CELEBRITY ADVERTISEMENTS AND BUYING BEHAVIOR OF TELEVISION VIEWERS

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Abstract. Various scholars have examined the effectiveness of celebrity advertisements to influence viewers and persuade them towards buying products. Findings of numerous studies largely support the fact that a positive relationship exists between celebrity endorsement and the purchase behavior of advertisement consumers. Employing the Ohanian's source-credibility scale, the current study intends to observe the effectiveness and influence that celebrity advertisements cast on the buying intentions of Pakistani youth (n=200). The findings of the study signify the relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase behavior of respondents. It has been found that the presence of celebrity in television advertisement inspires the buying behavior of viewers and they are persuaded by the attractiveness and expertise of the superstars modeled in the advertisements. Results of the study show that physical beauty and expertise of endorser/celebrity have been found considerably influential towards purchase intentions. In addition, certain demographic characteristics of consumers i.e. gender and academic qualification have also been detected as contributing factors to the said influence.

Keywords: Celebrity advertisement, Celebrity endorsement, Purchase intention, Expertise, Credibility of celebrity

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cohen (1963) argues that most of the time, we gather our impressions about the world and societies from media. The pictures in our minds are formulated by the images that media depicts and communicates to us (Lippmann, 1922). It is, therefore, largely held that mass media has potential to influence the consumers (Andre, 2009; Gerbner & Gross 1976; Roy, 2013; Shukla, 2013; Soulliere, 2003; Stephanie, 2008; Weimann 2000; Zaheer, 2016a; 2016b) and shape reality (Hallgren, 2012).

Of different forms of media, advertising is an important way used to persuade the public towards certain products or services. Advertising is especially used as a marketing tool to attract consumers and enhance the sale of product(s). Every day, consumers are exposed to different types of communication massages in print and electronic media. So, it becomes quite a challenging situation for an advertiser to grab a person's attention. In view of this goal, advertisers tend to employ various tactics to clamp the attentiveness of their target audience. The ultimate goal of using diverse techniques is to make the advertisements influential and effective. In order to achieve this objective, using celebrities for the purpose of endorsing a brand, has become a prominent marketing strategy (Giridhar, 2012).

AIMS/OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main purpose of the study is to examine the effects of the television advertisements on viewers with reference to their buying behavior. To examine this dimension is significant so that it could be examined whether or not the advertisement contents and endorsement of celebrities retain power to influence the purchase choices of the viewers; and in case, advertisement contents and presence of celebrities affect the behavior of the viewers then to what extent. Considering the aforementioned objectives, it seems important to discourse conceptual background of Celebrity endorsement and Ohanian's (1990) source credibility model; both are regarded meaningful when it comes to television advertisement.

II. CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT

Celebrity endorsement is considered an important technique to cater the aim of advertising i.e. to influence the purchase behavior of consumers. Advertisers are known to the notion that positive image that celebrities retain and depict would make the message more persuasive (Choi & Rifon, 2007). Therefore, this technique of using prominent personalities and celebrities is practiced all over the world for the promotional activities (Pornpitakpan, 2004; Sunita, 2015). In the process of advertisement campaigns, the companies engage celebrities to feature in advertisements and the personality along with the features of the celebrity are matched with the image or aspects of promotional product.

The celebrity endorsement in advertisements and its impact on the consumers is an important area of examination and, therefore, various scholars have observed and discoursed it. Ohanian (1990) argues that the use of celebrity in advertisement does matter and contributes to make the advertisement more attractive, lively and appealing. The presence is equally good to gain the attention of the public. Probably, one of the reasons may be that most of the time people regard the celebrities as role models and idealize them or their qualities and as a result the personality appeals their attention. Therefore, the advertisers prefer celebrity endorsements to benefit from the potential influences of the personality.

In the field of advertising and marketing, the elements that influence consumer behavior in negative or positive way are called as "reference groups". In the words of Escalas and Bettman (2005), superstars and celebrities are considered to be most dependable reference groups in advertisement(s).

In a study, Lafferty and Goldsmith (1999) find that if consumers do not consider the qualities and attributes of product minutely, they prefer to follow celebrity endorsement. Therefore, the source endorser and the purchase intentions are thought to be positively associated with each other. Various research studies (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2000; Goel, 2013; Jain, 2011; Sternthal & Dholakia, 1978; Sunita, 2015) have examined the relationship of celebrity endorsement with buying intentions of the consumers and supported the notion regarding influence of celebrity endorsement.

