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Role of Brand Profile Affecting People's Perception: A Mediating Role of Celebrity Profile

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Abstract: In today's world celebrity profile plays an important role in driving the consumers' perception towards specific brands. This Research establishes the relationship between brands and celebrities, and attempts to address the ways to change the consumer perception using famous celebrities for advertising the products on different forms of media (both electronic and print). A structured questionnaire is used for measuring the impact of *brand profile and celebrity profile* on perception of the people. Results have shown that celebrity profile mediates the relationship between brand profile and perception of the people. This study is helpful to both the industry and academia as to how people's perception can be changed about a particular brand.

Keywords: Celebrity Profile, Perception, Mediation, SEM (Structural equation modeling)

1. INTRODUCTION

Media in the modern world affects general opinions and attitudes, especially when celebrities and superstars endorse commercials for common folk. This influence leads to the creation of an imaginary world that is a unique blend of celebrity stardom and the cognitive field which instills the mind of consumer. The urge to follow celebrities is so overwhelming that common people are possessed to unearth the routines of their role models (Caughey, 1984), and feel close to them by doing so. This social connection offers an opportunity for social medium (Ball, 1999) to be commercialized. The relationship between users and performers is strengthening through media, which creates a sense of involvement (Alan, Rubin, 1987). Different companies target their potential audience and adopt different strategies to exploit fan which engage them in buying. Thus one can easily say that celebrities serve as an important mean by which consumer's attention can be gained (Ohanian, 1991).

Till (Till, 1998) suggests that involvement of a celebrity for the promotion of a brand brings favorable outcomes, which was corroborated by White (White, 2009). According to him 25% of brands that are advertised on television are endorsed by celebrities (Erdogan, 2001). Almost 10% of the total cost of the advertisement goes into the pockets of brand endorsees (Agrawal, 1995). In addition, celebrity endorsements are beneficial for the life of brand (Choi, 2007).

(Ajzen, 1980) proposes that people use commonsense rationalism and wisdom to make their buying decisions, and they execute things in their minds before making any purchase decision. This thought pattern is augmented by celebrity endorsement. (Taleja, 2005) point out that advertisement intensive market is regulated by different items. Celebrity endorsements are used to create high price cost margins, large customer pools and coordination with customers. Thus, brand profile can use *Parasocial interaction* to change the perception of the customers with the help of celebrity profile, which adds value to a brand in the eyes of consumers (Parasuraman, 2000). If the perception is positive it develops a supportive trust and long-term commitment (Singh, 2000) for the consumer. A research by (Wells, *et al.*,, 2000) suggests that customers will not remember the product; they only remember the commercial endorsed by a celebrity endorser. Harris (Harris 2004) suggested similar results, which signify the importance of perceived brand image and its interaction with consumer behavior. Perception is the key element that gives birth to brand judgment, which is a mixture of perceived quality, conformity of product and maximum benefit (Kotler, 2006) and other factors. Perception is one of the factors that create risk in any environment (Osei, *et al.*,, 1997). Perception is the roughest and most superficial level of human mind that brings short term consequences in which human perceive about anything using the image of that thing previously present in the mind. (Attneave, 1962).we used perception for the purchase intension accordingly.

After all the discussion the conceptual model is represented in **(Fig. 1)**

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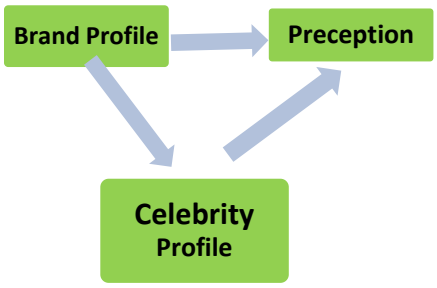


Fig. 2 The Conceptual Model

H1: Celebrity endorsement will work as a mediating factor between brand profile and the perception of the consumer.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Instrument

A valid structured questionnaire from the literature was used from the work of (Emma Lofgren, 2010). Total 48 items were present in the questionnaire on a five point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Likert scale is an efficient rating scale, actually used for the measurement of opinion and attitude according to the set scale values (Cohen, 2007). The division of the questioner is as follows:

Table 1: Reliability

Variables	Number of items	Reliability	
Total Variables	44	0.867	Accepted
Celebrity Profile	10	0.612	Accepted
Brand Profile	17	0.742	Accepted
Perception Purchase Intension)	17	0.858	Accepted

Data should be internally consistent and reliable while testing any hypothesis (Kent, 2007). Graziano (Graziano, 2010) suggested that testing is very important for validity of the data and a pilot study should be conducted before for checking that instruments (questions) are working properly or not (Bryman, 2007). According to (Kent, 2007) 5 major steps should be followed in conducting a research, and they are:

- Specifying information,
- Deciding accurate method for questioner administration,
- Deciding the substance, phrasing and formatting,
- Creating draft,
- Testing.

