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Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumers' Brand Equity: Case Study of Super Brands Companies in Kenya

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*Celebrity
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This paper was a seminar presented for partial fulfilment for the award of a degree in doctor of philosophy in Business administration (marketing option) at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT) Kenya. The paper takes the format of mini-research. The study's aim was to establish the influence of Celebrity endorsement on consumer brand equity on selected super brands in Kenya. Specifically, the study intended to establish whether the two major attributes of celebrity endorsement: Credibility and Attractiveness, influence consumers' brand equity. The independent variable was celebrity endorsement and brand equity was the dependent variable. The study was anchored on the TEARS model that combines many marketing communications theories that describe attributes of a good source of information. These are the Credibility model, source attractiveness model, the meaning of transfer model, and the product-match-up hypothesis, consumer, and buyer behaviour theories. The empirical literature on celebrity endorsement was reviewed regarding different views in measurements of brand equity and how celebrity characteristics affect brand equity. The study raised two questions; whether celebrity credibility influences consumers' brand equity and whether celebrity attractiveness influences consumers' brand equity. To answer these two questions, a Target population of 20 consumer super brands companies was picked with only 11 super brands qualifying to be the unit of observation on the basis that they have hired celebrities to advertise their brands. The unit of analysis was 40 consumers who were classified as lecturers, professionals, and students. These respondents were given a structured questionnaire based on the two objectives of the study. Thirty-eight questionnaires' (95% response) were returned and two were spoilt. Data were analysed by use of a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and presented in tables. The study findings indicate that celebrity attractiveness has the highest influence compared to celebrity credibility in influencing consumers' brand equity. On methodology, the study recommends that a mixed design approach and change of unit of analysis in future research, development of

hypotheses, include moderating variables as well as add to the main research the three remaining variables in the TEARS model. Study findings indicate that celebrity endorsement influence can lead to brand equity in the form of customer brand preference, awareness, loyalty and association, attitude, relevance, and differentiation. However, marketing and brand managers need to be careful when hiring celebrities to market their products because of the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy. On theoretical and academic implications, the study concludes that most of the studies carried out are in western countries. There remains a need for more studies in the field of celebrity endorsement in Kenya, Especially in the area of theories of source credibility, source attractiveness, match-up hypotheses and meaning transfer model. These models emphasise that source of information must have power. Scholars can further apply exploratory research in areas of psychology and consumer behaviour theories in relation to Celebrity endorsement.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, many consumer goods companies have kept their brands visible among competing brands using celebrities to increase their sales and profits. Andrews and Shimp (2017) note that Advertised brands frequently receive endorsements from a variety of popular public figures, such as television stars, movie stars, and famous athletes. Even dead personalities are widely used to endorse brands. Advertisers and their agencies are willing to pay huge salaries to celebrities' who are liked and respected by target audiences and who will, it is hoped, favourably influence consumer attitudes towards the endorsed brand(s). Multinationals such as Coca-Cola, Kimberley Clark, Nike, Adidas,

Unilever, Procter and Gamble, and Gillette to mention but a few, use celebrity endorsement as a major marketing strategy (Brice & Elisha, 2019). Michael Wood, founder, and director of business consulting company Aperio, which focuses on accelerating the growth of Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) brands in sub-Saharan Africa agrees that one-way companies can do this is through working with local celebrities to endorse their product or brand (Sharma, Sardana, Gupta & Arli, 2021).

Numerous studies such as Alsmadi (2000); Dwivedi, Johnson and McDonald (2015) and Vien, Yun, and Fai (2017) have explored celebrity endorsement due to its general character, and there

are studies that pertain to consumer behavioural contexts and brand evaluation viewpoints as well. Connecting to the context of advertising, it has defined a celebrity as a well-known personality who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (Schlecht, 2003). As per the Sri Lankan practice scenario, the majority of celebrities are found in the sports category (Kumar & Suresh, 2019). By categorising the different forms of celebrities, Stafford, Spears, and Hsu (2003) mentioned a sports celebrity endorser as a famous athlete or coach who uses public recognition to recommend or co-present with a product in an advertisement. Adding to the same, though, it has been viewed that sport has transformed from mere games to professional entertainment and sports marketers have taken advantage of this trend since sports celebrity endorsements have increased (Braunstein & Zhang, 2010). His argument is consistent with the Sri Lankan practice of getting celebrities involved with brand association-related activations and promotional events filled with entertainment and other social clues. However, extending an argument for the effectiveness of sports celebrities, authors have said that sports celebrities are not effective endorsers for companies and brands in all situations and across all product types (Felbert & Breuer, 2020). Certain athletes are utilised by brands as endorsers for their products because of the celebrity status gained by the athletes as a result of their success in their chosen sports.

