

AN STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF SPORTS CELEBRITY ADVERTISEMENT OVER THE PERCEPTION AND BUYING DECISION OF THE CONSUMER – A REVIEW

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Abstract : *Advertisements have always played as an important part of promotional mix. As the advertisement has evolved over the years, so have the consumers. The consumer now-a-days takes a well informed decision during purchase. This is possible partly because of the advertisement that is filled with information about the product. However, what will make the customer choose and buy the product of a particular company in this widely competitive market. How is that the company manage to stand out of the crowd? This paper is about one such tactics the companies are using now, that is sports celebrity endorsement. This paper tries to understand some previously conducted studies and understand the scope for further study.*

Index terms – *Advertisement, Sports Celebrity, Athlete, Performance , Branded Products, youth*

Introduction:

Celebrity endorsement is a kind of advertisement, where a famous person from the film fraternity, sports or modeling speaks or promotes the brand and helps in increasing the sales of the product or service. It has developed and evolved over the years, and because of its success, it is still one of the preferred promotional choices the companies have to meet the end objective. The main intention of celebrity endorsement is the ability of the ads is not only to influence the consumer's buying decision but also make home the idea of the product which is endorsed. Though an expensive affair, however it helps in the long run. Here every company is trying to create a bond with the consumer and in this event they are using the same strategy across. Well let's try and figure out is sports celebrity endorsement the key to this problem.

Objective:

To review and understand the previous work on sports celebrity endorsement and influence of same on the consumer buying behavior.

Need for the study :

For pure science 1+1 is always equal to 2, however when dealing with humans this might not be necessary true. A small change in the color of the packaging might bring in a lot of difference, then if a company gets in an in-form sportsperson talking good about the product, then there should be definitely a change that can be observed or is it? Well things cannot always be taken for granted, as we have seen couple of great failures in the past where big names have failed to deliver what they were expected to do. This paper helps us to understand better the factors involved

Research Methodology:

This paper is purely based on secondary data. The data collected is from various paper, websites and publication available with respect to sports celebrity endorsement and related topics.

Literature Review :

The advertising industry in India has changed from a small time business to a multi billion industry. This advertising industry in India is forecasted to grow as the second fastest market after China. The estimated money spent over ad will be around 0.45% of the GDP in India. The overwhelming support from the Indian government and the business friendly policies by RBI are converging for a better business environment. The proposed licenses for new banks and good market sentiments give the advertising and marketing industry an opportunity to excel.(2017) In China, sports endorsement for luxury brands are much sought out marketing strategy(Schaefer et al., 2011). However the effectiveness of this marketing strategy or such campaign is unknown. . (Lingling Liu et al., 2017)

PTI (2013) India air Force drops the God of cricket as its brand ambassador. The bond for two years between the Indian air defense force and Sachin Tendulkar came to an end. The IAF had aimed to motivate the younger generation to take up career in IAF, however it did not see any comparative difference as to previous years.

According to the study of sports celebrity endorsement advertising: a partial replication and extension by Steve Dix 2009 , is says that there was no significant difference in terms of consumer attitude with respect to endorsed product compared to non endorsed products.

A study by Yogesh Upadhyay and S. K. Singh (2007) tell us that the performance of a sports celebrity in men attitude does not change much, however the female fans attitude change a lot, hence it definitely has an impact on the consumers. This study was carried during the 2007 cricket world cup.

As per a study by Lear-Edwards et. al. (2009) Sports celebrity endorsements in retail products advertising, it says that the products sold by retailers are usually more with respect to certain sports celebrity than others.

Renton (2009) High star athletes and low star athletes play a role in selecting for endorsing the products. The paper tried to understand the impact of the same, where it found that the direct consumption had not effect about the start power.

The above articles suggest that there is minimum difference in terms of consumer attitude or the impact of using sports celebrity for the brands is not that successful.

This being the case why is that companies pay big to sportsperson to speak good about their products? Now let us see some other articles which show other side of the spectrum.

John Jung (1986) has to say that the idea of role models are seen as important social influencers and the same has been accepted by individuals and psychologists. The qualities we seek in a role model include success, honesty, and triumph over obstacles, challenging stereotype to name few of the qualities.

An article in Forbes by Kurt Badenhausen (2017), Forbes Staff - The World's Highest-Paid Athletes 2017: Behind The Numbers gives us the following details. Collectively the 100 highest paid athletes have earned around \$3.11 billion over the last 12 months. Athletes from 11 different sports streams made it in the Basketball with 32 players. Baseball has 22 players, American Football with 15, Football & Tennis with nine each, racing 5, golf 5 and boxing 3, cricket, MMA and track with one athlete each.

Dr. Karla McCormick (2010) says positive attitude of sports men/women in media or sports, the consumer carries a positive attitude towards them and hence also build a positive attitude towards the endorsed products. The character and styles of the athlete is very important to gauge how consumer responds to the product endorsed. More positive the image of the athlete, more he/she will be liked, which in turn will make the consumer to explore more and check and consume the products endorsed by the athlete.

Recognizing the athlete will result in increasing the likelihood of relating to the product in a positive way. Well the athletes have to be performing steadily in their sports to be identified, and get the attention of the consumers. Due to constant bombardment, the consumers are at free will, the switch brands as soon as the athletic idol change team.

Anita Elberse et. al. (2012) The study says that there is a positive relation between sales and sports celebrity endorsement. The study also says that with each great performance by the athlete the sales also jump with certain noticeable margin.

