The Cat among the Pigeons: The Dilemma of Lost Advertising Messages

Dr. Aamir Saeed
Associate Professor
Institute of Business Management

Sardar Muhammad Nawaz
Lecturer
Institute of Business Management

Bazla Mukhtar
Lecturer
Institute of Business Management

Kazim Usman
Lecturer
Institute of Business Management

Abstract
The use of celebrities in the advertisement is a powerful way to give meaning to a brand. A celebrity endorsement in an advertisement may attract consumers, but on the contrary, the commercial message of a brand may lose. The objective of this research paper is to investigate the role of celebrity endorsement on brand recall, brand message and to investigate if celebrities overshadow brand message? The studies related to the impact of celebrity endorsement are usually not based on experimentation, and therefore, lack concrete evidence in celebrity selection and endorsement decision making. Further, related studies with the celebrity endorsement and its impact in Pakistan are in mint condition and based on experimental designs with concrete findings are not available at all. The methodology used was before - after Experimental design, comprised of Experimental and controlled groups. The study was concluded by running different commercials in a natural and controlled environment, where the subjects were not aware of the experiment. Out of six commercials, three commercials were endorsed by celebrities and the rest were with no celebrity. Associative network theory was used as a lens and grounded theory to conduct this study. The study concluded that celebrity endorsement overshadows the brand and brand message. The study was limited to television commercials and consumer products spread over to the diversified industries.

Keywords: eclipsing effect, celebrity, brand, experimentation, advertising, associative network theory.

Introduction

The utilization of celebrities as endorsers in commercials has increased in recent years (Weismuelle et al. 2020). Firms invest a lot of money in celebrity endorsement (Parayitam & Muddangala, 2020), but they ignore different factors that may not lead to desirable results. Due to the complexity, changes, and fierce competitiveness in the market, consumers have been more aware and critical, demanding more in terms of quality, satisfaction, relationship, interactivity, and new experiences by the companies (Azizan & Yusr, 2019). Considering these challenges and aiming to meet these needs profitably, companies turn to a market, whose function is to understand and fulfill all market desires. Within the framework of marketing is advertising that involves promoting the organization, communicating the brand message, and positioning the brand in the minds of the consumer (Malik, & Sudhakar, 2014). According to Ries and Trout (1986), the focus of the positioning is not essential in creating something new or different, but to capture a place in the consumer's mind with the help of advertisement. According to Elegbe & Adesanoye, (2018) consumers get positive perceptions about the product advertised by celebrities, therefore companies use celebrities as their communication strategy. Organizations use celebrity endorsement as one of the influential ways to connect with consumers, and in return, the celebrity enjoys attention and being recognized in public on behalf of prompting brands on mass media such as TVCs, Billboards, Newspapers, social media, and many more (Germelmann, 2020).

Some researchers identified celebrity endorsement contributes to the fame of the brand, and some of the studies do not recommend celebrity endorsement based on the product being ignored and a celebrity remembered (Patel, 2009). This study tries to find out if celebrity endorsement overshadows the brand. The study in question explored this eclipsing effect on brand message and brand recall. Therefore, the significance of the study is adding to the existing literature body on the merits and demerits of using celebrity endorsement as a way of promoting brands in the Pakistani context and what managers should do to avoid this eclipsing effect (Ayers et al. 2014).

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the impact of celebrity endorsement on Brand Recall and Brand Message
2. To find out do celebrities overshadows brand message and brand recall
3. To find out what factors can be recalled from advisement when using famous and fewer celebrities.

Literature Review and Theoretical Development

Organizations are constantly finding ways to differentiate themselves from competitors and keep highlighting their offers with those of competition (Quader, & Sohel, 2018). The use of celebrity as a communication strategy is an effective step to influence consumers and produce positive buying behavior (Attia et al., 2017). Celebrity endorsement is a strong branding tool and companies utilize celebrities to endorse their brands to boost customer acceptance of the company name, for the promotion of their brand by transferring the attractive and positive image of celebrity on the brand to trigger consumer's purchase intention. This has also been confirmed by Kaushik & Baliyan (2017) that consumer prefers goods or services that are endorsed by celebrities.

In marketing, the term celebrity endorsement means the persuasion of advertising messages. Organizations endorse celebrities for a lot of motives, irrespective of how the celebrity's life experience suits advertisements. Earlier there used to be only one TV channel, but now we are flooded with many options of TV channels and numerous entertainment options are available to Pakistani consumers, therefore, Pakistani consumer has also become demanding and being highly influenced by glitz and glamour (Meyers, (2020).

