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An Examination of the Celebrity Endorsement towards Consumer Purchase Intention, of Young Females in Sri Lanka (From a Case Study of Fairness Creams): A Pilot Study and Overview of the Findings

R. S. Bandaranayake [α] , H.C. Pathirage [σ], P.S.C. Kularathne [ρ], D. P. S. H. Perera [ω] & Dr. Kingsley Bernard [¥]

Abstract- Considering the constant rivalry visible in the fairness cream industry and the celebrity endorsement based hyper-competition of public media advertisement techniques, this study aimed at identifying the variables which affect to purchase intention of young females in Sri Lanka. Depending on their age categories, education level and the duration of exposure to media the research had executed. This paper review the literature on celebrity endorsement and the three of the most common variables- attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness had been applied in the past researches and especially the "celebrity's country of origin" on affecting consumer's purchase intention is being brought forward as a variable to study for the first time related to the fairness cream industry. Numerous fairness cream companies use both local and foreign celebrities in their advertisements and measuring the effectiveness of the two categories can affect the advertising tactics of companies. The study has designed enveloping in-depth study on variables besides the common quantitative aspect and this method can reveal critical and more reliable results compared to past studies.

Keywords: celebrity endorsement, attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, country of origin, purchase intention, young females, fairness creams.

I. Introduction

This study is going to find out the impact of celebrity endorsement on the purchase intention. Celebrity endorsement is a strategy including a celebrated individual to offer an item; Purchase intention is the idea of how consumers willingly tend to purchase the products. Once marketers use celebrities to their marketing promotion campaigns; it will help consumers to grab the message which needs to deliver to the consumers from the marketers' side. Celebrity endorsement can use as a brand promotional technique. When we are using the famous and well-fitted celebrity for a brand or product we can have faith in increasing the sales and the market value towards that brand or product. Here we use celebrity endorser to for the promotional campaign and the celebrity endorser is a universal feature which mostly used in the modern marketing (McCracken & , 1989).

When marketers use celebrities for promotion campaigns; they can gain a strong brand value, brand control as advantages. Therefore organizations can enable them to accomplish bigger deals and benefits.

Celebrity endorsement is very important to build a positive or negative impact on consumers' minds. When marketers use celebrities who are maintaining a good image in their careers, then it will affect positively to the brand. Thereby this fact is mostly based on the celebrity who acts in the advertisement and also pay attention to the relevance of the celebrity to the product. Furthermore, when saying about the celebrity that person ultimately become the brand ambassador position within that organization where the product was launched. Celebrity has vast power on promoting products; therefore, we called them 'star -power'. The range of celebrities can impact to the majority in any capacity is conceivable. These people have been utilizing their 'image' to advance different items and administrations throughout recent years.

It is a fact that all marketers tend to spend money in an infinity way for the promotions which can promote by getting involvement from celebrities. Therefore this has become the trending fact in all over the world. Since celebrity endorsement has the high demand in the field of advertising product promotion also happens automatically; Because of that advertising has been changed enormously over the past years (Wei, et al., 2013).

II. Significance

Celebrity endorsement is a reputed and also well famous advertising method, which has used in years. Therefore, as marketers, all should have a well-accomplished knowledge in this area. Celebrity endorsement has a huge ability in making awareness toward the brand in consumers' minds. Moreover, this celebrity endorsement is not a new idea; this will help marketers to tackle the consumers in very strategically. This is a fundamental logic to promote brands. Since this celebrity endorsement has become to the trending level; marketers able to create a proper position about the brand in consumers' minds. Therefore, this will be

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hugely impacted as a strategy in brand positioning. It helps to create brand loyalty if the celebrity who used to promote the brand has good recognition in society also. Using well famous people for brand promotion now has been a fact that is spreading throughout the world rapidly and also it is not just utilizes for tangible products or brands; even for the places, services, or an event can get an advantage of using celebrity to the advertisement Furthermore, celebrity endorsement can make an impact positively towards the stock prices in the market. Moreover, it was a found fact that firms spend lots of amount of money as in $50 billion annually on celebrity endorsement thing for their brand promotions (Zamudio & César, 2016).

