

IMPACT OF SPORTS CELEBRITIES ENDORSEMENTS ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF LOW AND HIGH INVOLVEMENT CONSUMER PRODUCTS

S. Shahul Hameed*, S. Madhavan**

Abstract *A Practices of using celebrities as spokesperson for commercialized products are continuously favored towards the effort of marketing and positioning. The popularity of sports celebrity advertising is founded upon advertiser's belief on message credibility by well-known personalities to achieve greater attention, recall and behavioral intention among consumers. The present study assesses the Consumer level of interest on sports and attitude towards sports celebrity advertisement and perceived risk on the underlying purchase intention of Tirunelveli consumers towards the low and high involvement consumer goods, by exploring the mediating roles of attitude toward advertisement and perceived risk between interest level on sports and purchase intention. The influence of endorser's characteristics and cultures on consumer's behavioral intention is explained through the applications of the Theory of Identification (Kelman, 1961, 2006) and the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989) in this study. Descriptive findings collected from 450 potential consumers have suggested attitude toward advertisement and perceived risk into transactional purchase intention. From the study, researcher has found that attitude towards advertisement of low and high involvement products are nearly same but consumer behavior of purchase intention is differ from low and high involvement consumer goods.*

Keywords *Sports Celebrity, Awareness and Interest Level, Attitude Towards Advertisement and Purchase Intention*

INTRODUCTION

Famous people have always been made excellent salesmen. Presenting a familiar face is one of the fastest and easiest way for companies to create brand associations in the minds of consumers. When a widely loved actor or a heroic sports figure endorses a product, that product gains immediate credibility.

Celebrity marketing can be a viable advertising strategy for companies both large and small and across all industries. Up to 15% of all advertisements that run in America feature a celebrity endorser.

Companies hoping to work with a celebrity endorser must be willing to pay a premium price for their services. The greatest disadvantage of celebrity marketing is the high cost of securing celebrity partnerships. Advertising media such as TV commercials can be expensive; therefore smaller companies can focus on more affordable options like print ads or autograph-signing events. A company hoping to work with a celebrity must balance risk and reward, both of which can be significant.

There are several reasons that a company might choose to use celebrity marketing strategy. A new product can easily be introduced to consumers if they feel familiar and comfortable with the famous face endorsing it.

A consumer product is a product bought by final consumers for personal consumption. But not every consumer product is the same. Four different types of consumer products can be identified. Marketers usually classify consumer products into these 4 types of consumer products: Convenience products, Shopping products, Specialty products and unsought products.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Attitude toward Advertisement as the Mediator: Erdogan, Baker & Tagg (2001) proposed that effective advertisement through celebrity endorsements possess positive impact on actual purchases and sales. Thus, indirect relationship between celebrity endorsement and potential behaviors within the marketplace is present through favorable advertising effect. Demonstrated by Wu, Linn, Fu & Sukoco (2012), direct influential relationship is significant between perceived advertisement credibility and attitude toward advertisement, attitude toward advertisement and intention for purchase. Further studies supports that purchase intention can be affected through effective advertising (Sallam & Wahid, 2012). Supportive results through the direct relationship between attitude toward advertisement and purchase intention is also demonstrated by Goldsmith et al. (2000), as well as Khairullah & Khairullah (1999), bypassing the intervention of brand effect.

* Research Scholar, Dept. of Management Studies, M.S University, Tamil Nadu, India.

** Associate Professor, Dept. of Management Studies, M.S University, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: madhavan@msuniv.ac.in

