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Entrepreneurial Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Personality Congruity: A Review on Concepts and Practical Perspectives

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsement is a widely used marketing communication and brand building option found in different markets and product scopes. Most of empirical studies are found examining the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement with brand evaluations and brand relationship behaviours. The source credibility of the celebrity endorsement is one of the main bases discussed in this scope. The concept of entrepreneurial celebrity endorsement or celebrity entrepreneurship is a pivotal research priority in line with the practises found in today's business world. Celebrities involve with business and try to build the brand and performance with own endorsements. But the effectiveness of such endorsements on brand related evaluations and behaviours should be investigated to unveil the rationality. Accordingly, this paper attempts to review the concept of celebrity endorsement whilst special attention is made on celebrity entrepreneurship as the niche of investigation. Authors evaluate the empirical insights whilst cases are appreciated to discuss how such endorsements connect with the brand personality congruity. The main research instrument was literature review and journal articles, while business publications and cases were used to build the discussions. Paper makes an attempt to disclose the hands-on cases to provide learning avenues to further investigate how entrepreneurial celebrities engage with endorsements towards own businesses and social activities. Paper makes some

openings to investigate the overall effectiveness of celebrity endorsements made by celebrities as entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Brand Personality; Celebrity Endorsement; Entrepreneurial Celebrity Endorsement; Source Credibility; Marketing Communication.

1. Introduction

Advertising is one of the major elements in marketing that has been effectively used by marketers especially for creating attention for their products at the implementation stage. Thus, attention grabbing media stars are used by advertisers to seize consumer attention, especially at the stage of new product introduction, due to the critical market competition. This type of celebrities are effectively influencing the advertisements avoiding the noise of media. Thus, this strategy has been improving level of communication by cutting through the unnecessary noise of media (Muda, Musa & Putit, 2010). The recognition of the brand name has been improved by the effective use of brand endorsement (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983; Friedman & Friedman, 1979). According to McCracken (1989), "Many studies have also shown that celebrity endorsers favourably influenced important advertising effectiveness measures such as attitudes towards the advertisement, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention (Atkin & Block, 1983; La Ferle & Choi, 2005; Petty et al., 1983). Furthermore, celebrity endorsement strategy has the ability to create an image for a product through a meaningful transfer (Muda et al., 2010)

However, celebrity entrepreneurship has similarities with celebrity endorsement (Hunter, 2010). Marketers have spent enormous amounts of money annually on celebrity endorsement contracts which create a belief that celebrities are the effective spokespeople phenomenon of

‘celebrity entrepreneur-cum-endorser’ and is relatively new. Therefore, as such, few literatures are available for their products or brands (Katyal, 2007). According to this phenomenon, the celebrity role in advertising has been increased from 1990s (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Erdogan, 1999; Pringle & Binet, 2005; Seno & Lukas, 2007). In relation to that, the congruency has highlighted by the researchers as the main determinant factor in developing the expected brand personality by the communicators (Lawrence et al., 2014). A considerable amount of interest in the concept of brand personality and how it relates to the self-congruity effects (Aaker, 1991) are the foremost areas of this study. This study intends to discover the importance of the role of entrepreneur who endorsed the brand in its personality development.

1.1. Purpose of and Context of the Study

Celebrity endorsement is a highly researched field in marketing communication and a popular strategy in worldwide (Dissanayake, 2007; Kumara, 2016; Udovita & Hilal, 2018). Celebrities are hired because they are perceived to be more credible to promote a product compared to non-celebrities. Various avenues of celebrity endorsements have been examined by the researchers such as celebrity-brand congruence, source credibility of the celebrity, and meaning transfer mode (McCracken, 1989). Celebrities have a trend to engage in business not just as an endorser, but ultimately developing a unique brand personality for creating a competitive advantage. Brand Personality is a relatively new subject to research and the field. Aaker and Fournier (1995), Aaker (1997) and Durgee (1998), created the interest which eventually resulted in the construction of a brand personality scale by Aaker (1997). However, these researchers have not looked into the issue of celebrity personality even in congruence studies. Despite being extensively reported in popular media, the role of celebrity entrepreneur-cum-endorser in

