

An Exploratory Study of Ethical Perspectives of Celebrity Endorsements

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Abstract

Ethics in business is a much discussed phenomena now, especially after the news about the increasing number of corporate executives indulging in scams. However, it is essential to comprehend the relevance of ethics in each domain of management. The interesting development in the field of marketing communications necessitates an inquiry into how consumers generally feel about ethics in marketing communication. An increasingly notable trend in the advertising industry is "Celebrity Endorsements". Against the background of celebrity endorsement theories and celebrity endorsement strategies, the research paper presents a new term "celebrity ethics" from the consumers' point of view. Essentially, it delineates the "consumer perceived celebrity ethics" as an important dimension of celebrity endorsements. More particularly, it lists celebrities who are perceived as highly ethical. Thus, we believe that the results may provide valuable inputs to advertisers as well as to socially responsible organizations that are seeking to rope in celebrities who would be ethically fitting to act as endorsers for their products or services.

Keywords: celebrity endorsements, source credibility, trustworthiness, celebrity ethics, perceived celebrity personal ethics, perceived celebrity professional ethics, endorsement ethics

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Ethics in business has been discussed for a long time in the corporate world. However, the importance of the same has been realized more recently, when there have been more reports of corporate executives indulging in fraudulent activities. There is a growing concern for ethical behaviour among corporates, as it may protect the interest of the stakeholders. Companies are being awarded for their relentless effort to keep the ethical standards high in their operations. Alex Brigham, executive director of the Ethisphere Institute describes a strong ethical foundation as a "competitive advantage". Ethisphere Institute recognized Thomson Reuters, the world's leading provider of intelligent information for businesses and professionals, as the leading business ethics think-tank, as one of the world's most ethical companies (Kaj, 2012). There is an advantage of understanding ethics even at a deeper level, within each field of specialization of management. Within marketing communications, advertising ethical codes provided by ASCI (Advertising Standards Council of India) have been serving as a guiding post in ensuring ethics in the development of advertisements. While it is true that ASCI cannot provide detailed guidance as to "what to be done and what not to be done," it rests on the conscience of the practitioners to decide upon the content of the advertisement. Mr. Kim Das, Singapore based business director and president of the emerging markets at DDB Worldwide communications Group Inc. subscribes to the belief that ethics and moral stance are a far bigger responsibility (today) than they ever have been (Choudhary, 2013).

Innovative methods are employed for grabbing the attention of the target audience, but when innovative methods turn out to be manipulative, consumers develop skepticism. While the use of subliminal advertising is innovative, it is argued that it is exploitive of the subconscious status of the consumers (MacDonald, 2011). Subliminal advertising messages are subtly crafted to target the subconscious. Subliminal advertising blends both images and concepts so that both distract and focus the varying levels of attention of the consumers. For example, we came across a print of a cafe photo (Subliminal Messages, 2012) which used the outline of a naked woman in their steam coming from the cup. The same holds true for surrogate advertising, wherein the brand image of one product is duplicated extensively to promote another product of the same brand, especially when such an advertisement is banned. For example, the Manikchand Group, which is the leading producer of 'gutka' (tobacco products) sponsor Bollywood's Filmfare Awards. Yet another advertising trend that is all the more prevalent, and is very widely practiced is the phenomena of celebrity endorsement.

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Of all the innovative methods, celebrity endorsements are considered to be the most attention gaining tool to reach out to the consumers. But the negative impact is often overlooked at the cost of brand image. A research paper on content analysis of advertising in India concluded that 59% of the advertisements have celebrities, and Indian advertising has been using celebrities to a larger extent (Prakash, Kumar, & Prakash, 2012).

