

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON TEENAGERS' PERCEPTION AND BRAND BUILDING: A STUDY ON BRANDED APPARELS

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The Indian textiles industry, currently estimated at around US\$ 150 billion, is expected to reach US\$ 250 billion by 2019. This is due to the change in buying behaviour of rapidly growing middle class allied with strong economic fundamentals, and exposure to famous international brands. The market has gained immense importance due to the teenagers' tremendous increase in spends on fashion categories. Unique Consumer Perception (UCP) has become a key word in guiding their purchase decision. Marketers have also strategised the celebrity endorsement route, to communicate with these targeted segments. The researchers tried to understand and analyse the gap that exists in understanding teenager's perception towards these endorsement strategies and its impact on brand building activity. A sample size of 329 teenagers from 4 major cities of Gujarat have been used. The results have shown that at each stage of brand building, the impact of consumer perception differs as the state of consumers has changed from marginalized to multi-headed consumer.

Keywords: Unique Consumer Perception, Celebrity Endorsement, Customer Based Brand Equity, Teenagers' Perception, Branded Apparels

Celebrity endorsement in India has its route way back from the year 1941, with Leela Chitnis being the first Indian actresses endorsing the brand Lux (Gupta, 2018). Since then it has been witnessed, enormous brands being leveraging one of the most powerful association. Surprisingly this power of celebrity endorsement in this digitized era has grown by leaps and bounds. In the year 2007 the number of celebrity endorsements for Indian market was 665 which grew substantially in 2017 to 1660 (GroupM's, 2017). The presence of celebrity while communicating the brand will have a positive impact on the buyer, in particularly with reference to purchase intention and content reminder (Johnson, 2017). But in spite of this encouraging situation, and with everything around being so digitized, the world is moving towards lot of digital disruption making difficult for a brand to capture people's attention and desire to own the brand. This is also applicable in case of branded apparels. Kate Middleton endorsing whistles dress, giving it a "Kate effect" at various occasions elucidates the depth and width of apparel brand's association with that of a celebrity (Costa, 2011). Also at the Mac Gala awards Cannes festivals, the Film fare awards and many more such huge gatherings, the renowned designers, fashion brands and the lifestyle stores get the celebrities to endorse their apparels (McDonald S, 2018). Eminent film and sports personalities have time and again endorsed apparels and clothing to create a niche segment in the market. Further India been known as a star- struck nation, it is important to identify whether or not does this tagging still exists, especially when a brand is connecting with the teenagers. The solitary suffice strategy existing to tap in to the teens consumer base is to create a differential brand identity and to have a very effective communication both with an aim to capture the mind as well as heart of these lucrative segment

Literature Review

Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement does influence consumer perception. Following the thread of Jennifer Aaker's (1997), Dimension of brand personality, wherein Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness were considered as the Celebrity traits to be transferred to the brands endorsed by them. A presence of each celebrity trait leads to a perceptual alterations, like celebrity's expertise perceived leads to an attitudinal change (Horai et al, 1974), with Celebrity's Physical attractiveness a brand is perceived relatively to be better (Kahle & Homer, 1985). According to Muthu Kumar (2011) "Celebrities presence grabs attention and is even highly impactful".

Teenagers' Perception:

Teenagers are different but are not bizarre. They are digital-natives, are flawless communicator and are multi-tasking. World adolescent's population is around 36 %, out of which 38 % of them are concentrated in China and India. According to Census India 2011, 38 % of the total population is adolescent and youth population. The teens have an incredible tendency towards making money and also seize a huge spending capability. They equally urge for popularity, opt for adventures, often depressed and feel low (McAfee's, 2014).

Perception is an entire process by which an individual becomes aware of the environment and interprets it so that it fits into his or her frame of reference these references comprises of self experience, prejudices that one could carry, likes or dislikes or individual feelings (Walters et al , 1989). Perception crops up when individuals assign a meaningful picture to the given situation, event, object or a brand. This means mere exposure of a brand or listening about a brand does not refer to as perception (VanderWalt, 1995) it is ones criteria that leads to selection of a brand. Consumer perception thus is referred to as an individual psychological process, which is not at all a single process but is a multifaceted stage process. For a brand to be perceived it passes through the following consumer stages of perception, selection, organizing and interpretation (Lee & Yoo, 2000).

