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# CELEBRITY ADVERTISEMENT FOR INDIAN RURAL BUYERS: A MYTH FOR SUCCESS

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#### **Abstract**

This study analyses the effect of the different dimensions of celebrity endorsement that is trustworthiness, effectiveness, attractiveness and, respect on the buying intentions of the Indian rural buyers for purchasing the handwash products. Several studies elaborate the effect on consumer's buying intention for various FMCG products. However, there is a paucity of the examining the effect of celebrity on the buying intention of rural buyers especially for a growing Indian rural market. Therefore, study's aim was to examine the role and influence of a celebrity endorsement on the rural buyers. After concluding from various theories of celebrity endorsement and conducting experimental research with 560 rural respondents and conductive multiple regression analysis, the result exhibits that only three dimension of celebrity that is trustworthiness, effectiveness and attractiveness influenced the buying intention while respect was found insignificant in model. Hence, the study concludes that celebrity as a whole has positive impact on the buying intention of rural buyer.

Keywords: Buying intention, Celebrity endorsement, Celebrity advertisement, Handwash, Purchase Pattern, Rural

Buyers, Indian market.

JEL Codes: M01, M03, I0, I01.

#### Introduction

Over the last 150 years, advertising has developed from classical to modern in different phases. The critical goal advertisement and its acceptance is influence buying pattern of consumer goods (Ohanian, 1991). Marketers will now use the best technique to manipulate consumers by showing their goods through celebrities, which significantly affected the consumer's buying behaviour, so it has become the most appealing advertisement tool. A celebrity endorsement can give the brand a glamorous touch and now it's a business of multi million dollars.

The current market trend indicates that decision making at consumer end need special focus by marketing experts. Hence, it is becoming necessary for marketers to use various celebrities to link with their products, creating a specific brand image. The use of celebrities makes them iconic for their brand or product, resulting in high cost for the

company. Now, celebrity endorsement is used today as an effective strategic instrument to increase profit. But based on market research, it also reveals that this can be risky, as there is no guarantee that a celebrity can increase revenue production. The focus of companies diverted to rural market in the recent scenario of significant shift in the buying outlook of rural folks. Regarding the rural India, its annual real rural growth per household grew by 3.6% by 2025 compared to the past 20 years, which is 2.8% (McKinsey, 2007). With the positive growth of market, the other facet of rural India is the socio-cultural ties which binds the individuals in a very tight bond and affect their behaviour adversely. Therefore, the rural consumer needs some push and support for their buying, and celebrity endorsement becomes one of the pushes for hand wash buying.

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Concerning India, researchers focused on examining celebrity endorsement's (rural and urban areas) effect on the purchase behaviour of rural consumers. The celebrity endorsement is not a single term which works on the buyer. Celebrity has the various dimensions associated with them which directly and sometimes indirectly have positive or negative impacts on the buying intentions. These dimensions trustworthiness, effectiveness, attractiveness and the respect of celebrity in the society. However, the work on these dimensions is not a new but concerning the rural consumer of India is totally a new study that how the celebrity influences the buying intention in this time of technology for handwash. A very less empirical study was done till now. Hence, it is necessary to fill this void concerning the growing rural market of India. Therefore, the below research questions are address in this research:

- 1. Is celebrity endorsement influencing Indian consumers' purchase pattern?
- 2. Which dimension have the most significant influence on India's rural buyer's purchase patterns?

# Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

For the apparent research gaps of the study, an extant of the previous research needed. The research question points out some major item which analysed through the literature review. Zoubi & Bataineh, (2011) argued in favour of the use of celebrities in promotion of products due to their extreme attractiveness. It can assist customers in recalling the brand. According to Tingchi Liu et al., (2007) an endorser with significant source factors of credibility can significantly influence the consumer's purchase intentions. However, Hsu & McDonald, (2002) asserted that, while consumers may harbour favourable attitudes toward celebrities, these attitudes sometimes do not transcribe into buying behaviour.

