Measuring the Relationship Between Celebrity Endorsement and Young Female's Purchase Intention (Study of Fairness Cream Industry)

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The celebrity endorsement's involvement in advertising is gradually becoming essential in modern marketing. This study investigates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and the consumer purchase intention of young females in Sri Lanka. Considering the intense celebrity endorsement attachment, the study was based on the fairness cream industry in Sri Lanka. The attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and the country of origin of celebrities were established as variables in the study. The required data was obtained from young females aged between 18-25 belong to 4 major subgroups namely; school students, undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and salon clients. The findings suggest that there is a weak positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchase intention, and the strength of the relationship between each variable to purchase intention is discussed separately. This paper offers useful information to practitioners on selecting the best celebrity match for endorsing their brand as well as the study would facilitate effective brand promotion to develop existing business and upcoming entrepreneurs to assist competing with current and potential competitors in the market.

Keywords: *Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness, Country of Origin, Purchase intention*

Introduction

Celebrity endorsement has become a mandatory requirement in modern marketing. This is a very common to any countries use the celebrities for promotional activities (Pornpitakpan, 2004).The involvement of celebrities has a huge impact to make the advertisement success. Marketers can easily promote their brands through celebrities. Here celebrity in the particular brand advertisement act as a spokesperson for that brand. Therefore, it can influence the purchase intention of consumers positively or negatively. This study more based on consumer behavior aspect. Marketers have to be more careful when selecting the most suitable celebrity for their brands. That selected celebrity should have a good reputation in the industry and he or she should match the particular brand; otherwise, the advertisement will not be succeeded. Moreover, this might be affected by their overall sales amount. So, celebrity endorsement is that much important these days.

Throughout the study researches discuss the relationship between every four variables of the celebrity (Attractiveness, Expertise, Trustworthiness Country of Origin) with the consumers' purchase intention. To strengthen out the study discussed literature review on four variables that affect the purchase intention of consumers' mind. The purpose of this study is measuring the relationship between celebrity endorsement and young female's purchase intention.

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Literature Review

Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is a technique that has been applying for a long time and it has been one of the popular advertising strategies and identified as "ubiquitous feature of modern-day marketing" (Biswas, et al., 2009). Latterly, the usage of celebrity endorsement has been improving continuously (Boyd and Shank, 2004). According to current researches, celebrities perform as a common feature of the market place and becoming the image not only of consumer products and brands but of organizations themselves (Ilicic and Webster, 2011). A person who has a public recognition from a considerably large group of people and uses that recognition to represent for a Is certain consumer good or service on advertisements is known as a celebrity endorser (McCracken, 1989). The grounded theory for this study was the Ohanian's three credibility dimensions- Attractiveness, Expertise and Trustworthiness along with an introducing new variable- Country of Origin.

Attractiveness

The attractiveness of a celebrity is the extent to which the celebrity is being physically attractive or preferable (Ohanian, 1991). Also, according to the definition by Patzer (2012), "Physical attractiveness is an informational cue which involves subtle effects, persuasive, and inescapable; produces a definite pattern of verifiable differences, and transcends culture in its effects". According to Atkin and Block (1983)'s findings, the celebrities are mostly used for their associative qualities and attractiveness is one of the main factors which lead to a celebrity endorsement. The physical attractiveness of a celebrity leads to great social likability and acceptability. Many researchers have found physical attractiveness affects positively in connection with consumer's behavior regarding the product while comparing to an unattractive person (Ohanian, 1991). In most of the past studies, the attractiveness of the celebrity was appearing to be having positive relationship with the consumers' purchase intention.

Expertise

Expertise explains the extent to which a communicator is observed to possess knowledge, skills, experience or qualifications. Due to that focused to provide reliable and accurate information. Specifically, it has found that most of the time the expertise seems to be having a connection with the trustworthiness of the celebrity. According to Ohanian (1991), endorsers who are considered as knowledgeable are believed as trustworthy (credible). Kelman, et al. (1953) explains that Expertness is the probability that the product endorser has a real knowledge of what he is representing. Many researches on celebrity's expertness exhibited a positive relationship with consumers' purchase intention.