Chebet (2018) notes that celebrity endorsements in Kenya are such big business with companies hiring the likes of Jalang'o, Wahu, Victor Wanyama, MacDonald Mariga, Eric Omondi, Wyre, Jeff Koinange, and Size 8 (Eight) featuring as brand ambassadors for both multinationals and local companies alike. Sports such as Rugby and Football have become popular in Kenya in recent times and many companies have taken advantage of popular rugby players such as Humphrey Khayange and

Collins Injera to market their brands. The above examples are consistent with the research, especially in the context of advertising in which a celebrity is defined as a well-known personality who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (Schlecht, 2003).

In fact, Matara (2020) lists various celebrities from diverse fields (see appendices) who have been endorsed by companies that operate in Kenya. Award-winning DJ MO who owns Kenya's biggest gospel unit, System Unit has been the Broadways Bread ambassador since 2016, Ladasha, daughter to couple Size 8 and DJ MO who together are known as a "Gospel power couple", landed her fast gig as the brand ambassador for Soft Care Diapers sometime back that saw Size 8 grace our screens as a mother. This contract has been running down for two years now, and Size 8 definitely smiles all the way to the bank. The former Harambee Stars forward Denise Oliech is another Kenyan celebrity enjoying the fruits of being a brand ambassador. He was the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia Ambassador for the travel management company Bunson Travel (Mutisya, 2019).

The following discussion from earlier research supports why companies in Kenya have resulted in utilising celebrity endorsement strategy. According to Boorstin (1961), "The celebrity is a person who is known for his well- "knownness". In fact, he refers to celebrities as human pseudo-events, claiming that the omnipresent print and broadcast media have provided a "...means of fabricating well-knownness (Boorstin 1961, p. 47)". As such, celebrities rise and fall through the processes and whims of publicity. McCracken (1989, p. 310) defines the celebrity endorser "as any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement". This explains why little was known of Julius Yego until the 2016 London Olympics where he represented

Kenya in the javelin and came in as a silver medallist (Mutisya, 2019). The policeman had relied on the Internet to sharpen his skills, earning himself the nickname ‘YouTube athlete’. His relentless zeal to learn the skills online has seen him add another feather to his cap as the brand ambassador for Orange Telkom. As a result, the telecom company unveiled a 30-second advert featuring Yego talking about how he ended up being a javelin athlete as part of promoting Orange’s internet services in a bid to drive up numbers. Yego also happens to be Tusker’s Brand ambassador for East African Breweries Limited (EABL) (Ngari, 2018).

Another Kenyan athlete, David Rudisha has endorsed local products including the shoe polish Kiwi and Safe Guard (Derry, 2020). In creating a brand out of celebrity endorsement, actor Kenneth Ambani (Famed for his roles in TV series; Tausi, Makutano Junction, and Tushauriane) has featured in different products commercials for over two decades with his most recent one being Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT), which is running (Michoma, 2019). More examples of sports celebrity endorsement in Kenya include Victor Wanyama, Kenya’s National team stars’ skipper and Tottenham Hotspur midfielder. He was recently named the DStv 2018 FIFA World Cup ambassador (Mutisya, 2019). Wanyama was the face of Safaricom’s Chapa Dimba, which saw overall winners in each category receive Sh 1 million and a trip to London for a one-week training camp (Ngari, E. G. (2018). The launch of this unique football tournament changed the way fans and players interact with the game. This also led to an increase in Sports Pesa betting company sales which Victor Wanyama has endorsed.