advertising effectiveness literature is almost ignored (Muda et al., 2010). There are studies which argue the issues and challenges found in Sri Lanka as a specific context to examine the effectiveness celebrity endorsements including endorsements done by entrepreneurial celebrities towards endorsed brands (Dissanayake, Ismail & Pahlevan Sharif, 2017; Hennayake, 2017; Kumara, 2016; Udovita et al., 2018). Alongside, this paper attempts to address the effectiveness between the celebrity endorsement and entrepreneur celebrity endorsement towards the success of the brand personality.

1.2. Methodology

The main arguments and explanations of this paper have been supported by the empirical evidences and theoretical contents. Hence, the authors reviewed journal articles and industrial publications to review the concept and applications related to the celebrity endorsement, entrepreneur celebrity endorsement and brand personality. Literature review was employed as the main research tool while this paper attempts to discuss cases found within the application of entrepreneur celebrity endorsements in marketing communication. Further, paper discusses some industry specific case evidences, whereas concern is made on Sri Lankan industry practices. This paper follows a deductive approach in which arguments and explanations are mainly supported by empirical evidences and associated theoretical contents. Finally, the author discusses and concludes the paper by postulating future research directions related to the entrepreneur celebrities in the Sri Lankan context.

2. Literature Review

This paper presents the literature review by explaining the main concepts, theories and models found in the scope of celebrity endorsement whilst entrepreneur celebrity endorsement is reviewed with a special attention. The term credibility in celebrity endorsement has been explained with the relevant models since source credibility acts as a norm in celebrity endorsements.

2.1. Celebrity Endorser

According to Ferhat & Khan (2011), a celebrity is a universal character of society, blazing lasting impression in the recollections of all who follows its path. McCracken (1989) further describes celebrities as persons who enjoys public recognition from a large share of a certain group of people and uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in advertisement is known as a celebrity. Moreover, Ferhat & Khan also states that celebrities are usually known to the public for their achievement in an area other than the product endowed by them. The above definitions clearly delineate the possibility of source credibility embedded the accuracy of message given by the communicator. According to McCracken (1989) celebrity endorsement is a transfer of characteristics and attributes of the celebrity to the brand or product as the same will be transferred to the consumer. As described in the associative learning theory, image of the brand is influenced through transferring meaning to the brand from the endorser (Till & Busler, 1998). The modern society has been influenced by the celebrities for making their purchasing decisions (Choi & Berber, 2010). Therefore, endorsers should be transferred to the product or brand (McCracken, 1989). Accordingly, the effectiveness of celebrity influence on the campaign is enhancing the success of the advertisement (McCracken, 1989). However, to be a

successful advertisement, it is necessary to have an effective relationship between celebrity and the message (Erdogan, 1999). Thus, the right selection of celebrities will effectively increase the product positioning by creating a unique selling proposition rather than diluting the brand image (Mitka, 2008). As discussed by Seno & Lukas (2007) there are five factors which influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement under the two categories such as source-based factors and management-based factors (Muda et al., 2010). The source-based elements related to the qualities of celebrity can be controlled by the celebrities rather than the advertiser of the brand (Seno et al., 2007). Dissanayaka & Ismail (2015) pointed that the source based factors are mostly derived from image of the celebrity and further suggested that the credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity are the components of the source-based factors (Udovita et al., 2018). Thus, the source-based factor is significant to evaluate and examine the effectiveness of entrepreneur celebrity endorsement and brand personality congruity.

