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## The Impact of Celebrity Branding on Communication Effectiveness; In Case of Entertainment Celebrities

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### ABSTRACT

*The dynamic world of marketing communication has become multi-coloured and busy with advertisements, and it is hard to get noticed. It is an uphill task for the designer of an advertising campaign to differentiate itself from others and attract viewers' attention. Thus, celebrity branding in advertisement and its impact on the overall communication effectiveness is of great significance. Celebrities are people who enjoy specific public recognition by a large number of certain groups of people. They have some characteristics like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills that are not commonly observed. Thus, it can be said that within Sri Lankan society, celebrities generally differ from the common people and enjoy a high degree of public awareness. The study aims at investigating the impact of celebrity branding (celebrity endorsements) with respect to their celebrity attractiveness, celebrity credibility and product congruence on communication effectiveness which consists of customers' brand awareness, purchase intention and brand recall. Celebrity branding seems to be the latest and widely used technique by marketers these days. This paper tests the efficacy of this marketing tool. Data has been collected from 100 respondents in questionnaire form. Pearson Correlation, Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient, Regression Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha were run in SPSS to verify the devised model. As the key findings of the research; when the celebrity branding is high; the communication effectiveness also tends to be high to a certain extent (Pearson Correlation 0.754). Significant results were deduced to enforce the hypotheses that Celebrity Branding does have impact on Communication Effectiveness. Further research can be conducted in this research by changing the demographics of respondents and expanding the research horizon to check the significance of media in marketing and promotion.*

**KEYWORDS:** *celebrity endorsement, celebrity attractiveness, celebrity credibility, brand awareness, purchase intention.*

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## 1. Introduction

Celebrity branding is a type of branding, or advertising, in which a celebrity uses his or her status in society to promote a product, service or charity. Marketers pay millions to celebrities hoping that they endorse and make them more appealing and successful.

The theory behind the use of celebrity is featuring stars in advertising has special cultural significance, born from unique way they have constructed an image through various forms of media. In associating the celebrities with the product, these special meanings are passed on to the products or brands. In a competitive market, a famous face can give a brand an added appeal and help it to stand out. Celebrities have particular configurations of meanings that cannot be found elsewhere.

The modern world of marketing communication has become colourful and submerged with advertisement and it's hard to get noticed. It is an uphill task for the designer of an advertisement campaign to distinguish itself from others and attract viewer attention. In this busy era, people tend to ignore all commercials and advertisements, but even then the glamour of a celebrity seldom goes unnoticed. Thus celebrity endorsements in advertisements and its impact on the overall brand are of great significance (Chakrabarty and Agrawal, 2005).

The celebrities from the entertainment industry in Sri Lanka and have lately been famous for endorsing products; singing artists and actors have been used by some companies with an objective to increase their product's market share and achieve the overall marketing communication goals. This research concerns the use of celebrities from the entertainment industry in Sri Lanka in order to measure its marketing communication effectiveness.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

The knowledge acquired during the preliminary data collection phase of the research process helped to understand the broader and general concept of celebrity branding and the factors that make this concept an effective strategy. The precise problem statement can be drawn up for discussion and research as follows.

“How effective is celebrity branding from the field of entertainment in Sri Lanka?”

What are the factors associated between brand awareness and celebrity attractiveness?

Is there an association between purchase intention and celebrity credibility?

How are brand recall and celebrity product congruence interrelated?

### 1.2. Objective/s of the Study

- To identify association between brand awareness and celebrity attractiveness.
- To find association between purchase intention and celebrity credibility.
- To examine the association between brand recall and celebrity credibility-product congruence.
- To identify the extent to which celebrities from the field of entertainment in Sri Lanka have made a difference in the minds of the consumers about the perception of a particular company or product.

## 2. Review of Literature

Celebrities are people who enjoy specific public recognition by a large number of certain groups of people. They have some characteristic attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills that are not commonly observed. Thus, it can be said that within a society, celebrities generally differ from the common people and enjoy a high degree of public awareness. According to Friedman and Friedman, a “celebrity endorser is an individual who is known by the public for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed”. Compared to other endorser types, famous people always attract a greater degree of attention, recall and loyalty.

Many in the industry believe that celebrities can build brands; some consider celebrity branding a misuse of millions of dollars (Advertising Crossing, 2007). In a world increasingly filled with advertising clutter, marketers are trying to find new ways to cut through the noise and send their message straight to the consumer. Although the phenomenon of celebrity endorsements is not new, there has been a resurgence of this trend in recent times.

Clark & Horstman, 2003 had made several hypotheses regarding the celebrity branding like

01). It gives recall value to the product, 02). Celebrity attributes enhance the product, 03). The image of the celebrity transfers into the product and the person who uses the product also attaches to the image.