The Safaricom Live campaign is said to be one of the best-paying artists fetching a good paycheck and getting exposure across the country. The campaign goes across the country with different artists promoting products by the telecom company using music. One of the celebrities in the music industry

Jua Cali (this name means ‘hot sun’), shared with the media that the pay is really good money (Mutisya, 2019). Size 8, Jaguar, Juliani, Red San, Nameless, and Jimmy Gait are some of the artists who have been part of the Safaricom Live Caravan.

The above examples of celebrity endorsement strategy by companies in Kenya are theoretically supported by three source credibility models that take into consideration those variables that have an impact on the effectiveness of a promotional campaign based on the reaction of the customers. Trivedi and Sama, R. (2021) state that consumers are susceptible to an advertisement when they view favourably the knowledge and expertise of the chosen celebrity, as well as this person’s credibility. On the one hand, it is highly arguable that these results are universally viable due to the fact that they do not reflect some critical points, such as the conversion of these findings into purchase intentions. Merriman (2018) states that the collaboration of famous figures with a certain brand is performed through a type of declaration in which these individuals act as specialists in the department which is related to their area of business such as music, sports, beauty and food. In such a way, the usage of certain celebrities in promotional campaigns can perceptively influence customers to give more attention to the brand. The same happens when celebrities appear at certain events such as red-carpet events, premieres of films, and launches of products, which as a result links the brand used or endorsed with the stylish life of the individual.

This discussion support why companies in Kenya increasingly continue to endorse celebrities in varying fields of expertise. Media personality Mike Okinyi was named the brand ambassador for the Kenyan franchise of Pissero, a new Turkish menswear store, which was recently launched in Nairobi (Otiende, 2018). This celebrity has been a long-time client. The brand has long been associated with the creative class, but recently they have demonstrated a commitment to creatives. This means that the brand will build a direct relationship

with locals who will promote their products by proudly wearing them on stages and other platforms, as shared by an ecstatic Okinyi.

Celebrated radio personalities Maina Kageni and Adelle Onyango have been unveiled as Johnnie Walker Brand Ambassadors for the ongoing Formula 1 C Kenya experience by East African Breweries Limited (EABL), formerly Kenya Breweries limited. While speaking at the unveiling ceremony, EABL MD Jane Karuku notes that consumers are increasingly sophisticated and are seeking new experiences in an unconventional way. Her comments are supported by Biswas (2019), whose research documents how celebrity endorsement affects brand repurchase of customer equity.

Statement of the Problem

The topic of celebrity endorsements and its elements is heavily documented in academic literature, especially in developed countries but few studies in Africa. Secondary literature indicates that celebrity endorsement can have a negative and positive effect on a company's sales, profits, customers' purchase intention and brand equity (Liu, Zhang & Zhang, 2020). Oyeniy (2014) found that using a celebrity endorser with an attractive public image can decrease consumers' self-esteem and have a negative impact on buying intentions. Conflicting the latter, Sääksjärvi et al. (2016) indicate that having a celebrity endorser with an unattractive public image could potentially increase consumers' self-esteem and have a positive impact on buying intentions. Other research has proven the opposite. According to Wei and Wu (2013), people react more positively towards endorsement if the celebrity is attractive and fascinating. The consumer will have a positive approach towards the endorsement if they have a positive view of the endorser. This area of research is interesting since there are factors that could both benefit and damage the brand. As discussed above, previous research has ended up with different conclusions about the

risks of using celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool to improve companies' sales, market share, profits, and corporate image to mention but a few. In spite of all these pros and cons, celebrity endorsement has become popular in Kenya, especially among fast-moving consumer goods companies as well as other types of companies.

