

# The Effects of Celebrity Endorsement in Advertisements

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## Abstract

Celebrities are the personalities that are well known in public either because of their credibility or of their attractiveness or because of both of these. To leverage this, advertisers use celebrities in their advertisement to increase the effectiveness and heighten the credibility of commercials. Research has proven that celebrity endorsement does cast its impact, but other schools of thought attest the contrary. This study moves on the same line and affirms the impact of celebrity endorsement on customers' buying intention. It will identify the factors that lead to celebrity's influence on audience and also examine the effect of celebrity endorsement in advertisement. The study will examine celebrity endorsement from a strategic perspective and the impact of social networks on an organisation's celebrity endorsement strategy. The study will focus on the way the audience receive, associate and identify with the product and social influence it creates. The purpose of this paper is to help organizations, business people and media to understand the importance of advertising as well as the best ways and tools to use in developing messages for advertisements to reach their target audience. This study will help marketers in making the right choice of celebrities to use in endorsing advertisements as well as considering how far advertisement will be effected. This paper will critically analyze how celebrity endorsement in advertisement as a tool affects and influences people's opinions in marketing and its effect in the society compared to other forms of advertising. The methodology of collecting data for this paper will be through secondary research which will involve reviewing relevant literature such as journals, articles, texts, print media, social media and electronic media in this area of study. The data collected will be qualitative and quantitative which will be analysed and presented in forms of charts and tables.

**Keywords:** Celebrity, Advertisement, Endorsement, Mass Media and Effects

## Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to test the effect of celebrity endorsement in advertisement on consumers' perceptions of the endorsed brand or products. Advertising is integral part of

the society and economic systems for both consumers and businesses. It helps to deliver carefully prepared messages to target audiences thus facilitating marketing programs of the products and services of most organizations. Today celebrity endorsement has become one of the most popular forms of advertising (Choi & Rifon, 2007). Flipping through the various television channels, print media and radios or social media consumers find quite a number of endorsements.

Most of the television channels are now using celebrity endorsers to promote brands (Erdogan et al., 2001). The increase in popularity of celebrity endorsement can be attributed to the ability to grab audience's attention thus giving entrepreneurs a better chance for communicating message to consumers. The use of celebrities is believed to help consumers remember the message of the advertisement and the brand name the celebrity is endorsing, enables to create the personality of a brand because when a celebrity is paired with a brand, this image helps shape the image of that brand in the minds of consumers (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). If negative information about either entity is displayed on media may result in a damaged consumer evaluation of both entities.

Mass media can influence at both personal and public level in that at a personal level, the mass media may provide information and models that stimulate changes either positive or negative in behavior. At the public level the mass media may also create awareness about issues among policy makers and thus may contribute to changing the context in which people make choices. (Black Jay et al, 1995)

In today's competitive world consumers are exposed to thousands of voices and images in magazines, newspapers, and on billboards, websites, radio and television. Advertisers attempt to steal at least a fraction of a person's time to inform him or her of the amazing and different attributes of the product at hand. Because of the constant media saturation that most people experience daily, they eventually become numb to the standard marketing techniques. The challenge of the marketer is to find a hook that will hold the consumer's attention such as media message content and the hooks that can hold the consumer's attention are the celebrities.

### **Objectives of this study**

To identify the factors that lead to celebrity's influence on audience

To examine the effect of celebrity endorsement in advertisement on consumer habits

### **Thesis Statement**

The exploration of this topic is motivated by several factors. It seeks to examine whether celebrity endorsement in advertisements works and how it works. It also aims to identify attributes of celebrity endorsers and attributes of celebrity endorsement advertisements that are most appealing to target audience. The paper also seeks to examine audience's perceptions about how celebrity endorsements in advertisements work. Every advertisement aims to create awareness and arouse interest in the minds of customers. Celebrity Endorsement is one of these power tools by which advertisers try to leverage the image and identification of the celebrity to promote a brand. This makes the advertisement lively, attractive, interesting, but attention getting as well because audience takes the celebrity as a role model and in turn these celebrities impact their lives. Advertisers try to hire such celebrities for endorsement who are not only attractive but credible as well.

Celebrity endorsement in advertising is a new phenomenon in brand selling and also commercial issues that affect the lifestyle of consumers. Its influence has been great and most people want to change their way of living and identify themselves with artists or celebrities that are portrayed in media because they believe they are right. The celebrities have changed the audience's or consumer's way of thinking and perception and influence their consumption habits.