Mishra & Beatty, 1990, Petty et al, 1983 and Menon et al, 2001 find similar findings. According to these studies people relate themselves more to the product and like the product when the product is being

endorsed by popular celebrity. About 20% of U.S. ads feature celebrities (Solomon 2009), and the percent of ads using celebrities in other countries, such as Japan, is thought to be even higher. Traditional explanations of celebrity endorsement persuasion effects are based on the source effects literature and find that

- 01). Celebrity endorsement increases the attention paid to an add (Buttle, Raymond, and Danziger 2000);
- 02). Celebrities are generally attractive, which helps persuasion. When consumers are worried about social acceptance and others' opinions (DeBono and Harnish 1988) or when the product is attractiveness-related (Kahle and Homer 1985,, Kamins 1990);
- 03). Celebrities may be credible sources if they have expertise in a particular area, such as an athlete endorsing shoes (Ratneshwar and Chiaken 1991) or a beautiful model endorsing make-up (Baker and Churchill 1983);
- 04). Celebrities are often well-liked, possibly leading to identification and consumer persuasion in an attempt to seek some type of relationship with the celebrity (Belch and Belch 2007). In traditional dual process models (e.g. ELM; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983)

Celebrities are most often considered a peripheral cue; they are important in persuasion only when consumers are not involved in the product category or in processing the add. However, celebrities may provide central information when an aspect of the celebrity matches the product (as with beauty products and attractiveness; Kahle and Homer1985). Also, as affective peripheral cues, celebrity endorsements may lead media weight to have an impact on sales in mature categories (McInnis, rao, and Weiss 2002).

Lasith Malinga, the Sri Lankan fast bowler, who has won millions of hearts of cricket fans in Sri Lanka and abroad, recently signed an agreement with AMW to work as the brand ambassador for Yamaha. After this agreement, the company experienced an increase in sales of 19 percent within one month for the Yamaha Gladiator bike. A local agent for AMW attributed this success to the popularity of Lasith Malinga and desire of the youth in Sri Lanka to follow this unique style. The company said that it expects even more growth in sales within the next few months (Sunday Times).

A recent study estimates that approximately 25 percent of American commercials use celebrity branding and in support of the study, research has confirmed that widespread employment of celebrities in advertising campaigns is chiefly due to more favorable advertisement ratings and product evaluations and can have a substantial impact on financial returns for the companies that use them. One possible explanation for the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is that consumers believe that the celebrities have a genuine affection towards the products that they endorse. (Silvera and Austad, 2003)

Celebrity Endorsements as a branding strategy and its widespread use is a modern day approach that companies use to effectively outplay and edge-out competitors. Research has found that celebrities are more effective than other types of endorsers, such as "The professional expert", "The company expert" and etc. To capitalize on this effectiveness, in 2004 Gillette signed an endorsement deal with soccer celebrity David Beckham worth between US \$ 30 US \$ 50 million. In 2003 Nike spent millions of dollars on celebrity endorsements, two of whom were the basket baller Michael Jordan and the golfer Tiger Woods.

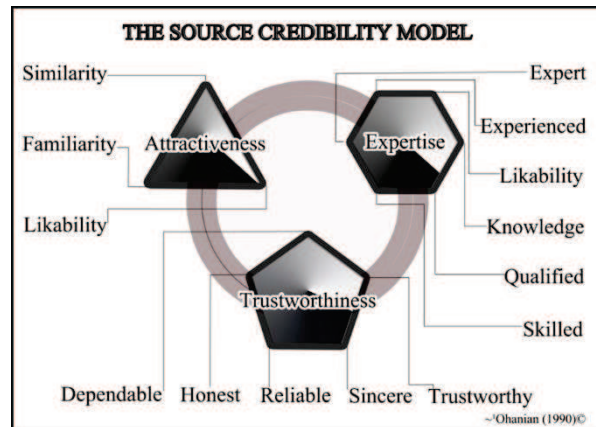
Not all celebrity endorsements have had positive returns; in that aspect the selection of celebrity becomes vital. The celebrity should have high recognition, high positive affect and high appropriateness to the product. Britney Spears has high recognition but negative affect among many groups. Michael Jordan has high recognition, high positive affect but will not be appropriate to advertise cosmetics products. In simple terms if an endorsement does not fit a star's perceived identity then it can work against the image of the celebrity as well as the product's. (Kotler, 2006, pg507)

