THE EFFECT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION – EVIDENCE FROM Q MOBILE LINQ ADVERTISEMENT

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsement is a common practice adopted by companies throughout the world. This practice is increasing more and more now even for the technology industry. Companies use celebrity endorsement to influence consumer purchase intention by improving their brand image in the minds of the consumers. This research study gives a detailed and comprehensive account of the effect of celebrity endorsement on consumers' purchase intention in the case of Qmobile (Linq) endorsed by Priyanka Chopra. Three hundred and fifteen questionnaires were distributed in various malls in Karachi. Two hundred and eighty five useable questionnaires were returned. Analysis was done using multiple regression analysis. The independent variables include; celebrity attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and match-up. Consumer purchase intention is the dependent variable. A firm should carefully select the celebrity to endorse its brand for effective communication of the message and positive response from the consumers.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, celebrity brand match-up, consumer purchase intention

JEL Classification: Z 000

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Introduction

A wide variety of products is available to the consumers in the present era. The consumers are more aware of offers being made to them; they can compare those offers and select the best one for themselves. This scenario however has increased the competition amongst the companies by leaps and bounds. Each company is trying to grab the consumers' attention towards their brand (Sheth, Mittal, & Newman, 1999). In order to attract the consumers, one of the most common means used by the companies is the use of advertisements to convey their message, and to make the message more effective they employ celebrities to endorse their brand (Abhishek & Sahay, 2013).

It is a common practice for companies to use celebrities, in order to boost the brand image, as a tool to convey a message that would be powerful enough to leave a lasting impact on the minds of the consumers. The question to consider here, however, is to know if celebrity endorsement really is effective or not as in the present day scenario, it is said that the retention power of consumers in case of any brand has ceased to a minimum (Das & Padhy, 2012).

Celebrity endorsement is an effective strategy employed by the marketers. Consumers idealize celebrities and perceive the brands to be of high quality which are endorsed by celebrities. After the consumers use these brands, they consider themselves similar to the celebrities whom they have been idealizing. Marketers use advertisements and celebrity endorsements to create brand awareness along with brand personality (Erdogan, Taggs, & Baker, 2001). Therefore, for effective usage of celebrity endorsement to increase the brand image and consumer purchase intention it is important to identify the factors that influence celebrity endorsements and impact consumer perception.

In Pakistan, it has been observed that the consumers are not just attracted but also influenced by the actors appearing in different TV series, movies and sports personalities. This attractiveness and influential aspect of celebrities has given rise to the increased trend of celebrity endorsements being done in Pakistani advertisements. The aim of this research study is to learn the impact celebrity endorsements

have on consumer perception of brand image and how much consumer purchase intention is influenced by the celebrity endorsement.
Research Question

1.   What is the effect of celebrity endorsement, celebrity's attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and match-up on consumer purchase intention?

Literature Review

Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is one of the most talked about topics in marketing (Bower & Landreth, 2001). It is considered as a means of conveying a message to the target audience with greater persuasive power as compared to a message conveyed by a non-celebrity spokesperson (Ohanian, 1990). When a message is being conveyed by a celebrity spokesperson the recall of that message also increases (Friedman & Friedman, 1979).

When a firm is competing with products falling in the same category, the most often used strategy to target the audience is the use of celebrity endorsement to grasp the attention of the audience better than the competitor (Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe, 1989). According to the findings of Atkin, Hocking, & Block (1984), the use of celebrity endorser improves the image of the brand, has a positive impact on company's image and the message credibility increases.

The significance of celebrity endorsement can be understood through the degree of its usage since 1979 where in out of every six commercials (which amounts to 17%) approximately used celebrity endorsement to convey a message to the audience. By 2001, this percentage increased and approximately 25% of the commercials were using celebrity endorsement to convey a message and induce positive image in the minds of the consumers (Erdogan et al, 2001).

Celebrity Attractiveness

Attractiveness of a celebrity is also an important factor that influences the brand image and the consumer purchase intention. Attractiveness of a celebrity includes the facial features and physical

attributes of the celebrity such as the celebrity's likeability, familiarity and similarity; these attributes contribute towards the effectiveness of the message being conveyed by the celebrity and this effectiveness leads to impactful brand image and consumer purchase intention (Ohanian, 1990).

Kelman (1961) stated that the celebrity's attractiveness is linked with the effectiveness of the message being conveyed by him/her. If the target audience likes the celebrity based on the physical attractiveness and considers the celebrity as a familiar and likeable individual, then the chances of accepting the message being conveyed increases tremendously.