Though the celebrity endorsement majorly trending in other regions in several sectors; when it comes to the Sri Lankan context there was no study based on fairness cream and the celebrity endorsement concern Sri Lanka. As an Asian country, Sri Lanka has a good market for this fairness cream and beauty products; meanwhile, fair skin has come to a very important factor for a human being in Sri Lanka in this era. Thereby it is very important and useful to do a study on this area to find out the impact of celebrity endorsement towards consumers purchase intension from a case study fairness cream. Although there is a lot of the number of researches has conducted on celebrity endorsement with the fairness cream industry internationally (Chi, et al., 2011). In Sri Lankan context there are very fewer researches has been executed. On the contrary, the fairness cream brands in Sri Lanka are striving on celebrity endorsement to gain customer attention towards the ultimate goal of affecting positively for the consumers' purchase intention. The final results of the research based on Sri Lankan context can be different than international studies. Besides the explorations done on overseas regions, more of Sri Lankan based researches should conduct towards disclosing actual impact and reasons behind the celebrity endorsement Sri Lanka. By generating 100% reliable and applicable results according to the study, the marketers can get an exact idea.

III. Problem Statement

Currently, fairness cream popularity and the competition of its market is widely increasing in Sri Lanka. Among various tactics used in advertising, celebrity endorsement has become a critical factor for increasing sales of fairness cream brands. The celebrity used marketing practices, which are being appeared through media in day-to-day life is evidencing the success of those methods related to a celebrity endorsement. The fairness cream brands in Sri Lanka seem to be focusing on popular local, and foreign (Especially Bollywood) actors and sometimes the marketers use both actors. It is interesting to explore the reason behind this practice, which had never subject to any research, conducted in Sri Lanka.

Fairness cream is a product which is used to increase beauty by a fairer skin. Therefore, celebrities' personalities (based on appearance, social image, and, etc.) are being affected to the customer purchase intention (Priyankara, et al., 2017). In Sri Lanka, both local and foreign celebrities' advertisements are broadcasted. The success of these two types of celebrities should be measured and analyzed in Sri Lankan context towards getting a conclusion to find out the impact of celebrity endorsement on customer purchase intention of fairness creams. A proper investigation can fill this gap and assist marketers in their decisions towards success.

Although there are several pieces of researches that have been conducted on celebrity endorsement with the fairness cream industry internationally (Chi, et al., 2011). Based on Sri Lankan context, there are fewer researches that have been executed. On the contrary, the fairness cream brands in Sri Lanka are striving on celebrity endorsement to gain customer attention towards the ultimate goal of affecting positively for the consumers' purchase intention. The final results of the research based on Sri Lankan context can be different than international studies. Besides the researches based on overseas regions, more of Sri Lankan based studies should also be conducted on disclosing actual impact and reasons behind the celebrity endorsement Sri Lanka. By generating 100% reliable and applicable results according to the study, the marketers can get an exact idea about successfully application and management of celebrity endorsement towards influencing positively for the purchase intention of the fairness cream customers in Sri Lanka.

IV. Initial Literature Review

With the advancement of product diversity and the competition among products and services, has gradually expand the amount that spent on promotional initiatives by multitudinous organizations. Besides, several organizations are driven to invest heavily in their marketing communication efforts orderly to compete.