Ng'ang'a (2013) carried out a study on the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer behaviour amongst the middle-class residents of Nairobi. This study was guided by the following research question; 'Does the use of celebrity endorsement influence consumer behaviour amongst middle-class residents in Nairobi? The study found that there is a positive relationship between different celebrity attributes and the purchase intention of the consumers which demonstrates the effectiveness of celebrities as successful endorsers. It was found that people are more likely to buy, already buy, and are happy with the purchases done under the influence of celebrities. Regarding negative publicity of the celebrity, not many people think about it or are still unsure of it. Akinyi (2017) carried out a study on the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer behaviour amongst the middle-class residents of Nairobi. The study demonstrates there is a positive correlation between different celebrity endorser attributes and purchase decisions of the Middle class in Nairobi County. The study further reveals that the low and middle classes are not receptive to celebrity endorsements in commercials and therefore companies should not use this as a strategy. These two studies, among others discussed in the literature review focus on purchase decisions and the theory of the consumer, but what makes this mini-research different is that it focused on source characteristics of an effective celebrity endorsement in regard to influencing customer's brand equity (not customer's purchase decision) of super brands companies in Kenya. The study attempted to contextualise the TEARS model with respect to celebrity endorsement and brand contextualise. Experts posit that one source of a research problem

is to validate or falsify a given theory. This study attempted to contextualise the source of information attributes that are captured by various theories and summed up by Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Respect and Similarity (TEARS) model as discussed in the literature. The goal will be to test model validity fit in the final research.

Objectives of this study

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumers' brand equity of super brands companies in Kenya

Specific objectives

- To establish the relationship between celebrity credibility and consumers' brand equity of super brands companies in Kenya
- To determine whether celebrity attractiveness influences consumers' brand equity of super brands companies in Kenya.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions

- Could there be a relationship between celebrity credibility and consumer brand equity of super brands companies in Kenya?
- Could there be a relationship between celebrity attractiveness' and consumer brand equity of super brands companies in Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework is the "blueprint" for the entire research which serves as the guide on which to build and support a research idea. It provides the structure to define how a researcher will philosophically, epistemologically,

methodologically, and analytically approach the study as a whole (Grant, 2014). Eisenhart (1991) defines a theoretical framework as a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory; that is, the framework is constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships. There are different models and theories found in early studies that discuss the characteristics of celebrities to be possessed in making an endorsement effective. This study was guided by the theoretical frameworks discussed below.

TEARS model

The TEARS model was developed by Shimp (2003) and represents five attributes, namely trustworthiness and expertise belong to the credibility component, while physical attractiveness, respect, and similarity are dimensions of attractiveness. Further, Spry et al. (2011) mentioned that credibility is important as high endorser credibility leads to higher brand credibility. Moreover, Shimp (2003) did provide the integral component to be tested referring to expertise, attractiveness, respect, and similarity.

This study was anchored on The TEARS model. This model consists of the following components: Trustworthiness, Expertise, Attractiveness, Respect, and Similarity. Shimp (2003) documents that two general attributes, credibility and attractiveness, play important roles in communicating effectively. These characteristics are also important regarding the effectiveness of endorsers. The study focused on these two major attributes of the TEARS model; Credibility and Attractiveness. The other three variables of the TEARS are captured as sub-components under credibility (trustworthiness and expertise), while physical attractiveness, respect and similarity are captured as sub-components under attractiveness.

Credibility is "the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having relevant knowledge, skills, or

experience and trusts the source to give unbiased, objective information” (Belch & Belch, 2004, p. 189). Two of the most important aspects of credibility are expertise and trust (Hoyland et al., 1953). Ideally, celebrities are seen as credible sources of information (Goldsmith et al., 2000) and the credibility of those is described as the total amount of positive features that create and increase the acceptance of the message (Erdogan, 1999). Credibility, which is one of the most important determinants of celebrity endorsement is particularly important when people have a negative predisposition towards a brand. In this case, powerful arguments are needed in order to positively influence the attitude towards the brand. Consequently, when celebrities are seen as credible sources, consumers’ acceptance of the message and persuasion are affected (Belch & Belch, 2004).

Trustworthiness as the first sub-component can be described as an endorser’s ability to be perceived as believable, dependable, or someone who can be trusted (Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Trust is earned by the endorsers’ accomplishments in his/her domain (entertainment, sports, science), and if the consumer believes that products are being endorsed for self-interest, the persuasiveness can be lower than if the audience believes that the endorser is advertising a product without any additional benefits from the brand (Shimp, 2003). Expertise is the E component of the TEARS model, which is about having certain skills, knowledge, or abilities which can be related to the endorsed brand. Whether the endorser is an expert or not is not important, but rather how the audience perceives the endorser. If the source is perceived as being an expert or very knowledgeable, it is possible to change the audience’s opinion about a brand or product (Shimp, 2003).