There are certain features of a celebrity's personality that could be appealing to the consumers. For instance, Yoon, Kim and Kim (1998) examined the effects of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention and found the element of attractiveness more dominant and effective in terms of persuading the consumers. Contrarily, other scholars argue that only physical beauty is not the only important feature, rather credibility of the celebrity is equally essential. It has been observed that sometimes consumers like mere physical beauty and sometimes they prefer credibility and trustworthiness. It is reasoned that consumers are more influenced by the ad messages with which they feel a sense of similarity and an association. It means that consumers are much influenced by the celebrity when they trust the celebrity to have involvement or attachment with the product instead of mere modeling. Menon, Boone and Rogers (2001) endorse the notion and argue that involvement of celebrity in advertisements affects the level of acceptability of the advertised product and resultantly influence the purchase intentions of consumers in a positive way.

Amongst various features of the celebrity advertisements, the element of credibility matters a lot when it comes to influencing consumers and their purchase behavior. Various scholars (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2000; Shimp, 2000; Zahaf and Anderson, 2008) have endorsed that credibility of advertisement and endorser retains potential to enhance the inclination of consumers towards buying the product(s). Khatri (2006) maintains the same thought in a different way and describes that celebrity endorsement does not assure the increase in sales or profit, rather it only makes the advertisement attractive and considering the credibility features of celebrity, consumers feel a sense of security to purchase the very product. Also Moynihan (2004) terms it the intangible magic of celebrity that works due to trustworthiness of celebrity. In a study conducted in 1982, Harmon and Coney find that more credible resource of communication iss more influential compared to less credible resource. Considering the scholarly arguments, it may be said that in order to influence purchase behavior of consumers and especially encourage brand switching, the use of credible resource is of highest significance.

Regardless of the positive characteristics attached with celebrity endorsement, its negative effects have also been observed. For instance,

despite the fact that presence of celebrity inclines the consumers in favor of product, people often lose their faith when celebrities endorse a lot of products simultaneously. Tripp, Jensen and Carlson (1994) have found that over-endorsement impacts the purchase intention negatively, thus declining the effectiveness of celebrity. In another study conducted by White, Goddard and Wilbur (2009) it has been noted that if some negative events are attached with the endorser, it will affect the buying behavior in an adverse way.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that there are many brands and products that receive the attention of the public without the tag of popular personality or celebrity. Endorsing this view, Chhajer, Naidu and Shah (2015) describe that despite the dependence on celebrity endorsements, few brands have implanted their image on consumers as the most consistent source.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on theoretical groundings of Ohanian's (1990) source credibility model. According to this model, the perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise affect the credibility of the endorser. Successively, the source credibility retains potential to affect the purchase intentions of consumers. The Source Credibility Model basically states that the effectiveness of a message depends on perceived level of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of a celebrity in an advertisement. These factors are being discoursed in summary as under:

Attractiveness: The major aim of an advertisement is to persuade consumers towards changing their attitude towards certain brands (Solomon, 2002). In pursuance of this aim, advertisers often engage celebrities who are physically attractive. In this way, they get benefit from prestige and physical lure/charm of the superstars. Since physical appeal is considered a tool having a potential to change the attitude (Menon et al., 2001), Ohanian has added the element of attractiveness in the proposed model and opines that physical attractiveness positively affects the consumer behavior towards a product as compared to the product with unattractive celebrity.

Trustworthiness: Trustworthiness is thought to be an important factor in communication. Abdul Majid-Sallam and Wahid (2012) define

the element of trust in communication as "the listener's degree of confidence in, and level of acceptance of, the speaker and the message". According to Van der Waldt et al., (2009) trustworthiness is in fact the believability an endorser possesses in the eyes of public. Various researchers have found that trustworthiness makes advertising effective and has positive relationship with the attitude of the consumers (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1999; Clinton, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008). Ohanian (1990) has added the dimension of trustworthiness in source-credibility model and argue that a trusted/trustworthy communicator could prove to be very persuasive, regardless of being expert or not.

Expertise: Expertise may be termed as the professionalism held by the endorser, which motivates the consumers to buy products (Goldsmith & Lafferty, 2000). It is often thought that a celebrity in advertisement with expertise is regarded more trustworthy and dependable compared to unreliable celebrity (Hung, Chan, & Tse, 2011). Ohanian, (1990) has added this dimension in the proposed model and contended that the expertise or proficiency of endorser affects the receiver in a positive way and inclines the receiver to the communicated information.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Does celebrity endorsement correlate with the purchase intention(s) of consumer(s)?

RQ2. Are demographic characteristics of consumers correlated with source-credibility?

HYPOTHESES

H1: Attractiveness of celebrity is related with purchase intentions of consumers.

H2: Credibility of celebrity is related with purchase intentions of consumers.

H3: Expertise of celebrity is related with purchase intentions of consumers.

H4: Demographic characteristics of consumers are linked with attractiveness, credibility and expertise of celebrity.

IV. METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the hypotheses of the study, survey method was adopted. A total of 200 respondents were selected (age, M = 21.1, SD = 1.775 and female 54 %); the data was collected from the residents of Lahore city with a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The details of scale development have been mentioned as under.

