

# Exploring the Impact of Single Celebrity vs. Multiple Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior

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## ABSTRACT

Multiple celebrity is defined as the use of two or more celebrities in an advertising campaign (Hsu & McDonald, 2002) while single celebrity endorsement refers to the use of only one celebrity in an advertising campaign. This study aims to analyze the impact of single vs. multiple celebrity attractiveness and product match-up on consumer brand choice behavior by conducting an experiment. Questionnaires were administered on a sample of 250 respondents. Correlation analysis was significant, and after that multiple regressions were used to test the impact on consumer brand choice behavior of single vs. multiple celebrity endorsement. Implications of advertising strategy, limitations of this research, and the scope for future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** Multiple Celebrities, Single Celebrity, Celebrity Attractiveness, Celebrity Product Match-Up, Consumer Brand Choice Behavior.

## INTRODUCTION

Endorsement in advertising has witnessed several transformations over the past few decades. Celebrity endorsers are being used in about 25 percent of all television advertisements in order to promote brands (Erdogan, 2001). About 60 percent of advertisement expenditure in India consists of celebrity endorsements (Saxena, 2008). However, it is believed that celebrities have a positive impact on financial returns for the companies that use them (Endorgan, 2001).

A celebrity endorser is defined as “*any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition when they appear in the advertisement in front of the consumers*” and who often have distinctive attributes such as attractiveness and trustworthiness (McCracken, 1989; Silvera & Austad, 2004). Celebrities like movie actors, television stars and prominent athletes are extensively used in television advertising (Shimp, 2003). Celebrity endorsement is considered an effective promotional tool by marketers worldwide because it influences perceived product quality and uniqueness (Dean, 2001), advertising

effectiveness, brand recognition, brand recall, purchase intentions and even purchase behavior compared to those without celebrities (Cooper, 1984; Mathur & Rangan, 1997; Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell, 2000).

Multiple celebrity is defined as the use of two or more celebrities in an advertising campaign (Hsu & McDonald 2002). Many researchers found that multiple celebrity endorsements can be advantageous for appealing to various target audiences, to reduce the boredom, to boost ad and brand image, so that the purchase intention of consumers can be increased (Erdogan Z. B., 1999; Hsu & McDonald, 2002; Saleem, 2007).

A lot of research work has been done on celebrity endorsement, but there is a lack of divergent research on the contrast between single and multiple celebrity endorsement in advertising. Pragmatic evidence regarding how a consumer reacts to multiple celebrities in advertisement is often lacking, thereby leaving a gap in an important research area. This research is carried out to obtain a view amongst Indian consumers about multiple celebrity endorsement versus single celebrity endorsement.

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## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Celebrity Endorsements

Research indicates that celebrity endorsements can result in more favorable advertisement ratings and product evaluations (Cooper, 1984; Dean and Biswas, 2001) and advertisements featuring celebrity figures consistently produce more favorable impact than the non-celebrity advertisements (Atkins and Block, 1983). Companies can choose celebrities as endorsers to increase their competitive advantage for mainly three main reasons: launch, reinforcement, and repositioning (Pringle, 2004). In addition, many researchers indicated and revealed that the superficial image of celebrity endorsers had an affirmative impact on product buying behavior (Ohanian, 1991; Mathur.L.K. & Rangan, 1997; Goldsmith et al., 2000).

Above all, celebrity endorsements are used for creating a distinct impact and for better communicative effectiveness in conveying the message to the consumer (Sherman, 1985). This helps in building awareness about the brand (Seno, D. & Lukas, B. A. 2007). In addition to this, Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) found that a right celebrity can change perceptions of wrongly positioned products. Celebrities are known all over the world and can thus give the same status to a product that is being established in an international market (Silvera & Austad, 2004). However, celebrity endorsements are getting affected by vampire effect, i.e., a celebrity, sometimes, overshadows the brand on account of the celebrity's ambition and desire for exposure (Evans, 1998; Kulkarni & Gaulkar, 2005; Erdogan, 1999). Sometimes negative publicity about the celebrity affects the endorsing brand and this could prove to be a liability (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995).

