

CHAPTER - II

Statement of the Problem

It is postulated that celebrities used as spokespersons in advertising copies have considerable effect on consumers to persuade them to buy a product or a service. This study compares the relative impact of celebrity Advertising messages and non-celebrity advertising messages on consumers' attitudes and beliefs. The aim of this study is to highlight the differential influence of celebrity and non-celebrity models in the evaluative stage of consumers' purchase decision process.

The study endeavours to examine the difference between the effectiveness of the unknown models and celebrity models in advertising in terms of formation and change of consumer's attitude towards the advertised brand of a particular product. It also investigates the relative effectiveness of two different types of role models on consumers attitudes towards a particular brand based on the Tri-component attitude models that has generated considerable research into formation and change in attitudes. Yet there are dark areas in research pertaining to attitudes and beliefs particularly celebrity advertisements which are used on a very wide scale in almost every country in the world since 1920s. India is one prime example of the use of celebrity endorsers of a large variety of products which constitute almost 35% of ad copies recently produced in the advertising industry, apart from the fact that there are international well known celebrities who promote products in

the local market as well, such as the soft drink Pepsi Cola endorsed by the American pop singer Micheal Jackson, AIDS awareness by the Chinese film star Jaki Chan, Coca Cola by Tina Turner the American Pop singer and many more for different types of products. Thus these considerations led this research work to study precisely how consumers formulate their attitudes towards advertisements which, as a result, will lead to the formation of the same type of attitudes towards the advertised brand, and to what extent a change in attitudes will occur as a result of exposure to different ad messages delivered by celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Attitudes are an expression of inner feelings that reflect whether a person is favourably or unfavourably predisposed to some "object". As an outcome to some psychological processes, attitudes are not directly observable, but must be inferred from what people say or from their behaviour. Consumer researchers therefore tend to assess attitudes by asking questions or making inferences from behaviour. According to one popular definition, an attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object.² Attitude towards the advertisement (A ad) has been defined as "Predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner to a particular exposure situation."³ A ad may contain both effective reaction, e.g.

ad created feelings of happiness, and evaluation e.g. of an ad credibility or informativeness.⁴

The attitude construct is one of the most important ideas in advertising management. The basic argument is that consumer's purchases are governed by their attitudes toward product alternatives (beliefs) and that advertisers can do something to affect those attitudes. Attitudes can be measured directly by asking respondents to indicate whether he or she likes or dislikes a brand or by attempting to direct assessment of the degree of like or dislike on a positive - negative scale. The indirect approaches rely on deriving a measure from other kinds of consumer response. e.g. a consumer could be asked to judge a brand on the basis of several attributes on characteristics according to whether it was positive or negative on each attribute, and the mean of her or his scores taken as the attitude measure.

The simplest way to measure overall attitude toward an object (brand, advertisement, store, product class etc) is to ask a respondent whether he or she likes or dislikes it. There is no explicit attribute criteria given on which the evaluation is made. Respondents are simply asked to answer "yes" or "no" and the responses are used to determine the brand attitude. On the other hand if the concern is to attempt to capture the degree of attitude, the question can be put in the form of a scale, i.e. a respondent could be asked to express how much she or he liked a brand on a scale

ranging from "very much" (1) to "very little" (5) Attitudes thus can be used to provide the basis for selling objectives and evaluating performance. Example "effectiveness of an advertising campaign " which involves determining the target audience.

Considering the range of attitudes that might be held for a brand that has been on the market for a short period of time. Figure 2.1 shows seven attitude segments that might be identified for the brand, ranging from Segment 1, holding strong negative attitudes, through segment 4, holding neither positive nor negative attitudes, to segment 7 holding strong position attitudes.⁵

