Impact of Islamic Scholars as Celebrity Endorser on emotional attitude towards brand

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Abstract

The Purpose of the research paper is to investigate the effect of Islamic Scholars as celebrity endorser on customer emotional attitude towards brand. Two Islamic celebrities were taken for study namely Sch1 (Junaid Jamshed) and Sch2 (Dr. Amir Liaquat). Data was collected from 100 respondents via questionnaires, incorporating Celebrity endorsement and emotional attitude towards brand. Celebrity endorsement covered three dimensions namely attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness. Correlation and regression analysis was then employed to examine the relationship, association and effect of the variables on each other. In order to study comparative analysis t-Test was employed. Results indicated a strong, positive and significant association between attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness on emotional attitude towards brand. Regression results specified that attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness affect emotional attitude towards brand positively and significantly. The t-Test results indicated that attractiveness and trustworthiness level was significantly different in two celebrities -high level in case of Sch1.Research has yet not examined celebrity endorsement and its effect on emotional attitude towards the brand from the perspective of Islamic scholars as celebrity endorsers. The current study is the first of this type as per our knowledge. Managers can effectively utilize the research findings of the current study as in today's modern world brand is a critical asset of the company. The present research proves that celebrity endorsement is an effective and efficient tool. On the basis of the research findings it can be argued that celebrity endorser should be one who is considered to be credible on the basis of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness.

Key words: Celebrity endorsement, attractiveness, Expertise, trustworthiness and emotional attitude towards brand.

Introduction

Every fifth advertisement uses celebrity to endorse products. Among marketers celebrity endorsement is a popular strategy to promote products and services to customers (Halonen-Knight &Hurmerinta, 2010).

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Seno and Lukas (2007) had studied extensive use of celebrity endorsement of product in marketing decision making is not an accident. Research has established the fact that celebrities are more active than other types of endorsers. Endorsers with solid creditability source factors i.e., expertise, reliability, and charismacan significantly influence consumer purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1991).

Research regarding the use of Islamic scholars as celebrity endorser and its effect on emotional attitude towards the brand has hardly been carried out. The current research is intended to highlight the perspective that is as to how far the Islamic celebrities' endorsement influences the customers' intention to purchase the brand recommended because using celebrities as endorsers can help marketers to create fashionable advertisements, and inspire a positive effect. Celebrities are casted in advertisements globally and they perform as a spokesperson to promote products (Kambitsis, Harahousou, Theodorakis, & Chatzibeis, 2002). In this study Celebrity endorsement will be studied from three dimensions namely Trustworthiness, Expertise and attractiveness.

Theoretical Frame work

Celebrity endorser makes advertisement credible (Jagdish, Agrawal & Wagner,1995). Cronley, Kardes, Goddard, and Houghton (1999) stated that customers have positive approach towards the brand and celebrity even they are familiar with the fact that endorser has earned money while promoting the product. According to Arnold, Cooper and Roberson (1995) "attitudes reflect a person's tendency to feel, think or behave in a positive or negative manner towards the object of the attitude".

Previously Till, Stanley and Priluck (2008) had seen that, celebrity endorsement leads to positive approach towards the endorsed brand as it can affect both perceived quality and distinctiveness of the brand (Dean, 1999).

There are two renowned generic models, namely celebrity endorsements source credibility model by Hovland, Jenis, and Kelley (1953) and source attractiveness model by McGuire (1985). The credibility basis is used frequently to cause the marketer's positive attributes that influence the recipient's response to a message (Ohanian,1991). Many researchers have suggested, that in source credibility model, the value of a message in play depends upon perceived level of trustworthiness and expertise of an endorser (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991; Solomon, Bamossy, & Askegaard, 1999; Dholakia & Sternthal, 1977)

The source credibility has two dimensions namely expertise and trustworthiness (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). The expertise are "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions" and displays understanding, experience and expertise (Shank, 2004). Celebrity expertise should be in line with the nature of the product (Till & Busler, 1998). Trustworthiness refers to the level of assurance, in the marketer's objective, to communicate the

claims they find most convincing. It includes honesty, reliability and acceptability by the receiver (Hovland et al., 1953).

When the celebrity is supposed to be more trustworthy, the message will be more effective and it will lead to the persuasion of the receiver (Ohanian, 1990). Based on the above analysis the following are the deduced hypotheses:

H1: Trustworthiness will have positive and significant effect on emotional attitude towards brand.

H2: Expertise will have positive and significant effect on emotional attitude towards brand.