Trustworthiness

In here mainly discussed how the trustworthiness of a celebrity affected the purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, when considered about the brand attitude and the trustworthiness there was a well significant relationship. It was mentioned that there was a correspondent link between the brand and the celebrity who appeared in the advertisement (Fleck, et al., 2012). Previous articles had found that based on the type of celebrity, low trustworthy or high trustworthy it will affect more positively towards or more negatively towards.

When discussing the trustworthiness and the purchase intention, past studies have mentioned that the person who appeared in the advertisement has the more ability to influence the purchase intention (Daneshvary and Schwer, 2000).

Country of Origin

COO is a very complicated area when it comes to branding the product. There was no study has been conducted with application of country of origin of the celebrity and its relationship towards consumers' purchase intention. At the point of selecting a celebrity for an advertisement, it is much important to consider about the preferences and emotional side of the target audience, Because COO fact more based on differences between cultures, differences between social and demographic factors (Usunier, 1994). In this study have discussed the preferences of consumers in fairness cream industry by taking Indian celebrities and Sri Lankan celebrities.

This country of origin concept broke down into several facets. As a result of globalization in the production line and the arrival of hybrid products the research variable COO has become to an important level. As a result of country of origin concept it has identified as a "multi-dimensional" or "umbrella" concept that combines several sides of country of origin (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos, 2008). According to the past findings, COO of the celebrity and the consumers purchase intention having the significant relationship.

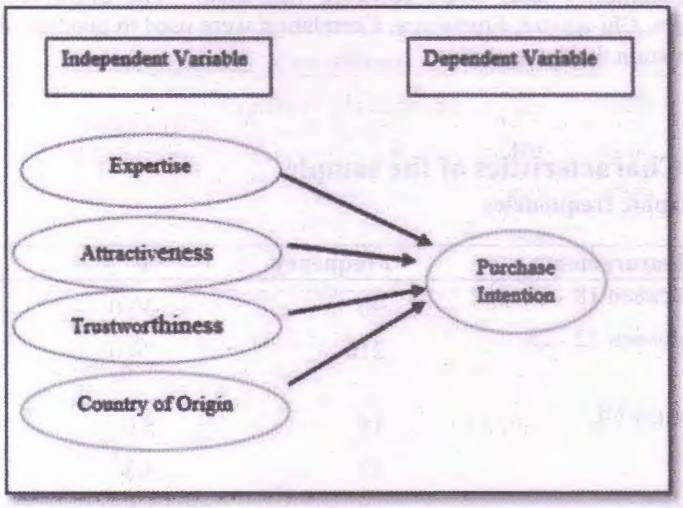
Purchase Intention

Consumer purchase intension is the critical factor when discuss about the celebrity endorsement. A consumer's attitude and assessment and external factors construct consumer purchase intension, and it is a critical factor to predict consumer behavior. Purchase intension can measure the possibility of a consumer to buy a product, and the higher purchase intension is ,the higher a consumer's willingness is to buy a product (Chi, et al., 2011). In the study of Khatri (2006) mentioned that the celebrities are treated as role models here since consumers are trying to imitate their favorite celebrity at some times. Therefore, above discussed past researches' findings derived the idea of trustworthiness and the coo of the celebrity has the relationship with the consumers' purchase intention.

Conceptual Framework

Following conceptual model has developed according to the past literature findings. Celebrity endorsement factors are considering as independent variables and purchase intention is considering as the dependent variable.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



