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A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED WOMEN

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Abstract:

The study titled “A Study on the Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on the Purchasing Decisions of Economically Disadvantaged Women” seeks to explore how celebrity endorsements shape the buying behaviour of women belonging to economically weaker sections. The research was conducted among 150 respondents selected from both rural and urban areas, using a structured questionnaire. The objectives were to examine the influence of celebrity endorsement on purchasing decisions, identify key influencing factors, analyse perceptions toward celebrity endorsements, and assess whether such endorsements contribute to purchase-related stress. The study concludes that celebrity endorsements are a powerful marketing tool, even among economically disadvantaged groups, but they must be used responsibly. It recommends that marketers prioritize ethical advertising and authenticity, while policymakers and educators promote consumer awareness and financial literacy to safeguard vulnerable consumers from undue influence.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Purchasing Decision, Economically Disadvantaged Women, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Stress, Marketing Influence.

Introduction

Celebrity endorsement has emerged as one of the most powerful and widely used tools of modern advertising. It is perceived as a win-win strategy for both brand image building and product marketing. In a highly competitive marketplace where local, regional, and international brands coexist, celebrity endorsement offers a unique way to differentiate products and strengthen brand recall. Through this form of brand communication, a celebrity acts as a brand spokesperson, lending his or her personality, popularity, and expertise to support the brand’s claims and enhance its credibility.

The significance of celebrity endorsement lies in its ability to influence consumer attitudes, perceptions, and ultimately, purchase decisions. Companies are well aware that the presence of a popular and credible celebrity in advertisements has a profound psychological impact on consumers. Therefore, firms strategically select celebrities whose image aligns with the brand’s identity, values, and target audience. A carefully designed endorsement campaign integrates product knowledge, brand objectives, and the celebrity’s image, aiming to persuade consumers amidst a wide array of competing brands. The effectiveness of such campaigns depends not only on the choice of the celebrity but also on the degree of congruence between the endorser’s image and the brand’s positioning (Subeer et al., 2012).

Celebrity endorsement has the power to initiate and arouse, inform and infuriate, entertain and educate the consumer. Advertising has been spread in our entire culture, influences society and our fundamental patterns of life profoundly. In nearly all of the advertisements of products right from the small tooth brush, cloths, shoes, food products and electronics items (mobiles, TVs, etc.) to high level automobiles youth icons are involved. Hence, the stardom of these public figures in advertisements attracts youth and influences their decision in the selection and purchase of the final product. Today youth want to eat, drink, wear dresses, accessories, use mobiles and ride the automobiles which are endorsed in advertisements.

Scope of the Study; The scope of the study is confined to economically disadvantaged women residing in selected rural and urban areas. It focuses on their purchasing behaviour, attitudes, and psychological responses to celebrity-endorsed products. The study does not include men or higher-income groups.



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Importance of the Study;- This study is significant for marketers, policymakers, and social researchers alike. From a marketing point of view, it provides clear insights into how celebrity endorsements can positively or negatively influence low-income consumers. For policymakers and social welfare organizations, the study will help to highlight the need to ensure responsible advertising practices that do not exploit economic vulnerability. From a research viewpoint, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer behaviour by exploring an underrepresented group—economically disadvantaged women—whose aspirations are shaped not only by need but also by social and cultural symbolism embedded in celebrity images.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the influence of celebrity endorsement on the purchasing decisions of economically disadvantaged women.
2. To identify the key factors that motivate economically disadvantaged women to purchase celebrity-endorsed products.
3. To analyse the perceptions and attitudes of economically disadvantaged women towards celebrity endorsements.
4. To assess the extent to which celebrity endorsements contribute to purchase-related stress among economically disadvantaged women.

Hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: Celebrity endorsement has no significant influence on purchasing decisions.

H₀₂: Celebrity endorsement does not significantly contribute to purchase-related stress.

Methodology;- Total population of the study comprises economically disadvantaged women belonging to low-income households or women from the category of economically weaker sections (EWS) in both rural and urban areas. Total number of the sample size is fixed to 150 respondents. Convenient sampling is used for the selection of the sample respondents, considering accessibility and willingness of respondents to participate.

Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. Primary data collected through a structured questionnaire designed to measure demographic characteristics, purchasing patterns, perceptions, and attitudes towards celebrity endorsement. Secondary data is collected from published journals, books, research papers, and reliable online databases related to marketing communication, advertising psychology, and consumer behaviour. The data were analysed, with appropriate statistical tools. Chi-square test and independent sample t-test were used for hypothesis testing.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to 150 respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population of economically disadvantaged women.
2. The sampling method used is convenience-based, which may introduce response bias.
3. The study focuses only on celebrity endorsement as a factor influencing purchase, not on other marketing variables like price, packaging, or product availability.

