

IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present research looks at how celebrity endorsements affect Lucknow University students' purchasing decisions. Celebrity endorsements are becoming a common marketing tactic, especially in the fashion and consumer goods sectors, where it is thought that the celebrity's reputation, image, and social impact might sway consumers' decisions to buy. This study's main goal is to investigate how students, a significant consumer behavior group, react to goods and services that are recommended by celebrities.

Three hundred Lucknow University students, from a wide spectrum of undergraduate and graduate participation, participated in the survey. To evaluate several aspects of celebrity endorsement, such as perceived reliability, visual appeal, reliability, and relevancy to the target market, the study used a structured questionnaire. Purchase intent, brand loyalty, and the frequency of purchasing celebrity-endorsed goods were all factors considered in the analysis of consumer behavior.

The findings showed that students' purchasing decisions are greatly influenced by celebrity endorsements, with perceived similarity to the target demographic and the celebrity's credibility being the most important determinants. Particularly when it came to fashion, technology, and lifestyle products, students were more inclined to buy goods that were recommended by celebrities they looked up to. Students who strongly identified with the celebrity's image or persona also reported a greater influence.

This study emphasizes how crucial it is to choose the appropriate celebrity match for marketing initiatives in order to maximize their potential impact. It also emphasizes how important it is for brands to match their endorsements to the beliefs and inclinations of their target market, which in this case is young people. These results provide important insights for marketers looking to reach young, impressionable consumers and advance our understanding of how celebrity impact affects consumer behavior in a university setting.

Keywords: celebrity endorsement, buying behavior, student consumers, marketing strategy, brand loyalty, Lucknow University.

1. INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsements have become one of the most powerful marketing strategies in a variety of sectors in recent years, including consumer products, technology, fashion, and beauty. Businesses spend a lot of money on celebrities in order to use their popularity, authority, and influence to build brand connections that appeal to customers. Because of their increased involvement in media and social media platforms where celebrities often engage with their followers, younger audiences—including college students—are more susceptible to

the influence of celebrity endorsements. As a result, both researchers and marketers are now very interested in how celebrity endorsements affect consumer behavior, particularly among students.

One of India's oldest and most esteemed universities, Lucknow University, is a microcosm of the country's larger youth market. Students at the university come from a wide range of socioeconomic origins, yet they are all exposed to international entertainment and media. This group is especially vulnerable to the trends that celebrities set, and their impact on students' purchase decisions is heightened by social media. Since students make up a significant portion of the consumer base, marketers who want to target this market with their tactics must comprehend how celebrity endorsements impact their purchasing decisions.

This study's main goal is to investigate the connection between Lucknow University students' purchasing habits and celebrity endorsements. The study looks at how students perceive celebrities' relevance, legitimacy, and dependability in order to determine how these variables affect their decisions to buy, especially when it comes to product categories like fashion, technology, and lifestyle. Furthermore, the study will evaluate if students' opinions and behaviors concerning endorsed products are significantly influenced by their personal affiliation with the brand or celebrity.

This study will advance our knowledge of marketing tactics aimed at millennials and Gen Zers by offering insightful information about how well celebrity endorsements affect young consumers' purchasing decisions.

It becomes crucial for businesses to take all necessary steps to influence, convince, and inspire a desire to purchase in customers through effective advertising in a market where advertising plays a major role in consumer purchases. Theoretically and practically, celebrities attract a lot of attention and publicity. Businesses spend a lot of money to associate themselves and their businesses with celebrities who endorse them. Marketers and advertisers agree that the persuasiveness of a message is greatly influenced by the personality of the speaker. Companies strive to use marketing communications activities to transfer the vibrant and enticing attributes that celebrities are known for to their products. In addition to their attributes, these well-known figures obtain strong recall rates for commercial purposes in addition to drawing attention towards campaigns in extremely cluttered markets.