Research has shown that because of the fame of celebrities, they do not only create and maintain attention of the consumers but they also achieve high message recall (Ohanain, 1991; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997). However, companies have limited control over the celebrity's personal which can also result in high risk and "no gain" situations (e.g. the "scandals" surrounding celebrities like Michael Jackson, Kate Moss, Britney Spears, Paris Hilton). As a result, companies build characters (using people who are not celebrities) which are congruent with their brands and target-audiences, and ensure that these characters are endorsing only one particular product. Tom et al. (1992) found that created endorses were more effective in creating a link to the product than celebrity endorsers. Mehta (1994) has found that there were no significant differences for the concepts 'attitudes towards the advertisement', 'attitude towards the brand' and 'intentions to purchase endorsed brands' between celebrity and non-celebrity endorsement advertisements. When confronted with non-celebrity endorsers, consumers the subjects were significantly more concentrated on the celebrity in the advertisement. However, Atkin and Block (1983) and Petty et al. (1983) have found the opposite results of Mehta (1994).

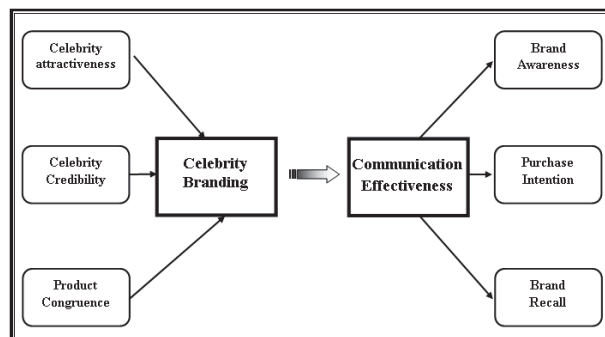
Potential advantages of utilizing celebrity endorses are that it can increase attention; polish the image of the brand, especially when a brand will be introduced in the market or a repositioning of a brand will take place. However, pre-testing and careful planning is very important and the life-cycle stage of the celebrity has also been taken into account (De Pelsmacker, 2004). Celebrity endorsing has a potential advantage

when a global campaign will be organized and the celebrities who were appropriate for a global target audience can be used; however this can be also very expensive. In general, potential hazards of celebrity endorsement are the costs and that the possibility that the celebrity overshadows the brand, or that it can change the image, that overexposure of the celebrity takes place (especially when a celebrity become an endorser for many different products) (ZaferErdogan, 1999). In the literature, two general models are often used to analyze celebrity endorsement: the source credibility model and the source attractiveness model. Both models will be described below. Furthermore, a description of the endorsed brands and the match between the celebrity and the product is given.

Figure shown below develops Ohanian's (1990) model of source credibility by including these variables as alternatives to the physical characteristics typically associated with attractiveness in source models.



The literature review conducted above allows constructing a conceptual framework that helps to identify the network of connections in the form of relationship among the variables that constitute the defined problem. A deductive method has been chosen considering the time constraints on the research. Through identifying the dependent and independent variable it was possible to develop the conceptual framework.



Billions of dollars spent per year and research have proved a positive and desirable relationship between celebrity and effectiveness in the global context. Celebrities like Tiger Woods and female athlete, tennis player and Wimbledon championship winner in 2002 have both been signed up for agreements of millions of dollars by Nike and Reebok. Therefore theory and practice both proves that use of superstars in advertising generates a lot of publicity and attention from the public and thus is more effective than any other form of advertising (Schlecht 2003).

However to find the relationship between celebrity branding and effectiveness in the Sri Lankan context, the following hypothesis is generated:

- H0- There is no relationship between celebrity branding and communication effectiveness (Corr: = 0)
- H1- There is a relationship between celebrity branding and communication effectiveness (Corr: ≠ 0)
- H1- There is a relationship between celebrity attractiveness and brand awareness
- H2- There is a relationship between celebrity attractiveness and purchase intention
- H3- There is a relationship between celebrity attractiveness and brand recall
- H4- There is a relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness
- H5- There is a relationship between celebrity credibility and purchase intention

- H6- There is a relationship between celebrity credibility and brand recall.  
H7- There is a relationship between product congruency and brand awareness.  
H8- There is a relationship between product congruency and purchase intention  
H9- There is a relationship between product congruency and brand recall.

### 3. Methodology

The research design pertaining to this research is the explanatory research, carried out to establish the correlation between celebrity branding and marketing communication effectiveness in Sri Lanka from the field of entertainment and sports which has already been explored in other parts of the world.

This correlation study is to be undertaken in a no contrived study setting, in which a normal or natural setting exists. Due to the natural nature of the study there is minimum researcher interference required to investigate this study. This is known as a field study and hence the relationship between celebrity branding and marketing communication effectiveness will be conducted using sample surveys.

After all the secondary forms of data have been collected in order to identify the broad area of interest in the preliminary data gathering phase of the research process, primary sources have to be used in order to conduct an explanatory research to test the relationship between celebrity branding and communication effectiveness in Sri Lankan. The research approach used would be a deductive with the use of developed hypothesis.