Thus this study takes the base of perceptual process and its sub variables as one of the dependent variables, to study teenager's perception towards celebrity endorsement. To investigate the selection process, and to know how is a celebrity being selected by the teenagers, the external set of variables considered are size, intensity, repetition, novelty, familiarity, exposure, defense and attention (Sahaney.S,1998). Internal variables for selection process considered are motivation, personality, self-image, involvement and learning. To study the subsequent perception process of organizing, the variables considered are figure and ground principle, grouping and simplification (Sahaney.S,1998). After viewing an advertisement having celebrity's presence, the brand is selectively perceived by the viewer and organized in his/her frame of mind. It is later when they start interpreting and finally leads it to either positive or negative purchase decision. Hence to analyze the perceptual interpretation, the variable set considered are positive impression, recall, physical appearance, inferences, evaluation and halo effect are to be considered (MHRD, 1998)

Brand Building

The research intends to evaluate the impact of celebrity presence in the brand communication process and subsequently measure the impact of the celebrity in influencing the specific targeted segment, the teenager in their purchase decision. It is quite challenging to measure, develop and implement marketing programs and thereby to measure its impact on the targeted segment. The models commonly used to evaluate the brand impact are the brand positioning model, customer based brand equity model and brand value chain (Keller, K. 2001). Customer based brand equity model is a model that suffices the purpose of stage wise impact assessment and also evaluates brand equity, taking customer views as a base. (Keller, 2002). The model consisting of brand salience, imagery, performance, judgment, feelings and resonance has been used in the study for framing the questionnaire and subsequent analysis. The study made by Keller describes that, to explore a differential effect of a marketing activation on consumers, CBBE is the pertinent one (Keller, 2003).

Methodology and Data

The method used in the study is descriptive, aiming to study teenager's perception towards celebrity endorsement and also to introspect, celebrity endorsement's impact in brand building exercise. The data is collected through structured questionnaire, using Non Probability convenience sampling method. The respondents are from four cities of Gujarat namely Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara (Census Report, 2011). A total of 332 respondents were enclosed under the study, consisting of 81 from Ahmedabad, 99 from the city of Rajkot, 73 were from Surat, and the remaining 79 teenagers from Vadodara. The respondents were teenagers ranging between 13-19 years of age group. The technical details in the questionnaire had been explained to the respondents prior to the survey. The independent variables, considered for the study are celebrity perceived personal attributes (Stylish, trendsetter, successful, influential, good looking, funny, likeability, trustworthiness, expertise and credibility) and demographic variables (education, gender, age, location and no. of sources of income). The dependent variables are consumer perception (perceptual selection, organizing and interpretation) and brand building (salience, imagery, performance, feelings, judgements, resonance).

The analysis has been done using techniques like association, differential effect and impact study using SPSS 20. The alpha coefficient for the 24 items used to test perception, the dependent variable is 0.703 (Cronbach, 1951). And for the 7 items used to investigate brand building, the dependent variable is .614, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency (Perry .R. Hinton, Charlotte, 2004).

Hypothesis

H¹: There is an association between the teenager's demographic variables and their perception towards celebrity endorsement

H²: There is a significant difference between location from where the teens are and the Celebrities impact on brand building

H³: $M_1 \neq M_2$, in the population there is a difference between Male and Female with respect to the celebrity's impact on brand building

Results

H¹: Teenager's demographic variables are positively associated to their perception towards celebrity endorsement

To analyze the data, 24 statements were framed based on the literature review. The overall descriptive statistics of the perceptual statement irrespective of the pertaining demographic

Discrimination is tending towards positive side. At the selection stage of perception, with 11 statements encountered by the respondents, the mean score is high with an average close to 4. This clearly indicates that having the celebrity in an advertisement definitely makes a brand most likely to be selected. The teenagers get highly convinced with the apparel brand and also it will make the brand to be noticed to them. At the perceptual organizing stage, the presence of celebrity in a brand's communication certainly helps the teenagers, to better organize the information about the branded apparel in to their mental frame for further response. In spite of the two stages being positive, at the interpretation stage of perception the results are not supportive, out of the 8 statement of perception; none of the statement had a mean score above 2.5, except to the statement which stated that the celebrity's presence increases the value of endorsed apparel brands and gave a positive impression to the apparel brands with celebrities.

Chi-square test result

From Table 1, it can be concluded that there is no association between what the teens study and their perception towards endorsement. On analyzing the association between gender and teenager's perception it has been observed that out of the 24 statements of perception 16 formed an association.