Applying Attractiveness. Physical attractiveness is a key consideration in many endorsement relationships notes (Ohanian, 1990). The concept of attractiveness does include not only physical attractiveness but also concepts such as intellectual

skills, personality, attractive performance, and other skills of the endorser (Erdogan, 1999). The concept of attractiveness can also be divided into three sub-attributes, physical attractiveness, respect, and similarity (Shimp, 2003).

Celebrities can be attractive because of great accomplishments or because they are established for example, great sports performances. People have respect for these achievements and are therefore attracted to them. Physical attractiveness suggests that a celebrity determines the effectiveness of persuasion and as a result consumers want to be like the endorser and identify themselves with the endorser (Cohen & Golden, 1972).

One of the most famous male celebrities in Kenya is footballer Victor Wanyama, who is a very popular endorser for different kinds of brands (sports Pesa and Coca-Cola). His physical attractiveness is key to his success with these brands. This is consistent with Till and Butler (2000) who found out that there is a “physical attractiveness effect” on individuals’ attitudes to brands and purchase intentions. This probably explains why betting in Kenya has become very popular, especially in football and Rugby.

Conceptual Framework

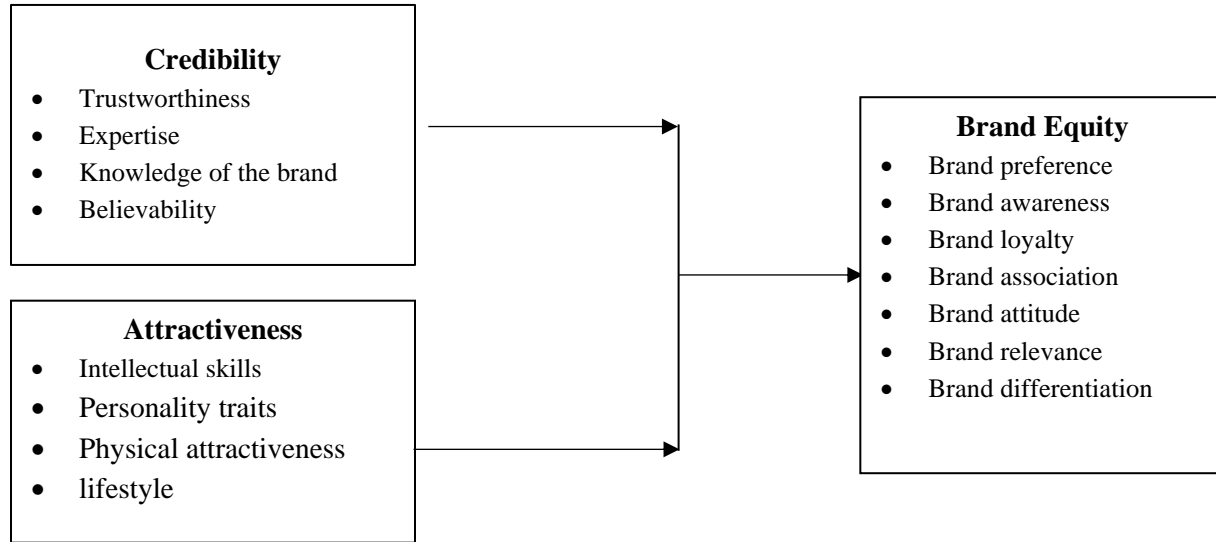
A conceptual framework is a written or visual presentation that explains either graphically or in a narrative form the main things to be studied like the key factors, concepts, or variables and their presumed relationship among them (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2011). Kothari (2004) defines a variable as a concept which can take on qualities of quantitative values. A dependent variable is the outcome variable that is being predicted and whose variation is what the study tries to explain, while independent variables are factors that try to explain variations in the dependent variable. The current study adopted two major components in the TEARS model; celebrity endorsement is the independent variable which was operationalised by credibility and attractiveness as

the independent variables. Both variables were found to have a positive influence on consumers' brand equity.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Celebrity endorsement



Adapted from Shimp (2003).