#### 3.1. Sample Frame

Population of this study is people who expose to Sri Lankan Television advertisements.

The sample frame includes the population of which the research is conducted. The population for this research included recipients of private email data base which excludes age, gender, location in Sri Lanka or any other demographic factor other than been a member of a predefined data base, and part of the data was gathered from collecting questionnaire forms from respondents based on convenience sampling.

Expected sample size is 100 and earliest is 100 respondents were taken.

### 4. Results and discussions

The data analysis techniques have been used based on the previous studies. The impact of one dependent variable is taken as the influence on one independent variable. So to measure the celebrity and consumer attitude measures of dispersion have been used.

In order to achieve the purpose of the study and to satisfy the objectives of the study in a measurable way (Statistically), the following statistical techniques were employed to analyze the survey data of the sample.

All the data analysis procedures were accomplished with the assistance of SPSS software.

Dimensions	Descriptions	Indicators
<b>Celebrity Branding</b>		
Celebrity Attractiveness	The physical and non-physical beauty such as Classy, Beautiful Elegant	Classy
		Beautiful
		Elegant
Celebrity credibility	Credibility is the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skill or experience and trusts the source to give unbiased, objective information.	Trustworthy
		Expertise
Celebrity Congruency	The match-up between the celebrity and the nature of the product.	Familiarity
		Congruent
		Good fit
		Believability
<b>Communication effectiveness</b>		
Brand Awareness	Ability to identify the brand within the category, in sufficient detail to make a purchase.	Heard the brand
		know the brand
Purchase Intention	The intention of the consumer to purchase the brand.	Likelihood of purchasing
		Likelihood of purchasing when the product is seen in a store
		Activeness in seeking the product
Product Recall	The ability to recall the brand under varying conditions.	Remember
		Preference

#### 4.1 Testing of Hypothesis

**Correlations**

		Attractiveness	Brand_Awareness
Attractiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, moderate relationship between Attractiveness of celebrities and Brand Awareness. It means that the brand awareness is not highly influenced by the attractiveness of the celebrity.

**Correlations**

		Attractiveness	Purchase_Intention
Attractiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, moderate relationship between Attractiveness of celebrities and purchase intention. It means that the purchase intention is not highly influenced by the attractiveness of the celebrity.

**Correlations**

		Attractiveness	Brand_Recall
Attractiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, moderate relationship between Attractiveness of celebrities and brand recall. It means that the brand recall is not highly influenced by the attractiveness of the celebrity.

**Correlations**

		Credibility	Brand_Awareness
Credibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.502**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, moderate relationship between credibility of celebrities and brand awareness. It means that the brand awareness is not highly influenced by the credibility of the celebrity.

**Correlations**

	Credibility	Purchase_Intention
Credibility Pearson Correlation	1	.670**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, strong relationship between credibility of celebrities and purchase intention. It means that the purchase intention is highly influenced by the credibility of the celebrity.

**Correlations**

	Credibility	Brand_Recall
Credibility Pearson Correlation	1	.536**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, moderate relationship between credibility of celebrities and brand recall. It means that the brand recall is not highly influenced by the credibility of the celebrity.

**Correlations**

	Product_congruence	Brand_Awareness
Product_congruence Pearson Correlation	1	.413**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, weak relationship between product congruency and brand awareness. It means that the product congruency is not highly influenced by the brand awareness.

**Correlations**

	Product_congruence	Purchase_Intention
Product_congruence Pearson Correlation	1	.669**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, strong relationship between product congruency and purchase intention. It means that the purchase intention is highly influenced by the product congruency.

**Correlations**

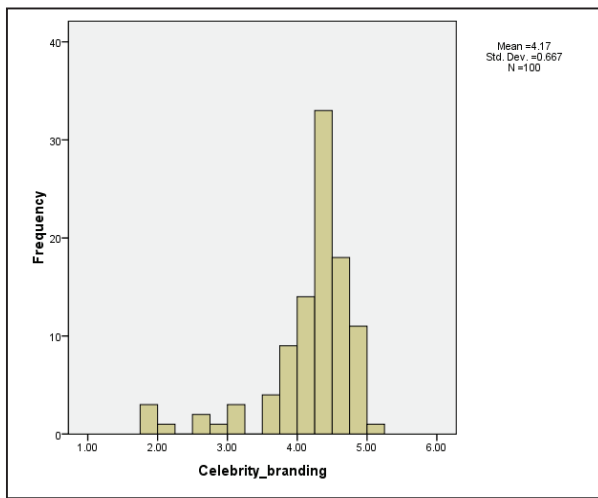
	Product_congruence	Brand_Recall
Product_congruence Pearson Correlation	1	.509**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