Advertisers seek to intrude into the consumer's consciousness through the usage of celebrities in their communications campaign (O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997). Within celebrity endorsements, it is believed that innovative strategies such as the use of real life couples -both married or in a serious, committed relationship - in the endorsement helps in bringing more trustworthiness to the brand endorsed. For example, Nescafe Sunrise is endorsed by Actor Surya and his wife Jyothika; Ajay Devgan and his wife Kajol endorse the Tata Indicom brand (Joshi & Ahluwalia, 2008). The campaign for Colgate Max Fresh Gel is the best example to illustrate innovativeness in combining sports and film celebrities (PRLog, 2011). The use of celebrity endorsements in social media is a new phenomenon, wherein the brands pay celebrities to post on the social network. A new study by the Nielsen Company indicates that those who respond to celebrity endorsers on social media are themselves far more likely to follow and respond to brands on social media. Kramer (2011) stated that 64% of adult U.S. Internet users who follow a celebrity also follow a brand. BAT's (Brand Affinity Technologies) comparison of celebrity-endorsed ads to non-endorsed Facebook ads revealed that endorsed Facebook messages resulted in a 50% improvement in cost-per-action (CPA) over non-endorsed Facebook advertising. The research results suggest that the power of celebrity endorsements is enhanced by social media (Sonnenaufgang, 2011). The ethical context is highly relevant in the emerging trends in advertisement. While there are benefits associated with the modern methods of advertising, the ethical side of such methods should not be overlooked. While real-life pair endorsements are being used wisely to bring trustworthiness to the endorsed brand, what happens to a brand when a pair breaks the relationship? The use of celebrity endorsements in social media needs an examination as it is perceived to be ineffective and unethical. Bard (2011) reported that 28.41% of the respondents thought that celebrity endorsements in social media are ineffective and unethical. The U.S. has already stopped this manipulation, with the US Federal Trade Commission stating that every paid-for endorsed tweet must be followed by the words 'ad' or 'spon'. The UK office of Fair Trading has started to crack down on people using social media to subtly endorse products.

Review of Literature

According to Friedman, H. and Freidman, L. (1979), the term celebrity refers to an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed. Celebrities are those people who are widely known (Kurzman, Anderson, Key, Lee, Moloney, Silver, & Van Ryn, 2007). Chavda (2012) reported that celebrity endorsement advertisements are necessary for organizations to survive competition. Research on the topic of celebrity endorsement rest on two general models: the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model. According to the source credibility model of Hovland and Weiss (1955), there are two factors that underscore the perceived credibility of the communicator namely, Expertness and Trustworthiness (as cited in Ohanian, 1990). Expertness refers to the perceived ability of the source to make a valid assertion. Trustworthiness refers to the belief that the assertions the message source makes are convincing and credible. Source credibility is commonly used to imply positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of the message (Hovland & Weiss, 1955). Erdogen (1999) suggested that the use of the word 'trustworthiness' in the celebrity endorsement literature refers to the honesty, integrity, and believability of an endorser. The source attractiveness model is a component of the source valence model of McGuire (McGuire, 1985). This model proposes that the attractiveness (physical and non-physical) of the source influences the receptivity of the message. The most important nonphysical components of source attractiveness are Likeability and Similarity. The source models (both source credibility and source attractive) do not explain why a celebrity fails as an endorser for one brand while being successful for another brand.

Meaning transfer suggested by McCracken's (1989) model presumed to overcome the stated weaknesses of the source models. In this 'meaning transfer model,' the celebrity is a persuasive communicator, and the consumer is responding to a particular set of meanings of the celebrity. Mehulkumar's (2005) CATLEF model examined the interaction between celebrity characteristics and product characteristics at a brand level for different countries. The perceived celebrity endorser image has to be summarized in a multicultural setting, with an international celebrity

being measured as per the following variables: Credibility (C) , Attractiveness (A), Trustworthiness (T), Likeability (L), Expertise (E), and Familiarity (F) . Research has shown that not only the classification of the product, but source credibility and source attractiveness can also influence the effectiveness of the celebrity endorser, but also the match between the brand and or the product with the celebrity.