Malik & Guptha, (2014) reveals that people from rural and urban areas are

interested in celebrity endorsement and brand identity and acknowledgement. It has also found that advertisements related with celebrity endorsement is more easily entice women than male respondents. In terms of opinions, both rural and urban people hold the same views on celebrity endorsements. However, effectiveness degree is higher in the urban individuals and the product or service must be the focal point of attention, not the famous person as stated by McCormick, (2016). Marketers have recently seen and accepted celebrity endorsement. It has been empirically proven; celebrity impacts the message that the firm conveys to its end-users (Eyitayo, 2017). The above-cited literature shows that some dimensions have not impacted consumer buying behaviour in urban and rural areas according to companies' expectations. The dimensions drawn are Trustworthiness, Attractiveness, Effectiveness and Respect.

Endorsers must be trustworthy, honest, credible. and dependable to preserve favourable connections with current and prospective consumers, "The degree to which an endorser is presumed to be reliable, sincere, truthful", and says the phrase "trustworthiness" (Shimp, 2010). Assume that these qualities are feasible and present in the celebrity and companies need to advertise the product through celebrity. In this situation, the organisation appears to invite the celebrity who have all the qualities (Shimp, 2010). While the endorser's integrity is essential, trustworthiness is also essential from the customer's perspective. It is the invisible trait that arises from trust (Moynihan, 2004). Businesses may benefit from the high stature, renown, optimistic public perception, and trustworthiness of a celebrity who endorse the product or brand. These features assist advertisers in selecting person as endorser, though they are not the only factor to consider when choosing a person as endorser (Ohanian, 1991). However, research indicate that trustworthiness has a significant and direct influence on consumer purchasing. However, the impact on rural buyers is not confirmed.



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Therefore, hypothesis is framed as: *Hypothesis(H1) 01*: Trustworthiness have a key relationship and significant effect on purchase patterns of Indian rural buyers.

Is Distinguishing the effectiveness of endorsements a crucial issue in academia and practice? Several studies conclude determine whether and under what conditions celebrities are the right product endorsers. However, some of them have concluded that celebrity endorsement is practical. Notwithstanding this, new research on the profitability and utility of celebrity endorsement has to release. According to Zoubi & Bataineh, (2011) and Ranjbarian et al., (2010) perceptions toward celebrity endorsers intentionally or unintentionally influence the public thought toward a brand. According to the previous literatures, most celebrity-endorsed advertisements product information and are irrelevant to the target audience. The study's findings are substantiated by Zoubi & Bataineh, (2011). They discovered that celebrities have no more influence on customer buying decisions than Previous non-celebrities. research discovered that the effectiveness of endorsement is responsible for fluctuating pattern of buying for a particular type of goods. Though its Match-up Hypothesis of Forkan, (1980) tries to avoid some of the source effectiveness model's pitfalls, it suggests that any celebrity who is alluring, plausible, and affable could sell any product. It continues to disregard the cultural significance of celebrity endorsers in endorsements (Erdogan, 1999). While endorsement is a tool to influence and persuade end users' purchasing behaviour/attitude. However, researches indicates that celebrity advertisement have a significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour. For rural India, where sociocultural norms associate with buying, i.e., cultural significance, it is necessary to examine. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

*Hypothesis*(*H2*) *02*: The effectiveness of the celebrity affects the purchase patterns of rural buyer.

Consumers strive to increase their and charm: attractiveness thev unquestionably responding to celebrities who a resemblance to them through (Erdogan, 1999). endorsement attractiveness is the degree to which an individual's interest is piqued. Endorser's attractiveness is critical and sacrosanct in the endorsement selection process (Rifon et al., 2016). Debevec & Kernan, (1984) founds that the physically beautiful endorsers have a more significant impact on beliefs than their physically frumpy counterparts in generating purchase intention. Numerous researchers demonstrated that an appearance is an integral part of the equation for his or her attractiveness (Winham & Hampl, 2008). In contrast, Bower & Landreth, (2001) reveals that attractive endorser was not much effective for promotional activities. Attractiveness has numerous levels that are difficult to quantify. While the model of source attractiveness is determined by the celebrity's affection. resemblance. awareness. and Winham & Hampl, (2008) demonstrate that the beauty is a critical factor in determining the effectuality of celebrities. Hence. attractiveness is not limited to physical attractiveness. It encapsulates the celebrity's entire lifestyle and various facets of his personality (Ahmed et al., 2012). Deshpande & Stayman, (1994) suggests, socio-cultural norms also decide a celebrity's attractiveness. Thus, it is necessary to examine the celebrity's attractiveness in improving preconceptions toward promotions concerning the rural population. Therefore, it hypothesised that:

*Hypothesis*(*H3*) *03*: Attractiveness has a significant impact size on purchase patterns due to a key relationship of Indian rural buyers.

Respect is the quality of being lauded or even venerated for the accolades of the endorser. Celebrities lauded for their screen presence, athleticism, endearing personalities, and positions on significant social issues. According to Charbonneau & Garland, (2005), using a plausible and admired person as the

"expression" (message carrier) is more efficient than using a standard model as an endorser. While unsolicited simulations can embody specific favourable social backgrounds (gender, age, and status), provide celebrities can more precise representations of these characteristics (Rifon et al., 2016). Hence, in the case of rural India, the respect is foremost important dimension because the society of India is still primitive concerning their social reflexes. Respect becomes one of the dimensions, which is the need for time to examine deeply, so this dimension positively results enhancing maximisation by sale using celebrity endorsement. Therefore, hypothesis is:

*Hypothesis*(*H4*) *04*: Respect of celebrity has a simultaneous relationship and a positive effect on purchase patterns of Indian rural buyers.

# Methodology

For this study, rural India is divided into four geographical region and sample is taken

from each region such as local hats and weekly bazaars. For the study, 140 respondents are selected from each region, reaching the sample size of 560. The empirical sample for this study includes rural buyers of various brands of hand hygiene products. The respondent to the questionnaire was randomly selected from the local haats. The statistical population of the study is made up of rural buyers over 21 years of age.

A pilot survey with 50 rural buyers was carried out to verify the validity of the questionnaire. After the validity check, the five items were added to the questionnaire. The measurement scale for celebrity endorsement was adopted from Ohanian (1991) and purchase patterns from (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016). A Likert scale of five point was used. The target audience includes rural buyers in India. The sampling frame includes the geographic units north, south, east and west India. The Cronbach Alpha is sufficiently high. (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha	Standardized Items	N of Items		
.826	.791	24		

\*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

The socio-economic distribution in Table 2 shows that most of the respondents were men (69.5%), their main activity was farming (34.6%) and the monthly income was in most of cases (23.4%) was Rs 5001-7000,

but a notable proportion also had a monthly income of between 9001 and 11000. The majority (76.3%) used the internet and 53.6% used the social media platform.



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Table 2. Demographic profile of respondent

	Category	No. (N=560)	%	
Gender	Man	389	69.5	
Gender	Woman	171	30.5	
	Daily wagers	131	23.4	
Occupation	Farmer	194	34.6	
Occupation	MNREGA	132	23.7	
	Skilled labour	103	18.2	
	<= 5000	99	17.6	
	5001 - 7000	131	23.4	
Monthly	7001 - 9000	76	13.5	
Income	9001 - 11000	102	18.2	
	11001 - 13000	92	16.4	
	> 13000	51	10.9	
Internet Use	No	133	23.7	
internet Ose	Yes	427	76.3	
Available on	No	260	46.4	
social media	Yes	300	53.6	

<sup>\*</sup>Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

#### Result

Stepwise multiple regression was use to evaluate whether the different dimensions of celebrity endorsement predict the purchase of the rural buyer. It is observed in Table 3 that different dimension of celebrity endorsement (trust, effect, attractiveness, and respect) that appeared as significant predictors of purchase patterns of rural buyers (criterion variables), out of four only three that is effect, attractiveness and trust were upheld as significant predictors that in combination

contributed significantly to buying intention (F (3, 380) = 41.274, p<.01 (Table 4) of rural buyers. Tolerance values are a measure of the correlation between the predictors variables and can carry a value between and 1. The tolerance value refer to Table 5 (effectiveness= .599, attractiveness=.884, trust=.645) suggest low level of multicollinearity is present. Multiple correlation is found to be R=.49 for effect, attract and trust which accounted for 24.6 % variance on purchase intention. (Table 3).