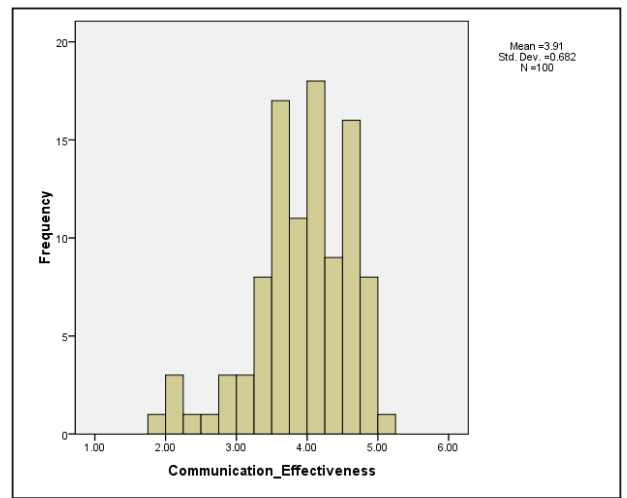
According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, moderate relationship between product congruency and brand recall. It means that the brand recall is not highly influenced by the product congruency.

Histogram - Celebrity branding



[Source: Survey Data]

Histogram - Communication effectiveness



[Source: Survey Data]

**T-Test**

$\mu_1$ : mean value of Celebrity branding

$\mu_2$ : mean value of Communication effectiveness

H0:  $\mu_1 \leq \mu_2$

H1:  $\mu_1 \geq \mu_2$

Decision rule  $\rightarrow$  P value  $\leq$   $\delta$  value; Reject H0

**Paired Samples Statistics**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Celebrity_branding	4.1728	100	.66670	.06667
Communication_Effectiveness	3.9122	100	.68244	.06824

**Paired Samples Correlations**

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Celebrity_branding & Communication_Effectiveness	100	.754	.000

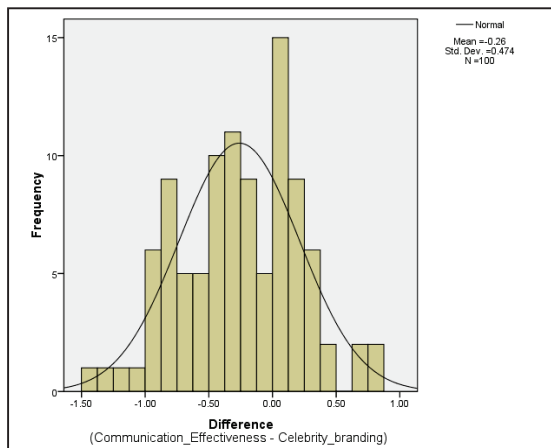


**Paired Samples Test**

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 CB CE	.26056	.47368	.04737	.16657	.35454	5.501	99	.000

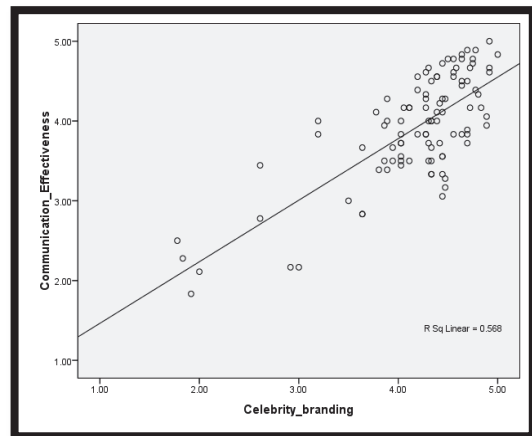
CB-Celebrity\_branding, CE-Communication\_Effectiveness  
[Source: Survey Data]

Histogram -Difference



[Source: Survey]

Scatter diagram - Celebrity branding and Communicationeffectiveness



[Source: Survey]

Hypothesis on celebrity branding and Communication effectiveness

H0- There is no relationship between celebrity branding and communication effectiveness  
(Correlation = 0)

H1- There is a relationship between celebrity branding and communication effectiveness  
(Correlation ≠ 0)

**Correlations**

		Celebrity_branding	Communication_Effectiveness
Celebrity_branding	Pearson Correlation	1	.754**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Communication_Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	.754**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

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

[Source: Survey Data]

According to the above table it can be seen that there is positive, strong relationship between Celebrity branding and Communication effectiveness. It means that the Communication effectiveness is highly influenced by the celebrity branding.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As per the major research questions and the research objective stated on the identifying the Impact of Celebrity Branding on Communication Effectiveness of Entertainment Celebrities in Sri Lanka, the conclusions are explained under the research objective.