To judge the extent to which the target audience gets involved with the message delivered by the celebrity endorser depends upon the physical and facial attractiveness of the endorser. Kahle & Homer (1985) stated that the target audience shows sensitivity towards the attractiveness of the spokesperson and this quality of the spokesperson is used to mould the perception of the audience. Attractive endorsers are also thought to be more reliable, trustworthy and credible by the people. A good example of this can be observed from the fact that if an attractive spokesperson in an advertisement claims to use a particular beauty product, it is more likely that this message will be easily accepted by the audience (Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe, 1989).

Celebrity Trustworthiness

The willingness of listener to hear out what the celebrity is trying to convey in the advertisement and accept the message being delivered by the celebrity is referred to as the consumers' trust on the celebrity. This quality of the celebrity to make the consumer agree with the message being delivered is known as celebrity's trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990).

Erdogan et al, (2001) stated that trustworthiness is the integrity, believability and honesty of the celebrity which is seen and perceived by the consumers being targeted for the message being conveyed. An experiment was conducted by Miller & Baseheart (1969) in which they stated that consumer and target audiences' attitude

towards a brand and their purchase intentions can be changed if the target audience considers the source of message as reliable and trustworthy.

Celebrity Credibility

Celebrity's credibility not only affects the acceptance of the message by the audience but also affects the credibility of the brand and the firm as a reliable entity which as a result influences the consumers into shaping up their perception about the brand and their purchase intention. It is also seen that if the celebrity is too popular then this popularity, at times, overshadows the brand under consideration. The celebrity while endorsing a brand acts as an expert and spokesperson for that brand conveying to the target audience that the claims of the brand under consideration are true and the brand is reliable. The endorser uses his/her popularity, position, personality and stature to influence and persuade the consumers about the positive image of the brand inclining them to purchase a particular brand (Das & Padhy, 2012).

Consumers consider expertise and knowledge of a brand in the celebrity endorser as an indicator of credibility in the endorser and the brand, hence improving the brand image of a product. Thus, it can be understood that expertise, knowledge and trust contribute towards forming credibility and improving the brand image in the eyes of the consumers (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Furthermore, it was stated that credibility of a spokesperson is the perception of consumers through which they rationalize that the information given by the celebrity spokesperson is unbiased, trustworthy and reliable. Therefore, greater the credibility percieved by the consumers about the celebrity endorser, the greater positive brand image will be formed in their minds (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000). Credibility of the endorser can be taken as having a dual role, first the conversion of consumers' negative attitude into a positive attitude toward a brand hence improving its brand image. Secondly, the credibility percieved by the consumers enforces a greater acceptance level in the consumers of the messgae being delivered (Belch & Belch, 2001).

Celebrity Expertise

Expertise refers to the degree or level of knowledge, skills or experience that an endorser possesses (Hovland et al. 1953). The perceived expertise of an endorser in the minds of the consumers is a more significant variable in explaining the consumer purchase intention as compared to the celebrity's attractiveness and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990).

In other words, it can be said that an endorser who is perceived to be an expert by the consumers is more persuasive in comparison to other endorsers who are considered to be attractive and trustworthy but not experts (Ohanian, 1990).

Expertise is defined as the extent to which a communicator of the message is perceived to be a valid source of assertions (Hovland, et al. 1953). Significance of expertise can be ascertained from an example in selling context; an expert salesperson induced a significantly higher number of customers to purchase a particular brand as compared to a non-expert salesperson (Woodside and Davenport, 2004).

Celebrity Brand Match Up

Brand match up with the celebrity is an important factor without which the other factors may lose all their significance incase of a celebrity endorsement being used in the advertisements. Brand match up means that the personality and attributes of the celebrity should match with the brand being endorsed. The more the product celebrity match is profound, the higher is the effectiveness of the message being delivered (Erdogan, 1999).

Congruency between the brand and the celebrity is also demanded by the consumers since it helps them in easy assimilation of the message being conveyed. This helps the consumers in accepting and believing what the celebrity is claiming about the brand under consideration whether the brand is of a soft drink, coffee, car, real estate or any other product (Ohanian, 1991).

