



**BRAND ENDORSEMENT BY INDIAN SPORTS CELEBRITIES:
IT'S IMPACT ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF LOW AND HIGH INVOLVEMENT
PRODUCTS****S. Shahul Hameed¹ and Dr. S. Madhavan²**¹Research Scholar, (Reg. No. 9548), Department of Management Studies,
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ABSTRACT

It is a well-known fact that advertisement plays a major role in increasing the sales of any product introduced in the market. Particularly advertisement that uses the image of a celebrity has huge impact. But as the trends change, the current trend is to use the celebrities from the field of sports. Using sports celebrities in the advertisements in order to reach wider audience has become a trend in the Indian context and moreover huge amount of money is being spent for this purpose. That is the reason why the present research has focused on this particular area. The major focus of the present research is to identify the impact of sports celebrity advertisements on the purchase intention of the consumers. It has included both high involvement product as well as low involvement product. Mixtures of 450 U.G. students and faculties from 10 colleges which are affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli have been selected for analysis. The respondents were chosen using convenience sampling method. the present research has suggested that in the case of Low Involvement Product sports celebrity advertisements can be used to increase the purchase intention of the consumers. But in the case of High Involvement Product, sports celebrity advertisements can be used only while introducing new products and for popularising it.

KEYWORDS: Sports Celebrity, Advertisement, Purchase Intention, Low Involvement and High Involvement product.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, use of celebrities as part of marketing communication strategy has become a fairly common practice for major firms to hold brand imagery. These firms juxtapose their brands with celebrity endorsers in the hope that celebrity may boost the effectiveness of their marketing. Companies invest large sums of money to align their brands and themselves with endorsers. Such endorsers are dynamic with both attractive and likeable qualities. Companies ensure that these qualities are transferred to products via promotional activities. Furthermore, because of their fame, celebrities serve not only to create and maintain attention but also to achieve high recall rates for Advertisement messages in today's highly cluttered environments.

Celebrities are worshiped, given respect and trusted. So marketers know that they are very influential on consumers. Television remains the most effective medium in India for reaching today's youth, and most efficient for introducing young people to various brands and in helping to shape their decisions about purchasing. The usage of celebrities by the Indian advertising agencies has experienced a phenomenal increase in the last ten years. Effective communication between the marketer and the consumers is the need

of the hour and celebrity endorsement is a strategy that is perceived to make full use of this opportunity. Most of the countries have adopted this strategy as an effective marketing tool and even India is carving out space for itself in this arena.

Indian people idolize the stars of the celluloid world. Since its inception in India, media and sports celebrities have played a vital role as endorsers for many products. Firms offer huge pay packages for stars like Mr.M.S. Dhoni, Mr.Shahrukh Khan, Mr.Sachin Tendulkar, Mr.Aamir Khan, Mr.Amitabh Bachchan and many others to get them on board with their brand. Celebrities in India not only mean film stars. Television industry has become as popular as film. Television stars are seen many times in a week as the daily soap has become a part of life style for every Indian. As cricket is a passion for most of the Indians, the cricketers are given more importance in India. Most common practice is roping in well-established and good players for advertisements. But nowadays the trend is like even if a new comer performs well even in a single match, they are immediately brought into commercials. Cricketers earn quite a lot of money through this. It can be rightly stated that celebrities have been quite successful in India in communicating right messages and influencing their purchasing behaviour. Celebrity endorsements in India have produced positive impact on consumers buying behaviour by increasing public attention and sales volume of the endorsed brands.

Celebrity endorsement business has become a multi-million rupees industry in India. Marketers use celebrity endorsers to influence the purchase decision of consumers in order to increase their sales and extend their market shares. Here, researcher has a question on whether the sports celebrity endorsement has a same impact or influence on consumer purchase intention of both Low and high involvement product. This study focuses on the celebrity endorsement by Indian sports celebrities and their impact on purchase intention of both Low and high involvement product.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

In such a scenario, the present research is focusing on the concept of sports celebrity branding. The present research is focusing at various levels, starting from understanding the effectiveness of sports celebrity branding. Are these advertisements attracting the audience enough? Are the customers buying the product because of these advertisements? Are there any difference in the impact upon the consumers based on the sports person? These are some of the major questions for which the present research is trying to find answers.

If these advertisements are having an impact, are there any difference in the impact that it has among the high involvement products such as cars, mobile phones, computer and low involvement products such as chocolate, pastes, newspaper. The present research doesn't stop at analysing the impact that these sports celebrity branding has among the consumers, but it goes a step further by analysing the risk factors involved in such advertisements. One sports person is involved in more than one brand advertisement and what are the risk that it creates for the products that is being advertised and what kind of impact that it creates among the consumers is also another pertinent question that the present research is focused on.

Moreover, the popularity of the sports persons is a temporary concept. If one fine day their performance in the sports deteriorates, then their popularity also decreases. The present research is also concerned about this concept and what is the impact that this has upon the advertisement, the consumer who buys the product or services.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To measure the mediations effect of Consumers positive attitude and perceived risk towards sports celebrities advertisement on purchase intention towards low and high involvement product.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study the researcher has used the descriptive research design with single cross sectional method. The sampling plan was adopted by the researcher to collect responses from the best possible accurate samples as discussed further.