### **Methodology**

This study will involve secondary information by conducting literature review. The materials used include texts, journals and articles within a period of last two decades. This will help in finding out what has been researched by other scholars especially the factors that lead to celebrity's influence on audience. It will also examine the effect of celebrity endorsement in advertisement on consumer habits.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Introduction to Celebrity Endorsement in Advertisement**

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal communication about organization, product, service or idea by an identified sponsor. (Belch, George E 1995). To do so advertisers employ several of marketing techniques and celebrity endorsement is one of them. The term celebrity refers to 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. (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Is a person, who has a prominent profile and commands some degree of public fascination and influence in day-to-day news media. The term is often denoted as a person with fame and fortune implied with great popular appeal, prominence in a particular field, and is easily recognized by the general public.

The term celebrity is associated with individuals who are frequently in the public eye and typically have a high profile in sports, entertainment industries among others. They are used to endorse services, products, ideas or organizations (Black Jay et al 1995).

Endorsement is a channel of communication where celebrities act as spokesperson of the brand and by extending their popularity and personality they certify the brand's claim and position, (Kotler, 2009)

There is a huge impact of celebrity endorsements among the consumers through television commercials in India, as Indians like the celebrities a lot and there is a huge fan following. A consumer that observes messages for two different firm's products, one product's message containing a celebrity endorsed and the other not believes the celebrity endorsed product will have more purchases and so be of higher value (Lalitha & C. Kumar, 2010).

Celebrity endorsement if used effectively makes the brand stand out, enhances brand recall and facilitates instant awareness. Celebrity Endorsement is a way to get the brand noticed amidst the rush that is there in the market place. Celebrities like film stars and cricketers have not only been successful in gathering huge public attention, but also in increasing sales volume. For example, Cadbury used Amitabh Bachchan a celebrity to promote the brand when it went through a bad phase in India. Soon the advertisement recreated people's love for the brand and increased Cadbury's sale (Joshi & Ahluwalia 2008), (Matrade Chennai, 2005).

Celebrity endorsement has become a prevalent form of advertising. It is reported that 20% of all television commercials features a famous person (Sam, 1996). In Kenya there are many celebrities such as Churchill a comedian who endorsed *Omo* as the best washing

powder on televisions, Ms. Morgan of Tahidi High programme was used to endorse Faulu Bank and influenced quite a number of people to open accounts, Julie Gichuru a television news presenter endorsed *dettol* as the best disinfectant that kills germs effectively and this has become a household name for many families, Jimmy Gathu media presenter was used in “Mpango waKando” campaign to stop spread of HIV/Aids, Celina an actress of Mother in law program endorses harpic and David Rudisha an athlete who endorses use of Kiwi as the best to use. These products have been selling so much because consumers want to associate with the celebrities and they want to believe the information that they give is accurate and true. Celebrity endorsement has been in application from a long time (Kaikati, 1987), not too late when advertisement techniques were taking on new forms because advertisers realized soon that by using publicly renowned personalities in advertisements they will be able to align brands personalities with that of the celebrities. It is noteworthy that not all the celebrities prove to be successful endorsers, thus making the selection process more difficult (Giffin, 1967). Advertisers go for a careful selection of celebrities because if any aspect goes wrong in celebrity endorsement selection process, the celebrity endorsed advertisement campaign may collapse. These aspects cast a comprehensive impact upon the customers, as most of the customers prefer those celebrities who are credible and trustworthy, some like those who are attractive possess charming physical features, and some consider both of these dimensions. Advertisers also look for a proper match between the celebrity’s personality and product’s attributes proves to be successful because the congruence of features from the celebrity and the product targets the senses of the customer more positively and leads to the development of favorable perceptions about the brand (Michael,1989), (Ohanin, 1991). This could be done in form of testimonials, promotions, campaigns or advertisement to ensure that communication is done to specific target audience respectively (Black Jay et al, 1995) According to (Kotler2009) advertising objectives can be classified by primary purpose whether the aim is to inform, persuade or remind. A specific communication task can be accomplished with a specific target audience during a specific period of time. Informative advertising is introduced heavily when introducing a new product category by informing the consumers of the image, quality and convenience benefits of the new products. Persuasive advertising becomes more important as competition increases, by trying to build selective demand by persuading consumers that they offer best quality for their money. Reminder advertising is important for mature products because it helps to maintain customer relationships and keep consumers thinking about the product. For example Coca-cola company advertisements primarily build and maintain the Cocacola relationship rather than informing or persuading customers to buy in the short run. Advertising goal is to move consumers through the buyer-readiness or move people’s immediate action. The advertisements are meant basically to change the way the consumers think about the brand or product. Media buyers and planners think of message strategy which helps in creating effective advertising messages. The main purpose of advertising is to get consumers think about or react to the product or company in a certain way. People will react only if they believe that they will benefit from doing so. There should be a compelling idea that will bring the message strategy to life and in a distinctive and memorable way. Message execution is also essential to capture the target market’s attention and interest thus find the best approach, style, tone, words and format for executing the message. (Kotler, 2009) Most media buyers prefer using personality symbols where a character used represents the product. It also uses testimonial evidence or endorsement a style that features a highly believable or likeable source endorsing the product. Positive image that the celebrities cast

