IMPLICATIONS OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT BASED BRANDING EFFORTS OF MEDICINES IN INDIA: PREDICAMENT WHETHER PHARMACEUTICAL PRESCRIPTIONS ARE TACIT OR EXPLICIT

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Abstract

A celebrity is used to impart credibility and aspiration values to a brand, but the celebrity needs to match the product. A good brand campaign idea and an intrinsic link between the celebrity and the message are musts for a successful campaign. We have seen the instances where celebrities are use in branding of pharmaceutical products including medicines, diagnostic kits and healthcare supplements. Celebrities are no doubt good at generating attention, recall and positive attitudes towards advertising provided that they are supporting a good idea and there is an explicit fit between them and the brand. On the other hand, they are rendered useless when it comes to the actual efficiency of the core product, creating positive attitudes to brands, purchase intentions and actual sales. Does celebrity endorsement based branding efforts of medicines are fruitful in branding. Based on a survey of 500 doctors, it is found that celebrity based branding plays impart less significant role in on brand recognition and prescription of medicines.

Keywords – Celebrity based branding, Medicine Branding, Brand recognition

I.   INTRODUCTION

India has opened its markets only recently and is witnessing an era of competition that its industry never imagined. Many venerable old organizations are now clutching at expensive straws to survive.

Consequently, one of the most noticeable trends over the last five years has been the plethora of celebrity endorsements. Across product categories, from toiletries to telecom, hi-fi to hotels, ready-mades to razor blades, everyone seems to be roping in a "Brand Ambassador" to sell their products. If we take a look at the set of brand ambassadors who have been contracted so far, they are all either from the world of film or cricket. This is because India produces and consumes vast quantities of both. Celebrities are involved in endorsing activities since late nineteenth century. The advent of celebrity endorsements in advertising in India began when Hindi film and TV stars as well as sportspersons began encroaching on a territory that was, until then, the exclusive domain of models.

Pharmaceutical industry is no exceptions. Shilpa Shetty a well known celebrity promotes Volini a pain relief medicine. Pariyanka Chopra another celebrity promote Cipla, the advertisement is indirect advertisement where the celebrity just aware the masses about the use of asthma inhalers and   on the screen in a side Cipla is mentioned throughout the advertisement. Cipla makes asthma inhalers and by this advertisement they build their brand. Rohit Sharma present ODI cricket team vice captain appears in Nasivion advertisement. It's a medicine that helps in nasal congestion as a decongestant spray. Virat Kholi, present captain of Indian cricket team in all format, appear in advertisement of different variants of vicks i.e. tablet and inhaler.

Here the vary idea is that the appearance of these celebrity may have impact on people but real target chunk is doctors. Actual practice in medical field is that patients must consult the doctor than only take medicines. On the one hand these medicine branding efforts are making the people to fall in the pit of self-medication on the other hand the real target group i.e. doctors might have least effect by them. It is difficult to believe any doctor recommend a medicine to a patient just because a celebrity appeared in the advertisement of it.

II.   DEBATES AGAINST THE BRANDING OF MEDICINES

The use of self-medication is highly prevalent in the community. Self-medication can be defined as obtaining and consuming one (or more) drug(s) without the advice of a physician either for diagnosis, prescription or surveillance of treatment. The major reasons of self-medications are:

- Lack of immediate access to doctors
- High consultancy fee
- Fear of being put through unnecessary tests
- Lack of time
- Increased access to internet
- Increased medicines advertisements with celebrity endorsement
- Increased brand education by pharmaceuticals companies

When we study the reasons of the self-medication we find that the increased brand awareness is making people to do it. After watching a 30 sec advertisement on television they become equivalent to a doctor with several years of study. The effects of self-medications are:

- Incorrect diagnosis
- Delay in medical advice

- Adverse reaction
- Permanent loss or damage
- Allergic issues
- Death too is possible is some cases

So it could be said that the branding of medicine must be avoided and it must be narrowed to target only RMP and doctors only.

III.   DEBATES IN FAVOR OF BRANDING OF THE MEDICINES

Caveat emptor

Under the principle of caveat emptor, the buyer could not recover damages from the seller for defects on the property that rendered the property unfit for ordinary purposes. The only exception was if the seller actively concealed latent defects or otherwise made material misrepresentations amounting to fraud. Thus we can say that customer education in the form of branding by pharmaceutical companies are not only required but also desired. A patient have all right to know about the medicines and these branding efforts are just a contribution to that.

Branding of medicines and Placebo effect:

Placebo effect is also called the placebo response. It is a remarkable phenomenon in which a placebo -- a fake treatment, an inactive substance like sugar, distilled water, or saline solution -- can sometimes improve a patient's condition simply because the person has the expectation that it will be helpful. Expectation plays a potent role in the placebo effect. The more a person believes they are going to benefit from a treatment, the more likely it is that they will experience a benefit.

To separate out this power of positive thinking and some other variables from a drug's true medical benefits, companies seeking governmental approval of a new treatment often use placebo-controlled drug studies. If patients on the new drug fare significantly better than those taking placebo, the study helps support the conclusion that the medicine is effective.