There should be a congruence between the celebrity and the product in terms of characteristics such as image, expertise, or attractiveness (Baker, Churchill, & Gilbert, 1977). As one news article put it, celebrity endorsers in India fall in three buckets. One set of celebrities are clear that they want money, then there are stars who are true to their image attributes and usually work with brands whose traits they think suit their image . The third set are the smaller stars, the ones that don't have any positioning and are interchangeable (Celebrity Management is still evolving in India, 2010). Arguably, when a single celebrity endorses many different products in different ads, his credibility decreases, and the same celebrity endorsing the rival brand negatively influences the brand image (Singh & Kaur, 2011) . Mukerjee (2012) indicated in his article about the celebrity's value being related to the celebrity's popularity and the celebrity's private life - personal integrity.

Research Gap

The above discussion reveals the ethical concerns relating to the trends in celebrity endorsements and throws some light on the theoretical models of celebrity endorsements. Celebrity ethics is here referred to as how celebrities are perceived by the consumers with reference to ethicality in terms of their personal life, professional life, and in terms of their endorsement practices. Personal life ethics of celebrities are manifested through the conduct of their personal life, and the extent to which the consumers/public are aware of it through the media or other sources. Professional life ethics of celebrities could be seen as their being ethical in their professional dealings (sports/films etc.). Endorsement ethics are the consumers' perceived ethical position of a celebrity in endorsing a brand without manipulating messages. Granted, ethical view of a celebrity endorsement is subject to cultural contexts. Nevertheless, one should not downplay the relevance of ethical aspects of celebrity endorsements to brand building. Certainly, keeping the ethical standards high in formulating celebrity endorsement strategies will not risk the brand to lose its image. Celebrity ethics is a new dimension presented in this study. Although celebrity dimensions such as credibility, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and meaning transfer model have often been discussed in various research works, yet there is no clear mention regarding celebrity ethics by researchers. Hence, a research attempt was made to ascertain if there is any logical basis to underscore the importance of celebrity ethics, and to compile a list of celebrities who are highly ethical.

Research Objectives

Thus, against this backdrop, we made an attempt to uncover the ethical perspectives of celebrity endorsements with the following set of objectives:

- 1) To understand the respondents' general attitude towards celebrity endorsements.
- 2) To explore the underlying factors relating to celebrity ethics.
- 3) To identify the list of celebrities who are perceived as highly ethical.

Methodology

A list of 25 celebrities were identified by conducting a preliminary research with 50 post graduate students. The list included celebrity endorsements from films and sports. The questionnaire was reviewed by two advertising agencies, one from India and one from abroad. On the basis of the review, the questionnaire was redesigned. The research instrument was tested for content validity and reliability. The attitudinal statements of celebrity endorsements in the questionnaire scored a reliability statistic value of Cronbach's alpha of 0.929, and this signifies high reliability of the statements. The celebrity ethics statements scored a reliability statistic value of Cronbach's alpha of 0.893, and this signifies the high reliability of these statements. The primary data were collected from the sample size of 500 respondents living in Bangalore. The data was collected during the period from 2011 to 2012. Exploratory factor analysis and mean score were used to evaluate the attitudinal statements of celebrity endorsements and the ethical aspects of celebrities. The mean score was used to identify the top celebrity in terms of personal, professional, and endorsement ethics.

Data Analysis and Results

The research had an almost equal number of both men and women as respondents (51% male respondents). Most of the respondents belonged to the age group between 20-30 years. This age group was suitable for the present study as it was revealed in a study by Singh and Kaur (2011) that the respondents agreed with the statement, "Celebrity endorsements mainly target youngsters". The purchase decisions of 41% of the respondents were based on the recall of celebrity endorsement advertisements of brands.

