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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF UNETHICAL CORPORATE PRACTICES ON CORPORATE BRAND EQUITY <i>DR. R. SATISH KUMAR & ATULSEN SINGH</i>	1
2.	FACTORS AFFECTING MANAGERIAL CREATIVITY <i>DR. RISHU ROY & SUPRIYA GUPTA</i>	7
3.	THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ADVERTISEMENT ON INDIAN CUSTOMERS <i>CHAITRA BOCHEER .K.S & DR. H. NANJEGOWDA</i>	15
4.	INNOVATIVE BANKING SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SALEM <i>DR. A. JAYAKUMAR & G. ANBALAGAN</i>	20
5.	THE EFFECT OF CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON TQM PRACTICES IN ISO CERTIFIED COMPANIES <i>BHAKTA BHUSHAN BISWAS</i>	24
6.	THE RELUCTANCE OF JORDANIAN WOMEN IN WORKING IN THE TOURISM SECTOR: CASE OF JORDANIAN FEMALE <i>AMEEN AHMED MAHBOB AL MOMANI</i>	30
7.	A STUDY ON CONSUMER BRAND PREFERENCE TOWARDS HEALTH DRINK PRODUCTS IN TIRUVARUR DISTRICT (TN) <i>DR. N. UDHAYAKUMARI & G. T. VIJAYALAKSHMI</i>	37
8.	AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF FRIDAY EFFECT IN NSE NIFTY COMPANIES <i>DR. S. POORNIMA & V. CHITRA</i>	41
9.	ANALYSIS OF WAGE BURDEN AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY OF STATE BANK OF INDIA AND ICICI BANK <i>DR. ASHOK JHAWAR & ROBIN THOMAS</i>	45
10.	OUTSOURCING AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE <i>V. K. RANJITH & BIJUNA C MOHAN</i>	49
11.	FINANCIAL IMPACT OF HRM ON PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATIONS: A STUDY <i>MOIRANTHEM MOMOCHA SINGH & DR. D. GOPALAKRISHNA</i>	52
12.	ROLE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN INDIA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR <i>DR. NASIR ZAMEER QURESHI, ADIL AMIN BHATT, ZUHAIB AHMAD BAZAZ & NASREEN KHAN</i>	55
13.	CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR <i>DR. M. L. GUPTA & SHAILESH VERMA</i>	61
14.	COMPETENCY MAPPING: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR HRM <i>MANISHA CHOUDHARY, DR. DIPTI SHARMA & DEEPENDRA MAHALAWAT</i>	64
15.	INNOVATION IN FINANCIAL SERVICES: A STUDY OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS <i>AMANDEEP KAUR SHAHI & KRITI AVASTHI</i>	67
16.	SERVICE QUALITY OF BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE INSURANCE IN SOUTH INDIA USING SERVQUAL INSTRUMENT <i>SUBHAN BANDE</i>	72
17.	CAPITAL STRUCTURE DETERMINANTS FOR SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE IN THE ENERGY SECTOR OF INDIA <i>DR. SUNITA PANICKER</i>	77
18.	FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN INDIA - A ROAD AHEAD <i>K. THIRUMAMAGAL & DR. TI. M. SWAAMINATHAN</i>	82
19.	LOANS AND ADVANCES OF COMMERCIAL BANKS: A CASE STUDY ON JANATA BANK LIMITED <i>FARJANA SALAM, FAHIMA SALAM, ASHUTOSH ROY & MD. HALIMUZZAMAN</i>	88
20.	THE EFFECTS OF CREDIT FINANCE ON THE NIGERIAN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR'S PERFORMANCE <i>AKINSEYE OLOWU & DR. ONIMOLE SOLOMON</i>	94
21.	INFLUENCE OF CREDIT ADMINISTRATION ON FARMERS OPERATIONS IN OSUN STATES OF NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF THE NIGERIA MICROFINANCE POLICY <i>OLADEJO MORUF & SOYEMI KENNY</i>	102
22.	APPRAISAL OF FACTORS INFLUENCING TAX AVOIDANCE AND EVASION IN NIGERIA <i>AKINYOMI OLADELE JOHN & OKPALA KENNETH</i>	107
23.	LEVEL OF WORKERS' JOB SATISFACTION AT JUTE MILLS: A CASE STUDY ON NARSINGDI DISTRICT <i>MD. GHULAM RABBANY, ABU ZAFAR AHMED MUKUL, SHARMIN AFRIN & AIRIN RAHMAN</i>	112
24.	MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION USING SERVQUAL: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY OF BANGLADESH <i>MD. SHARIFUL ALAM</i>	116
25.	WORKER CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPLIANCE TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WOOD WORKERS IN NAJA DAVID WOOD INDUSTRY LIMITED IN KUMASI, GHANA <i>DR. KOFI OSEI AKUOKO, DR. MARTIN KWAKU YEBOAH, VINCENT DE PAUL KANWETUU & ELIZABETH ADWOA KWANKYE</i>	121
26.	PERCEPTIONS OF RETAILERS ON FDIS INTO INDIAN MULTI BRAND RETAILING <i>N. SURESH</i>	128
27.	LOAN ASSETS CLASSIFICATION OF SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANKS IN INDIA <i>M. ANBALAGAN</i>	131
28.	EXAMINING FACTORS AFFECTING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE <i>ARSLAN AYUB, MUHAMMAD SALMAN ASLAM & ADEEL RAZZAQ</i>	136
29.	A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS ABOUT BANKING SERVICES IN MADURAI CITY <i>S. RENUGADEVI</i>	139
30.	EVA AND MVA: WHICH METRIC IS EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE IN EXPLAINING REPORTED EARNINGS? – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SELECTED INDIAN FIRMS <i>MAHESH KUMAR KURMI</i>	143
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	147