Empirical Review of Literature and Variables

Brand Equity

Though brand equity is focused on three perspectives, namely financial (Haigh, 1999), company (Keller, 2003), and customer (Aaker, 1991), this study considered brand equity from the customer's perspective. The parameters that measure brand equity are brand preference, awareness, loyalty, association, relevance, attitude, and differentiation. Many respondents disagreed among these indicators, indicating other factors influence brand equity, as the empirical review notes (Schivinski, Muntinga, Pontes & Lukasik, 2021). Furthermore, marketers and researchers use various perspectives to study brand equity. Customer-based approaches view it from the perspective of the consumer- either individual or an organisation and recognise that the power of the brand lies in what customers have seen, read, heard,

learned, thought, and felt about the brand over time (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The conjunctional improvements of the past three decades from the theoretical advances in the area of marketing and branding, as well as the practices that most transnational companies (TNCs) implement, have brought to the attention of managers from all around the world that BE is a decisive tool in maintaining brand relevance in the eyes of the consumers (Kapferer, 2012).

Joachimsthaler and Aaker (2009) define Brand Equity (BE) as a series of assets and liabilities which are connected to a specific brand that further enhance (or detract) value to (or from) the customers. Based on this theoretical approach, BE consists of brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality, and Other Proprietary Assets. One of the main elements of this model is Brand Awareness (BAW). Keller (2012) mentions in his latest works that BAW reflects an

individual's ability to spot a brand under various conditions. Many other scholars, such as Aaker (1991), agree that it is a very important asset due to its implication on consumers' insight and view of the company, as well as its powerful impact on customers' tastes. Joachimsthaler and Aaker (2009) stated in their research that customers have a psychological need to be acquainted with the product and company, which in a way prepares them and makes it easier to assign a number of positive attitudes toward various goods and/or services which they are unfamiliar with.

Brand Associations (BAS) embody a broader notion than the other segments of this model, especially due to the fact that it can be represented by anything that links the consumer to the brand in question. This measure can include a large number of possible elements, such as pictures (imagery such as logos, designs, logotypes, and colours) and symbols, product characteristics, conditions of usage, as well as brand personality (Geuens, Weijters & De Wulf, 2009). Perceived Quality (PQ) is an outcome of an individual's subjective opinion of a product or brand (Aaker, 1991; Dodds et al., 1991). It plays a distinctive role in the area of "associations", partially due to the fact that it impacts the previously-mentioned segment of the BE model – BAS. PQ contributes to BAS on many levels, which can be denoted due to the previous findings of Aaker (1991) that show that it empirically influences profitability.

Brand Loyalty (BL) is defined as an individual's personal approach towards a certain brand or good which is solely based on past experience (Deighton et al., 1994). BL is a pivotal part of any brand due to the fact that it plays an important role in generating and maintaining the brand's value. The main idea of this measurement is to fortify the scope and increase each element of the BE. Pebble was one of the first to bring a "smartwatch" to the attention of mass consumers and change the world's views over such products in a positive way since it was able to hold over a week on one charge and

connect to both Apple iOS and Android OS ecosystems, which are two of the most popular platforms. This product received unprecedented initial crowdfunding from loyal fans of the idea.

Proprietary Assets (OPA) include all the other smaller assets that create certain competitive advantages for the company and for the brand. These can differ based on the goods sold by the company, the level to which the company markets its goods, as well as many other aspects of the business which the company undergoes (Leahy, 2011).

Kotler (2003) explored the same borders of Aaker's definitions, stating that BE is the affirmative differential result that customers experience when recognising a brand name or logo as a response to the variety of products and services encountered on a daily basis. Building up along the same lines, Kapferer (2012) advocates that BE is made of two particles, one of which generates the second one. He denoted that assembling a strong and loyal customer base generates future profit, which means that if the connection with the consumer is stabilised, then it can form grounds for a durable and longstanding financial asset.

Celebrity Endorsement Variables and Consumers' Brand Equity

Dwivedi, Johnson and McDonald (2015) conclude that celebrity Credibility and Attractiveness have a positive influence on customer's brand equity, as supported by the following studies;

Further, Sivesan (2013) found a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement to customer-based brand equity. Zafar and Rafique (2011) investigated the impact of celebrity endorsement on customers' brand perception and purchase intention. Their results indicate that celebrity endorsement has a reasonable impact on customers as per their brand perception.