Sampling Plan for Primary Survey:

- I. Universe: Students and Faculties of colleges affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in Tirunelveli district.
- II. Population: Under Graduate students and Faculty members
- III. Sampling Unit: Sports or Sports Knowledge student pursuing undergraduate and sports faculty members or with sports knowledge.
- IV. Sampling plan and size: The Convenience sampling technique under Non probability sampling method is used for the research to be conducted. In this research, the sample consists of Undergraduate students and faculty members of Arts and Science colleges affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University owing to the fact that these people are interested and have knowledge on sports or being a sports person himself. To begin with, 30 students and 30 faculties of a college are selected as samples for this study. 10 colleges were selected from Tirunelveli district, 600 questionnaires were distributed among them, Out of 600, only 512 filled questionnaires are received. Of these, 450 questionnaires were filled and had complete information and hence were used for the analysis.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table No. 1
Consolidated Table of Moderated Mediation Analysis – Gender wise

Profile	Classification	Type of product	Mediator	Mediation Type	Result (Mp) Mediation %
Gender	Male	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	75%
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-
		HIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	12%
			Perceived Risk	Half Mediation	59%
	Female	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	66%
			Perceived Risk	Half Mediation	8%
		HIP	Positive Attitude	No Mediation	-
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-

The above is a consolidated table that provides the overall impact of the mediation on the purchase intention of the consumers. The moderation variable used here is gender. The result arrived at is that in the case of both low involvement products as well as high involvement products, the mediation of positive attitude of sport celebrity advertisements is high on the male respondents compared to the female respondents. Moreover, only in the case of low involvement product, there is an impact of the positive attitude on the purchase intention of the female respondents, in the case of high involvement product there is no mediation effect. With regard to perceived risk, only in the case of high involvement product, there is high mediation effect upon the purchase intention of the male respondents but they still have an intention to buy the product. But, in the case of female respondents there is no mediation of the perceived risk on high involvement product, because of the reason that there is no mediation effect on the positive attitude and therefore there is no mediation of the perceived risk also.

Table No. 2
Consolidated Table of Moderated Mediation Analysis – Family Income wise

Profile	Classification	Type of product	Mediator	Mediation Type	Result (Mp) Mediation %
Family Income	Below 25,000 rupees	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	17%
			Perceived Risk	Half Mediation	9%
		HIP	Positive Attitude	No Mediation	-
			Perceived Risk	Half Mediation	71%
	25,000 - 50,000 rupees	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	62.9%
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-
		HIP	Positive Attitude	No Mediation	-
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	48%
	Above 50,000 rupees	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	89%
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-
		HIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	18%
			Perceived Risk	Half Mediation	41%

The above is a consolidated table that provides the overall impact of the mediation on the purchase intention of the consumers. The moderation variable used here is family income. The result that is highlighted in the here is that in the case of people with low family income, there is a small percentage of mediation effect with respect to positive attitude. But in the case of medium and high income groups, the mediation effect of positive attitude is high in the case of low involvement product. In the case of high involvement product, there is no mediation effect. With regard to low involvement product, there is no mediation effect on medium and high income groups, but in the case of low income group the perceived risk affects slightly the purchase intention of the consumers. With regard to high involvement product, there is high mediation effect in the case of all the income groups. But it can be seen here that as the income becomes high, the mediation effect of perceived risk on the purchase intention becomes lesser and lesser.

Table No. 3
Consolidated Table of Moderated Mediation Analysis – Type of respondents wise

Profile	Classification	Type of product	Mediator	Mediation Type	Result (Mp) Mediation %
Type of Respondents	Faculty	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	74%
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-
		HIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	6.8%
			Perceived Risk	Half Mediation	57%
	Student	LIP	Positive Attitude	Half Mediation	77%
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-
		HIP	Positive Attitude	No Mediation	-
			Perceived Risk	No Mediation	-

The above is a consolidated table that provides the overall impact of the mediation on the purchase intention of the consumers. The moderation variable used here is the type of respondents. With regard to faculty members, in the case of low involvement product there is very high mediation effect of positive attitude on the purchase intention of the respondents. In the case of high involvement product, there is slight mediation effect on the purchase intention and there is high mediation effect of perceived risk on the purchase intention of the consumers. With regard to students, only in the case of low involvement product there is very high mediation effect of positive attitude on the purchase intention of the respondents. With regard to perceived risk, there is no mediation effect. In the case of high involvement product, there is no mediation effect of perceived risk as well as positive attitude.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

1. The attitude towards advertisement of low involvement products as well as high involvement products is good among the respondents. But with the case of purchase intention - for the low involvement products, the purchase intention is good while for the high involvement products the purchase intention is questionable. So, in the case of low involvement product, companies may use sports celebrity endorsement when a new brand/product is being introduced as well as for the sales improvement of the existing product/brand.
2. In the case of high involvement products, when introducing a new product/brand the sports celebrities can be used in order to create awareness or positioning among the consumers about the product. But in the case of an existing product/brand which is already popular, sports celebrities are not advisable. The consumers do a lot of ground research and take expert opinion while going for a purchase of high involvement product. Therefore, instead of spending on advertisement with sports celebrities, they can spend the money on improving the quality, features and technology of the product. If the quality is increased, the consumer base might automatically increase and therefore increasing the sales of the product.

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