Literature Review

Previous studies (Atkin & Block, 1983¹; Ahmed, Mir & Farooq, 2012²) have emphasized that a credible and attractive celebrity endorser enhances the perceived quality of a brand and increases consumers' trust and purchase intention. The celebrity's image transfers symbolic meaning to the product, thereby improving recognition, recall, and acceptance. Brian Moeran (2003)³, pointed out that celebrity endorsement is considering as a method product marketing strategy, expressing the celebrity's importance in relation to the company. The study uses areas of fashion, advertising and publishing to identify how celebrities promote relationships across several cultural production platforms. According to Atkin and Block (1983): the image created through celebrity endorser support them to get the attention of the customers towards the product. The study also clearly indicates that comparing with non-celebrity endorsers, celebrity endorsers are more effective. Tripp,



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Jensen, and Carlson (1994)⁴ clearly explain the credibility of celebrities and their influence on advertisement. More endorsements from a celebrity will negatively affects how people view the endorser and how they feel about the advertising. According to Lynn Bennett (1992)⁵ There is a strong connection between a woman's access to the outside-particularly to independent income-and her control over the use of family resources on the inside. In fact, the ability to earn and control income appears to be one of the most powerful determinants of a woman's status in the family.

While there is no single universal law defining "economically disadvantaged women, "government welfare schemes often describe them as women from households with annual income below the poverty threshold set by state or central guidelines, usually under the EWS or BPL classification. An Economically Disadvantaged Woman refers to a woman who lacks the financial resources, access to stable employment, or income-generating opportunities necessary to maintain an adequate standard of living. In the context of India, the term is generally used for women belonging to families categorized as Below Poverty Line (BPL) or Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), and those facing systemic barriers to education, ownership, and credit access.

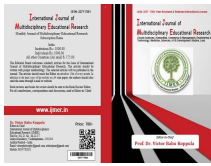
Data Analysis and Interpretations

- Age: Total respondents are almost equally distributed among various age categories (Below 25, 25–40, and 41–55), with a smaller portion above 55 years. This shows that a balanced generational representation and diverse viewpoints on celebrity endorsements.
- Occupation: Students and employed women dominate, showing that many respondents are at stages of income growth or transition.
- Place of residence: Rural and urban representation is nearly equal, allowing insight into differences between modern exposure (urban) and traditional influence (rural).
- Monthly Income: the analysis clearly reveals that majority of the respondents belongs to the income category of below ₹10,000. Its an evidence to the financial capacity of the respondents and their inability to meet day to day requirements.
- Income Stress: Around two-thirds experience or are uncertain about income stress, reinforcing financial limitation as a major purchasing barrier.
- Buying Frequency: Purchases are infrequent and occasion-driven, showing price sensitivity and selectivity in non-essential purchases.
- Buy Likelihood (Celebrity Product): Most respondents are Unlikely or Extremely Unlikely to purchase celebrity-endorsed products, showing their cautious financial decision-making.
- Purchase Because of Celebrity: The analysis clearly shows that about 43% have purchased due to celebrity influence. Celebrity power exists but the financial positions of the respondent are also matters.
- Buy Favourite Celebrity's Brand: More than half show brand affinity toward their favourite celebrities, suggesting their strong desire and emotional connection.
- Motivated by Celebrity: Slight majority (54%) are motivated by celebrity endorsements, showing that celebrities still play an influencing and motivational role.
- Influenced by Celebrity: Similar proportions of "Yes" and "No" indicate moderate but widespread influence.