Celebrity endorsements have long been a staple of marketing campaigns, and more and more studies are looking into how they affect customer behavior. Celebrity status, appeal, and trustworthiness are used in these endorsements to influence the attitudes and actions of consumers. This section examines the body of research on how celebrity endorsements affect consumer behavior, with a particular emphasis on college students and young people. It also identifies pertinent theories and findings that shed light on the ways in which these endorsements affect purchasing decisions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

"Any individual who enjoys public recognition and uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement" is how McCracken (1989) defined celebrity endorsement. The effects of literature sources that show that: endorsement by famous people increases the attention paid to an ad; celebrities are generally attractive, which helps persuade when consumers are worried about social acceptance and other people's opinions; or when the product is related to attractiveness, are the basis for conventional explanations of celebrity endorsement spin-off effects.

(Kahle and Homer 1985, Kamins 1990); celebrities may be reliable sources if they are knowledgeable in a certain field, such as when an athlete endorses shoes or a stunning model endorses makeup. Celebrities are frequently popular, which may cause identification and persuade consumers to try to establish a relationship with the celebrity.

According to Belk (1988), consumers see the goods they buy as "bundles of meaning" or qualities like cleverness, bravery, thrift, and honesty that they can use to create their sense of self, rather than just "bundles of utility" as economists assert. Businesses try to give their products several meanings by associating them with celebrities who embody the meanings they want. Customers' perceptions of any celebrity endorser are influenced by their perceptions of the brand being recommended.

Silvera and Austad (2004) point out features of commercials that help them effectively convey messages. The results suggest that customers' judgments of whether the endorser genuinely enjoys the product can have a significant impact on the success of endorsement advertising. Additionally, this research indicates that advertisers should work harder to choose the best endorsers and to give compelling justifications and explanations for why endorsers genuinely enjoy the things they promote.

"Endorsement is a channel of brand communication in which a celebrity acts as the brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claim and position by extending his or her personality, popularity, stature in the society, or expertise in the field to the brand," according to Roll (2006), who also defined endorsement.

Gan (2006) looks into how Chinese consumers react to advertisements including celebrities and those that don't. According to the findings, Chinese consumers choose celebrities with more polished appearances, competent career abilities, and effective communication.

Saleem (2007) pointed out that celebrity endorsements are increasingly playing a significant role in marketing strategies. She suggests that when there is little to no product differentiation, marketers could employ celebrities in their advertisements. However, the endorsement of numerous celebrities (more than one celebrity in a single advertising) may be the solution when marketers need to concentrate on a more diverse market.

Hunter and Davidsson (2008) investigate how consumers' perceptions of brands are affected by unfavorable information about celebrities. The conclusion is that unfavorable information may cause people to have a bad opinion of the brand. But, that is not case if company is led by celebrity.

To study how product endorsers "match" with both celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers, Koernig and Boyd (2009) used the example of a well-known athlete and an unknown model. According to the findings, a well-known athlete may promote a sports brand more successfully than a non-sport brand.

Mukherjee (2009) looked into the relationship between brands and celebrity endorsements as well as how celebrity endorsements affect consumers' purchasing decisions. According to him, celebrity endorsements are usually a two-edged sword with many benefits. If used appropriately, they may work wonders for the business, but if not, they could have disastrous effects on the brand and business as a whole.

In their study, Patra and K. Datta (2010) came to the conclusion that choosing the perfect celebrity to promote a company is a difficult task. When choosing a celebrity, agencies and advertisers should take into account a number of factors.

Sonwalkar, Kapse, and Pathak (2011) came to the conclusion that celebrities have a significant impact in brand memory and serve as influential opinion leaders. They are useful in starting people in a desired state of need, but they don't give any advertising message legitimacy.

Bhargava (2015) shown that consumers try to consume a brand that aligns with their individual personalities. The consumer has a slight preference for male celebrities over female ones. Instead of a celebrity promoting a product, price influences the majority of buyers.

According to Arora's (2011) research, a celebrity can improve a product's image in a variety of ways. Making sure that the product and the celebrity are a good fit is the responsibility of the marketer. She further stated that Celebrity Endorsements, on one hand give support to the brand but in no way guarantees that the disadvantages associated with the same could be avoided.

2.1 Consumer Behaviour with respect to celebrity endorsements

Celebrity endorsements are well known for their capacity to improve sales and brand perception. Scholars contend that consumers' opinions of the endorsed brand are greatly influenced by a celebrity's reputation, dependability, and perceived beauty. The idea of "transfer of meaning," in which customers identify the celebrity's traits with the company being promoted, is a key factor in the success of celebrity endorsements. This phenomena is especially pertinent to young customers who frequently look up to celebrities and emulate their tastes and behaviors.