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CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT INFLUENCING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**DR. M. L. GUPTA****DEAN****FACULTY OF COMMERCE & BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION****CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY****MEERUT****SHAILESH VERMA****ASST. PROFESSOR****ITERC COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT****MEERUT****ABSTRACT**

The focus of this research paper is to understand the role of celebrities in changing consumer's preference. How the celebrities create a unique image of product in the market. Through celebrities marketers create opportunities for new product and also retain existing product in the mind of consumers in the stiff competitive market.

KEYWORDS

celebrity endorsement, celebrity credibility, consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

It doesn't matter how new an idea is; what matters is how new it becomes."

-Elias Canetti

The practice of celebrity endorsement has been used at least since the 1760s, when Josiah Wedgwood, the founder of the Wedgwood pottery in England, used his products' association with royalty to create the feeling of quality about them. Other brands have sought to associate themselves with successful and admired public figures. Through campaigns using television, radio or print, celebrity endorsements have become a standard feature of many advertising campaigns.

There are a number of advantages to use celebrities in advertising, whether you are running print, Internet, radio or television commercials. The key for small companies is making sure the local celebrity is relevant and has broad appeal. Popular celebrities often work best because they naturally generate lots of attention.

Celebrities are most effective if they promote products or services they are most likely to use. In other words, they must be plausible consumers, such as a local newscaster wearing a business suit from an area men's store.

In today's dynamic economy market are overcrowded with varieties of products and companies. Every day consumers are exposed to new arrivals which creates a big problem for companies to have a unique position in the market. It has been challenging for the companies to attract the attention of the consumer where consumer are aware of the detailed information of products available in markets. Celebrities play a key role in influencing the buying attitude of consumers towards making final decision to purchase a product. Using a celebrity has the advantage of the publicity and attention getting. Large segments of the audience can instantly recognize and identify with a famous person and the attention and goodwill associated with the celebrities can be transferred to the product. Celebrities play a two way role for consumers as well as for companies by transferring information to consumer and by making profitability for companies at large. In the era of globalization there is a need for mass marketing by a person who can Bridge the gap between consumer and companies. When people watch advertisement of their favorite celebrities, a perception is created and the consumer assumes certain characteristics in him, which he may not have. A certain kind of emotional relationship is created which creates the brand uniqueness amongst the other available brands.