Companies spend millions of dollars on these public figures (celebrities) to endorse their product or sponsored messages on television, radio, newspaper, billboards, magazines with the hope that this celebrity endorsement will create an impact of their product in the minds of consumers and induce them to buy the product which ultimately helps in increasing their sales and profit (Rai & Sharma, 2013). However, there are numerous objectives of advertising and commercial messages, but the main purpose is to create an appropriate image of the advertised product and to increase the brand recall of consumers (Buil, 2013). It is proved through numerous studies that the use of celebrity can achieve different objectives of advertising such as enhancing the brand preference, brand recall, grabbing consumer attention, and can make the commercial stand out of clutter (Muda, 2017) which ultimately leads to purchase intention. But according to Borden (2014) if the advertisement focuses more on celebrity than on the brand and its attributes, then there will be more recall of celebrity and less recall of brand, which ultimately decreases purchase behavior.

Celebrity

Celebrities can be described as individuals who have achieved fame in their respective careers such as singing, dancing, acting, sports, politics, etc. Celebrities are people who have special and different features; they have a very different way of living that sets them apart from common people (Algan & Kaptan, 2021). They are people who are recognized by a large number of people, their attributes like attractiveness, lavish lifestyle are few characteristics that differentiate them from the general public (Zafar et al., 2019). Celebrities have multiple roles like they give appearances in public at some special events or while performing their duties. They appear in the news, media channels, and magazines, etc. One of their roles is to act as a spokesperson while advertising a product. People who are greatly recognized by a large group of common people can be termed celebrities (Temperley, 2006).

Endorsement

An endorsement can be defined as the medium of the brand's message in which a celebrity serves as the brand ambassador and endorses the claim and stance of the brand by utilizing his/her name, fame, and prestige in a particular area to the brand. According to Dhanesh & Duthler (2019), celebrity endorsement can be a point of differentiation for any brand in a market where there's a great presence of domestic, regional, and global brands. Parmar et al., (2020) state the two stages of this process, i.e., the first stage involves a celebrity acquiring the meaning from his/her role, and after that this meaning is conveyed to a given item or brand with the help of advertisement, while, the second stage involves customer grabbing the product's or brand's new theme, the absorbing meaning conveyed by the celebrity, otherwise it will only add cost with no benefits.

Spry (2011), referred to the conditioning principle where the celebrity can only be effective when he or she shares some common traits with the traits of the brand. The study concluded that if there is a mismatch between celebrity and brand, it will have no impact on brand loyalty, and inferential beliefs. Another issue with the celebrity endorsement is his or her physical attractiveness. Different studies concluded that using physically attractive celebrities has its dangers. One of the most common is that in many cases the celebrity is remembered and the product is ignored (Trampe, 2010; Rifon, 2016). Khatri (2006) specifically found that in 80% of cases where the physically attractive celebrity is used in the commercial, the celebrity is remembered and the product is not. However, the study also recommends celebrity endorsements and high recall of the product in situations where the celebrity and brand share the same personality traits.

Brand Message Recall

Brand Recall is the component of Brand Awareness which means the ability to remember the brand after being exposed to communication or promotional message (Jin et al., 2019). According to Levrini et al., (2019) brand recall is the mental reproduction of some target item experienced or learned earlier. Faizan (2018) characterized Brand Recall as a subjective proportion of how great the brand is remembered and recognized by the customer in terms of the brand message. Brand recall, awareness of brands, and their recognition come in a similar box, and they all have similar importance (Spry et al, 2011).

Consumer Associative Network Theory and Eclipsing Effect

Associative network theory also props the mechanisms by which it can be derived that celebrity endorsement is an effective advertising strategy (Till & Busler, 2000). According to Schweickert et al., (2019), concerning the associative networks of memory, brands and celebrities represent the "nodes" or processing units. Through the endorsement process, an associative link (or a pattern of connectivity) is constructed between the brand and the endorser." With media publicity, consumers gain information about brands and celebrities and with time, the consumer becomes knowledgeable about celebrities and brands. Research shows brand familiarity leads to deeper knowledge about brand attributes and develops a deep association with the brand. Due to the endorsement technique, the celeb and the brand nodes are connected in the minds of the consumer. The endorsement method offers the brand and celeb nodes collectively, activating memory retrieval for both nodes simultaneously (Yadavalli & Jones, 2014).

