

Celebrity Brand Congruence and Consumer Sentiments Towards Retail Fashion Industry in Sri Lankan Context: Examine the Mediating Effect of Brand Personality, Special Reference to the Western Province

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This study investigates the impact of celebrity brand congruence on consumer sentiments in the retail fashion industry of Sri Lanka, with brand personality considered as a mediating variable. In identifying these gaps in literature, the study particularly establishes the interaction between celebrity traits and brand attributes in relation to the behavior of consumers operating within a culturally specific setting. The study shall highlight actionable insights on how marketers may best utilize celebrity endorsements and align brand and celebrity personalities to foster better consumer attitude and perception.

A quantitative methodology was applied as per the nature of the research questions figured out, and the study was conducted among consumers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, within the age group of 15–40 years. Data were secured from 385 respondents through structured online surveys using a non-probability convenience sampling method. Responses were analyzed by SPSS. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses were also used to test hypotheses on celebrity brand congruence, brand personality, and consumer sentiments.

The results show that dimensions of celebrity brand congruence-image congruence, demographic congruence, personality congruence, and trustworthiness-strongly positively affect consumer sentiments. Brand personality mediates this relationship and strengthens the impact of congruence on sentiments. The study thus suggests that culturally relevant celebrities should be chosen, authenticity should be developed, and endorsements should be designed in such a way that they reflect the brand identity for better consumer attitude effects.

This research contributes to the theoretical literature on how brand personality mediates the effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer attitudes, hence deepening the understanding of consumer behavior within the Sri Lankan context. Practically, the findings will help marketers in optimizing celebrity endorsements to meet brand values and consumer expectations for better brand loyalty and equity. Future research should examine the generalizability of these findings across cultures and broaden the analysis to cover various demographic segments in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Celebrity Brand Congruence, Consumer sentiments, Brand personality, Retail fashion industry in Sri Lanka*