The brief assessment of the Sri Lankan consumer perception on celebrity branding analysis indicates, that celebrity endorsement advertising strategy can under the right circumstances indeed justify the high costs associated with this form of advertising. The uses of celebrity for branding create favorable impact on the consumer and it creates a connection which forces a consumer to purchase a product. However, as several failures show, it is essential for advertisers to be aware of the complex process underlying celebrity branding.

Celebrity branding can be a goldmine or a minefield for a company's brand building process. There have been extensive studies relating to the process of celebrity branding and brand-building, these studies indicate that celebrity endorsement has worked well in some consumer segments while failing in others. Few celebrities have been more successful than those with almost parallel fame. So the role of celebrity branding in the advertising space is equivocal and cannot be seen as an assured strategic tool to win profits, market share, revenues, etc.

Modern day consumers are well educated and smart, they know celebrities are being paid for these endorsements and this knowledge makes consumers rather more cynical about the product and celebrity branding. Majority of the consuming population also know what is advertising and how it actually works and this knowledge of consumer makes the task of celebrity branding all the more difficult and challenging for the advertising companies and sponsors.

This research result confirms some of the key findings reported in the literature, but also contain some differences with what other researchers have found; as the positive relationships found in all nine relationships under consideration are moderate or strong positive relationships. This may be due to the sample used, demographic and geographic differences and the fact that only small number products of the few product categories were considered. However, most of the literature on this subject dates to the 2000's and significant cultural changes and developments in consumer product categories have occurred since.

However, the result suggest tentatively that the use of attractive celebrities could be as effective in influencing attitudes and purchase intentions as the use of celebrity endorses across very different products. Ex- a famous celebrity is ranked attractive and has a high influence on brand awareness, purchase intention and product recall as well. A poorly matched-up celebrity endorser, on the other hand, is in nearly all cases amongst the least effective advertisements.

Data was collected through the survey method by questionnaires. A questionnaire was developed and distributed among the members of sample to gather data. Statistical techniques; mean, median, mode and variances are some of the techniques use to analyze data.

- **Celebrity Attractiveness**

The first factor of the celebrity branding is Celebrity Attractiveness. According to the calculations by using the statistical software (SPSS) here Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.799; since the Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7 it can be concluded that the scale is reliable.

The tables give the Pearson correlations as below;

**Celebrity Attractiveness and Brand Awareness = 0.557      Celebrity Attractiveness and Purchase intention =0.575**

**Celebrity Attractiveness and Brand Recall =0.581**

Therefore it can be concluded that there is a positive and moderate correlation between Celebrity Attractiveness and Communication Effectiveness.

Based on the above findings it can be concluded that, attractiveness of a celebrity used in advertising would moderately affect the communication effectiveness. Out of above mentioned indicators, celebrity attractiveness has the major impact on brand recall.

More precisely, when the attractiveness is high; the communication effectiveness also tends to be high to a certain extent.

- **Celebrity Credibility.**

The second factor of the celebrity branding under consideration is Credibility. This was measured under two variables. According to the statistical calculations done in the previous chapter, Spearman's

Correlation is 0.642. SPSS outputs indicate that there is a positive and relatively strong correlation between two indicators. So it can be concluded that the scale is reliable.

The tables give the Pearson Correlation or the coefficient of correlation values as below;

Correlation between

**Celebrity Credibility and Brand Awareness =0.502**

**Celebrity Credibility and Purchase Intention =0.670**

**Celebrity Credibility and Brand Recall =0.536**

Therefore this can be concluding as there is a moderate positive relationship. Further this can be said that celebrity credibility has direct and little bit strong positive effect to the communication effectiveness.

Based on the above findings it can be concluded that, attractiveness of a celebrity used in advertising would moderately affect the communication effectiveness. Out of above mentioned indicators, celebrity credibility has the major impact on Purchase Intention.

More precisely, when the credibility is high; the communication effectiveness also tends to be high to a certain extent.

More specifically, most of celebrities who are in advertisements do not have expertise knowledge over product and they are not much trustworthy. If companies can use more knowledgeable celebrities, for an example, celebrities who are engaging in relevant field, companies can increase the purchase influence of people and can increase the brand recall value more effectively. According to the responses we received from the questionnaires, most of people would like to feel the expertise knowledge of the endorser, but they don't experience it in some advertisements. If a company wants the celebrity to be seen as credible then the consumers must perceive them to be trustworthy and have the expertise to speak about a product or a service (Miciak and Shanking, 1994).

- **Celebrity Product Congruency**

The third factor of the celebrity branding is celebrity product congruency. According to the statistical calculations done in the analysis chapter Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.872; since the Cronbach's Alpha is greater than 0.7 it can be concluded that the scale is reliable.