↳ **Attitude Towards Celebrity Endorsements :** From the Table 1 of the mean score statements, it is identified that the statements such as "*Celebrities in advertising contribute to the development of brand personality,*" "*Celebrities in advertising help in developing a liking towards a brand,*" "*Celebrity endorsements help in developing a positive image about the product*" recorded the highest mean score of 3.6120, 3.5080, and 3.4720 respectively. The statement with the highest mean score reveals the fact that celebrity endorsements for a brand help in developing a liking for a brand, creating a brand image, and eventually aids in developing a brand's personality.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Celebrity endorsements have a stopping power in getting the attention for a brand.	3.3300	1.08418
Celebrity endorsements paint a true picture of products through advertisements.	2.8120	1.19813
Celebrity endorsements help to remove the doubtfulness of the quality of a brand.	2.6500	1.11982
Celebrities in advertising help in developing a liking towards a brand.	3.5080	.96737
Celebrity endorsements help in developing a positive image about a product.	3.4720	.96700
Celebrity endorsements transfer meaning (symbolic meaning) to a brand.	3.1620	.97038
Celebrities in advertising contribute to the development of brand personality.	3.6120	.96505
Celebrities in advertising reinforce the value of brands.	3.2580	1.01068
Celebrities in advertising reaffirm the quality of brands.	2.9540	.93468
I prefer celebrity endorsed products against non-celebrity endorsed products.	2.5520	1.19421

Source: Authors' Research

↳ **Attitude Towards Celebrity Ethics :** An attempt was made to identify the attitude statements or variable groups that are leading to form celebrity ethics. Factor analysis was used for this purpose. The Table 1 indicates the total variance accounted for by all the factors. The Table 2 shows the total variance explained for the attitude toward celebrity ethics. On rotation, the Factor 1 extracted 10.593 % of the variance, Factor 2 extracted 20.014 % of the variance, Factor 3 extracted 28.780% of the variance, Factor 4 extracted 37.054% of the variance, Factor 5 extracted 45.039% of the

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.754	10.593	10.593
2	2.450	9.421	20.014
3	2.279	8.766	28.780
4	2.151	8.274	37.054
5	2.076	7.985	45.039
6	1.886	7.253	52.293
7	1.663	6.397	58.689
8	1.461	5.621	64.310

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Source : Authors' Research

Table 3 : Rotated Component Matrix for Attitude Towards Celebrity Ethics

Attitude Statements	COMPONENT							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
If I am a publicly recognized person, I must be careful in my actions as they may negatively influence people.	.725	.212	-.027	.025	.191	.092	.069	.242
Perception of ethics differs from person to person.	.714	.235	.220	.113	-.006	.141	.009	-.133
I show honesty and integrity with everyone I deal in public.	.695	-.046	-.053	.182	.068	-.091	.203	.329
One's personal ethics (values) determine his way of behaving with others.	.692	.062	.340	-.095	-.080	.353	-.028	-.089
I don't like exploiting the inadequacies of other people.	.606	.067	-.078	.501	-.022	.167	.085	-.002
Commitment, Hard Work, Sincerity, Loyalty , and Integrity are some of the best words to describe professional ethics.	.120	.747	.099	.044	-.129	-.047	.130	.222
It is possible for a business to be both ethical and profitable.	.135	.744	.112	.057	.144	.113	.061	-.121
Bribing means favoring some one for want of personal benefit at the cost of others.	.290	.544	-.092	.160	-.018	.423	-.046	.147
People who leverage professional publicity should cautiously exercise faithfulness to the public.	.151	.531	-.029	.043	.015	.353	.308	.187
I feel exaggerated versions of Ads by celebrities are entertaining, provided they are within the limits of decency, and are generally within the acceptable level.	-.109	.487	.173	.061	.267	.178	.348	-.184
I feel products endorsed by a person of high ethics will have more credibility.	.043	.140	.741	.056	.085	.032	-.017	.188
I am delighted and moved to buy products endorsed by celebrities who are honest even off screen.	.134	-.062	.704	.203	.109	.050	.172	-.093
I think the celebrity who admits the harmful consequences of the brand endorsed by him will be perceived as more reliable for endorsing brands.	-.070	.040	.502	.385	.014	.256	.028	.183
I think celebrities confirming to advertising ethics add value to brands.	.012	.267	.492	-.047	.451	-.363	-.094	.112
I will appreciate and buy products endorsed by celebrities whose endorsements are not exploiting the inadequate knowledge of the consumers about the product.	.199	.094	.478	.457	.096	.160	.141	.006
Celebrities who are not misleading with information will be perceived as honest.	.036	.214	.210	.753	-.031	-.070	-.049	.205
I think the believability of a celebrity might decline if the celebrity endorsing a brand makes tall claims.	.169	-.022	.153	.740	.119	.109	.069	-.128
Advertising helps to shape the society's views of the world and itself.	.076	.007	.035	-.014	.823	.027	.015	.115
Advertising shows an accurate view of reality.	-.001	-.077	-.015	.315	.732	.170	-.081	-.220
I understand celebrities endorsing food products and drugs (medicines) keep the consumers' well being in mind.	.033	.095	.189	-.047	.618	.029	.071	.142
Persons with strong Personal Ethics comply easily with Professional Ethics.	.096	-.009	.134	-.054	.204	.693	.187	.138
Making tall claims is nothing but telling lies.	.260	.096	.104	.264	-.004	.650	.040	.100
According to me, telling lies in any form is detestable.	.164	.143	-.007	.250	.068	.004	.820	.090
Stealing is not only taking others' money, but is also misleading or exploiting other people with wrong information.	.049	.219	.186	-.198	-.097	.235	.730	.035
Celebrity endorsements will be more effective when advertisement implementation is simple, clean, and free of irrelevant facts.	.155	-.007	.323	-.001	.132	.155	-.007	.707
Professionals whose actions have an impact on the public should strictly be ethical.	.074	.411	-.068	.115	.062	.300	.224	.589