on the audience can make the message in the advertisement more persuasive (CHOI & Rifon, 2007).

Marketers claim that celebrities affect the credibility of the claims made, increase the memorability of the message, and provide a positive effect that could be generalized to the brand. (Ohanian, 1991). Use of attractive people is common practice in television and print advertising, with physically attractive communicators having proved to be more successful in influencing customer's attitudes and beliefs than unattractive spokespersons.

Advertisers choose celebrity endorsement because of its greater benefits and immense possible influence because audience view celebrities as their role models. Celebrities endorsed advertisements draw more attention as compared to those of non-celebrity ones, helps the company in re-positioning its product/brand and empowers the company when it is new in the market or plans to go global. However celebrity endorsement does not hold sole key to success. It also presents the company with potential hazards. Such as overshadowing, overexposure, and controversy (Erdogan, 1999).

### **The Effect of Celebrity Endorsements in Advertising**

There is a belief that media have powerful effects on audiences either directly or indirectly on attitudes, beliefs or behaviors (Elizabeth, 2011). It also affects perceptions of reality, level of anxiety and many dimensions on the way we think, feel or act. (Black Jay et al, 1995) Celebrity endorsements in advertising are so common in that it helps build trust with current and potential customers, increase the chances of the brand being remembered, and attract a new type of audience. Endorsements also may increase the consumer's desire for a product. This is often achieved by implying that the particular celebrity is successful, talented, or attractive at least partly because of the product.

According to (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995), when a celebrity is paired with a brand, the image helps shape the image of that brand in the minds of consumers. Most of the celebrities used help in developing credibility and trust of the product being advertised on the audience. Many people hold certain celebrities in high regard, so an endorsement of a product instantly increases the amount of trust the consumer has in the brand.

According to (Miciak & Shanklin 1994) this can sometimes work against the brand, however, if the celebrity starts to receive negative press. When an endorser's image becomes tarnished by allegations of illicit, unethical, unusual or unconventionally behavior might lead to a lower opinion of the celebrity and the brand that is being promoted.

Celebrity endorsers attract supporters as well as fans to try the brand, increase brand awareness and consumption intentions. Celebrity likeability and congruence between endorser and the endorsed brand influence predisposition towards the advertisements, which in turn affect attitude toward the brand purchase intention (Fleck et al., 2012). The purchase confidence comes from the credibility and profitability attached to employing a celebrity as an endorser. Effectiveness of the celebrity in endorsement depends on three constructs of the source including expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness. The marketing implication is that marketers need to select celebrities that are the most attractive and believed to be most entertaining to audience, popular and talents.

Table 1

*The Occurrence of Celebrity Endorsed Versus Non Endorsed Advertisements*

	Print media	Electronic media	Social media	Mean %
Endorsed advertisement by a celebrity	10	14	11	62.5
Non endorsed advertisement	5	6	5	28.5
Not exposed to advertisement	1	3	1	8.93

It is clear that most people tend to be influenced by what they watch on celebrity endorsed products compared to the non endorsed advertisement or those that are not exposed to any advertisement at all. This is because the audiences view celebrities as successful and believe in them and take them as their role models thus matching brand with the celebrity.