The tables give the Pearson correlations as below;

Correlation between

**Product Congruency and Brand Awareness =0.413**

**Product Congruency and Purchase Intention =0.669**

**Product Congruency and Brand Recall =0.509**

Therefore, this can be concluded as there is a positive but moderate relationship between product congruency and brand awareness; and positive strong relationship between other four dimensions.

Based on the above findings it can be concluded that, congruency of a celebrity used in advertising would moderately affect the communication effectiveness. Out of above mentioned indicators, celebrity congruency has the major impact on Purchase Intention.

More precisely, when the celebrity congruency is high; the communication effectiveness also tends to be high to a certain extent.

Simply, higher the celebrity product congruency, it will lead to higher influence on communication effectiveness.

As can be interpreted from the results, celebrity branding has reasonable impact on customers as per their attitude, Brand Awareness, purchase intention, and Brand Recall. Celebrity branding has come out as not only an influential factor but rather a causal factor in the results of this study. Physical attractiveness, credibility and congruence of celebrity with reference to the endorsed advertisement all have impact on the customer's perception about the advertised product. The tests have by and large bore favourable significant results in the light of variables used. Thus, celebrity endorsements do result in sales hike. Hence the up and about trend these days.

Another implication of this study is that it goes out to show the extent to which today's customer is aware and influenced by media. Celebrities are worshipped as icons now. If the customer perceives the physical attractiveness, credibility and the match between celebrity and the product to be favourable, he is being influenced to like that product which leads to the purchase of that product. Features of the product itself take secondary importance.

## 5.1. Recommendations

Even though it is said that the celebrity branding directly effects on influencing consumers, in long run this should not take for granted. As the celebrity branding carry both negative impacts and the positive impacts as well and it needs to be managed properly. As in a world full of faces, the ones' which bolt from the blue

are perhaps of the celebrities. The advertisers are always on the lookout for such faces for the purpose of endorsement. But, the major challenge before them is to find the right faces for their brands or in other words celebrity management.

According to the findings and conclusions which stated above under the “Attractiveness” dimension, the most important indicator was “elegant”. Therefore when we design an advertisement which appearing a celebrity we have to concerned about the elegant. It is more important than classy, and beautiful.

Under the “Credibility” dimension, the most important indicator was “expertise” therefore when we design an advertisement which appearing a celebrity we have to concern about the expertise. It is more important than trustworthy.

The next dimension is Product congruency. Under the “Product Congruency” dimension, the most important indicator was “Believability” therefore when we design an advertisement which appearing a celebrity we have to be concerned about the expertise. It is more important than Familiarity, Congruent, and Good fit.

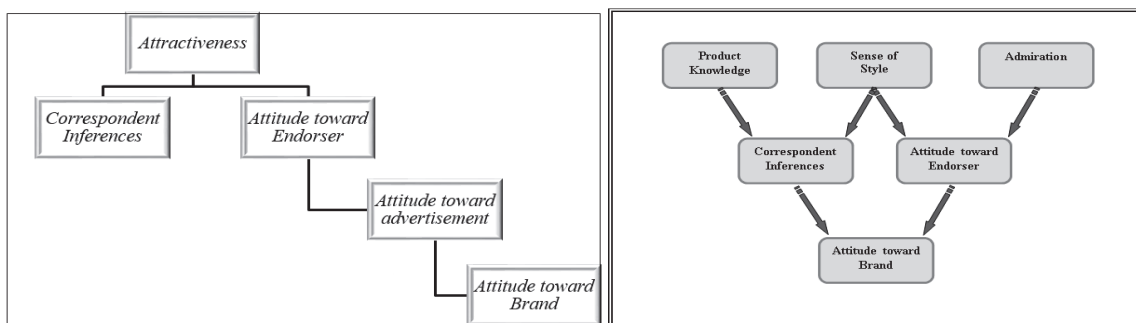
McCraken quotes, “In the best of all possible worlds, the marketing or advertising firm first would determine the symbolic properties sought for the product... It would then consult a roster of celebrities and the meanings they made available and taking into account budget and availability constraints would choose the celebrity who best represents the appropriate symbolic properties.” This suggests that the image of the celebrity must fit or be congruent with the product which can be explained from the theoretical perspective using a social cognition framework.

Study shows that the communication channel is also vital as celebrity in order to achieve the desired results. Moving beyond mainstream media like TV and Radio, creating brand engagement requires identifying the various touch-points where the potential consumer could interact with the brand in a positive manner and need to understand our target consumers’ interests, habits and leisure pursuits and determine which of these provide the opportunity to create branded environments and experiences where the brand becomes an integral and enjoyable part of such experiences. Branded outlets and events are such possibilities but there should be commitment and investment to pursue these on an owned, long-term basis rather than as one-offs.