Statements of perception	Perceptual process	P value Course and teens perception	P value Gender and Perception	P value Age and Perception	P value Location and perception	P value No. of income sources and perception
Celebrity_credible	Selection	.101	.042	.075	.008	.058
makes_ad_notice		.568	.054	.096	.001	.011
More_convincing		.585	.028	.004	.000	.042
More_believable		.027	.029	.080	.008	.037
Brands_more_acceptable		.419	.019	.355	.030	.052
Sets_reminder		.918	.042	.202	.036	.049
More_attractive_creative		.157	.637	.327	.000	.050
Ad_becomes_favorable		.589	.052	.110	.59	.047
Motivated_to_buy_Fav_star		.201	.054	.703	.082	.008
Makes_Brand_learning_Easy		.03	.046	.361	.451	.929
Increases_Brand_involvement		.236	.025	.361	.001	.931
Simplifies_Ad_content		.349	.037	.648	.042	.382

Most_noted_is_celebrity	Organizing	.796	.035	.899	.032	.025
Content_of_the_add_is_noted		.935	.696	.492	.028	.125
Blindly_rely_on_endorsed_celeb		.171	.911	.479	.036	.003
Recall_brand		.458	.015	.283	.052	.788
BrandsQuality_Physical_appearance		.304	.058	.155	.649	.477
Brand_notTrendy_if_NoCeleb	Interpretation	.618	.315	.78	.863	.050
CelebGives_positiveImpression		.921	.023	.015	.036	.026
StopBuying_ifCeleb_Scandal		.640	.284	.240	.017	.053
Affects_evaluation_of_alternative_brand		.310	.040	.141	.022	.005
Celebs_increases_valueOf_endorsed Brand		.009	.486	.562	.028	.366
If_change_in_Celeb_it_affects_my_purchase_Intensions		.897	.026	.124	.206	.008
I_Switch_to_theBrand_endorsed_by_my_Fav		.144	.019	.571	.052	.688

Table: 1 Chi- square result for association between demographical variables and perception

Hence the null hypothesis, H^0 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis H^1 is accepted, thus there is an association between teenager's gender and their perception towards celebrity endorsement. Likewise when age and teenager's perception towards endorsement is studied, the null hypothesis H^0 gets accepted, thus there is no association between Age and their perception towards celebrity endorsement. Further on analyzing the association between location and teenager's perception, from table 1, the results very clearly depicts that there is an association between location and the teen's perception towards celebrity endorsement. Subsequently association between no. of income sources i.e. number of earning members in the teenagers family and their perception towards celebrity endorsement is studied and the results hence proves that there is an association between income and teenager's perception towards celebrity endorsement.

Demographic Variables	Association
Course	No Association
Gender	There is an Association
Age	No Association

Location	There is an Association
No. of Income sources in family	There is an Association

Table: 2 Summary of the chi-square association

From table 2, it can further be summarized that, there is a strong association between the teenagers' demographical difference and their perception towards celebrity endorsement. This may be because they are demographically different and therefore their mental frames of response towards endorsers have differed, except in the case of course and their age.

Impact study

To study the differential impact of celebrities on brand building with the changes in the teenager's location, the one-way Anova test is used. Also for further impact assessment of celebrities on teenagers, an independent variable of gender is taken in to consideration, wherein for a scientific support to the study Student T-test is run on the data.

H²: Location and the Celebrity's impact on brand building are significantly different

Here four groups of teenagers, based on their location (Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara) are formed. The prime step in One-way Anova test is to test the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

One-way anova test result

Brand Building stages	Sig. (P value)	Levene Statistic	H ⁰ Accepted/ Rejected	Homogeneity of Impact Of celebrity's presence
Salience	.006	4.257	Rejected	Differ
	.016	3.501	Rejected	Differ
Imagery	.000	6.334	Rejected	Differ
Performance	.202	1.547	Fail to Reject H ₀	Do not differ
Judgement	.021	.164	Rejected	Differ
Feelings	.016	1.183	Rejected	Differ
Resonance	.053	2.588	Fail to Reject H ₀	Do not differ
Resonance	.021	3.276	Rejected	Differ

Tables: 3 Summary of Test of Homogeneity of variance

From Table: 3, the levene's F test for equality of variances, F value for salience stage of brand building is 4.257 & 3.501, with a sig(p) value of .006 and .016 respectively, which is lesser than the alpha of .05 ($P < .05$), hence we accept the alternative hypothesis H^2 , which indicates that the celebrity's presence has a significant differential impact amongst the teenagers residing at different location, in spite of being from the same state of Gujarat. Thus brand awareness level and brand knowledge also differs based on the location differences. It can be concluded that impact of celebrity at **Salience stage** of brand building significantly differs. At the **Imagery Stage** of brand building, the levene's F test for equality of variances, the value of F for Imagery stage is 6.334, with a sig. (P) value of .000. This indicates the differential impact of celebrity endorsement at the Imagery stage, thus there consideration for a brand with the celebrity, differs with the alterations in their location. Further at the **Performance** stage of brand building there is no significant difference on the impact of celebrity with that of the location. The value of F for Performance is 1.547 and sig. (P) value is of .202, therefore we retain the null hypothesis for the assumption of homogeneity of variance. At the **Judgement stage** of brand building, the impact on teenagers significantly differs, with the sig. (P) .021. Judgement here refers to, helping the teenagers in positively liking the brand through celebrity's positive impression and expertise. The impact of celebrity at **Feelings** stage of brand building on teenager is significantly different, based on the location they belong to, with sig. (P) value .016, thus there exists a differences in the level of emotional attachment to the brands, based on alterations in location. The impact of celebrity at **Resonance stage of brand building** on teenagers' is not significantly different based on the location they belong to. The null hypothesis H^0 gets accepted, stating that there is no difference in sense of community (sig. (P) .053) but loyalty so inferred (sig. (P) .021) does have a differential impact on the teenagers based on the variation in the location.