2.2. Celebrity Endorser Credibility

According to Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell, 2000, celebrity credibility is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject. In the past decades, social scientists have studied the source credibility concept to understand the effects on messages persuasiveness (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990; Sternthal, Dholakia & Leavitt, 1978). Reviewing the literature on the source credibility over the past five decades, Pornpitakpan (2004) has discovered that the majority of studies undertaken indicate that perceived source credibility has some degree of influence on communication effectiveness ((Udovita & Hilal, 2018). Accordingly in advertising context, such credibility is often linked with a model or an endorser (Friedman et al., 1979; Ohanian, 1990), the advertiser

(MacKenzie, Lutz&Belch, 1986), the advertisement (MacKenzie et al., 1989), corporate credibility (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell, 2002), or web credibility (Choi & Rifon, 2002). (Musa, Naina&Borhan, 2014). Marketers are highly concerned with the credibility of the celebrity in selecting them for their advertisements. Advertisements which include celebrities of credibility induce the customer's awareness towards price of the brand, and facilitates a distinguished place for the brand in the mind of customers (Aziz et al., 2013). As Ohanian (1991) highlights, the trustworthiness of the expertise are the factors of celebrity credibility (Udovita&Hilal, 2018).

According to Erdogan (1999) an expertise is defined as knowledge, skills and experience a celebrity has towards advertised brand. Further, for a celebrity to be considered as an expert, he or she should be prominent in the action related to the advertised products (Biswas, Biswas & Das, 2006). Hence, it is significant in creating a unique mental picture towards a product or brand. Integrity, honesty and believability of an endorser, and trustworthiness are the major sources of credibility which are linked with celebrity credibility (Erdogan, 1999). According to "TEARS" model, attractiveness and credibility are the two major components which create the endorser's effectiveness. The five attributes of the TEARS model are trustworthiness and expertise (which have its place in the credibility component), and physical attractiveness, respect, and similarity are dimensions of attractiveness (Hennayake, 2017). Shimp (2003) claims that target audience has trusted the celebrity endorser due to the professional and personal lifestyle have been revealed to the general public via the mass media (Hennayake, 2017; Kumara, 2016). In addition to that Shimp (2003) classifies the attractiveness of TEARS model in three sub-components such as physical attractiveness, respect and similarity. Physical attractiveness includes lifestyle characteristics, intellectual skills, personality properties and so on (Hennayake,

2017). Thus, TEARS model has rationalized that effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in examining branding-related studies. Further, the components of the TEARS model help examine how the effectiveness of endorsed-message is patterned (Shimp, 2003). In the Sri Lankan context, there is a study on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand attitude in a financial product, which finds a substantial relationship between attractiveness & expertise, trustworthiness and brand attitude (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015). Hence, celebrity endorsement credibility is strongly important to create the brand attitude of consumers. According to Zahaf & Anderson (2008), endorsement has been influential in overall effectiveness of endorsed message (Hennayake, 2017; Udovita et al., 2018). Dissanayake et al. (2015) emphasizes the same concept through a research reference to the service sector context. Thus, it is critically important to explore how over-endorsement practice are joined with source-based factors to determine the effectiveness of endorsed message leading to brand evaluation (Koththagoda & Dissanayake, 2017; Kumara, 2016).

2.3. Entrepreneur Celebrity Endorsement

As described by Hunter (2010), it is difficult to differentiate a celebrity entrepreneur and a celebrity endorser since both are promoting brands (Kaputa, 2013). Celebrity endorsers are approaching differently; although not officially an owner or employee, he/she has managerial inputs and artistic directions. The celebrity entrepreneur does nothing more than endorse the product in which they have an equity stake (Kamen et al., 1975; Pringle et al., 2005). Thus, the difference between the two is often a difficult one to make, this is the case with reporters and consumers. To eliminate this trouble, a pragmatic view of entrepreneurs requires the ownership in and running of a firm, whichever alone or in teams, is adopted (Kamm, Shuman, Seeger, & Nurick, 1990; Ruef, Aldrich, & Carter, 2003). Accordingly, background ownership and