The match up between the brand or product being endorsed and the celebrity endorsing it is important in order to allow the

consumers build a positive association in their minds regarding the brand or product. In case, consumers are unable to link the association between the brand endorsed and the celebrity spokesperson then the message conveyed gets lost in the clutter of all the other messages being aimed at the consumers (Parmar & Patel, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework
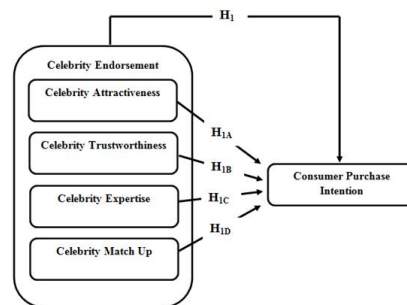
Hypotheses

H_{1A}:   Attractiveness of the celebrity has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention

H_{1B}:   Trustworthiness of the celebrity has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention

H_{1c}:   Expertise of the celebrity has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention

H_{1D}:   Match up of the celebrity has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention

Methodology

       The sample selected for this research was from all households of Karachi having a television at home. Currently, the total number of households in Karachi is approximately 2.7 million (Mughal, 2014). Three hundred and fifteen questionnaires were distributed in various malls in Karachi. Two hundred and eighty five useable questionnaires

were returned. According to Anderson, (2010) for a population over two million the sample size used is considered appropriate. Convenience sampling was used for the purpose of data collection, to make the data collection process easy for the researcher (Marshall, 1996; Greener, 2008). For a research where it is not possible to access the entire sample frame convenience sampling is used and the result thus obtained are reliable (Vaughan, 2001).

The instrument used was adopted from a research study conducted by Zafar & Rafique, (2012), the instrument contains 27 items in total based on seven point Likert Scale. 1 indicates very unlikely and 7 indicates very likely. The reliability of the instrument was established by the earlier literature and the researchers but it was re-established in the light of the current research and demographics. The stimuli used in the questionnaire for this research was the Qmobile Linq advertisement in which the cellphone is endorsed by Priyanka Chopra. The instrument is divided into several parts namely; demographics, trustworthiness, credibility, attractiveness, product/ brand match up, brand image, and purchase intention. The research paradigm used is post positivism and the research is deductive in nature.

Analysis

Table-1

Respondents' Profile

Variable		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	138	48
	Female	147	52
Age	Up to 18 Years	58	20
	19 to 29 Years	200	70
	30 to 39 Years	27	10
Income	Up to Rs.21k	146	44
	Rs.21K to Rs.25K	32	11
	Rs.25k to Rs.50K	75	26
	Rs.50K to Rs.75K	10	4
	Rs.75K to 100K	26	9
	More than Rs.100K	16	6
Marital Status	Single	152	54
	Married	133	46
Education	Primary	10	4
	Matric	23	8
	Inter	28	10
	Bachelors	138	48
	Masters	86	30
	Total	285	100

Correlation

Table-12

Correlation Results

	Attract	Trust	Expert	Match up	Purchase
Attract	1				
Trust	.648	1			
Expert	.276	.501	1		
Match up	.282	.561	.777	1	
Purchase	.259	.393	.508	.564	1

The Table-2 shows all the relationships were significant at a level of 0.01 (2-tailed). The correlation of celebrity expertise (M=3.686, SD=1.778, N=285) and brand match-up (M=3.346, SD=1.316, N=285) with r(285)=0.777, p=0.00<0.01, was strongest while the weakest was with brand image (M=3.632, SD=1.729, N=285) and attractiveness M=4.350, SD=1.296, N=285) with r(285)=0.192, p=0.00<0.01. Additionally correlation tells that the variables are unique and distinguishing (Hair Jr. et al, 2010).

Reliability of the constructs

Table-3

Reliability of the Constructs

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha on standardized item	No of items	Mean(S.D)
Attractiveness	0.823	0.825	4	4.35(1.29)
Trustworthiness	0.925	0.925	5	3.30(1.49)
Expertise	0.950	0.951	5	3.68(1.77)
Match-up	0.773	0.776	5	3.34(1.31)
Purchase Intent	0.923	0.926	3	3.05(1.73)
Overall	0.892	0.894	27	3.55(1.55)

The Table-3 shows the reliability of the instrument used for the purpose of data collection. Reliability of each construct was analyzed to be greater than 0.7. When Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.6, it is considered that the instrument has internal consistency and the data collected is reliable (Leech, 2008). Cronbach's alpha for the complete instrument was found to be 0.894.

Overall Model Regression Test

Table-4:
Summarized Regression Results

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standard Coefficient	T	Sig
	Beta	Std Error	βeta		
Attractiveness	0.041	0.056	0.031	0.739	0.461
Trustworthiness	0.179	0.057	0.154	3.154	0.002
Expertise	-0.270	0.054	-0.276	-5.016	0.000
Match up	0.169	0.072	0.128	2.340	0.020

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention, Independent Variables: Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise and Match up R^2=0.723; Adjusted R^2=0.718, p<0.05, F(5, 284)=123.87

The results of regression analysis for the overall model indicate that the predictors celebrity attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, match up with the brand and brand image explain 71.8% of the variance (R^2=0.718, F(5,284)=123.87, p<0.05). It was also found that attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, match up with the brand and brand image significantly predict consumer purchase intention which according to Cohen, (1998) is a large effect.

