

CELEBRITY INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

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Abstract:

Politics is field where candidate or parties compete for power and to create change. And to win and secure power, they must have support from the people/public. Celebrity endorsement helps the party/candidate to gain recognition and support from maximum number of people, so that they can win the election. Celebrity endorsement has certain effects on people. This article 'Celebrity influence in political campaigns' would study about the influence that celebrity endorsements have on the general public. And, also the factor of celebrity endorsement in the United States of America (USA).

Then it ends with the final conclusion of the characteristics of celebrity endorsements on the whole and the scope of the future of this topic and its related topics.

Keywords: Endorsement, Political campaign, Celebrity, Influence, Election

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1. Introduction:

We live in the modern world of technology, where people are connected and influenced by the social media's and the mass media's.

Politics is a field where the criteria for winning and securing seats/posts solely depends on the number of supporters a party/person has among the public and the number of votes the party/person secures too depends on this criteria. And for this purpose to gain higher number of supporters and voters most parties seek celebrity endorsements and influence as they have a better connection and number of followers in the public. This study focuses on the celebrity influence in political campaigns and celebrity endorsement in politics to a certain extent.

The role of celebrities (meaning the people who are famous among the masses and are widely adopted as public figures) in politics and the political campaigning. Celebrities come from different industries. Celebrities could be from the television industry, the film industry, the music industry, the fashion industry and others.

We observe this in India in different states in various political parties where certain celebrities endorse for a particular party/candidate. Even in the recent United States Presidential election, 2016 Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (the current president of the USA) have been endorsed by an army of celebrity supporters.

2. OBJECTIVES:

- To study the celebrity influence/endorsements in political campaigns.
- To study celebrity influence in politics in India and the USA.

3. RESEARCH METHOD:

This research relies on secondary source of information like other articles, books, and journals. And various other studies related to the topic of women entrepreneurship in India. And this research uses common knowledge on the topic of interest.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH:

The research relies on secondary sources like books, articles and journals. This uses common knowledge on the topic of woman entrepreneurship in India and related stuff. This research does not contain primary, freshly collected data's.

CELEBRITY INFLUENCE/ENDORSEMENTS IN POLITICAL CAMPAINGS

Politics is field where winning or losing depends on the number of supporters a candidate or party has. Every person who is involved in politics wants to become a leader or at least wants the party they support to win and secure seats in the elections. Politics is the play/ competition for power and authority, this is common among all candidate, only their goals and plans might change.

Each party would have their own agendas, plans and priorities. To secure maximum votes and win in the elections they would need to increase the number of voters for their party. The common public people are the voters. So how do they attract the public to vote for their party?

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Will spread their propagandas among the public through various meetings, public speeches etc. most commonly we can observe that celebrities often talk and support for a party endorsing the particular party.

Celebrities endorsing a particular party would eventually boost their number of voters. Which will let them win, eventually. Celebrity endorsements have such great value for political parties as the celebrities are persons who have a number of people following them, and taking them as inspiration. These people who follow the certain celebrity would also start following the party which they endorse.

This can be seen from the basis of psychology and sociology, as humans are beings who live in groups and societies. Where one would be most likely to follow what the majority follows. Celebrity endorsements have certain effects on the human psychology, such as that it would make people not aware of the parties right or wrong, but just because the celebrity loved by that

person is endorsing the certain party would influence the person into going for that party, mostly not thinking about the party and its prospects.

Service-dominant (SD) logic “argues that value can only be created with and determined by the user in the ‘consumption’ process and through use or what is referred to as value-in-use” (Lusch & Vargo, 2006 p. 284).

Which implies that value happens or is created when there is an intersection between the provider and the receiver. If we take this into, and apply in our study we can see that the political party is the provider and the public are the receiver. And the celebrities are the intersection. So now as there is an intersection created in the name of celebrities between the provider that is the political party and the receiver which is the public, now according to the above theory/ argument there is value created between the public and the certain political party/candidate.

The factor of celebrity endorsements in politics, can be seen all over the world, globally in almost every country where there are industries like fashion, television, cinema, music, etc. as the people in this industries are the ones who are most likely to reach out to the public through the mass medias and the tele-world.

At the same time many studies reveal that not all people who like a certain celebrity are likely to follow the party the celebrity endorses.

There are people who look the celebrity and politics as separate as white and black. They do not get tangled with the endorsements or influence of the celebrity to a certain party/candidate. These group of people focus on the ideas and plans the certain party /candidate has for the development of the state.

Celebrity endorsement on political party is advantageous to the parties for spreading their propagandas and is good way of advertising their party/candidate to the masses.