### **Factors that contribute to celebrities' influence on audience.**

#### **Identity**

This is all about the people that a person associates with in the environment. By observing continuously a person gets attracted and apes what they do (Wes ten, D. 1999) Audience view celebrities as very important, prestigious and unique thus this brings in the perception of practicing what they do and identify themselves with celebrities to have an image similar to them. This helps in finding reinforcement for personal values thus finding model behavior.

#### **Association**

This is attached to the people that you live and socialize with where you want to appear like them and be in the same level since there is belief of being in the same social class. This focuses on identifying with others and gaining a sense of belonging thus helps one to connect with family, friends and society (Wes ten, 1999).

#### **Media**

According to (Black Jay et al,1995) media exposes the audience to a lot of information each new day. It has got a lot of influence in that we are most likely to believe in what we see, hear or read. We take it with a lot of concern and put it into practice or rather give it a trial. Media plays a major role in agenda setting in the society, informing and this process has a cognitive approach.

(Mehta, 1994) there are differences found in cognitive responses responded by receivers of information. In the non celebrity conditions receivers focused more on brand and its features whereas in celebrity endorsement conditions receivers concentrate on the celebrity in the advertisement. On the contrary (Atkin & Block 1983) argue that celebrity endorsers produced more positive attitudes towards advertising and greater purchase intentions than a non celebrity endorser.

(Packard,1957) suggested that celebrity endorsement strategy is effective in selling products and services as status symbols since celebrities are individuals of indisputably high status and in endorsements such individuals invite consumers to join them in enjoying products.

### **Advantages of using celebrity endorsement in advertisement**

- a. Establishment of credibility – approval of a brand by a star fosters a sense of trust for the brand among the target audience especially in case of new products.
- b. Ensured attention- celebrities ensure attention of the target group by breaking the clutter of advertisements and making the advertisement and the brand noticeable.
- c. Higher degrees of recall- people tend to commensurate the personalities of the celebrity with the brand thereby increasing the recall value of the product.
- d. Associative benefit- a celebrity's preference for a brand gives out a persuasive message. Because the celebrity is benefiting from the brand the consumer will also benefit thus this perception increases the sales or consumer's attachment to the product.
- e. Psychographic connect-celebrities are loved and adored by their fans and advertisers use stars to capitalize on these feelings to sway the fans towards their brands.
- f. Demographic connect- different stars appeal differently to various demographic segments such as age, gender, class and geographic location among others. This helps in reaching different target groups.
- g. Mass appeal- some stars have a universal appeal and therefore prove to be good bet to generate interest among the masses

### **Disadvantages of using celebrity endorsement in advertisement**

- a. The reputation of the celebrity may derogate after he or she has endorsed the product- incase the celebrity used has a tarnished name; the behavior of the celebrity reflects on the brand thus affects the audience attitudes towards the product that they endorse.
- b. The vampire effect- in case the celebrity overshadows the brand. This makes the audience to remember the celebrity and not the product being advertised.
- c. Multi brand endorsement by the same celebrity would lead to overexposure. The novelty of a celebrity gets diluted if he does too many advertisements, thus the advertisement might not have major influence or meaning to the audience.

### **Theoretical Frame work**

This study is based with the frame work of three theories namely cognitive perspective theory, diffusion of innovation theory and the social learning theory which help in shedding light in understanding how consumers form positive or negative opinions of celebrities and the endorsed product.

### **Cognitive perspective theory**

According to (Black Jay et al, 1995) the psychologists study learning to consider how people interpret the events and stimuli around them, fashioning of their actions according to their individual understandings. These understandings, thoughts, expectations and perceptions are known as cognitions that is mental process. This involves decision -making and language.

According to (Sullivan, 1953) persons interactions are strongly affected by the images a person forms in his mind and begin shaping self image, perception, responses and behavior. Once the person finds a match to a significant other, this will determine how the person will respond to a celebrity endorsing a product (Baum & Andersen, 1994) According to this analogy the mind takes in information, process it in various ways and produce output in the form of codes, words and behaviors. (Black Jay et al 1995) This theory is in support of celebrity endorsement in advertisement on consumers because the more information is

mentioned or displayed to audience the more they are influenced and perceive the information is true and suitable for them to guide in consumption of products.

### **Social Learning Theory**

The social learning theory also called observational learning occurs as individuals learn by observing behavior of others (Wes ten, D.1999) Learning to produce behavior exhibited by a model is called modeling; vicarious conditions mean learning by observing the consequences of a behavior for someone else. The impact of observational learning is enormous, from learning how to give a speech, how to feel and act when someone tells an appropriate joke, learning what kind of clothes, haircuts, products or diets to take. Observational learning in which human or other animal learns to produce behavior exhibited by a model is called modeling.