Celebrity Attractiveness

Table-5:
Summarized Regression Results

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standard Coefficient	T	Sig
	Beta	Std Error	Beta		
Attractiveness	.347	0.077	0.259	4.150	.000

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention, Independent Variables: Attractiveness, R^2=0.067; Adjusted R^2=0.064, p<0.05, F(1, 284)=57.43

The results of regression indicates that the predictor celebrity attractiveness explains 6.4% of the variance (R^2=0.064, F(1,284=57.43, p<0.05). It was also found that celebrity attractiveness (ß=0.259,

p<0.05) significantly predicts consumer purchase intention which according to Cohen(1998) is a large effect.

Celebrity Trustworthiness

Table-6

Summarized Regression Results

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig;
	Beta	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
Trustworthiness	.455	.063	.393	7.186	.000

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention, Independent Variables: Trustworthiness, $R^2=0.154$; Adjusted $R^2=0.151$, p<0.05, F(1, 284)=132.12

The results of regression indicates that celebrity trustworthiness explains 15.1% of the variance ($R^2=0.151$, $F(1,284)=132.12$, p<0.05). It was also found that celebrity trustworthiness (ß=0.393, p<0.05) significantly predicts consumer purchase intention which according to Cohen(1998) is a large effect.

Celebrity Expertise

Table-7:

Summarized Regression Results

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standard Coefficient	T	Sig
	βeta	**Std Error**	**βeta**		
Expertise	.496	.050	.508	9.924	.000

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention, Independent Variables: Expertise, $R^2=0.258$; Adjusted $R^2=0.256$, p<0.05, F(5, 284)=221.1

The results of regression indicates that the predictor celebrity expertise explains 25.6% of the variance ($R^2=0.256$, $F(1,284)=221.1$, p<0.05). It was also found that celebrity expertise (ß=0.508, p<0.05) significantly predicts consumer purchase intention which according to Cohen(1998) is a large effect.

Celebrity Match-Up

Table-8:

Summarized Regression Results

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standard Coefficient	T	Sig
	βeta	Std Error	Beta		
Match up	.744	.065	.564	11.502	.000

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention, Independent Variables: Match up, R^2=0.319; Adjusted R^2=0.316, p<0.05, F(1, 284)=272.78

The results of regression indicates that the predictor celebrity match up explains 31.6% of the variance (R^2=0.316, F(1,284)=272.78, p<0.05). It was also found that celebrity match-up (ß=0.564, p<0.05) significantly predicts consumer purchase intention which according to Cohen(1998) is a large effect.

Discussion

Ohanian, (1990) stated that physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorser creates an impact on the consumer and influences consumer's purchase intention towards the brand. Celebrity's attractiveness is linked with the effectiveness of the message being conveyed by him/her (Kelman, 1961). A message conveyed by an attractive spokesperson is more effective and easily accepted as compared to the message conveyed by an average looking spokesperson (Kamins et al, 1989). The noteworthy point here is that attractiveness of the endorser plays an important part when the brand being endorsed belongs to a non-technology category; whereas, in case of technological brands attractivenss plays a less significant role (Kamins, 1990).

Higher the trust factor of the endorser in the eyes of the consumer, the higher would be the impact on consumer's perception towards improving the brand image and hence influencing the consumer purchase intention (Erdogan et al, 2001). The effectiveness of the advertisement and the information communicated through it depends on the trustworthiness of the celebrity endorser; the more a celebrity is considered to be trustworthy the more boost is provided to the brand image and an increase in the consumer purchase intention

can be observed (Hovland et al, 1953). The factors associatated to trustworthiness such as believability, integrity and honesty individually and collectively affects consumer percetion towards brand image and consumer purchase intention. Erdogan et al, (2001) stated that trustworthiness is the integrity, believability and honesty of the celebrity which is seen and perceived by the consumers being targeted for the message being conveyed.

Expertise is defined as the extent to which a communicator of the message is perceived to be a valid source of assertions (Hovland, et al. 1953). Significance of expertise can be ascertained from an example in selling context; an expert salesperson induced a significantly higher number of customers to purchase a particular brand as compared to a non-expert salesperson (Woodside and Davenport, 2004).