A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents to check the reliability of the scale. The overall reliability of the instrument is 0.8, which is an acceptable as suggested by (Fornell, 1981).

Participants

Simple random sampling technique is used for the collection of data. Personal visits and online questionnaires were collected in order to minimize biasness (Emma Lofgren, 2010). Online questionnaires were distributed to large population because Emma Lofgren suggested this method cost effective and time saving; moreover it reduces the element of biasness up to greater extent (Emma Lofgren, 2010). Personal visits were conducted in different universities, college and households for data collection. Overall 300 questionnaires are circulated and a total of 250 were received back. Thirty-six out of these were discarded because they were incomplete, making the usable data for analysis equaling 71% (men = 90 and women = 124). **(Table 2)** is representing the demographics characteristics of participant.

Table 2: Demographics

	Demographics	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Gender	Male	90	42.1
	Female	124	57.9
Age	18-25	142	66.4%
	26-30	34	15.9%
	31-35	19	8.9 %
	35-40	11	5.1%
Education	more than 40	8	3.7%
	Matriculation	1	0.5%
	Intermediate	16	7.5%
	Graduation level	101	47.6%
	Master's Degree	89	41.6%
	80,001-90,000	7	3.3%

Analysis

Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) through AMOS (Analysis of moment structures) is used to check the mediation of the process that shows the indirect effect of celebrity profile that is actually used by the brand profile to change the perception of the customers. AMOS is best used for the SEM, because it provides structural demonstration along with appropriate results. Perception was used as an independent variable whereas our dependent variables were Brand Profile and Celebrity Profile. When the data is loaded in AMOS, error terms are added automatically. The results of the test are shown below along with the recommended values by (Kline, 2011).

3. RESULTS

Total direct effect of brand profile on Perception is not significant, while estimates are -0.149. Indirect effect is highly significant (estimate 0.066) proving full Mediation. The output generated by SEM validates out hypothesis, and thus we can say that Brand Profile with the help of Celebrity Profile creates a significant impact on consumer behavior, hence it can changes the perception of the customers well.

Table 3. SEM (Structural Equation Modeling)

Sr. No.	Hypothesis	Description	Estimate	Lower	Upper
1	H_1 (Celebrity endorsement will work as a mediating factor between brand profile and the perception of the consumer)	Total indirect effect of brand	0.066***	0.20	0.154
		Total Direct effect of brand Profile on	-0.149†	-0.312	0.025
		Total effect of brand Profile on Perception.	-0.083	-0.232	0.109

In order to further validate our model, we referred to the model fit output of AMOS and the table is shown above. The first value of model fitness is CMIN; it is actually Chi-square calculated in AMOS, whose standard value is given in the table (4). The CMIN value of our hypothesis falls within an acceptable range thus our hypothesis is validated.

Table 4. Model Fit

Fit Metric	Standard	Model Value	Result
CMIN/DF	$2-3^{*}$ good fit	2.06	Accepted
CFI	$\geq .9^{*}$	0.9	Accepted
RMESA	$\leq .08^{*}$	0.071	Accepted

The second value is the CFI a Comparative Fitness Index, good for all small and large sample size, with the standard value of 0.9; the results show that our data also fulfills this requirement. The last fitness test is RMESA (Root mean square error of approximation) used for checking the fairness of data explaining the covariance (difference between the observed and implied values of data) with the standard value of ≤0.08; our data is giving the value as 0.071 that is also a perfect Fit.

4. CONCLUSION

The relationship of celebrities, brands and customers, are very well explained in the previous researches. With the help of this information a hypothesis was developed to conduct research. The result shows significant relationship between perception (Purchase intension) of the people toward brand and celebrity profile, as a mediator between these variables. It showed that perception of the people can be changed if celebrity profile is used effectively. The growing awareness and knowledge of people about brands and celebrities are making them more conscious about their profiles. Celebrity endorsement now is an effective tool used. If brands effectively use the profile of celebrities can change the perception of targeted customers.

Moreover, the results are validating our proposed hypothesis. Some limitations are faced during this research like (time, sample, and generalized research). They can be used as documentary evidence that will guide managers to design such advertisements campaigns that will highlight the cited factor. An effective endorsee not only brings life to a brand but also helps in capturing large market share it also effect the thought pattern of customers. The research can also be helpful in judging a specific brand on a condition that target audience is using that product.

The research can be helpful for the companies and endorsers in every possible perspective of branding by evaluating the effectiveness of existing endorsee and endorsement viability along with developing stronger correlation among the celebrities and brands for the improvement of customer's awareness.

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