Virat Kohli's stands 7th in the list with an earning of ₹93.93 crore (\$14.5 million) just by endorsing products. He supersedes Lionel Messi who earns ₹87.52 crore (\$13.5 million) through brands. Aarti Iyengar (2017)

According to Yuko Sawatari (2005), both male and female consumers think or use the same criteria for athlete's expertise and trustworthiness, to recognize and value the athlete's achievement in her or his field. When it comes to the factor of attractiveness of the endorser the law of nature prevails, where the opposite sex is more interested than same sex if the endorser's attractiveness is not given much value, in this case it tends to be rather same for both the sex.

As per Alexander Manta (2013) some sports celebrity can only endorse related products; however some sports celebrities can also endorse unrelated products. The article suggests that the celebrities who are known for acquirable expertise by consumers are expected to endorse related products. Well as compared to other sports celebrities who are at their top of the position and very few aspire and achieve that position, the consumer or public would not mind seeing him/her endorsing unrelated products or services

According to J Sridevi (2013), the consumer's show positive impact towards the products which is been endorsed by celebrity compared to ordinary people.

According to Dr. Jagadeesh Prakash & Shamala (2014). R major portion claim to are dependent on electronic media as a media to watch their favorite sport. One more finding is that the youngsters are more inclined to buy branded products which are endorsed by celebrity rather otherwise.

According to Pitch Madison AD report 2017 the ad industry is expected to grow by 13.5% in 2017. Ad industry size was Rs.43, 991 crores in 2015, Rs.49, 480 crores in 2016 and projected to be Rs.56, 152crores in 2017. Television, the projected growth is Rs 21,269 crores, the print media is projected to grow to Rs.19, 869 crores. Digital advertising growth projected to Rs.9, 144 crore mark as video, social and mobile grow fast. Radio is projected to grow to Rs 2,008 crore markets, Cinema advertising is projected to grow to Rs 601 crore. The sub-segment of Digital OOH & Malls has seen rapid growth even as the overall OOH market projected to grow to Rs. 3,234 crore.

Dr. Shamala R. in his study says that mass media plays an important role in popularizing sports through sports celebrities. Sports celebrity plays a part of role model for youth in social development. Apart from this there is a relation between the products purchased by the youth which is endorsed by the sports celebrity.

According to *Lily Bradic* (2015) the main factor for brand is to find the right celebrity to endorse the product. Companies choose not just a celebrity, rather they choose the aura, character and attitude which gels well with the brand and the product to be endorsed. The most important is the trustworthiness and credibility. Well the article also suggests that the ad is more effective if it shows that the endorser is a user of the product that they promote so that the fans believe it.

Sretenka Dugalić et al. (2016) Sports marketers have had to become much more entrepreneurial to create a competitive advantage for a sports organization and deliver relationship value to consumers. The aim of the paper is, therefore, to establish a link between athletes and potential customers, which offers the market (through the transfer of athletes) the image of the company that is acquired through access to a public promotional effect.

According to an article by Ratan Bhusan (2017) PepsiCo and Indian cricket captain has parted ways after a six years association. This call came after the Indian cricket captain said that promoting products which are against the ideals of fitness was not right. This shows how now a day's even the endorsers are very careful before choosing the product.

This study investigated brand image involving sports celebrities. Creation of a brand image through various associations is the main objective of marketing strategies. Dr. Jagadeesh Prakash et al. (2014) There is many strategies to achieve this goal, out of which endorsement by sports celebrities is a strong one, which can create brand image among the youth. Brand strategists and advertisers need to know the opportunities of using the sports celebrities with good performance in IPL matches. Professional performance may give significant boost to the image of the brand, which could lead to profit for the brand so endorsed.

A reporter for CNN Anita Elberse (2009) The way these celebrity moves, every step is watched, gossiped by the common people. So it is for the celebrity to be very careful to stay away from unwanted scandals and publicity. This not only taints the image of the celebrity, but the products he/she are endorsing. So there is a lot at risk. We have seen it in past how Accenture terminated its deal with Tiger Wood because of one such incidence.

Findings -

1. Advertisement as an industry is grown to a big business, big enough to have a market and soul of its own.
2. Be it luxury items or low involvement products which are endorsed by sports person, it doesn't make a big difference in term of customer attitude.
3. People connect to sports person as idols and social influencers in the lives of the consumers, however there is no much of connection between buying the product and influence of celebrity on the buying.
4. Well some want to put it this way, the positive attitude towards the celebrity the consumer will carry positive attitude towards the product. Similar to balance theory in consumer behavior.
5. Recognizing the sportsperson is also important to relate to the product in a positive way, now we cannot have any person in India, having a positive attitude towards a product just because it has been endorsed by a well know sports celebrity who is popular in USA and not in India.
6. Sportsmen are also careful and selective in what brand they want to promote or endorse, because of many factors.
7. The chance of a consumer buying a endorsed product is more, if he feels that his favorite celebrity also uses the product
8. The consumer would want the celebrity to endorse only products which are related to the activity, however the same consumers would not mind if a few celebrities who have achieved big milestones in their career to endorse related and/or non-related products.
9. Electronic media plays an important part in reaching the public at large. This is possible through twitter, face book, instgram and other social media.

Conclusion

The advertisement market is growing at phenomenal rate. So advertisers find new ways to persuade the consumer in buying their products. So the use of sports celebrity has become one of the key to The articles gives us a idea of how consumer sees their respective sports idols, the aura and the factors that influence the life, the access point to the sports celebrity, kind of products the sports celebrity endorse, however at the same time we see that some of the articles also says that what so ever be the place the celebrity holds in the life of the consumer, he/she doesn't allow the influence of the celebrity on the buying decision.

Scope for further study

Well this sets in a scope for further study of why is that, even if the celebrity has influence over life of the consumer , still then the celebrity has little or no significant influence in the buying decision (Steve Dix 2009). May be the demographics would differ; the perception of the people would differ depending on their upbringing. Well this is like finding a black cat in a dark room, there can be one cat or many.

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