When it comes to expertise it refers to the degree or level of knowledge, skills or experience that an endorser possesses (Hovland et al. 1953). The perceived expertise of an endorser in the minds of the consumers is a more significant variable in explaining the consumer purchase intention as compared to the celebrity's attractiveness and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990).

In other words, it can be said that an endorser who is perceived to be an expert by the consumers is more persuasive in comparison to other endorsers who are considered to be attractive and trustworthy but not experts (Ohanian, 1990; Horai, Naccari, & Fatoullah 1974).

Product match up with the celebrity is an important factor without which the other factors may lose all their significance incase of a celebrity endorsement being used in the advertisements. Product match up means that the personality and attributes of the celebrity should match with the brand being endorsed. The more the product celebrity match is profound, the higher is the effectiveness of the message being delivered (Erdogan, 1999).

The effectiveness of the message being conveyed depends on the existence of a match up between the celebrity endorser and endorsed brand. Companies should ensure that there is a match between the brand being endorsed and the endorser so that the

message is highly influential and effective and creates a positive perception of the brand in the minds of the consumers (Danes & Schwer 2000).

Gaps and Contribution

Majority of the earlier researches are of generalized nature without any stimuli, the drawback in these researches is that subjects while responding which might be contrary to the object of the study think of different brands or products and there will be a variation in responses. (Agarwal, Kumar, & Kumar, 2012; Bahl, Pandey, & Sharma, 2012; Rengarajan & Sathya, 2014). To address this issue a particular brand, celebrity and advertisement were selected (Qmobile, Linq endorsed by Priyanka Chopra). Most of the earlier studies had not integrated the results in the conceptual framework adequately (Ohanian, 1991; Erdogan, 1999; Zafar & Rafique, 2012; Das & Padhy, 2012; Rengarajan & Sathya, 2014). In this research study a conceptual frame work was developed and the relationships between the variables were established in detail in the literature section of the research study. Additionally most of the studies have adapted the questionnaire from other countries but not have established the validities for the countries in which the questionnaires were used (Agarwal, Kumar, & Kumar, 2012; Bahl, Pandey, & Sharma, 2012; Abhishek & Sahay, 2013; Rengarajan & Sathya, 2014). Consequently validities were re-established for this research study to check the study's application in Pakistani culture.

Implication

Managers can create a positive brand image and influence consumer purchase intention by keeping the celebrity endorser's attributes in mind. From the analysis it was concluded that managers should keep some aspects in mind which include;

· Use of celebrity endorsement should be kept consistent over time to strengthen the association between the endorser and the endorsed brand.

· The execution of the advertisement in which a celebrity endorser is used should be executed in a simple and clean

manner. Advertisers should keep the irrelevant design elements out of such advertisements.

·   An endorser should be selected who is not already associated strongly with any other brand.

·   Match of the brand and celebrity endorser should be kept in mind for effectiveness of the message.

·   The combination of the celebrity endorser with the brand should be tested to insure positive image is being projected towards the target audience. Celebrity endorser can be used to reinforce or create a particular image of the brand in consumer's mind. The celebrity endorsements done for less familiar brands will be more effective. Celebrity endorsement will be more effective for those brands about which the consumers have less or limited knowledge.

·   To get value from the celebrity endorser, the endorser should be used across the marketing mix and not just advertising.

·   Choice of celebrity endorser should be made carefully to prevent any potential for negative publicity or tarnishing of brand's image in the eyes of the consumers (Johansson & Sparredal, 2002).

It was also concluded that certain aspects of the celebrity endorser should be kept in mind while employing the celebrity to become a spokesperson of a brand, those aspects include;

·   The message conveyed must reflect the honest opinion, beliefs, findings or experience of the celebrity endorser. Endorser's claims should be substantiated by the advertiser. If any efficacy claims are being made then they should also be substantiated if they were made by the advertiser.

·   The brand shown in the advertisement being used by the celebrity should in fact be used by the celebrity and the celebrity should be a bona fide user of it.

·   The advertisement can only be used as long as the celebrity holds the views expressed in the advertisement and the advertisement has a good belief (Moorman, 2006).

Limitation and Future Research

Only Karachi households were selected for carrying out the research. The research at hand was restricted to a single city. Selected sub variables of celebrity attributes were taken into consideration to gather data from the consumers in order to analyze the selected attributes in detail. Endorsement message communicated by the celebrity was taken only in the context of a single brand being endorsed. For future, research needs to be conducted in case of multiple endorsements done by a single celebrity for competitive brands within the same time frame and also in different time frames.

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