A study by students of School of Management, University of Bath, Bath, UK shows that ‘low political salience respondents were significantly more likely to vote for the political party when a celebrity endorser is used. However, the inverse effect is found for high political salience respondents’.

The most common places where celebrity endorsements can be found are in branding, products, and politics.

It can also be said that the increased use of celebrity endorsements in the political campaigning has influenced the average voters. But, ‘Traditional claims state that rational voters, voters who have a high degree of political interest, only rely on party-specific information, and are thus not impacted by additional cues such as endorsements by celebrities’ (Schuessler, 2000).

Many studies and statistical data also show that young adults are more likely to not fall for celebrity endorsement when it comes to the ground of politics instead they, study the party its aims and ideas and, focus more on what the political party of candidate plans and promises to do for the state. Young adults are also more likely to seek advice and learn from rather educated people in the field of politics other than celebrities and consider their opinions value as null interest.

It is also to be noted that there are difference hoe celebrity endorsements have influence among people in politics. Like, there is difference in the effects on the basis of ethnic diversity, age, gender, occupation, level of education, fame of the particular celebrity among the community and other such factors.

CELEBRITY INFLUENCE IN POLITICS IN THE USA

The USA (United states of America) is a global level economically well Country, and is a superpower of the world. USA is one of the countries where there are a number of highly acclaimed celebrities, in almost all the fields such as acting, singing, music, fashion, television etc.

Even in the recent United States Presidential election, 2016 Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (the current president of the USA) have been endorsed by an army of celebrity supporters.

Also the same was observed in the first presidential election of former president of the USA Obama.

He had celebrity endorsements from famous celebrities such as will.i.am a famous singer/musician, and the most famous talk show host Oprah Winfrey. Such celebrity endorsements not only made the public receptive to Obama's campaign but also drew attention to his ideas and plans he for the USA.

It was in 2008 that senator Barack Obama announced that he is standing as a candidate for the Presidential election for the USA. Obama began a campaign that challenged the structural limitations of Washington as well as the way it came to make decisions. He argued just as usual for change like every other politician does. Through calls for unity and a renewed sense of citizenship, Obama's political framework became a rallying call for political "hope" and "change."

This drew the attention of many celebrities on his side. That to, Most of the celebrities that followed his side were high end celebrities who have a great deal of fame and influence among the public. The most influential and valuable of them all was Oprah Winfrey. Oprah Winfrey was already viewed as one of the most powerful celebrities in Hollywood (Forbes, 2007). This factor sent most of the big political maestro's into frenzy and awe, that how Oprah Winfrey's endorsement to Obama can cause a huge tide in the number of Obama's supporters and how her potential could swing the election in favour of Obama. This was famously known as the Oprah Effect. Along with Winfrey, entertainer/musician Will.i.am became a notable endorser in Obama's political campaign through his "Yes we can" YouTube phenomenon. It was a famous video which made one of Obamas speech into music, that video got millions of views and hits in Youtube, but not only hits but a wave of supporters of Obama in his campaign.

In their study of the “Oprah Effect,” Garthwaite and Moore (2008) concluded that not only did she increase votes for Obama, Winfrey’s endorsement increased the overall voting population in the US election.

Many presidential campaigns in the US presidential elections have involved celebrities and their endorsements. For example, in 1960 John F. Kennedy was supported by “Rat Pack” members such as Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin, and Ronald Reagan received support from many celebrities, including Frank Sinatra (Adamowski 2004; Jolson-Colburn 2007).

But it did not work out the same way for Hillary Clinton in the recent united states presidential election, 2016 as it did for Obama in his campaign. Both Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton had numerous celebrity endorsers. But comparatively Hillary Clinton had the good lot celebrity endorsers who were famous, popular and had high number of fan followers. All the world thought Hillary would win the election, due to her powerful factors and celebrity endorsements, but in the end it came out of the blue that the winner of the us presidential election, 2016 was Donald Trump.

6. CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that celebrity endorsement in political campaigns is one of the important factors which decides of helps determine beforehand the probability of winning or losing of a particular political party or a particular candidate who has stood for the election. At the same time it cannot always be relied on as different people have different opinions towards each party, not all the people support for a party just because their favourite celebrity endorses the party or candidate. This factor is seen high among young adults, as they seek advice and opinions from the people who are well versed in politics. Also good celebrity endorsement does not always mean a chance of winning although it might be a good possibility.

The scope of research on this topic is vast as more field work can be done and many statistical data can be collected and all most any method can be applied to study its effects. This research has unlimited scope as elections run across all over the world I almost all the countries and throughout the year consecutively.

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