### Multiple Celebrity Endorsements

When we have more than one celebrity in an advertisement, it represents the consensus of all the celebrities to a given product and this multiple consensus will have a huge impact on the customers (Kelly, 1967). According to the attribution theory, this multiple consensus attracts customers by developing a positive evaluation of the ad, brand, and product (Hsu & McDonald, 2002). Hence, multiple celebrity endorsements based on potential

impact of consensus information are considered as a good marketing strategy. On the other hand, Erdogan (1999), has cautioned that multiple celebrities can confuse consumers about the brand's identity and that it should be assured that "each and every celebrity possesses compatible meanings that are sought for brands". Saleem (2007) points out that multiple celebrities can have a positive impact on attitude toward advertisement and brand and also are much more effective for low involvement product advertisements.

### Celebrity Attractiveness and Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior

Attractiveness was defined in terms of facial and physical features (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Caballero & Soloman, 1984; Patzer, 1983); it was later defined in terms of model's attractiveness (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Kahle and Homer, 1985), in terms of sex appeal (Steadman, 1969), or sexuality and liability (Maddux & Rogers, 1980). A research body in advertising and communication identified physical attractiveness as an important cue in an individual's initial judgment of another person (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Chaiken, 1979; Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985). According to McGuire (1985), source attractiveness model is more related with physical attributes such as similarity, familiarity, and likeability.

Bagozzi et al. (1979) and Spears & Singh (2004) concisely define purchase intentions as "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand". Variables such as considering buying a brand and expecting to buy a brand are determinants to measure purchase intention (Laroche et al., 1996; Laroche & Sadokierski, 1994; MacKenzie et al., 1986). Many researches indicate that celebrity spokesperson's physical attractiveness has a positive impact on brand image, attitude towards the brand, and purchasing intent (Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Till et al., 2000), and it also became more favorable as the celebrity endorser's attractiveness was increased (Kamins, 1990). Thus:

*H<sub>1.a</sub>*. Single celebrity endorsement attractiveness will positively impact the consumer's brand choice behavior.

*H<sub>2.a</sub>*. Multiple celebrity endorsement attractiveness will also significantly impact the consumer's brand choice behavior.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics of Constructs**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of Variables</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>
Single and Multiple celebrity attractiveness, celebrity product match – up and consumer's brand choice behavior	20	0.611

**Table 2: Correlations matrix for Single Celebrity Endorsement**

<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Classification</i>		
	<i>Single Celebrity Attractiveness</i>	<i>Single Celebrity Product Match – Up</i>	<i>Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior</i>
Single Celebrity Attractiveness	1.0		
Single Celebrity Product Match- Up	0.229*	1.0	
Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior	0.414*	0.261*	1.0

Note: \*  $p < 0.01$

### Celebrity Product Match up Hypothesis and Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior

Byrne et al. (2003) suggests that many marketers face problem in choosing the appropriate celebrity to advertise their product. An advertiser must match the product or company's image, the characteristics of the target market, and the personality of the celebrity in order to establish effective brand image (Khale & Homer, 1985; Till & Busler, 1998; Kiminis & Gupta, 1994), and the determinant of the match between celebrity and brand depends on the degree of perceived match-up of brand (brand name, attributes) and celebrity image (Misra & Beatty 1990). Product message conveyed by celebrity should be congruent (Forkan, 1980; Kamins, 1990). If there is no congruency, then audience will remember the celebrity, not the product. Evans (1998) termed this situation as "vampire" effect, where the celebrity has sucked the life-blood of the product dry. Hsu and McDonald (2002) suggest that the match-up factor is very important for the effectiveness of the single celebrity advertisements as well as for the multiple celebrity endorsements.

Previous studies have identified the match-up of the characteristics between the product and the endorser as an important factor to determine communication effectiveness (e.g. Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kalra and Goodstein, 1998; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Misra & Beatty, 1990; Sengupta et al., 1997; Till & Busler, 1998). Misra and Beatty (1990) and Kamins et al. (1994) found that the better the congruence between celebrities / brand pair, the

greater the positive response to advertising in terms of attitude or even purchase intent. Thus:

*H<sub>1.b</sub>*. Single celebrity endorsement product match-up will positively impact the consumer's brand choice behavior.