Product involvement: Friedman and Friedman (1979) studied if the effectiveness of the endorser type is dependent on the product type. It was hypothesized that the subjects will evaluate more favorably, the advertisements featuring a celebrity endorser, than those using an expert or a typical -consumer endorser, in the promotion of the products high in psychological and/or social risk. In this type of product, the celebrity will be significantly more effective in inducing purchase intentions. For financial products, a professional expert endorser would be more effective than a typical consumer endorser. For the products low in all five types of risk (psychological, social, financial, performance, physical) a typical consumer would be more effective. Any product being endorsed by a celebrity would be expected to sell at a higher price. Regardless of the type of the product, celebrity will be more effective in sustaining the recall of the advertisement. The sample consisted of middleclass housewives. The results revealed that the product - endorser interaction did occur. The product related to social risk for e.g. (jewellery) achieved highest evaluations, when endorsed by a celebrity. A product related to performance risk achieved highest evaluations, when endorsed by an expert. For a product low in all five types of risk, for e.g. (cookies) highest evaluations were obtained when endorsed by a typical consumer. Using a celebrity did not impart a high price image. The study also confirmed that regardless of the type of the product, the celebrity endorser was more effective in sustaining recall for the brand and advertisement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To measure the direct and indirect effects of interest level on sports (IV) on purchase intention (DV) through attitude towards advertisement (M1) and perceived risk (M2) on Low involvement consumer products (W).
- To measure the direct and indirect effects of interest level on sports (IV) on purchase intention (DV) through attitude towards advertisement (M1) and perceived risk (M2) on high involvement consumer products (W).
- To find out the changes of consumer behaviour between Low involvement and high involvement consumer products.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher has applied the probability sampling method to collect the primary data. Consequently, he has applied the stratified random sampling method to obtain the responses from consumer goods purchaser of students and lecturers of colleges in Tirunelveli. A sample size of 500 respondents was selected on the stratified random sampling method. Out of 500 respondents chosen for the study, 450 of them were found usable. The study has been done on the basis

of both primary as well as secondary sources of data. The data collected among the students and lecturers of arts and science colleges in Tirunelveli district through survey constitute primary data and information gathered through books, journals, magazines, reports, dailies constitute the secondary data. The data collected from both the sources were scrutinized, edited and tabulated. Normality, linearity, Reliability and validity were checked. Further, the processed data was analyzed using Process Macro in SPSS and other computer packages.

DATA AND RESULT ANALYSIS

To estimate the total, direct and indirect effects of interest level on sports (IV) on purchase intention (DV) through mediators of attitude towards advertisement (M1) and perceived risk (M2) on Low involvement consumer products (W).

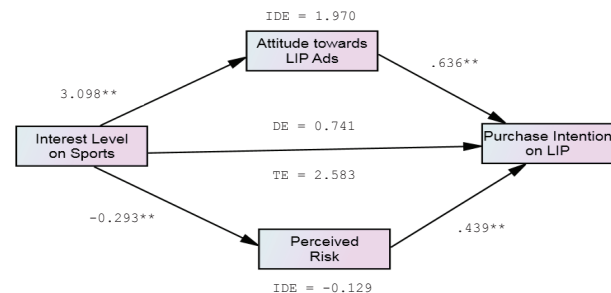


Fig. 1 Path Analysis for Low Involvement Products

It reveals that interest on sports have a positive relationship with Attitude towards low involvement product advertisement and that interest level increase by 1 unit leads to an increase in attitude towards advertisement by 3.098 units. On the other hand, interest level on sports increase by 1 unit leads to a decrease in perceived risk by 0.293 units for low involvement products.

Positive attitude towards LIP advertisements act as a mediator between interest level and purchase intention of LIP. The indirect path has a positive effect on purchase intention and increase the unit level from 0.742 (direct effect) to 1.970. So, here the attitude towards LIP advertisement acts as an enhancer mediator and it plays an important role in this path to boost purchase intention of low involvement products.

Likewise, perceived risk acts as another mediator between interest level on sports and purchase intention of low involvement products. The indirect path has a negative effect on purchase intention and decrease the unit level by 0.129. So, here the perceived risk act as a suppressor mediator and it plays a negative role in this path to reduce purchase intention of low involvement products.

Even though, risk plays a significant mediator the attitude towards low involvement products advertisement also has significant effect than risk. So for low involvement products, risk plays an insignificant role than attitude towards advertisements.

Model = 4

Y = INT_LIP (purchase Intention on Low Involvement product)

X = INTREST (Interest Level on Sports)

M1 = ATTI_LIP (Positive attitude towards Celebrity's Ad.)