running are the major requirements. Then the endorser may be seen as running the company and holding a position in management with artistic direction, but if they are also owners probably they would have not been considered as entrepreneurs. Similarly, casual celebrity investors can own stocks in hundreds of companies, but unless they also take part in running of the company, they will probably not be seen as entrepreneurs. In Sri Lanka, popular cricketers started to involve in businesses and used their personal brand in to brand building strategies (Koththagod & Dissanayake, 2017). But we argue to investigate how the personal brand of such celebrity entrepreneurs could exactly generate brand related outcomes and performances. Sometimes over-endorsements may kill the brands being endorsed by popular celebrities when they act as entrepreneurs whilst endorsing other brands (Dissanayake, et al., 2017). Studies said it does reasonably capture what the public think of when they think of entrepreneurs (Bengtsson & Peterson, 2008). This denotes the issues and challenges found with entrepreneur celebrity endorsements.

2.4.Explanations on Brand Personality

According to Yoon (2004), products have personalities like people, and they can make them or break them in the market place same as brands are expected to have personalities like people, and those are not merely determined by the actual physical characteristics of the product, but it has been hosted by other factors such as advertising, image of the company, users image, product origin. By referring past literature, researches have revealed that consumers would have seen different personalities in different brands (Karande et al., 1997; Plummer, 2000; Siguaw et al., 1999). According to Aaker (1997), the brand personality is defined as the set of human characteristics connected with a brand, which is considered one of the most widely accepted definition of brand personality (Yoon, 2014). Brand strategies have been focused traditionally on

the functional or utilitarian of products or services, but in the recent decades, the industrial competition has caused more difficulties in the differentiation of brands on the functional attributes alone (Sampson, 1993; Siguaw et al., 1999). The attributes of the product can be easily imitated due to the fact that brands are functionally more like each other (Phau and Lau, 2000). Hence brands competing on product attributes only have faced severe issues. Marketers and consumers pay more attention to the symbolic aspects of the brand rather than its rational or functional attributes (Yoon, 2014). Hence, researches generally believe that it is not sufficient to understand consumers behaviour by using rational attributes alone (Yoon, 2014). Therefore, brand personality has been taken a great deal in creating attention for symbolic attributes of a brand. As a result, the face validity of brand personality has been accepted by a wider community, including practitioners (Plummer, 2000) and academics (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998).

2.5. Celebrity Endorser & Brand Personality

To create the favourable indications of the product, the marketers often use celebrities to endorse their products, which influence the consumer to plan the celebrity's personalities into the brand that helps create a positive attitude towards the brand in the mind of the target customers (Farhat & Khan, 2011). Nike uses Michael Jordan as the brand endorser to create the brand personality as an active, hi-tech and professional (Yoon, 2004). Marketers create the brand personality to project it, and can be selected, manipulated and created (product related and non-product related ways) by the marketers over time (Plummer, 2000). Plummer (2000) claims personal factors, such as personality and socio-demographic profile of the endorser can affect the consumers' perception of the brand. Thus, the entrepreneur celebrity endorsement can effectively reach the consumers by developing the desired brand personality by the communicators. Aaker (1997) classifies brand personality dimensions as sincerity, excitement,

competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Sincerity is comprised of brand personality characteristics like domestic, honest, and genuine (Farhat & Khan, 2011). The Excitement consists of characteristics like exciting, trendy, spirited, and up-to-date. Competence includes characteristics such as reliable, responsible, and efficient. Sophistication is characterized by pretentious, glamorous and charming. Ruggedness incorporates characteristics of tough, strong, and outdoorsy. (Farhat et al., 2011).

In consumer buying behaviour, the congruity between the self-concept and brand image is a frequently studied area. According to Sirgy et al. (1982), self-congruity subject is used to explain product use and ownership, predict brand attitude, brand loyalty and purchase intention (Farhat et al., 2011). The purpose of congruency is to assess the appropriateness between the brand and the other entity. As explained by Hawkins, Best & Coney (1983), a good matchup between celebrity image and product images will receive high effectiveness score, in terms of advertisement and celebrity effectiveness measures. Further, Mowen (1980) also emphasizes the need for endorser-product congruence in the context of a balance model approach to product endorser effectiveness (Farhat et al., 2011). The fitness related to celebrity spokesperson and product endorsement has been examined by De Sabo & Harshman (1985) and has introduced factor-analytic procedure to uncover the perception-cognitive overtones of both product and spokesperson. McCracken (1989) also states that the effectiveness of the endorser depends, in part, upon the meaning he or she brings to the endorsement process (Kaputa, 2013). Thus, it seems a rational that the congruence between the celebrity and the brand endorsed should have to be a positive impact on the brand's image (Dissanayaka, & Weerasiri, 2017).