Celebrities are selected keeping in view the target customer. Accordingly a proper marketing mix is prepared to influence customer's final buying attitude. In celebrity endorsement celebrities lends his/her name and appears on behalf of a product or services over and extended period of time. Celebrity endorsement with the product also provides credibility in the minds of audience. Celebrities are likely to positively affect the consumer's brand preference, brand attitude, and purchasing intentions.

Companies using celebrity endorsements usually have a prepared public relations strategy and can take advice from crisis management professionals within the advertising industry. Companies engaging in such endorsements also need to secure exclusivity from the celebrity in all aspects of their lives, and not just when advertising a product. Millions spent on a celebrity endorsement can be undermined if the contracted celebrity is seen using a rival product or service. Companies also need to be prepared to offer long contracts to celebrities, as this creates stability and consistency in the eyes of the consumer.

It's true that celebrity endorsements do in fact greatly influence our consumer decisions. Advertisers are able to grab our attention by endorsing various celebrities or sports figures. By defining consumer decisions and following the model, it is easier to explain how celebrities influence consumer decisions. Nike and Gillette are just a few examples of companies that have really made commitments in forming these multi-million dollar endorsements to better market their product.

WHO ARE CELEBRITIES?

According to Friedman and Friedman, a "celebrity endorser is an individual who is known by the public (...) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed". Compared to other endorser types, famous people always attach a greater degree of attention, recall and loyalty.

According to Melissa St. James, a doctoral fellow and marketing instructor at The George Washington University, "Studies show that using celebrities can increase consumers' awareness of the ad, capture [their] attention and make ads more memorable."

In this age of intense competition, where capturing a position in the consumers' mind space is extremely tough, celebrity endorsements give an extra edge to the companies for holding the viewers' attention. Celebrities can catalyze brand acceptance and provide the enormous momentum that brands require by endorsing the intrinsic value to the brand.

Celebrities like movie stars, TV personalities, popular entertainers & sports icons provide a common reference group appeals. Celebrities represent an idealization that most people imagine that they would love to live.

A firm that decides to employ a celebrity to promote its products or services has the choice of using the celebrity as:

Testimonial: celebrities have personally used the product and based on their experience they attest to the quality of the product or service. Superstar Salman Khan, who has been given the first ever Brand Endorser of the Year Award instituted by International Advertising Association, said he promotes only those products which he used. Testimonials prove that reviews are indeed real and credible.

Endorsement: A form of brand or advertising campaign that involves a well known person using their fame to help promote a product or service. Manufacturers of perfumes and clothing are some of the most common business users of classic celebrity endorsement techniques, such as television ads and launch event appearances, in the marketing of their products. Celebrities represent the product by their name. They may not have used the product before or may not have expertise about the product. For instance, Kareena Kapoor Khan endorsing Head and Shoulders. This is a very special association for Kareena as it is the first shampoo brand to come out with a music video and that too featuring Kareena.

Actor: A celebrity endorsing the product or services as part of character enactment. For instance smriti irani promoting water purifier of Eureka Forbes as part of her character enactment in Kyunki saas bhi kabhi bahu thi.

Spokesperson: A spokesperson is someone engaged or elected to speak on behalf of company. A celebrity is a person, who represents a brand or a company over an extended period of time. In India, Pepsi first used Aamir Khan, model turned actress Mahima Chaudhary and model and ex-Miss World Aishwariya Rai to promote its product. Later it used others Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Kajol, Rani Mukherjee, Saif Ali Khan, Fardeen Khan, Akshay Kumar, Shahid Kapoor (before he entered the movie world), Preity Zinta, John Abraham, Pawan Kalyan, Ram Charan Teja, Priyanka Chopra, and Kareena Kapoor as well as the national cricket team. Ranbir Kapoor & Deepika Padukone were signed for Pepsi's Youngistan campaign which targeted the youth.