Source: Authors' Research

Table 4 : Naming of the Factors Relating to Celebrity Ethics with Reference to Celebrity Endorsements in Advertising		
Naming the underlying factors (Latent Variable) Grouped under Celebrity Ethics	Statements	Factor Loading
Consumer Perceived Personal Life Ethics	If I am a publicly recognized person, I must be careful in my actions as it may negatively influence people.	.725
	Perception of ethics differs from person to person.	.714
	I show honesty and integrity with everyone I deal in public.	.695
	One's personal ethics (values) determine his way of behaving with others.	.692
	I don't like exploiting the inadequacies of other people.	.606
Consumer Perceived Professional Ethics	Commitment, Hard work, Sincerity, Loyalty, and Integrity are some of the best words to describe professional ethics.	.747
	It is possible for a business to be both ethical and profitable.	.744
	Bribing means favoring some one for want of personal benefit at the cost of others.	.544
	People who leverage the professional publicity should cautiously exercise faithfulness to the public.	.531
	I feel exaggerated versions of Ads by celebrities are entertaining, provided they are within the limits of decency and generally fall within the acceptable level.	.487
Consumer Perceived Celebrity Endorsement Ethics	I feel products endorsed by a person of high ethics will have more credibility.	.741
	I am delighted and moved to buy products endorsed by celebrities who are honest even off screen.	.704
	I think the celebrity who admits the harmful consequences of a brand endorsed by him will be perceived to be more reliable for endorsing brands.	.502
	I think celebrities confirming to advertising ethics add value to brands.	.492
	I will appreciate and buy products endorsed by celebrities whose endorsements are not exploiting the inadequate knowledge of the consumers about the product.	.478
Consumer Perceived Celebrity Honesty	Celebrities who are not misleading with information will be perceived as honest.	.753
	I think the believability of a celebrity might decline if the celebrity endorsing a brand makes tall claims.	.740
Advertising Ethics	Advertising helps to shape the society's views of the world and itself.	.823
	Advertising shows an accurate view of reality.	.732
	I understand celebrities endorsing food products and drugs (medicines) keep the consumers' well being in mind.	.618
Celebrity Integrity	Persons with strong Personal Ethics comply easily with Professional Ethics.	.693
	Making tall claims is nothing but telling lies.	.650
Ethical Perspective of Stealing & Lying	According to me, telling lies in any form is detestable.	.820
	Stealing is not only taking others' money, but also misleading or exploiting other people with wrong information.	.730
Endorsement Implementation	Celebrity endorsements will be more effective when advertisement implementation is simple, clean, and free of irrelevant facts.	.707
	Professionals whose actions have an impact on the public should strictly be ethical.	.589

Source : Authors' Research

variance, Factor 6 extracted 52.293% of the variance, Factor 7 extracted 58.689% of the variance, and Factor 8 extracted 64.310 % of the variance.