Muda(2014) has mentioned in their study that, Celebrities are individuals who well known to the public due to their accomplishments in areas such as sports, entertainment, politics, broadcasting, corporate, etc. From the Frame of reference of celebrities, Endorsement presents a remunerative auxiliary income, which for some celebrities' contemptible earnings far above what they made in their actual field of work (Ilicic, et al., 2011). Celebrities are not only selling products or services; they are involving to make a powerful impact across all surfaces of approved culture and public life, Influencing customer attitudes and perceptions. Illicic(2011) mentioned in their study, by diminishing a

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brand with a celebrity, Brand can leverage unique and positive secondary brand associations from a celebrity and gain consumer awareness. Most contemporary researches on celebrity endorser influence have intensive on endorser qualities, as an example: source Credibility or a match between certain product and the endorser (Singh, et al., 2018).The source credibility describes the level of impact that can make an attitude change of certain consumers. This attitude changes are very much critical when it comes to the advertisement – effectiveness measuring. Agrawal's (1995)study has discovered that company announcements for an associate with celebrities as a spokesperson may have a noticeable effect on the expected future revenue. Celebrity endorsement affects the market share of the particular product as well as it influences higher purchase intention among consumers.

a) Celebrity endorsement

McGuire (1985) mentioned Celebrities are individuals who are well known is because of the accomplishments of their respective areas such as Sports, Movies, Tele dramas, etc. McGuire (1985) has given the most frequently referenced precision for celebrity endorsement. A single personality who enjoys public recognition and which uses that awareness in the interest of customer goodwill by visible in an advertisement. Celebrity Endorsement is a heavily engaged scheme in advertising because it is more fruitful than not Celebrity endorsement in terms of making a desirable outcome for the sponsors. When it comes to the determinants under celebrity endorsement, there are plenty of them. The determinants described by Priyankara(2017) are credibility expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, similarity, liking, familiarity, and the consonance with the particular product. According to Priyankara(2017) source credibility, depends on trustworthiness. Source attractiveness depends on familiarity, liking, and similarity.

i. *Attractiveness*

The source attractiveness model derives the endorser's communication dimensions into an effective level. Diversely. The source attractiveness model introduced from McGuire's (1985) source valence model. This model has attractiveness as the third component of source credibility. Attractiveness mentioned the perceived attractiveness of the source (Ohanian & , 1991). The number of past researches has emphasized the attractiveness of the source is an important object of source effectiveness and subsequently, credibility. Leung (2013)found that consumers are skillful to memorized celebrity endorsers whom they determined as attractive, fun, and demonstrative. Suppose to attractiveness related product, a physically attractive celebrity strengthen the spokesperson's credibility, and a positive frame of mind towards the advertisement (Kamins & , 1990). A study has found out that using an attractive celebrity to endorse a product is more effective than using an unattractive celebrity (Busler, et al., 2000).

ii. *Expertise*

Braunsberger(1996) found a celebrity who high in expertise as compared to one who lows in expertise makes positive intention towards consumer's minds and also discovered celebrity had perceived expertise directly impact the consumer's purchase intention, regardless of whether the product is personal use or for gift-giving. Fruitful celebrity endorses who are perceived to have expertise in particular areas can create consumers more willing to purchase the advertised product (Ohanian & , 1991). Expertise celebrities are more tend to identify the attributes, which need to advertised and specifically highlight those and they are highly occupied when it comes to the commercial operations(Leung, et al., 2013).When it comes to the special advertising appeals consumers are expected to have a fully described understanding of the persuasive intent of advertisements.

iii. *Trustworthiness*

Trustworthiness, or which extend we trust someone is crucially determined when it comes to the source of celebrity-endorsed into a certain brand (Hovland & , 1951). Declaration about the object or issue and trustworthiness was determined as the degree of consumer's faith in the communicator's objective to communicate the statements he or she regulate most valid. Trustworthiness is a statement of dignity, believability, and honesty possessed by the endorser personality and observed by the consumers who hang on the target audience's perceptions (Erdogan & Zafer, 1966). When it comes to the consumers' belief that the source is trustworthy, they also assume that the communicated idea is a higher inaccuracy, and it is credible. Accordingly, an integrated brand advertising strategy inbounded with celebrity endorser personality who consumers perceive as honest, believable and dependable. Also, the self-efficacy of an endorser may directly convey from the considerable perceived trustworthiness of the celebrity by the customer (Stephen, et al., 2016). Trustworthiness is closely measured when it comes under the celebrity endorsement theory to determine the level of success in any promotional campaign, which uses celebrities.