3. Case Reviews on Entrepreneur Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Personality Congruity

Most successful entrepreneurs not only brand their organizations, they tie them to personal brands, infusing their business brands with their personalities, values and leadership styles (Kaputa, 2013). They are visionaries who know that branding's soft power trumps the hard power of credentials and quantifiable things listed on a balance sheet, the soft power encompasses the image, intellectual property, reputation network and relationship of the company, the intangible assets that attract people to brand (Kaputa, 2013). Consider Richard Branson at Virgin and the late Steve Jobs from Apple, each has masterfully leveraged his story, philosophies, interest and personality to brand the company in tandem with himself (Kaputa, 2013).

According to Kaputa (2013) brand entrepreneurs have the ability to see the big picture, connect with people emotionally, and embrace change. Also, entrepreneurs are not shy away from visibility and they work to be the "human embodiment" of their companies. Brand entrepreneurs always think about the outside, because they do not start by examining their companies in particular. Kaputa (2013) further explains entrepreneurs first consider the larger industry, their customers and competitors. Finally, brand entrepreneurs are challenging the status quo without fear to experiment and always attentive to what can be fixed or improved where there are gaps. According to the above different characteristics of the brand entrepreneurs, the author has strived to discuss the relevant brand personality trait related to the practical applications in order to the different cases. According to Joshi (2017) the billionaire business magnate in United Kingdom, Richard Branson is a shining example of what well-nurtured personal brand can do for professional fortune. Branson has been showcased as a champion for innovation and disruption. He runs about 400 companies counting airline, mobile, financial services, music and more. If Richard Branson's personal brand association is removed, it would have been appeared less

identical lesser-known businesses doing the same thing. However, Branson has taken them to a different level, all because of his personal branding has been transferred to the corporate brand of Virgin as an entrepreneur celebrity endorser. According to Joshi (2007) on social media, Richard Branson is a top draw. More people follow him on LinkedIn (more than 10.9 million) than anybody else on that platform. He has about 03 million followers on Facebook, and another 10.4 million on Twitter. According to Aaker (1997), dimensions of brand personality, the Excitement & Competence characteristics are more relevant to the personality brand trait that has been transferred by Richard Branson to the corporate brand of Virgin to create its brand personality. It consists of exciting, trendy, spirited and efficient characteristics. Branson always believes that authentic value you create that makes impact to the world in a positive way. It denotes that fun, adventure and a dare-devil attitude (Joshi, 2007).

Steve Job from Apple is also one of the cases that can be discussed under the concept of entrepreneur celebrity endorsement towards brand personality development. As stated by Hak (2016), Jobs developed a cohesive aesthetic identity that made his products stand out from all of the other consumer electronics. He also developed a unique visual identity for himself; his jeans and turtleneck uniform conveyed the message that he was interested simple, effective approaches. Steve Jobs turned Apple into a powerhouse of a brand through effective brand endorsement in different media. Steve Jobs wasn't just a tech guru; he was a renaissance man with the knowledge in literature and the art at Berkeley, and he brought that expertise to bear on his work at Apple (Hal, 2016). Thus, the personal brand uniqueness of Steve Job has effectively transferred to the corporate brand of Apple creating a unique brand personality through cohesive and aesthetic look. Alan Michael Sugar is also a British business magnate and founder of

Amstrad, media personality, politician and political adviser who transferred his self-brand personality to his business as an entrepreneur celebrity endorser in creating a brand personality (Sullivan, 2016). Jennifer Lopez, the famous singer, actress, and model, the sportswear brand named JLO has been recently launched by Jennifer Lopez. To the media and public she bills as an entrepreneur. The Sweet face Fashion is the partnering company of Jennifer Lopez for the business purpose is the joint venture, where the company designs, markets, manufactures, and sells Jennifer Lopez's sportswear collection. Although by licensing out her name Lopez could be considered as engaging in entrepreneurial behaviour that "drives the market process" (Davidsson, 2004). Further explaining the activities, she performed for the company are more similar to what is normally considered an endorsement (Kamen et al., 1975).