The Source Attractiveness Model

The Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1985) asserts that an individual's receiving of a message originates from his/her resemblance to, familiarity with, and liking of the endorser that is relaying the message. According to Ohanian (1990) in order to examine the effectiveness of the endorser the most important factors are observed Expertise, Trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Therefore the following hypothesis is deduced from the literature.

H3: Attractiveness has positive and significant effect on emotional attitude towards brand.

The current research compares two Islamic celebrities in Pakistan, for the purpose two known brands are analyzed, First, "Lays Potato Chips" endorsed by JunaidJamshed, Islamic scholar (Sch1) during the controversy against "Lays" for using ingredients falling under the category of haraam, these ingredients were propagated not to be fit for Muslim consumption. Second was Meezan Oil and Ghee endorsed by Dr. Amir LiaqatHussain (Sch2), anotherIslamic scholar of Pakistan, who hosts Islamic talk shows and morning programs. Over the period of time both scholars had made their image as the people near to the Islamic Faith and people follow their coaching.

To meet the requirements of a comparative study a sample of 50 respondents each for both the scholars was taken. Comparison of the two scholars was made on the basis of the test variables namely attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness for which t-Test was conducted. The hypotheses developed for comparative analysis are as under:

H4: There is no significance difference between the attractiveness levels of both Celebrity endorsers.

H5: There is no significance difference between the Expertise levels of both Celebrity endorsers.

H6: There is no significance difference between the Trustworthiness levels of both Celebrity endorsers.

Methodology

Keeping the nature of the research in view the study design was developed using convenience sample of 100 students, because the nature of study is exploratory. The data was collected by using Questionnaire adapted from Ohanian (1990). The Celebrity Endorsement construct comprises of 13 items. Celebrity endorserment has three sub-dimensions including attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness.

Attractiveness dimension was measured using three items; Expertise measured using 5 items and Trustworthiness measured using 5 items. The responses were measured using 7-point likert scale and the remaining three measurements were measured using seven levels, semantic differential scale. Emotional Attitude towards Brand was developed by Sweeney and Soutar (2001) was used based on 7 point likert scale, whereas Emotional Attitude toward brand was measured through adopted to develop by Braunstein-Minkove, Zhang and Trail (2011).

The adapted questionnaire was pretested to check the reliability of the two. The average Cronbach alpha being equal to .83 was taken as satisfactory; hence the tool was finalized and used for data collection. Correlation is observed significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Research Results Study 1; Sch1 as celebrity Endorser

The results showed that attractiveness is correlated with emotional attitude towards brand (r = .59) significant at .01 level. Expertise is related with emotional attitude towards brand show correlation (r = .57) significant at .01 level. Trustworthiness is correlated with emotional attitude towards brand (r = .74) significant at .01 level.

Regression Analysis forSch 1

Linear regression was performed to test hypotheses 1, 2 & 3.Control variables were excluded from regression analysis. The regression analysis supports hypothesis 1 (β = .591, p < .000), so hypothesis 1 is accepted according to statistical criteria. The regression results confirms hypothesis 2 (β = .57, p < .000); hence hypothesis 2 is also accepted. The regression test results also confirm hypothesis 3 (β = .74, p < .00); thus hypothesis 3 is also accepted.

Research Results for Sch 2: Sch2 as Celebrity Endorser

The results of study 2 showed that Attractiveness is correlated with emotional attitude towards brand (r = .58) significant at .01 level .Expertise is related with emotional attitude towards brand show correlation (r =.76) significant at .01 level). Trustworthiness is correlated with emotional

attitude towards brand(r = .78) significant at .01 level. Correlation is observed significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of study 2 showed that Attractiveness is correlated with emotional attitude towards brand(r = .58) significant at .01 level .Expertise is related with emotional attitude towards brand show correlation (r = .76) significant at .01 level). Trustworthiness is correlated with emotional attitude towards brand (r = .78) significant at .01 level.

Regression Analysis

Linear regression was performed to test Hypothesis 1, 2 & 3 in the entire regression test there were no control variables.

The regression analysis supports Hypothesis 1 (β = .58, p < .000), so hypothesis 1 stands Valid.

The regression result confirms Hypothesis 2 (β = .76, p < .000).Hypothesis 2 is also accepted.

The regression test results also confirms Hypothesis 3 (β = .78, p < .00); Thus Hypothesis 3 stands Valid.

t-Test Analysis Attractiveness Test Variable

Referring to H4 we hypothesized that there exist no significance difference between attractiveness level of the celebrities but reference table 5 the results indicated that There exist a significant difference in the scores for attractiveness level of celebrity endorser Sch1 (M=5.6, SD=.38) and attractiveness level of Sch2 (M=4.0, SD=1.2) conditions; t= 9.0 p = .000.Thus rejecting hypothesis 4.