*H<sub>2.b</sub>*. Multiple celebrity endorsement product match-up will also positively impact the consumer's brand choice behavior.

And in order to check the effectiveness of single and multiple celebrities' attractiveness and product match up on consumer brand choice behavior, the following hypothesis was tested:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: Single celebrity endorsement attractiveness and product match-up will positively impact the consumer's brand choice behavior

*H<sub>2</sub>*: Multiple celebrity endorsement attractiveness and product match-up will positively impact the consumer's brand choice behavior

## METHODOLOGY

### The Study

The present study focuses on investigating the effectiveness of single versus multiple celebrities on consumer brand choice behavior. The study was aimed at filling the gap in knowledge in the domain of consumer psychology concerning the comparison of single

versus multiple celebrities' effectiveness and consumer behavior. The survey approach was used to collect data. A pre-experimental design was used to analyze the data obtained through survey.

### The Sample

The data reported in this paper was collected as part of a large study designed to analyze single versus multiple celebrities' attractiveness and their product match-up and its impact on consumer brand choice behavior. To determine the sample size, the researcher has taken 95 per cent level of confidence at 4 per cent tolerance error, as the population was unknown. With this, it was found that the required sample size was about 98, while the actual number of respondents was 250. The sample drawn was a convenience sample that was purely based on opportunistic means from a readily accessible subgroup of population (Baker, 1990). For this study, 250 respondents were asked to provide feedback on advertisement chosen for them. A structured non-disguised questionnaire was designed to gather the data required for this research.

### Procedure and Study Design

The experiment was conducted by exposing participants to snaps of popular television advertisements of cellular service provider brands like Bharti Airtel Ltd., and Idea Cellular Ltd. According to TAM's Ad Ex India report (January to June 2011), cellular service provider category topped the list with 79 per cent share in telecom and internet service provider sector of TV advertising. In this, Bharti Airtel Ltd. contributed a share of 19 per cent (Rank 1) and Idea Cellular Ltd. contributed a share of 18 per cent (Rank 2) in television advertising among the categories of telecom and internet service provider sector. These advertisements were popular among the viewers. Advertisements featuring Abhishek Bachchan who endorsed 'Idea Cellular Ltd' as a single celebrity and advertisement featuring R. Madhavan and Vidya Balan, who endorsed 'Bharti Airtel Ltd' together as multiple celebrities are considered as stimuli for this study. Under pre-experimental design, the One Shot Case Study (X O1) method has been used. Only those participants who had viewed this television commercial are considered for the survey.

## Measures of the Study

### Dependent Measures

One dependent measure was used in this study namely: consumer's brand choice behavior. Consumer's brand choice behavior, a four-item scale, was measured on five point Likert scale consisting of the options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Anchors used in this scale were: "helps me make the buying decision, helps me remember the endorsed brand during shopping, increases acceptance of endorsed brands and increases my awareness of endorsed brands" (Alsmadi, 2006).

### Independent Measures

To measure source attractiveness a four-item scale, was measured on five points likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Anchors used in this scale were: "more attractive, more popular, more enjoyable and more attentive" (Alsmadi, 2006). Following this measure, the subjects were asked to rate their overall impression of the celebrity product match - up on five point likert scale anchored by "Influencing the image of the brand and building up the trust of the brand" (Alsmadi, 2006).

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Demographic Profile of Respondents

The sample has a gender distribution of approximately 72% male (n = 180) and 28% female (n = 70). The age distribution of sample respondents is heavily dominated by the age group 13 to 34 as it accounted for 46% (n = 115), which is far higher than in comparison with age group of respondents between 25 to 35 years and 36 to 44 who represent 34% (n = 85) & 14% (n = 35) respectively and respondents aged above 45 years constituted 15% (n = 15). The education level of respondents is: 34% are graduates (n = 85) and 30% are post-graduates (n = 75). Occupation was constituted by the students who accounted for 44% (n = 110) of the sample, and by the employed with 32% (n = 80) of which the 10% were businessmen, 6% (n = 15), and 8% were housewives.

