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## The Impact of Animated Spokesperson: Implication to the Marketers- An Indian Perspective

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### **Abstract:**

*Purpose-The main purpose of the article is to find out the impact of animated spokesperson on customer orientation. Objective of study-The main objective of study was as follows: a) to find out the impact of animated spokesperson on products and services, b) Impact of animated spokesperson on expertise c) consideration to be kept in mind while choosing animated spokesperson. Data collection-data is collected from 200 respondents which were divided into three categories i.e. children in the age group 8-10 years of age, 21-25 years of age and 25 and above. Data was collected through written questionnaire method and personal interview method. Data analysis-Multivariate and univariate tools are used for analysis. Managerial implication-The study is of great use to the marketers in understanding the impact of animated spokesperson and how to make the best use of animated spokesperson.*

**Key words:** animated spokesperson, customer orientation, expertise

### **1. Introduction**

The use of celebrity to promote a product or service is quite old. Celebrity endorsement is used as an important tool for promoting a particular product or service. In India where celebrities are considered as hero worshippers the strategy of using celebrities is quite effective. One diversification in celebrity endorsement is the use of animated spokesperson to promote a particular product or service. Animated spokesperson is considered as most of the interesting and effective weapon for creating brand awareness about a particular product or service. Previously animated spokesperson were considered as “retarded brothers” but later on things were on a positive note once it was thought that animated spokesperson can actually take you if not further than live action.

The use of animated spokesperson over celebrity endorsement brings about the following benefits.

- 1) It is more effective and attractive.
- 2) It brings about a strong brand association.
- 3) It is acceptable by most of the age groups.

Recently, companies are using different types of animals, human beings and virtual patterns like objects to speak for their products and services in different characters.

Many researchers have proved that using an animated spokesperson over a spokesperson is better because they tend to create a unique brand association and secondly they have a long lasting impact in the minds of the consumers. Using animate spokesperson reduces the distance between companies and brand and develops a strong brand association resulting in purchase decision. Another major advantage of using an animated spokesperson is the reduction of the cost aspect. The use of animated spokesperson is not limited to a particular time period but can be used indefinitely.

### **2. Review of Literature**

Callout and Lee (1994) conducted an analysis to examine the effect of animation and animated spokesperson on television advertising. Findings indicate that animated spokesperson is being used more often for high involvement products.

Walt and Wheeler (2009) also conducted a study to check the attitude of respondents with regard to three parameters drawn from Ohanian scale between celebrity endorsement and created spokesperson. Results of the study show that with regard to first two parameters i.e. trustworthiness and expertise celebrity endorsers and created spokesperson stand on the same level. However, with regard to attractiveness parameter Celebrity endorsers seem to be more attractive than the created spokesperson.

Horsier Sorbet and Seirra.J.Jermy and Torres.M.Ivonne (2008) made use of distinctiveness theory in order to compare the effectiveness between cartoon spokesperson and celebrity endorsements in print ads for attitude towards ad, attitude towards brand

and purchase intention. Results of the study show that in print ads cartoon spokesperson are better than celebrity endorsers with regard to attitude towards ad, attitude towards brand and purchase intention.

Huang et al (2011) conducted a study on animated spokesperson. Advertisement and communication effects and purchase decision. The study was conducted in two stages; the first stage comprised of selecting a representative spokesperson and the second stage comprised of filling a questionnaire consisting of 32 questions.

Mcgoldrick et al (2006) conducted a research on screen characters. The main aim of the research is to measure the degree of appropriateness of on screen characters. The study was conducted by creating a website for online book sellers and included respondents from 183 countries. The results indicate that human characters are more appealing than other characters. They appear to be more likeable, appropriate and trustworthy. However, the studies also revealed the possibilities of mismatch which might take place between expectation and capabilities of human characters.

### 3. Data Collection

Data is collected from 200 respondents divided into different age categories. The respondent's category varied according to age. The data collection was done in two stages. First, some well known animated spokesperson ad were selected on the basis of random sampling method. Then, the respondents were shown some advertisements of these animated spokesperson on the basis of which they were asked to answer some questions on five point likert scales. However, for children personal interview was taken. Children in the age group 8-10 years of age were taken. Effect of animated spokesperson was divided into three parts i.e. effect of animated spokesperson on products, effect of animated spokesperson on expertise and consideration using animated spokesperson. Each of the research variables included questions like do the love for animated spokes characters trigger purchase intention? Do the image of animated spokesperson affect the views of the product or corporate and do the peripheral products the corporate develop trigger purchase? For second research variable effect of animated spokes characters on high involvement products questions like will you use a product? As a corporate owner what kind of animated spokes character you will use were for which animated spokes characters speak for? For the third research variable questions like if you are.....? These variables were tested against some background variables like, age. Before actual study pilot study was done which revealed that most of the question should be close-ended.

### 4. Data Analysis

Data is analyzed using SPSS software. The result of the analysis is as follows:

In order to test the reliability of data Cronbach Alpha score was calculated the variables were divided into three categories i.e. effect of animated spokesperson on products and services, effect of animated spokesperson on expertise and consideration to be kept in mind while choosing an animated spokesperson. The reliability scores were as follows.

Parameters	Cronbach Alpha
Effect of animated spokesperson on products and services	.642
Effect of animated spokesperson on expertise	.430
Consideration to be kept in mind while choosing an animated spokesperson	.447

*Table 1: Showing the Reliability Scores of Various Variables*

Respondents in the age category 8-10

For this age group personal interview as done and it was found that the variable animated spokesperson influences the desire for products and services and effectiveness of the animated spokesperson plays a very important role in influencing purchase decision.

Respondents in the age category 21-25

Descriptive were performed for all the age category and it was found that in case of impact of animated person spokesperson on products and services, consumers seem to be influenced more by the variable animated spokesperson influences the desire for products and services.(mean=8.71 and S.D=4.723)In case of the role of animated spokesperson on expertise the respondents believe that animated spokesperson help in comparison of different competing brands (Mean=4.05 and S.D=.99). For consideration to be kept in mind while selecting the animated spokesperson the variable the effective ness of animated spokesperson occupies maximum importance(Mean=3.6582 and S.D=1.05)

Respondents in the age category 25 and above

Descriptive analysis was done and it was found out that in case of the impact of animated spokesperson on the products and services it was found that the variable animated spokesperson increases brand awareness and brand recall (mean=6.75 and S.D=2.7). In case of role of animated spokesperson on expertise the variable animated spokesperson increases authenticity has the highest mean(mean=4.52 and S.D=.5).For the third category consideration to be kept in mind while choosing an animated spokesperson the variable character chosen should match with the variable (mean=3.55,SD=2.7)

### 5. Managerial Implications And Scope For Future Research

The study is of great use to the marketers in deciding the selection of animated spokesperson. It will also help marketers to decide what type of animated spokesperson to use in order to draw the best of sales over the counter. There is lot of scope for future studies by taking a wider sample and more variables brought under study.

### 6. Limitations

The main limitation of the study is limited sample size and only limited no of respondents chosen for study.

### 7. Conclusion

Therefore, we can say that animated spokesperson has an important impact on the various age groups and their use must be so designed so that it brings about maximum effectiveness across all age groups. The type of animated spokesperson used will differ according to the nature and the type of products and services.

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