The most well known modeling studies were done by (Bandura, 1967) and his colleagues on children aggressive behavior (1961, 1963). In these studies children observed an adult model interacting with a large inflatable doll named Bobo.

One group of children watched the model behave in a subdued manner, while other groups observed the model verbally and physically attack the doll in real life on film or in cartoon. Children who observed the model acting aggressively displayed nearly twice as much aggressive as those who watched the no aggressive model or no model at all.

The likelihood that a person will imitate a model depends on a number of factors, such as the model's prestige, likeability and attractiveness. Whether individual actually performs modeled behavior depends on the behavior's likely outcome. This outcome expectancy is, itself, often learned through an observational learning mechanism called vicarious conditioning meaning a person learns the consequences for someone else. This theory explains how use of celebrity endorsement in advertisement affects or influences audience consumption intentions because they watch, listen, observe and would want to consume what the celebrities endorse.

### **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

Diffusion of innovations theory that seeks to explain how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through cultures. The main proponent and figure of this theory is Everett Rogers in (1986). Diffusion is the process through which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over a period time among the members of a social system. (Rogers,1962) espoused that the theory has four elements that influence the spread of a new idea: innovation, communication channels, time and social system.

Diffusion occurs through a combination of the need for individuals to reduce personal uncertainty when presented with new information, need for individuals to respond to their perceptions of what specific credible others are thinking and doing and to general felt social pressure to do as others have done. If the potential adopter believes the innovation to be interesting and with potential for benefits from respected and trusted opinion leaders, there is a likelihood of getting influenced.

This theory is relevant in the adoption process, in which an individual or group individuals are confronted with an innovation and react to it in one way or another. The adoption process is divided in four stages namely; the knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation stages. The audience acquires idea, knowledge from advertisement endorsed by



celebrities about a product in the market, thus making the message influential to the local or ordinary audience. They then form opinions, attitudes, either positive or negative towards or about the innovation or an idea. Persuasion also occurs through peers who already have some experience with the innovation. The behavior is then imitated. The individuals make up their mind about the innovation or idea they can either reject or accept the idea or innovations. Individuals begin using the innovation or products.

### **Conclusion**

Celebrity endorsement in advertisement is the use of testimonial evidence or endorsement, a style that features a highly believable or likeable source endorsing the product. The increase of celebrities endorsing brands has been steadily increasing over the past years. Marketers acknowledge the power of celebrities in influencing consumer- purchasing decisions.

Celebrity endorsement can bestow special attributes upon a product that it may have lacked. A celebrity is used to impart credibility and aspirational values to a brand and needs to match the product since the value associated with the celebrity is transferred to the brand and therefore it helps in creating an image that can be easily referred by consumers. As a result by association, the brand can very quickly establish the credibility, it can get immediate identification and thus can improve sales. The main objective is to garner faster brand recognition, association and emotional unity with the target audience. Celebrity endorsement if used effectively, makes the brand stand out, galvanizes brand recall and facilitates instant awareness thus the right choice of celebrity to use must be done by the marketers. This gives a room for media personalities to be used in marketing products for various organizations and companies who can easily be identified with by the audience, through the chosen advertising media. The type of media used could be print, electronic or social media.

Celebrities are good at generating attention, recall and positive attitudes towards advertising provided that they are supporting a good idea and there is an explicit fit between them and the brand. However celebrity endorsement in advertisement has negative impact on the audience ranging from the morals, norms and behaviors in the society. Most of the audiences have abandoned their normal way of living according to the set cultural standards and expectations of the society at large in that they are aping what the celebrities are doing so as to identify with them. Celebrity appearance, knowledge, liking, and credibility of the celebrity are also highly correlated with advertising believability.

### **Recommendations**

Advertising is crucial for the purposes of marketing and creating awareness of the products to different target audience. This paper recommends that in order to have businesses and organizations thrive well in the market they need to choose the right marketing channels, media and celebrities to use so as to make the communication effective. The paper also recommends that before choosing any celebrity to use, analysis of the target group they want to communicate to should be done, the product being advertised and the message being put across so as to make the right choice of a celebrity to match the product.

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