WHY THE USE OF CELEBRITY

However marketers must first find the celebrity who can best fit and represents the image of the product and its meaning (Belch & Belch, 2001). Because, the credibility of the celebrity is important to create believable relation between the meanings which is associated with the celebrity and the product (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Therefore brands must consider three main components the credibility comprises. They are attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise (Pickton & Broderick 2005). Considering to these components, celebrity endorser must match with the product and the product's personality as closely as possible to be credible. Because every product has its own personality and if the celebrity and product's personality is very close to each other or very similar with each other then it will be much more effective (Fortini & Campbell 1992).

Celebrity endorsements have been part of advertising ever since the beginning of the profession. Athletes, musicians, actors and actresses, politicians, and other professionals have a tremendous amount of power and reach in persuading consumers. Research has shown that using celebrities in advertisement increases sales of the product being advertised. Even though we know the celebrity is being paid to promote a product, we buy it anyway because we trust her implicitly.

There are various reasons of using celebrities in advertisements. Celebrities ensure the consumer to purchase the product without any doubt. Celebrity credibility is the audience perception of both the celebrity's expertise about the product and trustworthiness of how honest the celebrity is about the product. If a celebrity endorses one product, the credibility of consumer towards the purchasing intention is high. For instance Youth market is highly lured by cricketers. Salman Khan, Aamir Khan, SRK, Saif Ali Khan, Katrina Kaif, Kareena Kapoor Khan create market for lifestyle products. Jewelers hire celebrities for promoting their trustworthiness in the market.

Another important reason why celebrity endorsements are so common in advertising is brand recall. There are a huge number of products being marketed to consumers all the time, so it's essential for a brand to find a way to stand out in the crowd and be remembered. If a customer sees an advertisement involving his or her favorite celebrity endorsing a particular product, then his or her chances of remembering that product are greatly increased.

Some of the Positive aspects of how a celebrity influences consumer behavior are given below:

- As the celebrities draw the immediate attention of the consumer and at the same time their perception of celebrities representing product differentiates the product from other products available in market.
- It is appealing to the masses. For the fact that celebrities have many followers, there is a big chance that an advertisement would bring a great impact to the audience. It will help you deliver your message to them effectively. You can assure that the attention of your target markets would be at your product.
- Celebrity endorsement keeps the customer to remember about the product. Almost all popular personalities have their own followers; this is why using them in a promotional activity would be very beneficial in introducing a new brand. Through association, it is easier for customers to remember the name of a certain product.
- Customers associate the product with the celebrity credibility. Using a famous individual in advertisement would help a startup business build its name in the market. This is because if the public believes and trust that person, there is a high probability that it goes the same with the commodities that he or she represents.
- It compensates the lack for innovative ideas. There are some instances when businessmen invest more in creating a perfect advertising campaign rather than developing their products. So, celebrity endorsements sometimes prove to be an effective strategy. Even if the products lack useful features and functionalities, there are still many people that patronize them for the fact that they are promoted by a reputable person.

Celebrity endorsing strategies are finalized keeping in mind the target consumers. Understanding Consumer behavior is a complex phenomenon. It is better to understand consumer's purchasing process so that appropriate celebrities can be endorsed to influence consumer purchasing decision.

Consumer behavior is "the psychological processes that consumers go through in recognizing needs, finding ways to solve these needs, making purchase decisions". Before a consumer makes a purchase, there are a number of factors that play into the decision making process. The generally accepted model of consumer behavior shows the process's involved in choosing a product. The first step of the process is problem recognition, where a consumer understands that he/she wants or needs something. After that point we begin to pursue our needs by gathering information on what it is that we want. Based on our findings, we begin to evaluate any other alternatives, and eventually purchase the desired possession.