**Table 3. Model Summary** 

Model Summary <sup>d</sup>										
Model	R	$\mathbb{R}^2$	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of	Change Statistics					
				the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup> F Change		df1	df2	Sig.	
					Change					
1	.421a	.177	.175	.04994	.177	82.137	1	545	.000	
2	.469 <sup>b</sup>	.220	.216	.04866	.043	21.219	1	553	.000	
3	.496°	.246	.240	.04793	.025	12.787	1	558	.000	

a.(Constant), Effectiveness

b.(Constant), Effectiveness, Attractiveness.

c.(Constant), Effectiveness, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness

<sup>\*</sup>Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

Table 4. Anova table

ANOVAa										
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.					
Regression	.205		.205	82.137	.000b					
Residual	.953	59	.002							
Total	.157	60								
Regression	.255		.128	53.852	.000°					
Residual	.902	58	.002							
Total	1.157	60								
Regression	.284		.095	41.274	.000d					
Residual	.873	57	.002							
Total	1.157	60								

a.Dependent Variable: Purchase Patterns b.Predictors: (Constant), Effectiveness

c.Predictors: (Constant), Effectiveness, Attractiveness

d.Predictors: (Constant), Effectiveness, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness

\*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

Table 5. Coeffecients

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>												
Model	Model Unstandardi zed Coefficients		Standar dized Coeffic ients	t	sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		Std.	β			Lower	Upper	Zero-	Parti	Part	Toler	ME
(C	455	Err.		2 120	002	Bound	Bound	order	al		ance	VIF
(Constant)	.455	.146		3.129	.002	.169	742					
Effectiveness	.732	.081	.421	9.063	.000	.573	.891	.421	.421	.421	1.000	1.000
(Constant)	.212	.203		-1.047	.296	611	.186					
Effectiveness	.601	.084	.345	7.180	.000	.436	.766	.421	.345	.325	.884	1.669
Attractiveness	.588	.128	.222	4.606	.000	.337	.839	.339	.230	.208	.884	1.131
(Constant)	.393	.206		-1.906	.057	798	.012					
Effectiveness	.398	.100	.228	.968	.000	.201	.594	.421	.199	.177	.599	1.669
Attractiveness	.578	.126	.218	4.597	.000	.331	.825	.339	.230	.205	.884	1.131
Trustworthiness	.331	.092	.198	3.576	.000	.149	.513	.382	.180	.159	.645	1.551

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Patterns

\*Source: Compile by Author using SPSS.

Hypothesis 1 is accepted as it increases the variance by 2.5% making the prediction to improve further in significant manner ( $r^2$  change=.025, F (1,380) =12.787; p <.01) (Table No.3) and exert a significant influence ( $\beta$  = .198; p<.01) (Table 5) on purchase patterns (r=.49) by trustworthiness of celebrity.

As apparent from standarised  $\beta$ , (Table 5) bearing t value that is significant at .01 level, effectiveness has predictive power ( $\beta$  =.22; p < .01) for buying intention and contribute about 17.7% in purchase behaviour ( $r^2$  change = .177, F (1,382) = 82.1377 p<.01) (Table 03), shows that effectiveness of celebrity helps in changing the purchase patterns of rural buyers

(r=.42) (Table 03), hence the hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Hypothesis 3 is accepted as attractiveness emerges as another significant predictor ( $\beta$  = .21; p<.01) (Table No.3) for purchase patterns which contribute about 4% ( $r^2$  change=.043,F (1,381)=21.219; p<.01) of variance in buying intention, means attractiveness of celebrity help in increase the buying intention of rural buyer (r=.469) (Table 3).