The power of positive thinking is not a new subject. The Talmud, the ancient compendium of rabbinical thought, states that: "Where there is hope, there is life." And hope is positive expectation, by another name. The scientific study of the placebo effect is usually dated to the pioneering paper published in 1955 on "The Powerful Placebo" by the anesthesiologist Henry K. Beecher (1904-1976). Beecher concluded that, across the 26 studies he analyzed, an average of 32% of patients responded to placebo.

With help of the belief of patients medicine can cure more than earlier. Branding of medicine can play pivot role in treatment. If a patient believes that the medicines are brand and it is going to help him surely it will help. Often branded medicines are costlier. "Costlier is better" is another ideology in the mind of consumers makes the barding efforts important in the cases of medicines.

There are intense debates whether branding of product must be done or not, if done in what ways it should be done? The researcher has confined the research area to the use of celebrity in the barding of medicines.

With the help of pervious researches and content analysis of different pharmaceutical companies profile researcher has found following branding tactic used by pharmaceutical companies.

1. Broad strategies: These are mergers, acquisitions and amalgamation etc. These are not so often. These are taken by high level managements and board of directors meeting.

2. Use of celebrities: These are most common practices in healthcare and body building segments.

3. Control on marketing mix: pharmaceutical companies are using intense sales force to increase their reach. They focus on availability and distributions of product. If the product is not available for a longer time in the market all branding efforts will perish and another product may occupy the brand image. This type of branding efforts also involve pricing decision etc.

4. Living in the product category: Johnson and Johnson set the best example of this branding effort. They excel in baby care segment and built their brand image.

5. Name close to generic: Products like Pacimol 650 by Ipca laboratories Pvt. Ltd. have easily captured the market. It was so because they have used the generic formulation of Paracetamol as their product name.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis (Ho): Brand recommendation and recognition does not have significant relation with have significant relation with celebrity endorsement

Alternate Hypothesis (Ha): Brand recommendation and recognition have significant relation with have significant relation with celebrity endorsement

V. METHODOLOGY

Present study will be considering doctors as respondents. Doctors are the population for present research. Sampling size based on confidence interval for statistics is used to decide sampling size.

Standard deviation of Population is unknown so we will use proportion formula.

$n = p (1-p) (Z/E)^2$

$n = 0.050 (1-0.50) (1.96/0.05)^2$

$= 0.50 (0.50) (39.2)^2$

$= 0.50 (0.50) (1536.64)$

$= 384.16$

As researcher cannot take a part of sample, so updating to nearest integer, minimum sample size will be 385. As the sample, location includes different cities nearby Lucknow and researcher has to visit each location five times so the researcher raised the sample size up to 500.

VI.   FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The correlations among the variables are positive. It can be said that the Celebrity Endorsement is going to increase Brand recognition of medicines. But the value of correlation is too small that the impact does not take the worth of making it. It is recommendable that companies should focus on other aspects of brand building in pharmaceutical products. The correlation table between brand recognition and celebrity endorsement are as follows:

Correlations		Brand recognition	Celebrity Endorsement
Brand recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.091[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.043
	N	500	500
Celebrity Endorsement	Pearson Correlation	.091[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	
	N	500	500
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

It can be said that Brand recommendation and recognition does not have significant relation with have significant relation with celebrity endorsement.

2. The vampire effect

The terminology *vampire effect* pertains to the issue of a celebrity overshadowing the brand. If there is no congruency between the celebrity and the brand, then the audience will remember the celebrity and not the brand.

Examples are the campaigns of Dawn French—Cable Association and Leonard Rossiter—Cinzano. Both of these campaigns were aborted due to celebrities getting in the way of effective communication. Another example could be the Castrol commercial featuring Rahul Dravid.

Medicines are not useful unless someone is sick. In such condition the use of celebrity in the advertisement will only increase the cost of advertisement. View will only retain the celebrity and possibly skip the product.

3. Changing images of celebrities:

Celebrity often loses their impact on masses. In recent times Hardik Pandya, a young cricketer, has face same issue. Due to his appearance and indecent comments against women in a TV show he put himself in controversy. Advertisements endorsed by him have been removed from media. Celebrity gets associated with the products. If they lose thei impact on people the product will also suffer.

Another cricketer Yuvraj Singh endorsed in Revital health supplements advertisements. In the coming years he suffered from cancer that may be from unknown cause. But due to this product contained a great lose.

3. Mismatch between the celebrity and the image of the brand:

Celebrities manifest a certain persona for the audience. Persona of the celebrity and the image of the brand must match. Each celebrity portrays a broad range of meanings, involving a specific personality and lifestyle. Most of the cricketer celebrities get their treatments outside India. In such case if they promote any pain relief medicine on TV, people will hardly accept it.

4. Celebrities endorsing one brand and using another (competitor):

Celebrities are often found using other than the endorsed brand. In such circumstances the endorsements may be worthless and may lose the goodwill of the product.

CONCLUSION

The research hypothesis suggests that the brand image of the medicine cannot be built by celebrity endorsement. It takes much more to make a medicine brand. The use of celebrity in

pharmaceuticals field will increase the cost of promotion mix which will not be good in long run. Companies must focus on other accolades of brand building. Even the legal complexities will reduce the scope of applicability of celebrity endorsements as there are medicines that cannot be sold without prescription.

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