Different researchers have used the concept of the "eclipsing effect" which means the celebrity becomes more overpowering than the brands. A study conducted by, Erfgen et al. (2015) characterize the eclipsing impact as "the use of celebrity for promotion of a product who are big names, such as actors, famous politician, sportsman overshadow the message of a brand. Celebrities overshadow the endorsed brand when they hurt the balance by being highlighted as the focal point rather than the brand within the promotional campaign and recognized as the most important figure, whereas the brand message is not given importance. E.g., Beyoncé is featured as the dominant figure in the 60-second advertisement of PepsiCo, enjoying her music in front of the mirror and relaying several pictures of her (Pringle, 2004).

In six of the first 12 seconds, Beyoncé is seen opening and drinking a bottle of Pepsi, whereas, in the other 42 seconds, Beyoncé is enjoying and singing. The whole advertisement is dominated by Beyoncé as only 12 seconds of the 60-second are dedicated to PepsiCo (Pringle, 2004). When celebrities are featured as a focal point in the advertisement, then most of the attention is diverted towards the celebrity rather than the brand. The disproportion of time and capacity toward the celebrity highlights his/her personality, which results in providing lower attention to the endorsed brand (Botelho, 2019)

Methodology

The methodology is the method(s) used in a particular area of study or activity. Unlike algorithms, the methodology is a system of broad principles selected to derive, interpret and solve a particular problem with disciplined rules. It is therefore the backbone of research as the methodology used directly affects the outcome and quality of research. A methodology is not the simple method used for data collection, but an array of activities selected to address the research question. In this study experimentation method is used to collect data because the objective of this study is to find the effectiveness of celebrities in advertisement and what factors are recalled by the audience after watching the ads, so the advertisement has shown to the audience act as treatment and the response of the audience is the output (O) that was recorded using DAR (Day after Recall) method.

Sample

It was made sure that the sample selected should be representative of the population. The sample was comprised of 100 young respondents of both genders aged 18-30. It was to make sure that the selected respondents are frequent TV viewers along with the understanding of different advertising mediums. The familiarity of celebrity and brands were also taken into consideration, the advertisement selected was of famous and renowned celebrities of Pakistan. A group of 100 participants was exposed to 7 different advertisements which were new to the audience, without letting them know the purpose of the study. After running the advertisements their responses were recorded related to if the audience remembers the celebrity, the brand, or the message?

Data Collection

The data collection technique was based on experimentation. Experimentation is a most scientific method of survey technique with limited bias and maximum accuracy. The experiment was conducted in a controlled environment where the environment was created for advertising exposure. As the objective of the study was to evaluate if the respondent recall the brand name, message, and celebrity and also if the celebrity fame overshadows the brand message and brand name, before and after the only experimental design was used. This experimental design is meant to evaluate the responses of the respondent after the treatment (X) is applied (Advertising commercials in this case).

In the controlled environment, 100 respondents were exposed to TV commercials and their respondents were recorded through a structured questionnaire after the exposure of advertising commercials after a day which is called the DAR (Day after Recall) method. Symbolically the experimental design can be presented as:

$$X \longrightarrow O$$
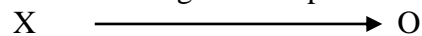
Where, X is the treatment that is advertising commercials that included celebrities, and O represents Observations recorded after the advertising exposure. Six different television commercials were played in a sequence to ensure the audience is watching TV commercials in the natural environment. The sample audiences were then supplied with the sheet to record their memories with few questions related to recall of the celebrity, recall of brand name, brand message, context/situation shown in the advertisement, attire of celebrity.

Demographic Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents. Male respondents are 42% and Female respondents are 58%. Furthermore, respondents aged between 18-25 are 57% and 43% are at the age bracket of 26-30 years.

Table 1: Demographics

	Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	42	42.0
	Female	58	58.0
Age	18-25	57	57.0
	26-30	43	43.0
	Total	100	100.0
Time spent on watching TV	30-40 mins	27	33.0%
	1-2 hours	40	40.0%
	3-4 hours	33	27.0
	Total	100	100.0

Experimentation 1

Experiment 1 was carried out with those advertisements in which celebrities have endorsed conventional brands. The descriptions are as follows in Table 1

Table 2: Experiment 1

No.	Advertised Brand	Celebrity	Duration of Ad
1	Samsung	Mahira Khan	1 min 43 seconds
2	Phoenix Battery	Fahad Mustafa	1 min 33 seconds
3	Chocolatto Biscuits	Saira Yousuf	0.55 seconds
4	Dawlance	Junaid Khan	0:50 seconds