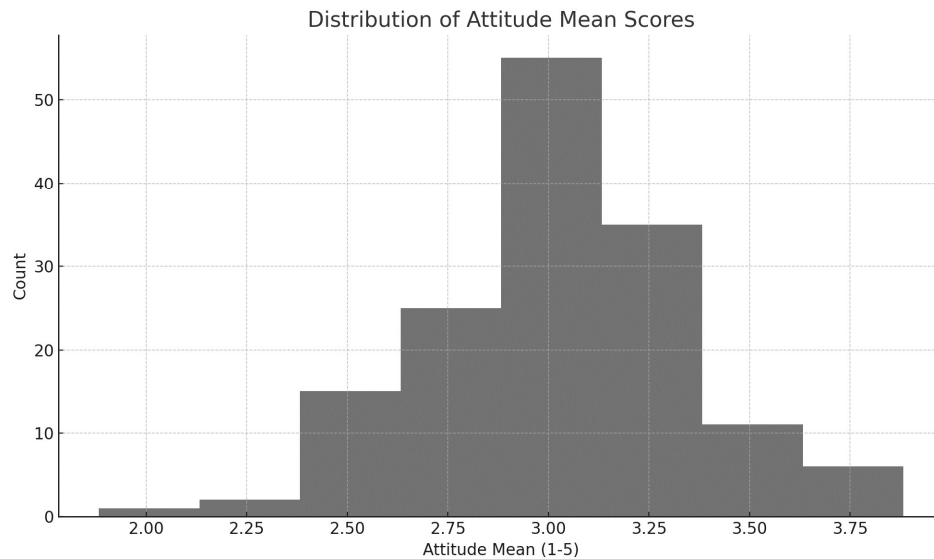
Attitude Analysis

Attitude Mean score - count: 150, mean: 3.01, std: 0.33, min: 1.88, max: 3.88

Distribution of Attitude Mean scores:



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Mean Attitude Score = 3.01 (Neutral). Respondents show balanced opinions, neither strongly agreeing nor disagreeing with statements about celebrity endorsements. And the low variance (std=0.33) suggests shared perceptions — moderate acceptance but limited enthusiasm.

Analysis from the Graph: Distribution of Attitude Mean Scores — The distribution is roughly centered around 3, implying neutrality with a slight positive skew toward favorable views.

It can be concluded that most respondents are open to celebrity influence but remain cautious buyers who prioritize practicality over emotional persuasion.

Motivation Factors

Top responses for 'Motivated_by_Celebrity':

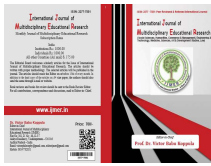
Response	Count
Yes	81
No	69

Cross-tabulation: Motivated-by-Celebrity vs Buy-Likelihood indicates that respondents who feel motivated by celebrities are slightly more inclined to consider buying their products.

Analysis shows visually that motivation and buying tendency have some overlap, but the relationship is not strong. Celebrity motivation alone does not translate directly into buying behaviour — financial ability and product relevance also play significant roles.

Hypothesis (H₀): Celebrity endorsement has no significant influence on the purchasing decisions of economically disadvantaged women.

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted between two variables: 'Purchase because of celebrity endorsement' (Yes/No) and 'Likelihood to buy celebrity-endorsed products' (Likely/Unlikely).



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Variable Relationship	Chi-square Value	p-value
Purchase vs. Likelihood to Buy	18.3	< 0.001

Interpretation: - Significant relationship; celebrity endorsement influences purchase decisions

The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 18.3$, $p < 0.001$) indicates a statistically significant association between purchasing due to celebrity endorsement and the likelihood of buying celebrity-endorsed products. This suggests that celebrity endorsement strongly influences the purchasing decisions of economically disadvantaged women.

Hypothesis (H_0): Celebrity endorsement does not significantly contribute to purchase-related stress among economically disadvantaged women.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare perception scores between respondents who reported purchase-related stress and those who did not.

Group	Mean Perception Score	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Stress (Yes)	56.8	9.1	5.1	< 0.001
No Stress	49.3	10.0	-	-

The t-test result ($t = 5.1$, $p < 0.001$) reveals a significant difference between the mean perception scores of the two groups. Respondents who reported purchase-related stress had higher perception scores towards celebrity endorsement. This implies that greater admiration and trust in celebrities are linked with higher levels of purchase stress among low-income women.

The study reveals that while celebrity endorsements attract attention and emotional engagement among economically disadvantaged women, actual purchase decisions are restrained by economic limitations and practical concerns. Positive attitudes exist but are often outweighed by affordability issues. Thus, endorsements in this demographic are most effective when the celebrity embodies authenticity, trust, and relatability. Overall, the findings emphasize that successful marketing must integrate celebrity credibility with value-driven messaging and accessible pricing strategies to convert aspirational appeal into real purchasing behaviour.

The study provides meaningful insights into the purchasing motivations and perceptions of economically disadvantaged women toward celebrity-endorsed products. The findings reveal that while celebrity influence does play a role in shaping awareness and aspiration, purchase decisions are primarily moderated by practical considerations such as income limitations, perceived product value, and necessity. Respondents who reported stronger positive attitudes toward celebrity endorsements were also somewhat more likely to express higher purchase likelihood, indicating that endorsement credibility and relatability can enhance product appeal even among cost-conscious consumers.

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