Influence of Celebrity Worship Motives (CWM) on Customer Brand Relationship (CBR) towards Services Brands

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ABSTRACT
Celebrity Worship Motives (CWM) determines how celebrities and consumers engage through a psychological bond. CWM intensifies the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement when resulting brand evaluations. CBR has been empirically tested as one of the brand-related behaviors resulted by different brand stimulus including celebrity endorsements. Moreover, CWM and CBR found to be significant research notions within celebrity endorsements-related studies whilst services sector is denoted as a specific research gap within. Inline, this study examines how CWM relates with CBR considering Sri Lanka as a specific context to of services sector. A deductive approach was followed to hypothesize the research questions. A questionnaire was employed as the research instrument. Sample was determined followed a multistage cluster sampling method, and finally 240 respondents were considered for the final analysis. Study used quantitative methods including inferential and descriptive statistical tools to analyze the data. Study found CWM impacts on CBR whilst aspirational motives was noted as a most significant influencer towards CBR. Paper concludes practical implications to industry and future research priorities were proposed accordingly.

Key Words: Celebrity Worship Motives, Customer Brand Relationship (CBR), Services Brands, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION
The celebrity endorsement comes through the character called celebrity. Celebrities make fame and public attention in the media covering both electronic, print and online channels (Shimp.2010). Usually, celebrities attribute community attraction, expertise, trust and respect that eventually hold an influential power on public or customers (Dissanayake, 2015; Hung, 2014; Seno & Lukas, 2007). Celebrity endorsement is a widely practiced communication and branding tool found across the markets and different product contexts (Dissanayake, 2015; Hung, 2014; Seno & Lukas, 2007). There are empirical arguments found claiming effectiveness of celebrity endorsement depends on source-based and management-based factors (Seno & Lukas, 2007, Shimp, 2010). There are theoretical and empirically tested models explaining contents related to effectiveness of celebrity endorsements including recently found TEARS model of Shimp (2010). TEARS model can be admired to employ in determining overall effectiveness of source-based factors in differently profiled consumer markets. Some studies argue the combined effect of both source-based and management-based factors determine holistic effectiveness of endorsed-message (Dissanayake, Ismail & Pahlevan Sharif, 2017; Seno

& Lukas, 2007; Zahaf & Anderson, 2008). Meanwhile, celebrity worship motives had been considered as another mechanism that shapes the consumer-celebrity psychological bond (Dissanayake, 2015). According to "Absorption-Addiction Model of McCutcheon, Lynn, Lange, & Houran (2002), it denotes celebrities result a cognitive bridge with consumers via para-social relationship. Such cognitive factors are named as celebrity worship motives (Hung, 2014). Conclusively, aspirational motives, entertainment motives and intense attachments are widely accepted as the celebrity worship motives (Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Hung, 2014; Hung, Tse & Cheng, 2011).

Meanwhile, relationship between celebrity worship motives with brand evaluation perspectives and brand relationship behaviors had been extendedly considered in recently held studies (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Dissanayake & Weerasir, 2017; Hung, 2014; Kumara, 2016). Studies discuss the role of celebrity worship motives towards such brand evaluations and brand-related behaviors that includes customer brand relationship (CBR) and brand evevangalism behaviors across different product categories (Dissanayake,et.al.2017;Hung,2014;Keller,2013). There are empirical studies specifically highlight services sector as a notable context to examine such relationships to unveil how celebrity worship motives act within brand-related behaviors and brand evaluation perspectives (Dissanayake & Weerasiri,2017;Ibok & Ibok,2013;Kumara,2016).

Context of the Study
Celebrity endorsements practices within the service sector brands are found as significant in Sri Lanka (Dissanayake, 2015; Kumara, 2016). The economy is transforming towards a more urbanized economy whilst services sector dominates in overall. In brief, service sector contributes nearly 60% to gross domestic production (GDP) in Sri Lankan economy whereas telecommunication, insurance, finance sector and hospitality provide a significant portion within (Central Bank Report, 2017). Celebrity endorsements practices are also found as significant within those services sectors (Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Kumara, 2016). Sri Lanka is a uniquely profiled market within the south Asian market context and its behavioral dynamics seem identical against other neighboring countries. The involvement of celebrities in Sri Lanka is dominated by Cricketers (Dissanayake, 2015). However, claims are found referring scant of empirical investigations to evaluate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements attributed by worship motives within Sri Lankan context (Dissanayake, 2015; Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Kumara, 2016). Alongside, this paper attempts to investigate how celebrity worship motives influence effective brand-related behaviors within the services sector of Sri Lanka. Alongside, customer brand relationship (CBR) is studied under the context of brand-related behaviors influenced by celebrity endorsements (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Doss & Carstens 2014; Kumara, 2016). Celebrity worship motives were found with the theoretical contribution of Absorption Addition Model and empirical explanations are found in recently held studies to rationalize the research gap (Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Hung, 2014; Kumara, 2016; McCutcheon et. al. 2002). The relationship between celebrity worship motives and customer brand relationship (CBR) is empirically justified to build the initial research questions and related objectives (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Doss, 2014; Kumara, 2016; McCutcheon et. al. 2002). Having said, this paper addresses undermentioned research questions and objectives.