2.2 Influence of Celebrity Trustworthiness and Credibility

One of the key elements affecting how successful endorsements are is the celebrity's credibility. According to Hovland, Janis, and Kelley's (1953) Source Credibility Model, the message's persuasiveness can be greatly impacted by the reliability and experience of the source. Students, who frequently have a tendency to trust celebrities they look up to and consider role models, should pay particular attention to this. Customers are more inclined to trust the company or product being promoted when they perceive a celebrity to be knowledgeable and trustworthy, which increases their propensity to buy (Ohanian, 1990). This is in line with studies on young people and students, which show that students are more likely to buy goods promoted by celebrities they deem relatable and trustworthy.

2.3 Identification and Social Influence with Celebrities

Celebrity endorsements are frequently used as a means of social validation, and university students are especially vulnerable to social influence in urban areas like Lucknow. The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) states that people often imitate the actions of others they look up to, such as famous people. Celebrities are social reference points for college students, and their impact can go beyond simply endorsing goods to include influencing more general lifestyle decisions (Bergstrom, 2001). Customers are more likely to be swayed by celebrities they perceive to have similar beliefs, attitudes, and interests, according to identification theory (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). Students are more likely to react favorably to things that celebrities advocate when they relate to them personally or aspirationally.

2.4 The Role of Media and Social Platforms

Celebrities may now communicate directly with their audiences, particularly young customers, thanks to the development of social media and digital platforms. According to research by Lou & Yuan (2019), celebrity endorsements on social media sites like YouTube

or Instagram have a greater impact on customer engagement. This direct engagement with celebrities might significantly influence the purchasing decisions of Lucknow University students, who are frequently engaged on social media. Students and celebrities can connect more personally through social media, which increases their likelihood of believing product recommendations and interacting with marketed content (Agrawal & Prasad, 2020). Social media also makes product evaluations, endorsements, and promotional information instantly accessible, which increases the impact of celebrity marketing.

2.5 Celebrity Endorsements and Youth Consumerism

In the consumer market, young consumers—particularly college students—are frequently regarded as early adopters and trend-setters. They are very open to new concepts and goods, frequently motivated by a desire to stand out from the crowd or blend in with their peers (Martin & Bush, 2000). Students' opinions about items are greatly influenced by celebrity endorsements, as they frequently view these products as stylish, current, or "cool" (Hassan & Shabbir, 2016). This tendency is especially noticeable in consumer areas like fashion, cosmetics, and technology, where student preferences are greatly influenced by the lifestyle choices of celebrities.

2.6 Studies on Celebrity Endorsements and University Students

Numerous studies have especially looked at how celebrity endorsements affect college students' purchasing decisions. According to a study by Khan et al. (2021), for instance, celebrity endorsements have a big impact on Indian university students, particularly in industries like fashion, electronics, and cosmetics. Similarly, study by Sharma and Nair (2018) demonstrated that students' perceptions of celebrities' beauty and reliability have a beneficial impact on their purchase decisions, with the greatest influence observed in categories like clothing and technology. This is consistent with research from Lucknow that indicates college students are heavily involved in celebrity culture and that endorsements have an impact on their purchasing habits.

3. CONCLUSION

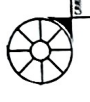
According to the literature, university students' purchasing decisions can be significantly influenced by celebrity endorsements. Students' opinions of endorsed products are greatly influenced by the relatability, attractiveness, and credibility of celebrities. Furthermore, the popularity of social media has increased the influence of celebrity endorsements and made them more successful in attracting young customers. Because Lucknow University students are heavily impacted by media and celebrity culture, these endorsements have an impact on both their opinions toward brands and their overall purchasing habits. To gain a better understanding of this dynamic relationship, future study in this field could concentrate on examining the particular product categories and celebrity characteristics that most significantly influence the purchasing decisions of Lucknow University students.

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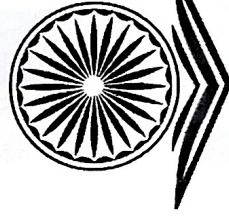
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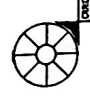
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