**Table 3: Multiple regression Analysis on Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior of Single Celebrity Endorsement**

Variables	Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior			
	Ba	$\beta b$	Sig. (p-value)	VIF statistics
Single Celebrity Attractiveness	0.373	0.356	0.000	1.055
Single Celebrity Product Match-Up	0.176	0.158	0.003	1.055
R <sup>2</sup>	0.200			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.194			
F	30.95*			

Note: <sup>a</sup> Standardized coefficients, <sup>b</sup> Unstandardized coefficients. \* $p < 0.05$

### Reliability Analysis

Prior to examining the relationship between variables under study, the strength of the scale was assessed by examining its reliability. The instrument was then subjected to the computation of coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha was computed to ascertain the extent to which items making up each variable shared a common core. In reliability analysis, the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient was calculated to find out the internal consistency of the items on the scale. In all cases it was found to be more than 0.6 (Nunnally, 1978) (see Table 1), which confirms that the scale shows good internal reliability.

For subsequent analysis according to study objectives, two multiple regression models were carried for single celebrity and multiple celebrities. The independent variables included for these two were celebrity attractiveness and celebrity-product match-up. Before finding this relationship, the correlation between dependent variable and independent variables must be verified.

### Relating Single Celebrity Endorsement Attractiveness and Product Match-Up to Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior

The results of the preliminary analysis of correlations indicated that the single celebrity attractiveness and single celebrity product match-up were significantly correlated with consumer's brand choice behavior as shown in Table 2.

To further understand the contribution of the single celebrity attractiveness variables and single celebrity product match-up in consumer's brand choice behavior,

a regression analysis was conducted. Table 3 provides the standardized ( $\beta$ ) and unstandardized (B) regression coefficients with their respective contribution and predictive power of each variable. In this study, Enter method was used. The model was significant,  $R^2 = 0.200$ ,  $F(2, 247) = 30.95$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The VIF value of the regression model is around 1.055, which is below 10, so there was no "collinearity" in this regression model (Hair et al., 1998).

Overall the results support  $H_{1a}$  and  $H_{1b}$ , as single celebrity attractiveness has statistically explained variations in consumer's brand choice behavior (sig. = 0.000;  $t = 6.388$ ;  $\beta = 0.356$ ) and single celebrity product match-up has statistically explained variations in consumer's brand choice behavior (sig. = 0.000;  $t = 3.008$ ;  $\beta = 0.158$ ) (see Table 3). Single celebrity endorsement attractiveness explains higher variation in comparison to single celebrity product match-up.

### Relating Multiple Celebrity Endorsement Attractiveness and Product Match-Up to Consumer's Brand Choice Behavior

Multiple celebrity attractiveness variables were not significantly correlated but multiple celebrity product match-up variables were significantly correlated with consumer's brand choice behavior when considered individually. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table 4.

In order to test the impact of multiple celebrity attractiveness and multiple celebrity product match-up variables on consumer's brand choice behavior, regression analysis was used which proved to be a significant model ( $R^2 = 0.026$ ,  $F(2, 247) = 3.357$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Table

5 provides the standardized ( $\beta$ ) and unstandardized (B) regression coefficients with their respective contribution and predictive power of each variable. In this study, Enter method was used. The VIF value of the regression model is between 1.002, which is below 10, so there was no “collinearity” in this regression model (Hair et al., 1998).

Multiple celebrity product match-up was found to be statistically significant in explaining variations in consumer’s brand choice behavior (sig. = 0.011;  $t = 2.553$ ;  $\beta = 0.143$ ) (Table 5). Overall, the results support  $H_{2.b}$ . Moreover, multiple celebrity attractiveness was found to be statistically a non-significant factor in explaining variations in consumer’s brand choice behaviour, hence,  $H_{2.a}$  was not supported.

## DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to see the effectiveness of single versus multiple celebrity endorsement on consumer’s brand choice behavior. It was found that the result was consistent with the hypothesized relationship ( $H_1$  and  $H_2$  were supported). Further, single celebrity

endorsement plays a vital role as compared to multiple celebrity endorsement in influencing consumer’s brand choice behavior. Based on further analysis, the study found that in single celebrity endorsement consumer’s brand choice behavior was explained by celebrity attractiveness and celebrity product match-up, but it would be logical to say that attractive single celebrity endorsement exposed to viewers largely affects the consumer’s brand choice behavior. So, it is advised to advertisers that the more attractive the single celebrity endorser is, the more easily one can influence the consumer’s brand choice behavior. The studies of Atkin and Block (1983), Kahle and Homer (1985), Kamins (1990), Till and Busler (2000) and Amos *et al.* (2008) confirmed that single celebrity endorsers have been found to produce more positive responses towards advertising and greater consumer’s brand choice behavior.

In addition to this, it was also found that when using multiple celebrity endorsements consumer’s brand choice behavior was largely influenced by celebrity product match-up, while multiple celebrity endorsement’s attractiveness variable was not significant. The study of

**Table 4: Correlations matrix Multiple Celebrity Endorsement**

<i>Correlation</i>	<i>Classification</i>		
	<i>Multiple Celebrity Attractiveness</i>	<i>Multiple Celebrity Product Match-Up</i>	<i>Consumer’s Brand Choice Behavior</i>
Multiple Celebrity Attractiveness	1.0		
Multiple Celebrity Product Match-Up	0.047	1.0	
Consumer’s Brand Choice Behavior	0.028	0.011*	1.0

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$

**Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis on Consumer’s Brand Choice Behavior of Multiple Celebrity Endorsement**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Consumer’s Brand Choice Behavior</i>			
	<i>Ba</i>	<i><math>\beta b</math></i>	<i>Sig. (p-value)</i>	<i>VIF statistics</i>
Multiple Celebrity Attractiveness	0.020	0.024	0.745	1.002
Multiple Celebrity Product Match-Up	0.160	0.143	0.011	1.002
$R^2$	0.026			
Adjusted $R^2$	0.019			
F	3.357*			

Note: <sup>a</sup> Standardised coefficients, <sup>b</sup> Unstandardised coefficients. \* $p < 0.05$

Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade & Momeni (2010) confirmed that “when there was a ‘fit’ between endorser and the endorsed brand, endorser’s image helps construct the image of the brand in consumers’ minds” (p.404) and Hsu and McDonald (2002) added that fit factor was predominant and crucial for multiple celebrity endorsements. In addition to this, Baker and Churchill (1977) founded that attractiveness of celebrity was not effective in producing stronger consumer’s brand choice behavior. So, if the advertising practitioners want to use multiple celebrity endorsement, then celebrity product match-up should be given more importance as it helps in changing the consumer’s brand choice behavior.

In terms of managerial implications, the findings provide some insights and feedback for administrators of media industry in drafting various advertising strategies on how to favourably increase the consumers’ brand choice behavior. The suggestions evinced are: first, as compared to multiple celebrity endorsement, single celebrity endorsement plays a vital role in influencing consumer’s brand choice behavior. Second, when single celebrity is used, it is ensured that the celebrity as a source of advertisement is attractive as this dimension is given importance by viewers. Third, if multiple celebrity endorsement is used then, celebrity product match-up compatibility should be maintained to influence consumer’s brand choice behavior, as attractiveness of multiple celebrity endorsement does not play vital role. To sum up, advertisers can use the single celebrity endorsement with source attractiveness and source product fit to develop strong and positive consumer’s brand choice behavior.

### LIMITATIONS AND THE SCOPE OF FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations of this research are primarily related to the generalizability of the findings and the cross-sectional nature of the research design. The pre-experimental design was used where the selection process was biased rather than on a random basis. Another limitation is that the celebrities used in the study are movie stars. Effort should be made to use celebrities from sports and other areas.

Due to these limitations, two recommendations are suggested for further research that would enhance scholarship in this study. First, since a consumers’ brand

choice behavior is psychological, the judgment changes over time. Therefore, cross-sectional study may not be able to portray the observed changes in patterns and the causality in dependent measures (Easterby-Smith et al., 2003). So, a longitudinal study should be adopted. And second, it is also recommended that future researchers broaden the research scope by taking up the study of attitude towards brand, attitude towards the advertisement, effects of source attractiveness, source match-up hypothesis, and attitude towards the advertisement’s impact on purchase intention.

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