Following table represents the table of most popular celebrities endorsing products for advertisement:

Name	Brands Endorsed
Salman Khan	Thums-Up, Suzuki Motorcycle Hayate, Revital, Yatra.com, Dixy scott
M S Dhoni	Reebok, Lays, Pepsi beverage, Aircel, Excide, Boost, Ashok Leyland, TVS, Max Mobiles, Siyaram's, Orient, Dabur, Titan, United Beverages, Amrapali, Gulf Oil and Lafarge.
SRK	nerolac paints, linc pens, i10 and i20, airtel, Belmonte
Virendra Sehwaq	Adidas, Karbonn Mobiles, Royal Challenge, Hero MotoCorp and Emami's Zandu Balm.
Gautam Gambhir	like Reebok, Red Bull and Hero Honda
Virat Kohli	Nike, Pepsi and Toyota
Sachin Tendulkar	Boost, Coca Cola, Toshiba major appliances, Adidas, Jaypee Cement, Aviva Life Insurance, Reynolds, ITC Sunfeast, Canon Camera, Castrol Oil Power 1, Active & GTX, Royal Bank of Scotlant, luxury Swiss watch Audemars Piguets, Toshiba
Amitabh Bachchan	Pepsi, Mirinda, ICICI Bank, Parker Pens, Reid & Taylor, Maruti Versa, Cadbury's, Nerolac, Hajmola, Navratna tail, Emani Boroplus, Eveready, Dabur, Sahara city Home, D'damas, Binnani.
Aamir Khan	Godrej group, Tata Sky

RISK ASSOCIATED WITH ENDORSEMENT

Also there are some risks of celebrity endorsement as celebrity's negative image can hamper the brand name. Controversial celebrities can damage the name of endorsed product or services. There have been many examples where celebrities have been found indulged in drugs scandals, rape, attempt to rape and murder.

The other problem about celebrity endorsement is overexposure. This problem occurs when a celebrity endorses too many companies and products (Belch & Belch, 2001). Celebrities are endorsing one or more product for advertisement. Multiple endorsements somehow loose the credibility from celebrities. Consumer thinks the celebrities are endorsing more products only for the sake of money. So despite of influencing the attitude of consumer in a positive way multiple endorsements puts adverse impact on the purchasing intention of consumers.

Another challenge of celebrity endorsements in the age of social media is the difficulty of crafting a perfect marketing message. Off notes are harder to overcome when "there's a constant 'second screen,'" says Erik Qualman, professor of digital marketing.

Consumers often cannot easily assess the true quality of products, at least not before they consume them. But seeing a celebrity attaching his or her name and good reputation to a product may help alleviate some of their uncertainty. Consciously or unconsciously, they might trust, say, Sharapova to endorse Prince Tennis rackets only if those products truly are of premium quality. After all, Sharapova herself would be at risk of damaging her reputation.

Another problem is the overshadowing the brand which means that consumers may only give attention to the celebrity and fail to realize the brand (Belch & Belch, 2001; Gellene,1998) and remembers the celebrity but not the message given by the advertising. So celebrity may become at the first place more than the brand and product (Fill 2005).

FINAL ANALYSIS

Celebrities are providing opportunities to companies as well as giving way to consumers to have choices before finalizing their purchasing. Every phenomenon has its pros and cons in the same way celebrity endorsement also have its advantages and disadvantages. In this era of marketing it has been compulsory for the companies to make their product distinguished from other similar products in the market. Now customers are ready to pay any cost to fulfill their specific requirement. Question is: how to aware and attract customer towards the brand? How to make brand recall while taking purchasing decision? How they can be shifted to new products? How they(consumer) can trust on the brand? Etc. There are lots of questions for attracting and retaining customers. Celebrities play an important role in changing customer's attitude for the customer which he has never used before. Celebrities also make the customer to adhere with the product. Marketer should accurately blend marketing mix, product mix, and celebrity endorsement to get the high customer trust and satisfaction with great profitability economically or socially.

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