Source 1: Authors Illustration

Methodology

Sample

The study concentrates on the young females at the age of 18 to 25 residing in Sri Lanka. The purposive sampling method was used in this study in accordance with the case study approach of the research. Dolisca, et al. (2007) mentioned that purposive sampling can be identified as the most successful sampling technique when it comes to the case study based researches. Also, according to past researchers, purposive sampling can be successfully applied considering the purpose and nature of the studies. This study was based on subjective human opinions. Therefore, taking several different sample groups with dissimilar backgrounds into consideration was necessary to generate a moderated result. By the purpose of sampling respondents according to specific types, knowledge or skills, this purposive sampling can be used (Vargas, et al., 2005). Therefore, the purposive sampling method was selected for this study, on the necessity of reaching respondents with different backgrounds and because of the case study approach of the study. As the research executed using a mixed-method, 300 respondents for the quantitative study, A three paged self-administrated survey questionnaire containing three sections was used to gather quantitative data. The section "A" contained the respondent profile which categorizes the respondents into demographic and behavioral variances. Section "B" consisted of questions that assist with understanding the respondents' general opinions on celebrity endorsement. The section "C" measured the strength of the respondent's standpoint based on four variables focused on this study - expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and country of origin. The values of this section were measured on five-point Likert scales, fixed to "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" continuum. Personal guidance is given to each respondent to ensure the reliability of the survey responses while answering the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaires were given in both Sinhala and English language mediums according to the respondents' preference to avoid any distractions deriving from the language difference.

Methods of analysis

To analyze the quantitative data, SPSS software was used. The SPSS tools such as, Descriptive statistics, Chi-square, Frequency, Correlation were used to generate the required quantitative information for the analysis.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the sample

Table 1: Demographic frequencies

Profile	Measurements	Frequency	%
Age	Between 18 – 21	90	30.0
	Between 22 - 25	210	70.0
Level of Education	Below OL	15	5.0
	OL	13	4.3
	AL	53	17.7
	Diploma	57	19.0
	Graduate	150	50.0
	Postgraduate	12	4.0
Respondents media usage	Yes	274	91.3
	No	24	8.0
Do respondents influenced by the celebrities	Yes	163	54.3
	No	121	40.3
	Total	**300**	**100%**

Source 2: Authors calculation

Considering the frequencies present the demographic profiles of above table 1, show that 30% of respondents are from age category 1(18-21). And the biggest amount of respondents is from age category 2 (22-25). In terms of the level of education compromises as the largest portion is from an undergraduate level which quantified as 50% out of 100%. And the other 50% has distributed among below OL 5%, OL 4.3%, and AL 17.7%, & Postgraduate 4%. According to the frequency analysis of level education, it appears that a sufficient amount of respondents can be identified as educated. Accordingly, the respondent's media utilization per week was mentioned. Results show as the number 91.3% out of total use any kind of media platform weekly and 8.0% were not. In terms of this frequency result, there can be people who can be influenced by celebrity endorsement, without any media utilization. But the amount is very low.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Correlations						
		Expertise	Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Country of origin	Purchase Intention
Expertise	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	300				
Attractiveness	Pearson Correlation	.343**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	300	300			
Trustworthiness	Pearson Correlation	.423**	.327**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	300	300	300		
Country of origin	Pearson Correlation	.195**	.109	.28 8**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.059	.00 0		
	N	300	300	300	300	
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	.031	.078	-.01 3	-.169**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.596	.175	.82 5	.003	
	N	300	300	300	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source 3: Authors Calculation

The above table demonstrates the correlation between dependent and independent variables. Looking into the result matrix generated, purchase intention, the dependent variable is only having a significant correlation with a country of origin variable 0.003. The R-value for the country of origin is -0.169. Perceived expertise (Pearson correlation = .031) and attractiveness (Pearson correlation = .078) are having a weak but positive relationship with purchase intention. Although the relationship is not significant. When considering the trustworthiness variable, the significance is quantified as 0.825 which more closer to 1. And the Pearson correlation (-0.013) also a negative value. Moreover, between independent variables, there can be identified significance correlation. Expertise was strong positively and significantly correlate with the country of origin (Pearson correlation = 0.195, P= .001). This output shows a confident and significant correlation between those variables.

Discussion

For many firms, finding a correct spokesperson to promote their product is a crucial matter in the present time. As stated by Wei & Lu (2013), Ohanian (1991b) says that endorser's effectiveness for make a better promotion can measure with their credibility. Her study assumes that perceived expertise makes a positive impact on American consumer's purchase intention while the same result indicates that trustworthiness and attractiveness are not affected to purchase intention. But considering Wei & Lu's study (2013), it demonstrates that the credibility model introduced by Ohanian (1990a) is not accepted in their context.