Experimentation 2

The second round of experimentation comprises of the same audience but the ads shown were without celebrities, to check the brand message recall of the advertisement and to compare the results of advertisement with and without celebrities

Table 3: Experiment 2

No.	Advertised Brand	Celebrity	Duration of Ad
1	IKEA	N/A	1 min 18 seconds
2	Meezan	N/A	1 min
3	Knorr	N/A	40 seconds

Results & Findings
Analysis of Experiment 1

As the research was based on experimentation, the data analysis was the comparison of sample audience recall after the exposure of four TVCs of conventional products. The units of comparison were Celerity recall, Brand recall, Message recall, Attire, and Context Recall. The findings of the experiment revealed that in the case of brands being endorsed by celebrities, the audience remembers the name of the celebrity than the brand message, this can also be seen in Fig 1 that celebrity recall is 90% while brand message recall is 40% which means that the audience remember the celebrity name but the message was not clear, concise and communicated properly in the advertisement. According to Inglis (2010) overpowering attire, dresses of celebrities also left the audience to remember about celebrity makeover. In this experiment attire of celebrity Saira Yousuf and Mahira Khan is well remembered. The result of experimentation demonstrates that celebrity affects the brand message recall as compared to brand recall, the message recall is more vulnerable to celebrity fame. This may be because the brand name is repeated multiple times in advertisement, and also the package and brand name is shown in the commercials, as compared to the message that has only the audio support.

Figure 1: Experiment 1
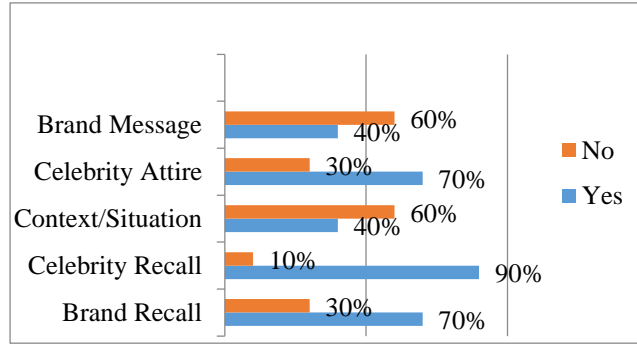
Analysis of Experiment 2

As a result of 2nd experimentation with less familiar celebrities, the message recall of that brand is much higher than the Celebrity recall, which shows that when less familiar celebrities endorse any brand and there is proper communication of brand message instead on focusing on celebrities, the audience could remember the actual brand and message communicated in the ads instead they highly remember Celebrity.

Figure 2: Experiment 2
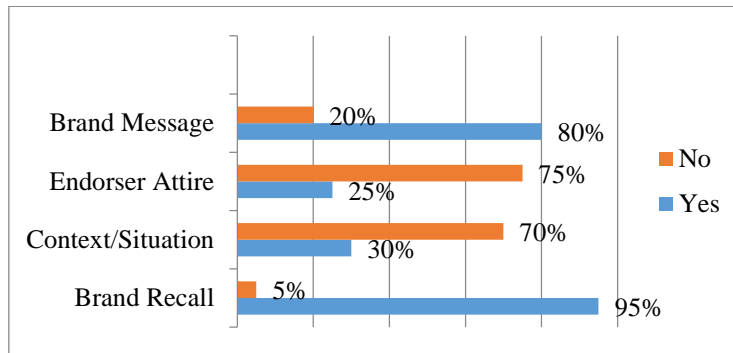
Discussion

In today's competitive environment every company is being confronted with massive challenges to interface with their potential customers. In this race of connecting with the consumers, where the challenges are all around it is difficult for companies to be in the 1st row and understand the needs and requirements of consumers and to provide them sufficient information to make purchase intention, therefore celebrities are used as a tool to promote the brand and create awareness among people (Silvera, 2004). Another research gives significant outcomes concerning big-name promoting without concentrating on a correlation with the brand. The outcome of the study was that brand message recall increases if there is a noteworthy fit between the celebrity and the brand, which recommends that the brand-endorser relationship could be a significant arbitrator of the vampire impact (Misra & Beatty, 1990).

To be in the market, facing this difficult race, and to stand separated from others; numerous advertisers will in general get caught in eclipsing the impact of their ads. It occurs by utilizing celebrities which instead of creating a positive impact, overshadows the brand message and diverts the attention of the viewer from brand message to celebrities (Kuvita & Karlíek, 2014). In one of the studies conducted by, Erfgen (2015) and his associates develop 2 print advertisements of hair color, one advertisement contains the notable big name endorser Cindy Crawford pitching the item, while the subsequent adaptation was an indistinguishable yet appealing model. Around a thousand members, all ladies who utilized

hair shading items normally were demonstrated one of the two versions for 6 seconds and later requested to record their responses in terms of celebrity and brand message recall.

