Under the credibility measure the trustworthiness, expertise and integrity (honest) of the celebrity endorsements. Celebrities who are having a good character and image in the society can highly influence on buying decision of people. Using celebrities, who have done wrong things, will not be worth enough for a brand to get attention and motivate people to buy the brand. So, it is suggested that business advertisers hire a high credibility endorser to promote their products in order to advance undergraduates' purchase intention and positive attitude towards the brands.

undergraduates' are selecting the alternative type of celebrity's base on the attractiveness, credibility and likability. That's way some celebrities are more attractive some celebrities are more credible persons and some are very likability. That's way undergraduates' are using those alternative variables for select the most suitable celebrity endorsement. In that way under this research mostly suitable attribute for the select the good celebrity are personality and trustworthiness of the celebrity endorsement.

According to we expected that positive attitude towards celebrities impressed purchase intentions. According to this study, attractiveness, credibility and likability of celebrities does not necessarily always interpret in to purchase intentions and also many reason affect for undergraduates' purchasing behavior. Hence findings of this study would be used to identify how celebrity advertisements influence the undergraduates' purchasing behavior and to effectively design the advertising campaigns to promote the brand.

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