Exposure to advertisements: In order to examine the exposure to TV, the respondents were asked to self-report the amount of time (i.e. hours) they usually spend to watch television in a week **(M= 12.55, SD= 9.582), and** frequency of seeing celebrities in advertisement(s) in a day (M= 2.83, SD= 1.118). The response options ranged from once a day (coded as 1) to more than 5 times a day (coded as 4).

Source-credibility Scale: Source-credibility scale proposed by Roobina Ohanian (1990) was used in the study. This scale is based on three-dimensions i.e. attractiveness, credibility/trustworthiness and expertise. This scale was used in this study with minor amendments, meant for making it consistent with the situation in Pakistan. In this 5-item scale (α= .801) respondents were to give their opinions regarding certain features of celebrity and their influences. The response options ranged from strongly disagree (coded as 1) to strongly agree (coded as 5). The scale was consisted of three variables i.e. attractiveness, credibility/ trustworthiness and expertise. The attractiveness included: because celebrity in the ad is attractive (strongly agree, 40.0%, M = 3.91, SD = 1.220), classy (agree, 38.5%, M = 3.88, SD = 1.084), beautiful (agree, 40.5%, M=3.92, SD= 1.081), elegant (agree, 40.0%, M= 3.89, SD= 1.111) and sexy (agree 31.5%, M= 3.37, SD= 1.128). Credibility/ Trustworthiness included, dependable (agree, 32.5%, M= 3.27, SD= 1.132), honest (agree, 43.0%, M= 3.51, SD= 1.037), reliable (agree, 47.5%, M= 3.68, SD= .891), sincere (agree, 49.0%, M= 3.74, SD= .882), trust worthy (agree, 44.0%, M= 3.73, SD= .992). Expertise included, expert (agree, 42.5%, M= 3.95, SD= 1.011), experienced (agree, 41.0%, M= 4.32, SD= 4.627), knowledgeable (agree, 49.5%, M= 4.43, SD= 4.617), qualified (agree, 49.5%, M= 4.10, SD= .821), and skilled (agree, 44%, M= 4.09, SD= .968).

Purchase Intension (PI): Purchase Intention measure was derived from the Ohanian (1990) and adopted after making it in line with

situation in Pakistan. In this regard, a 4-item scale was adopted (α= .716) in which respondents were asked to report different activities. The responses ranged from very unlikely (coded as 1) to very likely (coded as 5). Information asked included: after watching the ad, how likely you think/consider to try the product (likely, 40%, M= 3.33, SD= 1.182), how actively/keenly you search for the product in the store/market (unlikely, 44.5%, M= 3.39, SD= 1.021), considering the ad, how likely you purchase this product (likely, 49.5%, M= 3.41, SD= 1.003), does presence of celebrity in ad encourage you to buy (unlikely, 42.0%, M= 3.51, SD= 1.236).

Demographic factors: Demographic variables included in the study were gender (54.0% female, M= 1.54, SD= .5000), age (M= 21.1, SD= 1.775), monthly income (M= 47645, SD= 22902.43) and education (M= 1.33, SD= .471). The options for age ranged from 18 to 26 years, however, two options were given for education i.e. graduation and post-graduation.

V. FINDINGS

With the intention of pursuing the answer to first research question, three hypotheses were formulated and Pearson's Correlation test was applied to data. Statistical analysis indicated a significant relationship of purchase intentions with endorser's attractiveness (r= .179, p< 0.05), and expertise (r= .230, p< 0.05). However, no relationship (r= .018, p> 0.05) was found between credibility of celebrity and purchase intentions (see Table 1)

Thus, it may be interpreted that attractiveness and expertise of endorser in television advertisement(s) influence the purchase intentions of consumers to buy the product recommended in celebrity advertisement. Quite surprisingly, the element of credibility was found unpersuasive towards purchase intent of consumers. Hence, results support first and third hypotheses (H1 and H3) but did not verify second hypothesis (H2) of the study (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
TV ad Exposure	2.84	1.118	-						
Age	21.10	.91984	-.125	-					
Income	47654	22902.4	.010	.074	-				
Attractiveness	3.8650	.83418	.038	-.047	.067	-			
Credibility	3.5810	.76758	.088	-.104	-.070	$.463^{**}$	-		
Expertise	4.0550	1.20517	.072	-.065	.026	$.321^{**}$	$.371^{**}$	-	
Purchase	3.4063	.83367	.077	$-.115^{*}$	-.065	$.179^{*}$	.018	$.230^{**}$	-

Demographic factors and celebrity endorsement: In order to examine the relationship of celebrity endorsement with demographic factors (i.e. age, gender, income and education) of respondents, various statistical tests were applied according to the nature of data. Since data related to age and income was continuous in nature, Pearson correlation test was applied to the information. The results did not show any relationship of age and income with credibility, attractiveness and expertise of celebrity or endorser (see Table 1).