Research Questions
This paper identifies four research questions addressing to empirical gaps and contextual importance as reviewed.
  a). What is the impact of celebrity worship motives towards CBR?
  b). How does aspirational motives relate with CBR?

c). what is the impact of playful motives toward in CBR?

d). How does intense attachment relate with CBR?

Research Objectives

According to the research questions, paper contributes to knowledge and practice via four main objectives as mentioned below.

a). To evaluate overall impact of celebrity worship motives toward in CBR.

b). To examine the relationship between celebrity playful motives and CBR.

c). To evaluate the relationship between celebrity intense attachment and CBR.

d). To examines the relationship between aspirational motives and CBR

LITERATURE REVIEW

Paper presents a brief on main concepts and empirical relationships with reference to CBR and Celebrity Worship Motives (CWM) as unmentioned.

Customer Brand Relationship (CBR)

Celebrities play a very important role in the market where the people are interested to buy the product based on the celebrity's life style and good personality (Keller, 2013). Thus, celebrity is able to repair tarnished brand images as well giving the proper message to the target market to use the product through source –based and management-based attributes (Seno & Lukas, 2007). Celebrity endorsement involves in advertising campaign and promotes a product or service from person to person (Keller, 2013). A celebrity results favorable buying decision of the customers and attracts more attention of consumers in cluttered conditions (Shimp, 2010). The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is increased or shaped when it holds a strong emotional bond with consumer-celebrity bond (Dissanayake, 2015). The brand can be felt as a mechanism that connects consumers and sellers with the intention of creating a long-term customer brand relationship, which is called the relationship builder (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013;Klaus & Maklan, 2007). Accordingly, customer brand relationship is evolved from the brand experience, brand knowledge and/or brand meaning that the customer associates with the brand. The relationship largely overhangs on the success of establishing a brand meaning, which is a crucial negotiator between brand experience and customer brand relationship (Şahin et al., 2011). CBR is reflected as a brand-related concepts that explains how customers relate with informational bond with brands (Veloutsou & Tsiotsou 2010). CBR has been claimed as a notable brand relationship context to be investigated within services sector endorsed brands (Dissanayake, 2015).

Brand relationship is a highlighted element as it is perceived in resulting competitive advantage by establishing a strong bond between the customer and the brand (Bowden, 2009). To create a customer brand relationship, a business needs to provide their customers a unique brand experience which is created in the mind of the customer (Klaus & Maklan, 2007). The brand satisfaction effects on brand loyalty and customers are highly expected to get more satisfaction from their favorite brand (Keller, 2013). Brand relationship behaviors can be motivated with brand experience; and brand experience is stimulated with different marketing elements including sensations, feeling, cognition's and behavioral responses that are evoked by brand-related stimulus including brands design, identity, packaging, communication and brand environment (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Celebrity endorsements are also a stimulus result brand related behaviors by providing communication and evaluation experiences (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Keller, 2013). The influence of celebrity related attributes on CBR as a facet of such brand relationship behaviors has been widely discussed in recently held studies whilst proposing further investigations within different markets and

product contexts (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake,et.al.2017; Doss,2014;Kumara,2016).
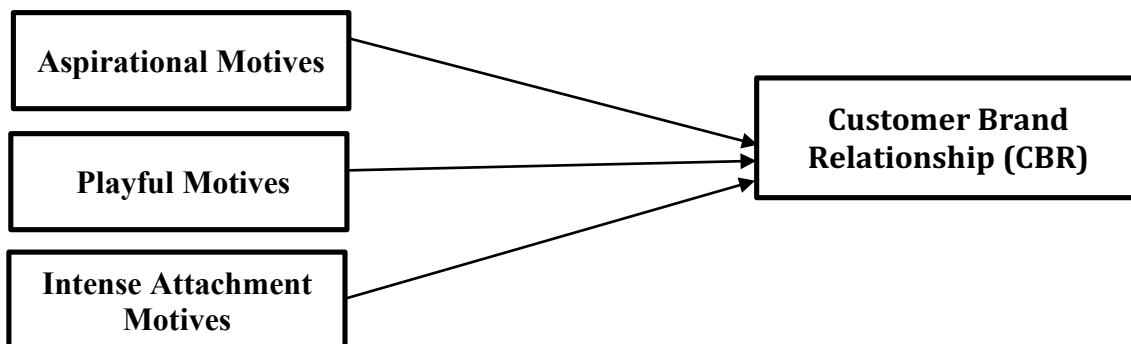
Celebrities Worship Motives (CWM)