Student's T-Test result

H3: $M_1 \neq M_2$, In the population there is a difference between Male and Female with respect to the celebrity's impact on brand building

Stages of brand building	Sig. (P)	H^0 Accepted/ Rejected	Significant Difference
Salience	.049	Rejected	Differ
Salience	.006	Rejected	Differ
Imagery	.049	Rejected	Differ
Performance	.037	Rejected	Differ
Judgment	.029	Rejected	Differ
Feelings	.013	Rejected	Differ
Resonance (sense of community)	.044	Rejected	Differ
Resonance (intense loyalty)	.027	Rejected	Differ

Table: 4 Summary of Student's T-Test for significant difference between Male and Female with respect to the celebrity's impact on brand building

The independent T-test is used; to study the differential impact of celebrities on the two groups namely, male and female. The test run on the group overall resulted that, there exist differences in the impact of celebrity endorsements on male and female teenagers. They are differently influenced Comparing the significance value (p = less than the priori alpha level), where $\alpha = .05$. From Table 4, summary of Student's t-test it is visible that, overall sig(p) values fall below $\alpha = 0.05$, thereby failing to accept the null hypothesis (H^0 : In the population there is no difference between Male and Female with respect to the celebrity's impact on brand building), and would retain the alternative hypothesis (H^3 : In the population there is a difference between Male and Female with respect to the celebrity's impact on brand building). The impact of celebrities on male and female teenagers at each stage of brand building from salience to resonance stage differs. There is a difference in the brand awareness level (sig (P) .006), brand being considered (sig (P) .049) also differs with male and female teenagers. The brand preference and liking (sig (P) .029), emotional attachment (sig (P) .013) with the brand, sense of community (sig (P) .044) and loyalty (sig (P) .027) does vary among the male and female teenagers.

Conclusion

The study hypothesized that teenager's perception towards celebrity endorsement is associated with their demography. The results found that teenagers have strong association with respect to Gender, Location & Income. There barely exists an association between a teenager's education, irrespective of whether in school or college, with their perception developed towards celebrity endorsement. Also there is no association between age, irrespective to the age differences, with their perception developed towards celebrity endorsement. It has also been found that the presences of celebrity, makes the perceptual selection process highly strong for the apparel brands. Thus it clearly indicates that, having a celebrity in the brand's communication process is just and guarantees the brand to be highly noticed, as well as seeks highest attention, in the midst of all other me too brands. The result also validates the fact that, the presence of a celebrity helps the teenagers to well organize the information thus received. As the presence of celebrity simplifies the ad content for the teenagers, makes the brand more reliable and also improves the brand's recall. But at the interpretation stage of perception the results are not supportive, pointing out to the fact that having a celebrity associated with the brand do not bring in any changes, in the way the brand is interpreted, expect for making the value of the brand rise and attaching a positive impression to the brand endorsed. Further while analyzing celebrity endorsement's impact on brand building for teenagers, it was hypothesized that the Location and the Celebrity's impact on brand building are significantly different. The results of both One-way Anova and Students T-test validated the CBBE model, as proposed by Keller in each stage of brand building exercise (Salience, Imagery, Performance, Feelings, Judgement and Resonance). The reason for such may be attributed to the fact that the impact of celebrity endorsement has a difference with the change in location of the teenagers, though all the respondents were from the same state. It may further be corroborated that the same logic may not be applicable for other cities in Gujarat and other states in India. The study also hypothesized that the impact of celebrity differs based on gender, i.e. male and female teenagers at each stage of brand building, from salience to resonance, has a differential impact. Thus can conclude that the presence of a celebrity in a brand's communication does not impact male and female equally, but there exist a differential impact. This means while communicating to the teenagers, the gender differences need to

be highly considered. The result reflects that there is a difference in the way in which, a male and a female teenager, becomes aware about a given brand, attaches meaning to the brand endorsed, and considers a brand in to their choice list.

The emotional quotient of a male and a female teenager attached to a brand with reference to celebrity endorsements also differs not only intrastate but also interstate as well. The judgement and the loyalty also vary with the difference in the gender.

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