iv. *Origin of the celebrity*

Furthermore, most of the companies around the world now started their brand expansions beyond their country bounds. Chao (2005)expands global marketing as a feasible business expansion theory, is because of that increment, consumers around the world can taste many products from different origins. When this brand expansion happens in the global market place, firms are facing several critical decision alternatives, including

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entry modes, advertising and, promotions, cultural issues, etc. When determining the celebrity endorsement in international brands, it also has a significant impact on consumer's product evaluation (Chao, et al., 2005). Determine that state, more studies have found out how the country of origin (COO) has an impact on celebrity endorsement strategies. Earlier COO models are using single cue models, which utilize one variable, which contain fundamental.

COO information. When it comes to the multi cue models are tend to overcome the weaknesses previously happened, and also it becomes more realistic than the previous model and consumers are more rely on COO information to make their buying decisions.

b) Consumer Purchase Intention

Apart from the variables discussed so far consumer purchase intention is the crucial element when talking about celebrity endorsement. A consumer's attitude, assessment, and external factors construct consumer purchase intention, and it is a critical factor to predict consumer behavior. Purchase intention can measure the possibility of a consumer to buy a product, and the higher purchase intention is, the higher a consumer's willingness is to buy a product (Chi, et al., 2011). Purchase intention indicates that consumer's willingness is to buy a product (Chi, et al., 2011). Moreover, consumers' brand attitude and purchase intention will be higher when a product has a high prediction image and informality (Chi, et al., 2011). Therefore this a proven fact that should consider much as possible when collaborating with the celebrity endorsement. Since this fact is too personal, it needs to pay more attention. Furthermore, Purchase intention is an individual action tendency relating to the brand.

Variables	Definition	Source
Attractiveness	The source attractiveness model derives the endorser's communication dimensions in to an effective level(Stephen, et al., 2016). Diversely, the source attractiveness model introduced from McGuire's(1985) s source valence model .	(Stephen, et al., 2016)
Trustworthiness	Trustworthiness, or which extend we trust someone is crucially determined when it comes to the source of celebrity which endorsed in to a certain brand (Hovland & , 1951).	(Hovland & , 1951) (Pornpitakpan & , 2004)
Expertise	Braunsberger (1996) found a celebrity who high in expertise as compared to one who low in expertise is make positive intention towards consumer's mind and also discovered celebrity has perceived expertise directly impact to the consumer's purchase intention, regardless of whether the product is personal use or for gift-giving(Braunsberger & Karin, 1996).	(Braunsberger & Karin, 1996)
Country of Origin	Furthermore, most of the companies around the world now started their brand expansions beyond from their country bounds. Chao (2005)Expand the global marketing as a feasible business expansion theory, is because of that increment, consumers around the world can taste many products from different origins(Chao, et al., 2005).	(Chao, et al., 2005)
Consumer Purchase intention	Apart from the above-mentioned variables consumer purchase intension is the crucial element when talking about the celebrity endorsement(Ohanian & , 1991).	(Ohanian & , 1991)

Figure 1: Summary of selected variables

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V. Proposed Conceptual Framework