The celebrity worship motives can be referred as a most influential icon that people admire since it influences brand evaluations and related behaviors (Hung, 2014). Thus, a bond between celebrity and consumer could result intensified brand related performances (Dissanayake, 2015). It connects   customer into celebrity's life style and increases the selling potential of any product endorsed. The celebrity and consumer are psychologically engaged (Dissanayake, 2015; Kumara, 2016). According to McCutcheon et. al. (2002), "Absorption-Addiction Model" explains how celebrities stimulate a cognitive bridge with consumers via facilitating psychological absorption referring to what is endorsed, stated as para-social relationship that reshapes the consumers' behavior. Alongside, people are very much interested to follow the celebrity's life style. Celebrity worship motives can be defined as compulsive addictive syndrome in which a person becomes overtly involved with details of a celebrity personal age (Dissanayake, et.al.2017; Kumara, 2016;McCutcheon et. al.2002). Celebrity is able to increase the sales figure as far as it holds strong emotional bond. There are three components found as frequently referred celebrity worship motives namely playful motives aspiration, motives intense and attachment motives (Dissanayake, 2015; Hung, et.al.2011; Hung, 2014; McCutcheon et. al.2002). Alongside, this papers conceptualizes its variable relationship by considering those three facets as celebrity worship motives.

METHODOLOGY

This study follows deductive approach to construct the model and variable relationships are supported by existing theatrical models and empirical justifications. Study was limited to western province of Sri Lanka as it represents a highly penetrated population towards media exposure and service sector market (Central Bank Report, 2017). Alongside, 225 sample units were surveyed followed by multi stage cluster sampling method. Clusters were determined representing divisional secretariat zones of the western province of Sri Lanka. The variables were operationalized with the scales found in empirical studies. CBR was tested by employing six elements proposed by Veloutsou & Tsiotsou (2010). CWMs were measured by applying items used to explain playful, intense and aspirational motives (Hung.et.al.2011; Hung, 2014; McCutcheon et. al., 2002). Study was executed as a quantitative survey, and questionnaire was employed as the research tool with 7 point Likert scale to collect primary data to achieve research goal (Ho, 2013). This study deals with celebrity worship motives (CWM) and customer brand relationship (CBR) as main independent and dependent variables. Respectively playful motives, aspirational motives and intense attachment motives were separately figured out as sub components of CWM (Dissanayake, 2015; Hung, 2014; Kumara, 2016). Accordingly, conceptual framework and hypotheses were developed as undermentioned.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses of the Study

As per the conceptual framework and research questions figured out, following hypotheses were formulated (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013; Dissanayake, 2015; Hung, 2014; Hung, et.al.2011; Kumara, 2016; McCutcheon et. al., 2002; Veloutsou & Tsiaotso, 2011).

H1: There is a significant relationship between Aspirational motives and CBR

H2: Playful motives and CBR are significantly correlated.

H3: There is a significant relationship between intense attachment motives and CBR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT DISCUSSION

Sample Profile

The sample profile was analyzed considering demographic data. Accordingly, 64% of the sample was represented by male segment as the majority. Age clusters were analyzed and it reports 56% within 30-40 years aged category whilst 29% and 15% were found within 40 above and 20-30 categories respectively. It indicates 61% of sample having professional of high education qualifications. Meanwhile, it reports telecommunication and finance services as the mostly exposed brand categories endorsed by celebrities reporting 48% and 37% compared other services categories.

Results of Reliability and Validity

Reliability of the items related to each construct has been calculated by employing Cronbach's Alpha values. Reliability indicates the internal consistency of the items that measures respective construct or variable (Ho,2013). Additionally, Average Variance Extraction (AVE) and Construct Reliability (CR) were executed to confirm the convergent validity (Ho, 2013;Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). The summarized statistics have been presented in the following table.