Negative impacts of celebrity branding on the brand, is a major area in which a high attention should be given in managing brands as well as celebrities. More often talked about is the extreme usage of a celebrity called ‘Lazy advertising’, which is inadequate content, masked by usage of celebrity. A good example is the use of tele drama and movie actress Chathurika Pieris in Nestamolt advertisements by Nestle Company. Also has said earlier, associating with a star, in it does not guarantee sales. There is also the fear of Brand-celebrity disconnected which points out that if the celebrity used represents values that conflict with the brand values, the advertising would create conflict in the minds of the target audience.

According to the above explanation, it is much more important to pay attention on attractiveness of the celebrity. As a recommendation, a diagram on which an explanation has been done under the literature review can be shown as follows.

[Attractiveness diagram]



Clutter in celebrity branding is very prominent these days and such kind of over-exposure can be for the brand as the recall value drops by a huge margin. A popular drawback of celebrity branding is the ‘Vampire Effect’ or the celebrity overshadowing the brand. Some viewers forget the brand that a celebrity is approving. Others are so spellbound by the personality of the celebrity that they completely fail to notice the brand being advertised.

Example – Channa Wijewardena and Upuli Paneebharatha have been used in Milco advertisement which seems to be having the vampire effect.

Two new drawbacks can be seen these days what marketers call celebrity trap and celebrity over-credibility. Celebrity trap is when the celebrity becomes an addiction for the marketing team and the task to find substitutes becomes more and more difficult, leading to surfeit of celebrities. Example – Wasantha

Dukgannarala has been used in CIC Agri product advertisement over and over again which ultimately create the effect of celebrity trap.

Celebrity over-credibility refers to skepticism by the consumers regarding the celebrities, especially when there is anything negative regarding the celebrity associated with the brand in the news, then brand is bound to be affected. Example-There has been a negative image about the well-known actress Upeksha Swarnamali due to her misbehavior and family matters so it negatively affected the brand image of Watawala tea .Another main worry of the advertisers is that their celebrity endorsement would get caught in a scandal or an embarrassing situation.

Multiple product endorsement also has a negative impact on customers' purchasing intentions. Tripped et al. investigated the effects of the multiple product of endorsement by celebrities on customer's attitudes and intentions. They found that the number of products a celebrity endorses negatively influences consumer perception of the endorser and the advertising itself. It was suggested that when as many as four products are endorsed, celebrity credibility and likeability, as well as attitude towards the ad, may attenuate. Example – Sunil Perera has been in most of the advertisement representing various local and international brands which are marketed in Sri Lanka.

The budget or cost is an important factor for celebrity endorsement management. Developing on the status of the celebrity, remuneration could run into millions of rupees for several years or may also include a profit sharing plan. Whether Celebrity branding has a positive or a negative impact on the brand is a debate that is open to interpretation. But till the time the corporate world continues to foot fancy bills of celebrity endorsers and till consumers continue to be in awe of the stars, the party is not likely to break up.

Celebrity expertise is also another major factor which determines the communication effectiveness. So the previously mentioned diagram on celebrity expertise has been presented in the second diagram which has been illustrated above.

## 5.2 Research implications and future research areas

The research was done to assess the communication effectiveness of celebrities from entertainment sector of Sri Lanka and targeted entertainment celebrities for the study, which limit the scope of the wide subject area of celebrity branding effectiveness. The few products categories used in the study do not necessarily constitute a generalizable basket of all categories. More celebrities and more products need to be evaluated to have more meaning full picture on communication effectiveness.

The research area can be further expanded through considering general public as the sample as most of the marketing communication targeting mass public. And also, it would be interesting to analyze to what extent generational and cultural differences affect the relative effectiveness of different advertisements. Extending the research to other age groups, introducing regional variation (city vs. country-side) and covering nationals in more countries would be necessary to obtain results that can be more easily generalized. So a more expanded sample can have a major impact to the accuracy of the research study. The actual attitudes can only be identified by taking the general public as the sample population.

The networks of connections and possible impacts between independent and dependent variables of conceptual framework need to be examined. There could be significant interrelationships between variables and indicators other than what the study was focused of.

However, research has no limit and there is a room for extensive research in this regard in future. Since the results of this study are positive, another area of research can be impact and efficacy of media on its viewers with respect to marketing products.

Communication effectiveness does not solely depend on the reputation of the celebrity. There has been so many advertisements which have been successful not because of the celebrity but because of the content and way in which the message is delivered. So the research could be further extended to identify factors that affect communication effectiveness other than the celebrity endorsement.

Reputation of the celebrity might not last for a longer period. So the analysis of its impact on communication effectiveness would be other key areas to be tackled.

Further the communication effectiveness could be analyzed under each demographic characteristics of the viewer in future researches

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