The results revealed lower levels of recall of the brand when Cindy Crawford was in the promotion contrasted with the infamous model. It appears members gave more attention to celebrities as compare to the brand message. Our findings have various significant results, to begin with, results demonstrate that the eclipsing effect is a genuine risk and managers should take steps to increase brand recall and remembrance of the brand message by focusing more on brands than a celebrity in commercials. All things considered, this study gives clear proof that big names might dominate the brand and in this manner weaken recall of brand message-supporting the eclipsing effect. When a celebrity's advertisement is displayed to the audience, and the ads were not of more than 5 mins and when they were asked about the message shown in the ads the recall was very low, however, they remember the celebrity it's attire and context shown in the advertisement but has lost what the brand wants to convey a message and vice versa.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to evaluate if there is any impact of celebrity fame on brand recall and commercial message. The study concludes that celebrity fame harms brand recall and recall of the commercial message. This is also concluded that the higher the celebrity fame higher will be the risk of the lost message and overshadowing the brand recall. This is important to understand that the commercials were shown to the sample audience in the natural environment and it was also made sure that the audience did not watch the commercials before. However, in reality, the commercials are repeated many times and the audience is exposed to them numerous times and through multiple mediums. Therefore, this experiment was based on recall of the sample audience through single advertising exposure. Utilizing celebrities in publicizing efforts has become a generally preferred system by brand managers. Even though famous endorsers can bring about customers recollecting the big name as opposed to the brand – which is called the vampire impact.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the existing literature on celebrity endorsement in the advertisement. The research findings of this research have proved that celebrities when used in advertisement are remembered and the actual brand message got lost, therefore Brand Managers should carefully use celebrity and their appearance in an advertisement to make the ads effective, so that message is conveyed to the audience properly to influence the buying behavior of customers.

Limitations of the Study

However, the study was conducted in a natural and closed environment where the subjects were not aware of the reasons and purpose of the experiment, the audiences were limited due to the nature of the study and experiment. Another limitation is that the TV commercials were all consumer products therefore the study is only specific to consumer products. Media is also limited to Television. The displayed commercials were all TV commercials and therefore this may be the case with other media like newspapers and websites where the results and findings may vary.

The study is limited to the only recall of celebrity, brand, and message. Many other factors can affect recall of all three that are celebrity, brand, and message. These factors may include the creativity of the advertisement, music, interest, and the readiness of the viewers in purchasing advertised brands. In this study, the said factors were not controlled. Therefore, in the recall of celebrity, brand, and message other factors might have played their role.

Another limitation of the study is the audience. The sample or audience, in this case, was a young class of educated people. Results of the same study may not be the same when the

audience includes age and education level varies. This study also ignores the creativity of advertising and the way the message is delivered in TV commercials. There is possibility and evidence that if the message is delivered differently through fun, and humor the message and brand recall may be high.

Future Directions of the Study

This study was based on displaying the commercials to the audience in a closed controlled environment. In the future, it can be evaluated if the multiple exposures of the advertising would be having the same impacts on recall of celebrity, brand, and message or not? Furthermore, the study can be evaluated through other mediums of commercials. There might have other factors that might have played a role in the recall of celebrity, brand, and message. In the future, these factors could be eliminated and the impact could be evaluated on two similar groups that are controlled and experimental groups to ensure more accuracy of the impact of celebrity endorsement. This study meant to understand the relation between the celebrity and brand and its message recall. However, the association between the celebrity and brand and commercial message recall can also be investigated in association with numerous ways through which the commercial message is being delivered. That might be fun, humor, jingles, and animations, etc. This investigation has added to the exploration field of famous endorses by proposing an administrative device to help increase the viability of commercial battles by breaking down big-name used in commercials. The research has likewise through this examination contributed with new research that would be fascinating to additionally contemplate. A proposal for further research can be to investigate the phenomenon of eclipsing and study if famous people can hurt the brand in some other manner separated from influencing brand recall and does the product category also influences the brand recall element.

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Annexures
Experimentation 1 Ad Links
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7dHssWCsRQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zj_JBnkFpcg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfsvE2aFG8M
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnVdvzB6wps
Experimentation 2 Ad Links
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxSQNiLlS5A
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWuH0b2opBU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=It94oZ6SgcA