Considering the frequency of demographic variables of the survey, stated in table 11, the majority of the respondents were age group 22-25 (70%). Then considering the education level of respondents, the majority of the respondents are from completed or reading a degree sector (50%). The form above mentioned findings states that more respondents are from age 22-25 who are educated. Below OL education level respondents are very few. When it comes to the media usage of respondents, most of them are weekly use any kind of media (91%) and the majority of them were aware of the celebrity promotions (53%). These critical findings demonstrate that the majority of the respondents are having a significant awareness of the study scope.

By look into the results of the correlation analysis, it demonstrates that celebrity's expertise and attractiveness are having a positive but week relationship with consumer's purchase intention (Expertise r = .031, Attractiveness r = .078). Also, there is no significance in both relationships. The outputs of this study have come up with Sri Lankan respondents. By considering these outcomes, the generated result is quite different from past studies. According to Chanthika's study (2004b), attractiveness and expertise of the celebrity are having a strong positive relationship with consumer's purchase intention. Essentially, as the preferred study has done in a foreign developed country (Singapore), the predictions, purchase power and purchase intention can be different from our country. According to correlation results, the relationship between Perceived trustworthiness and purchase intention of consumers is negative. It demonstrates that, when a young female buys such products, they are not considering which they can trust the endorsed celebrity, or not. The significance of the trustworthiness also 0. It clearly defines that there is no relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention, according to our study. Finally, the country of origin of the celebrity variable generates a positive correlation between purchase intentions. Also, it has a significant relationship between both variables. Since in Sri Lanka, any study hasn't found the relationship between a celebrity's country of origin and purchase intention. By considering the results of our study, it clearly defines, when it comes to the purchase intention of young females, they giving much priority to foreign celebrities rather

than Sri Lankan ones. Among all the independent variables, the only country of origin variable is having a positive and significant relationship on purchase intention.

Conclusion

Selecting a suitable celebrity for an advertisement is a very crucial thing. Therefore, before selecting a celebrity marketer should concern on some critical factors which affected the purchase intention relates to the celebrity who endorsed in the advertisement. Throughout the research on analyzing the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchase intention discussed four main variables; namely "Trustworthiness, COO, Attractiveness, Expertise". According to past research Findings said that there was a strong positive relationship between celebrity endorsement intention and the purchase intention of consumers. Moreover, it says that it enhances the attitude towards the brand also. Though those findings were given positivity contradictory to that this study got the result of a positive but weak relationship between celebrity endorsement and the purchase intention. Discussion about COO in the study of, it says that there also has a positive relationship between COO of the celebrity and the purchase intention. These findings were more congruence with this study. Finally, considering the results of our study, it clearly defines, when it comes to the purchase intention of young females, they giving much priority to the foreign celebrities rather than Sri Lankan ones. Among all the independent variables, only country of origin variable is having a positive and significance relationship on purchase intention.

Future Studies

Considering the empirical findings of the study, it demonstrates the study has only considering about the relationship in between dependent and independent variables. According to the results generated, the study has only considered about 4 characteristics of celebrities. It could be including more variables, which demonstrate celebrity's characteristics more. Assuming that, it can include celebrity's multiplicity variable which known as over endorsement of celebrities. The celebrity over endorsement has done with past studies (Hsu, 2002). Since in Sri Lanka, any study hasn't done by including celebrity multiplicity. Furthermore, the study has only considered about young females in Sri Lanka. It can expand to another age categories of women and can do a comparison in between age categories. Also, when it comes to the data collection, it can collect from different geographical destinations inside the country. It may generate a different conclusion for the study. Limited time duration and limited respondents were major limitations of this study. For future studies, it needs to expand the time duration for data collection. And, not only quantitative data, especially, with this type of research study, to get an accurate answer can do in-depth interviews for do a qualitative analysis.

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