Subsequently, t-test was applied to data in order to examine the relationship of gender with source credibility. It was found that a significant difference existed across gender and attractiveness (t= .785, df= 187.536) of celebrity, mean difference indicated that males (M= 3.9352) were more influenced from the apparent beauty of celebrities in advertisement(s) than females (M= 3.8222).

Likewise, a significant difference was observed between gender and trustworthiness (t= .581, df= 187.700) of celebrity, and mean score indicated that males (M= 3.6152) were more influenced by the trustworthiness of celebrities than females (M= 3.5519). In the same way, a significant relationship was found between gender and expertise (t= 1.672, df= 127.178) of celebrity; males (M= 4.2087) were found more influenced from the expertise of celebrities compared to females (M= 3.9441) (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and T-test Results of Source Credibility
Across Gender

	Gender	Mean	SD	*T*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attractiveness	Male Female	3.9352 3.8222	.86861 .80528	.785 .780	198 187.536	.524
Trustworthiness	Male Female	3.6152 3.5519	.79903 .74225	.581 .577	198 187.700	.638
Expertise	Male Female	4.2087 3.9241	1.56442 .76303	1.672 1.591	198 127.178	1.6

SD: standard deviation.
Total N = 200. Female N = 108. Male N = 92. Independent samples t-test by gender (equal variances not assumed).

In order to examine the relationship of qualification with source credibility, t-test was applied to data. Statistical results showed a significant difference with level of qualification with attractiveness (t= 1.536, df= 109.722), trustworthiness (t= .576, df=140.396) and expertise (t= .752, df= 195.899) of celebrities. Mean difference showed that graduate students were found more influenced by the celebrity endorsement compared to masters' level students (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and T-test Results of Source Credibility
Across Qualification

	Gender	Mean	SD	*T*	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attractiveness	Graduation Masters	3.9284 3.7364	.77339 .93884	1.536 1.438	198 109.722	.340
Trustworthiness	Graduation Masters	3.6030 3.5364	.79054 .72252	.576 .594	198 140.396	.414
Expertise	Graduation Masters	4.1000 3.9636	1.37535 .75072	.752 .906	198 195.899	.667

SD: standard deviation.
Total N = 200. Graduation N = 134. Masters N = 66. Independent samples t-test by qualification (equal variances not assumed)

VI. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study aims at examining the influence of celebrity advertisements on purchase intentions of consumers. For the examination, a three dimensional source-credibility scale (Ohanian, 1990) has been employed. Considering the results of the study, firstly, it has been found that media contents retain the potential to influence the viewers/consumers. Insofar as the relationship of celebrity advertisements and buying behaviors of viewers is related, it is concluded that celebrity advertisements are persuasive enough to influence purchase-intentions of consumers. In this regard, two dimensions of source credibility i.e. attractiveness and expertise have noticed to be especially significant. It has been found that purchase intentions of consumers are positively linked with attractiveness and expertise of the celebrity endorser. It means that people after watching celebrities in television advertisements are impressed by their physical beauty as well as the expert opinion of superstars appear in the TV ads. Resultantly, they buy the recommended products when they go for shopping. In this study, the element of credibility or trustworthiness, which is often seen valuable to incline the consumers towards buying the product, has not been found associated with purchase intentions of viewers. The results of this study about the element of credibility contradict the inferences endorsed by previous studies (e.g. Clinton et al., 2008; Goldsmith & Lafferty, 1999; Harmon & Coney, 1982). However, the results of current study are compatible with the earlier studies in terms of attractiveness (e.g. Menon et al., 2001; Yoon et al., 1998) and expertise dimension (e.g. Daneshvary & Schwer, 2000; Hung et al., 2011).

Insofar, as the relationship of celebrity endorsement with demographic characteristics of consumers is related, the previous studies have found age (Pandey, 2011) and gender (Sliburyte, 2009) linked with celebrity endorsement. Current study has examined the influence of various demographic factors on celebrity endorsement. Results show that age and income of respondents are not linked with celebrity endorsement. However, gender and level of qualification have been found linked with the source credibility. In this regard, males have been found much more inclined to the products endorsed by the celebrities as compare to females. Contrary to this inference, common impression is that females are more inclined towards the superstars and celebrities.

In a nutshell, it may be concluded that the presence of celebrity inspires the buying behavior of viewers and they are particularly persuaded by the physical beauty and expertise of the superstars modeled in the advertisements. In the end, it is recommended that considering the popularity of Indian film stars in Pakistan and their presence in Pakistani advertisements, the future studies should conduct comparative analysis of the endorsement level of both countries' superstars so that their level of persuasion could be determined.

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