Table 1. *t-Test Analysis Expertise Test Variable*

Celebrity Endorser		Mean	SD	t	Sig (2-tailed)
	Sch1	4.7	.30	1.8	.072
Expertise	Sch2	4.4	1.12	1.8	.075

With reference to H5 it was hypothesized that there exist no significance difference between the expertise levels of both celebrities. The test results reference Table 6 suggests that there exist no significant difference in the scores for expertise of Sch1 (M=4.7, SD=.30) and expertise of Sch2 (M=4.4, SD=1.1) conditions; t= 1.8 p = .07. Thus hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Table 2. *t-Test Analysis Trustworthiness Test Variable*

Celebrity Endorser		Mean	SD	t	Sig (2-tailed)
	Sch1	5.3	.42	7.3	.000
Trustworthiness					
	Sch2	4.2	1.0	7.3	.000

Referring to H6, we hypothesized that there exist no significance difference between the trust-worthiness level of both celebrities but reference Table 7 show the results which indicated that there exist a significant difference in the scores for trust-worthiness level of celebrity endorser Sch1 (M=5.3, SD=.42) and trust-worthiness level of Sch2. (M=4.2, SD=1.0) conditions; t= 7.3, p=.000. Thus hypothesis 6 fails to stand valid.

Discussion, Implications and Conclusion

The first hypothesis (H1) stands valid in the current study that celebrity endorsement from the perspective of people attractiveness, positively and significantly affects emotional attitude towards brand. The second hypothesis (H2) also accepted in both study 1 and study 2 referring expertise of celebrity endorser absolutely and significantly affects emotional approach towards brand. The third hypothesis H3 states that, trustworthiness of celebrity endorser significantly and positively affects emotional attitude towards brand.

The current study expands the body of knowledge in the area of source credibility, and it is among few investigations on Islamic celebrity endorser effectiveness with credibility level. Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1953) suggested that as per source credibility theory, a person's propensity to recognize evidence depends on the perceived credibility of the source that is communicating. This research proves that endorser credibility from the perspective of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness certainly and significantly effects emotional approach towards the brand in both studies. Furthermore the result of the present study suggests that the endorser credibility influences and improves brand credibility.

While discussing comparative study results it was hypothesized that there is no significance difference between the attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness level of both the celebrities. The group variable were both the celebrities namely Sch1 and Sch2. The t-test results indicates that attractiveness and trustworthiness level are significantly differ in case of Islamic celebrity case of Sch1. Whereas, there was no significant variance between the level of expertise for both celebrities according to the survey.

Lays brand went through a big controversy as it was claimed that lays had some haram ingredients, so it should not be consumed in Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The organization

effectively handled the situation by proving it to be halal through a source that is considered to be credible in terms of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness. The results suggested that the choice of Sch1, as an Islamic celebrity, was the right one for communicating the brand perspective of the product. The personal credibility was transformed into brand credibility by advertising with Sch1. It highlights the perspective that right celebrity selection is also the key for communicating the right message.

Decision-making Implications

The managers can successfully utilize the research findings of the current study as in today's modern world brand is a critical asset of the company. The existing research proves that celebrity endorsement is an effective and efficient tool. On the basis of the research findings it can be argued that celebrity endorser has to be credible according to social acceptability, his expertise and trust-worthiness.

The current study reveals that local celebrities operating in local culture can be effective and successful in influencing brand credibility.

The research findings provide a direction for new multinationals seeking entry into new markets by proving the importance of local celebrity as a source of influencing local opinion. The competitive marketing strategies can be effectively handled by using local frame of reference of advertising. Further multinationals will be able to gain cost effectiveness by utilizing local/national celebrities rather than expensive global celebrities as results of current studies demonstrate that local celebrities are effective.

The present research also proves that celebrity endorsement can be effective when the advertisement is simple, clean and without irrelevant elements referring Islamic celebrity Sch1 advertisement during the controversial phase of lays.

Limitations of Current Study and Future Guidelines

The current study, being only specific, has limitations. This research were mainly related to the generalize ability of the findings. The study undertakes only male celebrities. The generalizability of the study can be enhanced by increasing the sample size and product range.

Current study takes selective information on the effect to the consumer. The psychological effect of the consumer can be widened by incorporating more segments of consumers from other cultures. Different consumer judges endorsers differently on the basis of attractiveness level with divergent weighting. More detail segments of consumers may be a good way to avoid the selective information receiving effect in psychological aspect.

Longitudinal research design can be adopted for other products which use same celebrity for longer period of time to endorse the products.

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