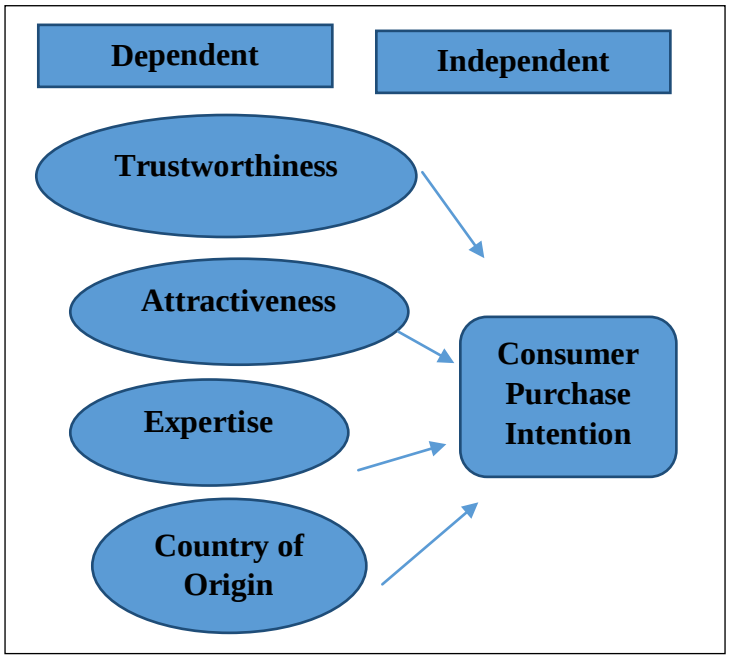

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

VI. Methodology

a) Sample

This study aims at young females aged between 18 and 25 residing in Sri Lanka. A pilot survey for the quantitative survey questionnaire was conducted by researchers on 32 respondents. A convenient random sampling method is to be selected to execute the study targeting 300 respondents for the quantitative survey and 50 in-depth interviews for observing the qualitative data.

b) Research Instrument

A three paged self-administrated survey questionnaire consisting of three sections is used to observe the quantitative data. Section "A" contains the respondent profile to categorize them on demographic and behavioral variances. Section "B" consists of questions that assist with tracking the respondents' general opinions on celebrity endorsement. The section "C" is measuring the intensity of the respondent's perspective based on four variables discussing in this study - expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and country of origin. The values of this section are measured on five-point Likert scales, fixed to "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" continuum.

To ensure the reliability of the survey responses, personal guidance is given to each respondent while marking answers. The survey forms are given in both Sinhala and English language mediums according to the respondents' preference to avoid any obstacles derived from the language variances. The targeted sample is approached covering respondents with different backgrounds (different ages, educational levels).

52 in-depth interviews will be completed to examine the qualitative perspective of the study. In this procedure, the respondents will state their open opinions about the four variables of celebrity endorsement in the study - expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and country of origin.

c) Questionnaire and survey administration

The questionnaire is pre-tested by a pilot survey, which participated in 32 respondents. From that survey, the SPSS Cronbach's alpha amount was 0.98. The required amount for reliability is 0.7 to prove the survey questionnaire is reliable and doable.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
.909	.904	19

Figure 3: Reliability Statistics

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This mini-survey accomplished objective 1 of the study.

Item	*Frequency*
Age Group	
18 -21 21-25	**1 (3.0)**
	31 (93.9)
Level of Education	
completed or reading G.C.E.AL	**1 (3.0)**
	27 (81.8)
completed or reading	**4 (12.1)**

Figure 4: Demographic profile of the respondents (Young)

Profile of the sample selected for the pilot survey has mentioned above. According to the majority of young females are selected in the age group between 21 and 25. Also, when it comes to the level of education, most of them are from a category, which named as completed or reading a degree. By looking into demographic profile summary can take an idea of how demographic factors may connect with the dependent variables and get a conclusion about celebrity endorsement towards consumers to purchase intention.

VII. Limitations and Future Research

According to the results obtained by the pilot survey, further steps of the research can be conducted as proposed previously. One of the limitation that we encountered while doing this research was limited time duration. This research area much more related to the qualitative, because of that, if we got more time to do these survey questionnaires by targeting more respondents, it could be more effective to the final answer.

Apart from that, when it comes to the objectives, we can add another objective as, how celebrity endorsement may influence the purchase intention of people from different geographical areas such as different districts.

Hence, in this pilot survey, we have selected a few respondents around 32. If we increase the number of respondents, we can have a clear and effective answer in the final analysis.

For the future researchers can select more respondents from different geographical areas to getting a more effective and developed answer.

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