# **Discussion**

Previous studies on celebrity endorsement have found that celebrities generate more positive perceptions of promotions and higher purchase intentions



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than non-celebrity endorsers (Ohanian, 1991). believe researchers that advertisement with a celebrity has a higher level of attractiveness, recognition, recognition accuracy and purchase than an advertisement without a celebrity (Dean & Biswas, 2001). In contrast, various studies have used several dimensions of a celebrity endorser to determine their impact. Therefore, in order to build trust, companies must feel their consumers' confidence in the product (Broadbridge & Morgan, 2001). With regard to Hypothesis 01, the results of the study on the Celebrity trustworthiness have a significant influence on the purchase patterns of consumers. The results agree with those of previous researchers such as (Chan et al., 2013). It should be noted that the results are diametrically opposed to those of Ohanian who found (1991),that celebrity trustworthiness does not significantly affect purchase intent. Research of Abedniya & Zaeim, (2011) shows that reliability is not a factor determining the consumer's intention to try a brand. According to the results of this study, trustworthiness is a dimension that influences the buying intention of hand hygiene products (FMCG sector), which is in line with the latest studies by Wang & Close Scheinbaum, (2017).

Based on the results of the study, hypothesis H2 is accepted. The efficiency affects the purchasing behaviour more as Mukherjee, (2009) examined the influence of celebrities on brand perception, the consumer constructs product's image based on its ambassador. The study accelerates Schlecht, (2003) findings that the connection to self-celebrity (effectiveness) plays a crucial role in purchasing. Efficiency correlates purchasing of hand hygiene products and linearly with purchase behaviour. It influences purchase patterns in relation to other dimensions.

Confirms research hypothesis H3 through the results of the study according to which the attractiveness has a positive influence on purchase patterns. Results of previous studies on advertising and political branding shows that celebrity attractiveness

enables positive attitudes. This stimulates participatory behaviour in intensified purchase patterns. The study is in good agreement with the research of Roshan et al., (2017), that the regular presence of person in the limelight (social media, print or electronic) promotes consistency. The results of this study are similar to those of Khalid & Yasmeen, (2019) and Onu et al., (2019) that they all discovered that celebrity attractiveness has a significant impact on buying behaviour. Attractiveness shapes the purchase behaviour of consumers. Attractiveness influences buying intention in relation to other dimensions and shapes the purchase behaviour of consumer. As a result, the study concludes that attractive celebrities used by organizations to promote their products influence the purchase pattern of rural buyers and encourage referral purchases. McCormick, (2016)recommends advertisers and marketers use familiar faces to promote their offers, as they are famous and well-known personalities. The study can then conclude that a celebrity they know, and if that particular celebrity endorses a product, will have a significant impact on rural buyers' purchase behaviour.

#### **Conclusion**

As a result, the study concludes that attractive persons used by enterprises to promote their products which influence the purchase intention of rural buyers and encourage referral purchases. McCormick, (2016) recommends that advertisers and marketers use familiar faces to promote their offers, as they are famous and well-known personalities. The study can then conclude that a celebrity they know, and if that particular celebrity endorses a product, will have a significant impact on rural buyers' purchase behaviour. The study examines the effect and relationship between celebrity support (using dimensions) and the purchase patterns of Indian consumers in rural areas. Previous studies have focused on celebrity support as an overarching concept of purchase intent, with an initial focus on urban consumers around the world. They use some elements of celebrity models but don't give overall weight to every dimensions. Hence, this study contributes to the literature on dimensions of celebrity support regarding the buying intention of Indian consumers of rural areas and how each dimension is responsible for forming or driving the purchasing model. However, there are very few studies that address Indian rural buyers and the dimensions of celebrity endorsement. Therefore, our study is unique when examining this in the context of Indian rural hand wash consumers.

Our study has certain limitations and suggests future directions for new researchers. First, our study was a cross-sectional study with data collected from only a small part of rural India. Second, our study mainly focused on rural buyers of hand hygiene products from different regions of rural India with a small sample size. We suggest that future researchers conduct a multi-sample longitudinal study to demonstrate the role of celebrity endorsement with other everyday products.

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