All 8 factors were named on the basis of the variables included in each case. From the factor loading of the attitude statements toward celebrity ethics, as depicted in Table 3, it is clear that the attitude statements are grouped. The Table 3 shows the rotated component matrix for the attitude statements, and the Table 4 shows the factors and the related variable statements grouped under each latent variable - that is a 'Factor'. The first three factors are Personal Life Ethics, Professional Ethics, and Endorsement Ethics . The other factors are Advertising Ethics, Celebrity Honesty,

Table 5 : Grand Mean Score of Perceived Celebrity Ethics and Ranking Based on the Grand Mean Score					
Celebrity	Personal life ethics mean score	Professional life ethics mean score	Endorsement ethics	Grand mean score	Ranking on the basis of the grand mean score of celebrity ethics
Shahrukh Khan	3.6100	3.5240	3.3500	3.4946	7
Aamir khan	3.6000	3.6960	3.3720	3.5560	5
Amitabh Bachchan	3.7580	3.9020	3.8020	3.8206	2
Abhishek Bachchan	3.2860	3.3740	3.4200	3.3600	18
Aishwarya Rai Bachchan	3.3560	3.5680	3.3340	3.4193	14
Kareena Kapoor	2.8617	3.3260	3.0360	3.0745	24
Katrina Kaif	3.5160	3.3380	3.3460	3.4000	17
Priyanka Chopra	3.3080	3.4920	3.4560	3.4560	10
M S Dhoni	3.3860	3.5240	3.4040	3.4380	11
Sachin Tendulkar	3.8140	3.9180	3.7160	3.8160	3
Abhinav Bindra	3.3580	3.5600	3.3340	3.4173	12
Hrithik Roshan	3.7900	3.7260	3.7960	3.7706	4
John Abraham	3.5480	3.4660	3.4580	3.4908	8
Ranbir Kapoor	3.3080	3.4740	3.1840	3.3220	19
Sania Mirza	2.8900	3.2060	2.7720	2.9560	25
Deepika Padukone	3.5080	3.4240	3.3507	3.4275	13
Akshay Kumar	3.4020	3.2860	3.1020	3.2633	21
R.Madhavan	3.5320	3.5480	3.3700	3.4833	9
Shahid Kapoor	3.4980	3.4660	3.2760	3.4133	15
A R Rahman	3.9220	3.8360	3.8580	3.8720	1
Preity Zinta	3.2900	3.2320	3.1960	3.2393	22
Viswanathan Anand	3.4740	3.6740	3.3740	3.5073	6
Narain Karthikeyan	3.2520	3.3260	3.1920	3.2233	23
Virendra Sehwag	3.5840	3.3900	3.2520	3.4086	16
Hema Malini	3.4300	3.4020	3.1140	3.3153	20

Source : Compiled by the Authors

Celebrity Integrity, Ethical Perspective on Stealing and Lying, and Celebrity Endorsement Implementation. All the 8 factors could be grouped and labeled as “Celebrity Ethics”.

↳ **Grand Mean Score of Perceived Celebrity Ethics and Ranking Based on Grand Mean Score:** The Table 5 shows the grand mean score calculated from the respondents' perceived Personal Ethics mean score, Professional Ethics mean score, and Endorsement Ethics mean score. The findings reveal an interesting fact that A. R. Rahman topped the list with the highest mean score - the grand mean score of 3.9720 in case of Celebrity Ethics, followed by Amitabh Bachchan, who was ranked second with the highest grand mean score of 3.8206, and Sachin Tendulkar secured the 3rd position, with the highest grand mean score of 3.8160.