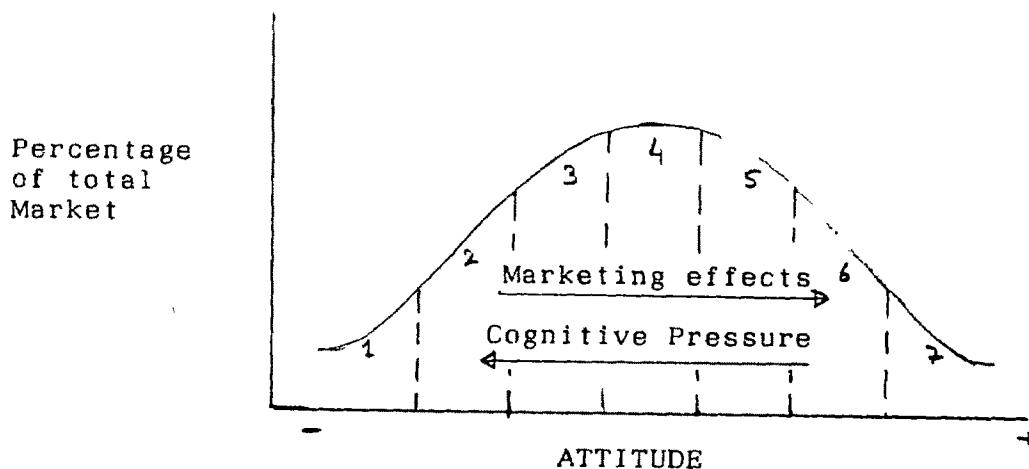


Figure 2.1 : Attitude Segments for a Hypothetical Brand

The tails of the distribution represent attitude extremes. The majority fall in the middle segments, holding slight tendencies in either direction or no predisposition

one way or another with respect to the brand. These segments represent alternative targets for an advertising campaign. Segment 7 might represent a small group of relatively heavy users who have become satisfied with the brand and are strongly loyal to it, attitude in this case could be a measure of brand loyalty. Segment 4 on the other hand, could hold no attitude for our brand for at least two reasons. First, it represents people who do not know that this particular brand exists. Second, some people in this segment could be aware of the brand but be so uninvolved in purchasing with respect to the product class that no meaningful direction of predisposition exists.

EARLIER STUDIES

The most thoroughly studied source quality is credibility. Research conducted by social psychologists over the past 30 years demonstrated that a persuasive source perceived as highly credible is more persuasive than a low credibility sender (Havland and Weiss, 1951; McGuire 1969, Hass 1981). The source that companies use to present their advertising messages typically attempt to project a credible image in terms of competence, trustworthiness, or dynamism. Celebrity endorsers are considered to be highly dynamic with attractive and engaging personal qualities.

Audience may also trust the advice provided by some famous persons, and in certain cases celebrities may even be perceived as competent to discuss the product.

Charles Atkin and Martin Block (1983) examined the impact of celebrity endorsers in their experiment with special reference to alcohol advertising and young audience. The conclusion states that the use of famous persons to endorse alcohol products is highly effective with teenagers, while the impact on older persons was limited. For all age groups the celebrity figure is perceived as more competent and trustworthy. Ad featuring a celebrity are rated more positively than the almost identical versions with non-celebrity, particularly for the adjectives strong, interesting, effective and important.

According to Friedman, Termini and Washington (1977) a celebrity is a person widely known to the public for accomplishments in domains unrelated to the product class. They cite a study showing that celebrities are featured in 15 percent of prime-time T.V. commercials. A later survey reported that this proportion was up to 20 percent (Advertising Age, 1978). The most widely used celebrity endorsers are sport figures, actors, and other types of entertainers.

Karmen (1975) stresses in his study on the trustworthiness factor relating it to lack of interest of the celebrity and the attribution that major stars do not work for the endorsement fee, but one motivated by genuine affection for the product.

Friedman, Termini and Washington in their experiment for a fictitious brand of wine featured an endorsement attributed to either a celebrity (actor Al Pacino) a professional expert, the company president, a typical consumer, or no source. College students read the ad and gave ratings on 0 to 10 scales of believability, probable taste, and intent to purchase. Across these three measures, the celebrity condition produced the highest source.

Karmen and Kragh (1975) reported that an oil company's advertising representing popular singer Johnny Cash led to greater awareness of the ads and positive change in the company's image. Friedman and Friedman (1979) propose that the celebrity would be more effective for product with high psychological or social risk, involving such elements as good taste, self-image and opinion of others.

Despite the frequent use of famous endorsers, there is little published evidence regarding effectiveness. Therefore the present study attempts to contribute to the existing base of celebrity advertising and illustrate the process of the impact on a purchase decision stages and consumer information processing basing the assumption on the Tri-component model of Fishbein theory on attitude formation and change.

1. Fishbein, Martin and Icek Ajzen (1975), Beliefs, Attitude Intention and Behaviour : An Introduction to Theory and Research Reading.
MA : Addison - Wesley.
2. Ibid p. 6
3. Machenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986, p. 130)
4. Baker & Lutz 1986.
5. Aakar. D & John G.. Meyers "Advertising Management"
(Prentice Hall of India Private Limited New Delhi 1986)
p. 164