M2 = RISKLIP (Perceived Risk on Low Involvement product)

Outcome: ATTI_LIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.967	.936	27.587	5986.926	1.000	448.000	.000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	-3.649	.817	-4.467	.000	-5.255	-2.044
INTREST	3.098	.040	77.375	.000	3.019	3.177

Outcome: RISKLIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.763	.583	2.580	440.927	1.000	448.000	.000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	17.974	.274	65.684	.000	17.436	18.512
INTREST	-.293	.014	-20.998	.000	-.321	-.266

Outcome: INT_LIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.983	.967	9.894	7876.599	3.000	446.000	.000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	-10.497	2.314	-4.537	.000	-15.044	-5.949
ATTI_LIP	.636	.047	13.531	.000	.544	.728
RISKLIP	.439	.139	3.170	.002	.167	.711
INTREST	.741	.132	5.627	.000	.482	1.000

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****

Outcome: INT_LIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.969	.940	17.942	8941.051	1.000	448.000	.000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	-4.925	.611	-8.067	.000	-6.125	-3.725
INTREST	2.583	.027	94.557	.000	2.529	2.637

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS *****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
2.583	.027	94.557	.000	2.529	2.637

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.741	.132	5.627	.000	.482	1.000

Indirect effect of X on Y

Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	1.841	.120	1.606	2.070
ATTI_LIP	1.970	.143	1.699	2.264
RISKLIP	-.129	.041	-.208	-.049
(C1)	2.099	.172	1.780	2.458

Partially standardized indirect effect of X on Y

Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	.107	.008	.092	.122
ATTI_LIP	.114	.009	.097	.134
RISKLIP	-.007	.002	-.012	-.003

Completely standardized indirect effect of X on Y

Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	.691	.046	.601	.780
ATTI_LIP	.739	.054	.636	.851
RISKLIP	-.048	.015	-.078	-.019

Ratio of indirect to total effect of X on Y

Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	.713	.049	.617	.808
ATTI_LIP	.763	.058	.653	.881
RISKLIP	-.050	.016	-.081	-.019

Ratio of indirect to direct effect of X on Y

Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
TOTAL	2.484	.673	1.609	4.204
ATTI_LIP	2.657	.738	1.708	4.597
RISKLIP	-.174	.082	-.385	-.062

Normal theory tests for specific indirect effects

	Effect	se	Z	p
ATTI_LIP	1.970	.148	13.327	.000
RISKLIP	-.129	.041	-3.131	.002

To estimate the total, direct and indirect effects of interest level on sports (IV) on purchase intention (DV) through mediators of attitude towards advertisement (M1) and perceived risk (M2) on high involvement consumer products (W).

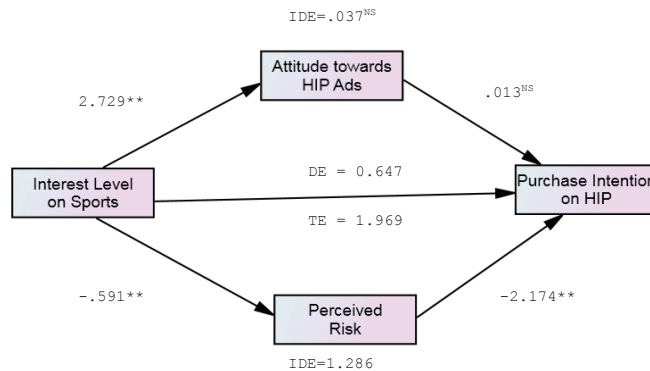


Fig. 2: Path analysis for High Involvement products

It reveals that interest on sports have a positive relationship with Attitude towards high involvement product advertisement and that interest level increase by 1 unit leads to an increase in attitude towards advertisement by 2.729 units. On the other hand, interest level on sports increase by 1 unit leads to decrease in perceived risk by 0.591 units for high involvement products.

Positive attitude towards high involvement product advertisements act as a mediator between interest level and purchase intention of high involvement Products. The indirect path has no significant impact. So, here the attitude towards high involvement product advertisement is not a mediator and it does not play an important role in this path to boost purchase intention of high involvement products.

