CHAPTER- 8

Suggestions And Scope For
Further Research
8.1 Introduction

The study has strategic and practical implications for marketers, advertisers, consumers, celebrities themselves and academicians and researchers. Suggestions for all stakeholders of the endorsement process are given in this chapter. Some suggestions are congruent with the findings of previous studies as analyzed and understood during detailed literature survey that was done as part of the study; most of the suggestions are explored new and are direct outcome of the primary survey done as part of the study. The suggestions pertain to following broad areas related to selection of celebrity, celebrity and product match, celebrity’s perceived image, and consumer perception and behavior with respect to celebrity endorsements of products and services.

8.2 Celebrity endorsements as an effective advertising tool

Following suggestions and implications of the study are given in order to make celebrity endorsements more effective for all stakeholders involved in celebrity endorsement process viz. marketers/advertisers, advertising agencies and creative directors, consumers and society, celebrity endorsers, and marketing researchers and academicians.

8.2.1 Implication of the study for advertisers/marketers

The celebrity endorsement budget of industry today is estimated to be in multi-crores and is constantly growing. Celebrities are million dollar babies of the advertising world attracting lot of money themselves and for the product they endorse. However companies need to be careful while selecting celebrity endorsers as a wrong decision could put company into big trouble while a right choice may change fortune of the company. Marketers should see that the positioning of the brand is correct and congruent with the image of the celebrity endorser before using such endorsers. Companies should be selective in using
celebrities who are over exposed and can overshadow the brand. All brands of product mix cannot be endorsed by same celebrity, thus in order to establish clear brand identity different endorser for different brands should be used. Celebrities who are controversial should be avoided. Certain celebrities are suitable for certain product categories only. Companies should select celebrity looking at past track record of celebrity. Certain level of expertise in the celebrity is a must in order to take full advantage of celebrity endorsement. Herd mentality should be avoided while selecting celebrity endorser. Companies should not hire a celebrity because every other company is doing that. Using multiple celebrities to endorse one brand could be a good strategy to overcome risks of negative celebrity publicity. Marketers need to come out of perception that like attracts like for gender specific products. One finding from this study is that celebrity influence through their characteristics of achievement and image rather than gender only. Gender was found to be an influencing factor in case of female respondents only. It can be said that males are leaving their gender specific inhibitions when it comes to acceptability of a particular gender celebrity is concerned, but females are still influenced by specific gender. Thus to be more successful marketers need to see target audience gender and product match as well as target audience gender, product and celebrity gender match in certain products. Real associative attributes need to be discovered in every celebrity in order to make them more effective.

8.2.2 Implication of the study for advertising agencies and creative directors

Value addition that a celebrity makes to the communication theme or idea is important rather than the sheer presence. Both celebrity and brand should have equal status in order to avoid vampiring or overshadowing effect. Media Budget should not be compromised because of high investment/expense in celebrity. Inadequate exposure will lead to inadequate results. Celebrity should definitely be well known and reasonably attractive so that consumers of all demography, and life styles could identify with the celebrity. It is obvious from findings that chosen celebrity should appeal to audience of different genders, different age groups, as
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well as both rural and urban consumers to be widely accepted and effective. Since male celebrities appeal to both male and female audience, male celebrities are a better bet when it comes to endorsement. Celebrity endorsements should not be used because there is no other alternative left or due to lack of creativity. In addition to attractiveness and credibility advertisers should also consider the meanings associated with celebrity. Attributes of celebrity in terms of age, gender, lifestyle and social status are important with respect to the target segment of the consumers. To its maximum possible extent, exclusivity of the celebrity endorsement should be maintained. Mere appearance with product can also transfer intended meaning to the product rather than explicit endorsement in the advertisement. Creative directors should focus on using celebrities in a manner where general public finds it real and credible. Perception of credibility can be enhanced by the way celebrity is used in the advertisement. Differentiating the advertisement and brand is important along with the use of celebrity endorsers. Celebrities should be used to create a distinct and unique positioning for the brands as a number of celebrities now a-days endorse different brands of same product category. Advertisers should carefully study an endorser by looking at their history and image of a celebrity before signing the celebrity for endorsement. There could be clause to end the contract in case celebrity is found to be associated in any unfair practice before or during the endorsement period.

8.2.3 Implication of the study for consumers and society

Consumers need to be watchful of claims made by the celebrities as their have been the cases where celebrities claims of product or services have failed to live up to the expectations of consumers. Strict rules and regulations need to be framed regarding endorsement of products by celebrities which negatively affect society. As evident from our study youngsters are more influenced by the celebrities and thus more vulnerable to false claim. Celebrities either from film or sports are role models for youngsters, in this scenario a model code of conduct need to be set by these celebrities themselves regarding the type of product they should endorse.
8.2.4 Implication of the study for celebrity endorsers

The celebrities should also be selective while selecting the brands to endorse; disjointed and unrelated endorsement should be avoided. Endorsements that do not suit the image and personality might negatively affect the brand value of the celebrity endorser. Endorsements that carry imagery too far are also not good. It affects their own brand image and credibility and might have negative repercussion in future endorsements. Once a celebrity gets strongly associated with a particular category or type of product it might limit their future endorsements. The celebrity in general should aim to achieve physical attractiveness as attractiveness is an important determinant in shaping the perception of consumers towards a particular celebrity. High recognition and exposure is required in order to become familiar and liked by the audience. Perception of a positive image is important as negative celebrity information does influence audiences’ perception of credibility of the celebrity and thus the endorsed brands. Endorsing social and cause related product can help build a better image amongst the consumers. Actual use of product and visibility of the celebrity with the endorsed product will help increase credibility of the endorsement and will make the endorser more successful. Endorsers should be knowledgeable and aware of technical attributes and features of the product. This will help increase trust and create a perception of expertise for the endorser although he/she might not be from the field to which the product category belongs.

8.2.5 Implication of the study for marketing researchers and academicians

The study has implications for academicians and research scholars in terms of research scope this area of marketing and advertising opens up. Although this research has addressed major issues regarding celebrity endorsement, this field of research has ample of opportunities for further explorations. Studies need to be conducted from time to time to track changes in the perception and behavioral patterns of consumers with respect to celebrity endorsements.
8.3 Scope for Further Research

Further research can focus on lifestyle and personality factors of the respondents that might shape their perceptions towards the celebrity endorsers. Culture and ethnicity could also be the factors that might influence customers' perception towards celebrity endorsers and the brand they endorse. Research can be conducted on understanding the consumers' perception of quality when the brands are endorsed by celebrities as well as on their perceived risk associated with buying the products that are endorsed by celebrities. Celebrity endorsements of products might lead to cognitive dissonance as their liking towards the celebrity might persuade them to buy products endorsed by the celebrity instead of buying the product that ranks better in terms of rational evaluations. Further research can be carried out on cognitive dissonance phenomenon associated with celebrity endorsements of products.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter summarized the outcomes of the study and implications of the study for various entities involved in the process of celebrity endorsement. This chapter has also outlined the future research directions that can be taken by researcher working in area of celebrity endorsement specifically and in advertising and marketing in general.