In the Sri Lankan context, there are cases that can be taken out to discuss how entrepreneurs brand personality has been transferred to corporate brands. Otara Gunawardene is a female entrepreneur who converted the retail sector in Sri Lanka with ODEL. Initially, she has formulated the concept of CSR to raise funds to assist animals, development into a lifestyle brand that is renowned for its international attraction and standard (Business today, 2017). According to Business Today (2017) Otara is a fashion icon and a trendsetter who is the first to introduce the department store concept to Sri Lanka. Otara expanded Odel's corporate social responsibility (CSR) operations toward the rescue, rehabilitation and empowerment of the neglected street dogs of Sri Lanka. Odel's CSR had already made a significant impact with environmental campaigns, beach clean ups, tree planting and funding of wildlife conservation projects creating positive change and awareness throughout the island (Business Today, 2017). Thus, she knew that to align public perception towards a compassionate outcome for 'pets' would not be easy when

conceptualising the Embark vision as a brand personality creator. According to the integrity personality characteristic, anything-is-possible attitude has been transferred by Otara as an entrepreneur celebrity endorser to her corporate business using an effective media platform. Kumar Sangakkara & Mahela Jayawardana are former legends of Sri Lankan Cricket who are running a successful business under the brand name of the Ministry of Crabs. The Ministry of crabs is an exclusive sea food restaurant chain which has expanded its business horizons to the global market, as an effective business (www.ministryofcrab.com). Thus, the personal brand uniqueness of Kumar & Mahela has been effectively transferred to the corporate brand of the Ministry of Crabs in creating a unique brand personality through exclusive and credible look.

The theoretical and practical implications of this study also provides managerial implications. The result of this case analysis help to understand the different application in the effective use of the celebrity entrepreneur endorsement towards the brand personality development of the business brands.

4. Conclusion and Further Research Directions

This concept paper has scope for researches as well as marketers through conceptual and case reviews such as brand personality scale developed by Aaker (1997) which was found out to be reliable and valid for the celebrity and brand. Thus it supports the Brand Personality Contrast and its use in marketing research. Also the review found an effect on celebrity personality on brand personality. This review supports the meaning transfer model of McCracken (1989) which proves that personality is a part of the meaning which is transferred to a brand. For marketers, this

concept paper reinstates that there will be an impact of the entrepreneur celebrity personality on the brand personality. Thus, in case of brand personality, care should have been taken before going for the celebrity endorsement, since there may be a transfer of some personality attributes of the celebrity to the brand. According to Cialdini (2001) consumers who are aware of and understand this potential source influence will be in a better position to fight its effects (Hunter, 2009). Thus organizations will be more concerned to investigate that celebrity entrepreneur could be a more effective communicator rather than the unrelated celebrity endorser. However, to influence this, it is important that they should have understood the source of a credibility's effectiveness in communication. In this regard, empirical reviews have shown the importance of a celebrity's expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness (Erdogan, 1999). In this effect, the study contributes both to the celebrity endorsement and brand personality subject and directs for more future research in this area related to analysis of the congruity of multiple entrepreneur celebrity endorsers and multiple brands to develop brand a personality index to identify right personality traits for brand development. This paper made a specific attention on Sri Lankan practises on celebrities in the use of branding strategies. Alongside, we do propose to examine the overall effectiveness of the use of entrepreneur endorsements towards brand performances rather limiting to marketing promotional effect.

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