Table 1: Results of Average Variance Extraction (AVE) and Construct Reliability (CR)

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Aspirational Motives (3 items)	0.765	.631	.753
Playful Motives (3 items)	0.712	.642	.783
Intense Attachment (4 items)	0.702	.677	.806
CBR	0.831	.662	.812

All the variables indicate a significant reliability confirming items measure what is intended to measure as it reports more than 0.7 of coefficients values in all the cases (Ho, 2013;Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). Moreover, AVE values report higher than 0.5 justifying convergent validity.

Additionally, CR values were found higher than 0.7 verifying the convergent validity indicating a sound foundation to interpret the results ahead (Ho, 2013).

Discussions on Regression Models: Aspirational Motives
The results found in the regression model on aspirational motives had been summarized in the Table 2. Accordingly, results had been explained in terms of correlations with CBR whilst justifying the model explanation.

Table 2: Regression Model: Aspirational Motives

Model Summery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.794a	.482	.472	6.13787	17.632	1	198	.000

Statistical analysis indicates that aspirational motives and CBR are highly correlated as R value reports 0.794 whereas P value is less than 0.05. Additionally, adjusted R square indicates 47% of the model is explained by aspirational motives. This is an acceptable logic to confirm the relationship between two variables and significant level of model explanation.

Discussions on Regression Models: Aspirational Motives
The results in relation to the regression model on playful l motives had been presented in the in the Table 3. Accordingly, it has explained correlations with CBR whilst justifying the model explanation.

Table 3: Regression Model: Playful Motives

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.604a	.482	.372	4.15783	12.602	1	168	.000

The results indicate playful motives and CBR are highly correlated as per the R value reported as 0.604. This is reported with a P value less than 0.05. Thus, it denotes consumers connect with CBR when the endorsement is done by a celebrity who holds strong playful bond with the consumers. Conclusively, playful motives explain 37% of the total model denoting an acceptable level of significant P value (P value is lesser than 0.05).

Discussions on Regression Models: Aspirational Motives
The undermentioned Table 4 presents the regression model on aspirational motives that explains the model with CBR. Alongside, explanation has been presented by verifying the correlation and model explanation.

Table 4: Regression Model: Intense Attachment Motives

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.702[a]	.372	.362	7.41329	15.756	1	187	.000

As per the model summery, intense attachment and CBR exhibit a significant correlation reporting 0.702 of coefficient value whilst P value is significant. Thus, it concludes consumers feel CBR when it satisfies intense attachment or bond with the celebrity who endorses the respective brand. In overall, 36% of variation is explained by this model as per the adjusted R square value indicates. Thus, model reports a better explanation to justify the influence of intense attachment towards CBR.

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

According to the statistical analysis on regressions, undermentioned table concludes the results related to hypotheses testing.

Table 5: Summery of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses	Correlation	P value	Results
H1: There is a significant relationship between Aspirational motives and CBR	0.794	0.000	Supported
H2: Playful motives and CBR are significantly correlated.	0.604	0.000	Supported
H3: There is a significant relationship between intense attachment motives and CBR	0.702	0.000	Supported

As per the summery presented in the Table 5, this paper verified almost all the three different celebrity worship motives influence customer brand relationship (CBR) behavior. Thus, it denotes emotional bond established between celebrity and consumer acts as a motivational force to develop informational relationship with the endorsed brand.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to test how celebrity worship motives (CWM) influence brand related behaviors. Accordingly, CBR was examined as one of the claimed contexts within the brand-related behaviors. CWMs were examined with three different facets namely aspirational, playful and intense attachment. Some authors argue these three facets to be considered as holistic or single construct (Kumara, 2016). However, this study separately examined those three dimensions in relation to CBR. We specifically referred services sector of Sri Lanka as a notable context to test the hypotheses in line with empirical justifications. Results show almost all the three different celebrity worship motives positively and significantly influence CBR. In today's context, celebrity endorsements attributed by source-based and management-based factors (Seno & Lukas, 2007), influence brand related outcomes rather advertising impact. This paper also suggests CWM and effectiveness of those source-based and management-based factors should be examined in extended studies to evaluate how it influences brand evaluations leading to brand-related behaviors (Dissanayake & Ismail, 2015; Kumara, 2016). Thus, it concludes strong emotional bond established with the celebrity influences intensified results on brand related behaviors like CBR. However, we suggest to further examine how CWMs work when celebrities engage with multiple endorsements or over-endorsement scenarios. This may provide interesting finding on how consumers respond or reshape their emotional bond with

celerity who commits over endorsements. Additionally, further research works are encouraged to examine the role of CWM as a mechanism that reshapes or moderates the brand evaluation and brand-related responses. Finally, we admire future studies to focus how intensive celebrity applications result long term brand related results rather limiting to behavioral outcomes within marketing communication perspectives.

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