Discussion and Implications

The findings from the mean score analysis of the respondents' attitude toward celebrity endorsements (as shown in the Table 5) suggests that celebrity endorsements contribute to the development of brand personality and help in increasing consumers' liking towards a brand. While celebrity endorsements undoubtedly have the above stated benefits, they need to be examined in the context of ethical perspective. The factor analysis results show the latent variable or the underlying factors related to celebrity ethics. The attitude statements relating to celebrity ethics include Personal Ethics, Professional Ethics, Endorsement Ethics, Advertising Ethics, Celebrity Honesty, Celebrity

Integrity, Ethical Perspective on Stealing and Lying, and Celebrity Endorsement Implementation. Respondents' agreement with the statements relating to Personal Ethics, Professional Ethics, Advertising Ethics, Celebrity Honesty, Celebrity Integrity, and Celebrity Endorsement Implementation indicate that they expected the endorsing celebrity to possess such ethical values. This is confirmed from the Table 5 listing the grand mean score of celebrity ethics. Undoubtedly, A. R. Rahman, Amitabh Bachchan, and Sachin Tendulkar do not have any such negative publicity in their private (personal) and professional life, and thus, they were perceived to be having personal, professional, and endorsement ethics. These celebrities with such a score in consumer perceived celebrity ethics could be roped in for endorsing brands to enhance the brand's image. Essentially, it is imperative to find the celebrity ethical score through research before selecting a celebrity for brand endorsements. Owing to the "ideal self" or "role model" image created by these celebrities with the brands, these celebrities and their endorsements have much impact on society. Moreover, such celebrities could be more appropriate to endorse social cause advertisements.

Conclusion

As revealed by the study, celebrity endorsements in advertising contribute to the brand endorsed. Ethics within the domain of management - advertising and celebrity endorsement - are relevant and significant as the present study unearthed the "celebrity ethics". Moreover, the ranking of a celebrity on the basis of a celebrity's personal, professional, and endorsement ethics suggests the use of celebrities with high ethical values to strengthen the brands endorsed. A careful examination of celebrities in the context of ethics is meaningful and useful in selecting the celebrity for endorsing brands. Celebrities with high score in ethics could well be considered for endorsing social cause advertisements as these celebrities have the power to transform the society towards a better one.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The main objective of the research was to understand if there existed an ethical perspective of celebrity endorsements in the respondents' mind. The factor analysis deployed in the study indicated that there is a categorization of celebrity ethics within the attitude or mental framework of celebrity endorsements for the respondents. However, the present paper limits itself only to the ethical perspective of celebrity endorsers. Hence, a hypothetical research correlating celebrity ethics and the impact of the same on a specific brand is essential to support the model. An ethical perspective is subjective to the cultural context, and it offers scope for celebrity ethics' study to be conducted in different cultural settings. An in-depth study of celebrity ethics using confirmatory factor analysis could uncover more insights of celebrity ethics. Further, it necessitates a study to check specifically if there is any negative effect or damage caused to the brand by endorsing the celebrity's unethical moves in personal and professional life as well as endorsement practice.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study relating to ethics is more relevant today as recently, some of the cricketing celebrities were reported to be involved in IPL spot fixing. The study shows that the respondents are in high agreement with celebrity endorsements and its role in developing a liking – positive image – brand personality for the brand. Furthermore, we affirm the views of earlier research conducted in the same area using celebrity endorsements for building brand personality. However, the significant contribution of this study is about the ethical perspective of celebrity endorsements. Building a brand with a celebrity who is perceived to be potentially weak in ethics may damage the brand image or brand personality and eventually, the consumers may dislike the brand. Further, just as there are specialized agencies which rank companies on the basis of ethics and although celebrity endorsement agencies exist, there is a business prospect for the specialized research agencies to come out with celebrities' assessment, including the ethical side of the celebrities.

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