Likewise, perceived risk acts as another mediator between interest level on sports and purchase intention of high involvement products. The indirect path has significant impact. So, here the perceived risk towards high involvement product advertisement is a significant mediator. Risk affects inversely the positive attitude towards high involvement products purchase intention.

Model = 4

Y = INT_HIP (purchase Intention on High Involvement product)

X = INTREST (Interest Level on Sports)

M1 = ATTI_HIP (Positive attitude towards Celebrity's Ad.)

M2 = RISKHIP (Perceived Risk on High Involvement product)

Outcome: ATTI_HIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.958	.919	27.700	5165.850	1.000	448.000	.000

Model

coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	-4.879	.783	-6.235	.000	-6.417 -3.341
INTREST	2.729	.038	71.874	.000	2.654 2.804

Outcome: RISKHIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.905	.818	3.256	1811.811	1.000	448.000	.000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	29.520	.309	95.399	.000	28.912 30.128	
INTREST	-.591	.014	-42.565	.000	-.619 -.564	

Outcome: INT_HIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.956	.914	16.874	2218.471	3.000	446.000	.000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	65.761	2.771	23.732	.000	60.315 71.207	
ATTI_HIP	.013	.042	.322	.748	-.068 .095	
RISKHIP	-2.174	.095	-22.966	.000	-2.360 -1.988	
INTREST	.647	.101	6.419	.000	.449 .844	

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****

Outcome: INT_HIP

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.913	.833	32.504	2196.787	1.000	448.000	.000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	1.523	.860	1.770	.077	-.168	3.214
INTREST	1.969	.042	46.870	.000	1.886	2.051

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS *****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1.969	.042	46.870	.000	1.886	2.051

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
.647	.101	6.419	.000	.449	.844

Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	1.322	.109	1.114	1.537
ATTI_HIP	.037	.114	-.187	.263
RISKHIP	1.286	.072	1.147	1.431
(C1)	-1.249	.157	-1.562	-.947

Partially standardized indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.095	.007	.081	.109
ATTI_HIP	.003	.008	-.014	.019
RISKHIP	.092	.004	.084	.101

Completely standardized indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.613	.046	.520	.704
ATTI_HIP	.017	.053	-.087	.122
RISKHIP	.596	.028	.543	.651

Ratio of indirect to total effect of X on Y

	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.672	.052	.569	.772
ATTI_HIP	.019	.058	-.096	.134
RISKHIP	.653	.032	.592	.715

Ratio of indirect to direct effect of X on Y

	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	2.045	.537	1.319	3.385
ATTI_HIP	.057	.205	-.229	.554
RISKHIP	1.989	.372	1.462	2.902

Normal theory tests for specific indirect effects

	Effect	se	Z	p
ATTI_HIP	.037	.114	.322	.748
RISKHIP	1.286	.064	20.207	.000

Specific indirect effect contrast definitions

(C1) ATTI_HIP minus RISKHIP

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

From the study, researcher found some important results. The consumers' attitude towards advertisement is same on both low involvement consumer goods and high involvement consumer goods. But, when it comes to purchase intention, behavior of the respondents is different. That is, in low involvement consumer goods the consumers' purchase intention is high, but in high involvement consumer goods the purchase intention of the respondents are very low.

Hence, sports celebrities' endorsements attract consumers and incline the attitude towards advertisements. It may help to create awareness about products and recall the particular brand's products. Even it helps to increase the purchase intention of low involvement consumer goods but it is not effective for increasing the purchase intention of high involvement consumer goods. So, the corporate may use the sports celebrities for their brand promotion of low involvement consumer goods rather than using them for high involvement consumer goods. If they are ready to use sports celebrities for high involvement products, use them for new products, i.e., introduction stage. This will be effective because, the sports celebrity's help to create awareness that incline attitude towards advertisements and recall the products easily, even though they may not boost the purchase intention. It helps to position their products easily in the consumer mind.

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