Celebrity Endorsement has been examined in many pieces of research as its generic nature and there are research works found referring to the consumer behavioural contexts and brand evaluation perspectives too (Hung, Chan & Caleb, 2011). Connecting to the context of advertising, it has defined a celebrity as a well-known personality who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (Schlecht, 2003). As per the Sri Lankan practice scenario, the majority of celebrities are found in the sports category. However, Bruce et al. (2004) emphasised that several other factors such as product-celebrity match, the attractiveness and credibility of the endorser, message and product type, and the level of involvement by the endorser, could impact consumer responses. Even this study has made a justification for how this research proposition should be examined from the customer's perspective on brand equity.

Al-Dmour et al. (2013) studied the effect of services marketing mix elements (service nature, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, people, and process) on the customer-based brand equity of mobile telecommunication service recipients in Jordan. The results suggest that there is a statistically significant relationship between services marketing mix elements and brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality and brand loyalty.

Further, Arokiasamy (2012) indicates the effects of the marketing mix (price, store image, advertising spending, distribution intensity and price promotion) on brand loyalty in the Malaysian hypermarket sector and the result revealed that the marketing mix elements are significant positive influence towards Malaysian hypermarkets' brand loyalty. Chang et al. (2005) examine the relationships between brand equity, brand preference, and purchase intentions with the moderating effects of switching costs on international air passengers' decisions in Taiwan.

Their findings indicate positive relationships between brand equity, brand preference and purchase intentions with celebrity endorsement.

Torres and Tribo (2017) examine the interaction between ownership structure and customer satisfaction and their impact on a firm's brand equity. They conclude that customer satisfaction has a positive direct effect on brand equity but an indirect negative one through reductions in ownership concentration. Karunanithy and Sivesan (2013) investigate the effects of the promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, public relation, and direct marketing) on brand equity in the mobile service-providing sectors. The study concludes that promotional mix has positively affected brand equity.

Prevot (2009) examines the effect of Guerilla Marketing on brand equity. This study argues that the impact of Guerilla Marketing is not only dependent on the customer's perception towards marketing activities but also depends on the medium used by the campaign. Further, this study concludes that the impact of Guerilla Marketing on brand equity can be positive, negative, or neutral.

Jahanzeb et al. (2013) investigate the direct influence of service quality on building consumer-based brand equity, along with the mediating role of corporate credibility and perceived value. The results suggest that perceived value and corporate credibility fully mediate the relationship between perceived service quality and consumer-based brand equity.

Abdoli et al. (2014) evaluated and prioritised the components affecting the acceptance of celebrities in advertisements from the point of view of consumers. The results of this study concerning consumers' motivation indicated the persuasion of these individuals in consumer purchase behaviour. The rest of the results indicate that the increasing extent of sales will not come to realisation by employing these individuals, indicating that these

individuals must be considered as a means for sale in the marketing mix rather than the marketing aims.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design is a blueprint used for the collection, measurement, and analysis of the data. It is a plan and structure of investigation used to obtain answers to research questions the study intends to answer (Kothari, 2004). This study adopted a descriptive research design with a case study research strategy. That was found suitable because the study was undertaken in order to be able to describe the characteristics of the variables interested in the study. This was achieved by clearly developing the objectives, designing the methods to collect the data, processing and analysing data, and reporting the findings. Kothari (2004) observes that

the goal of descriptive study is to offer a profile or to describe relevant aspects of the phenomenon of interest from an individual, organisational, industry-oriented, or another perspective, a survey strategy. This study aimed to establish the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumers' brand equity.

Target Population

A population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2003). The population of interest in this study included 20 consumer super brands companies adapted from brand analysis companies that analyse performing brands yearly. This acted as the unit of observation. The unit of analysis was 40 consumers who had gathered for a public debate on the state of the country on 24th November 2017 from 2-5 pm.

Table 1: Target Population

Brand Name	Category	Official Ranking 2015-16	Official Ranking 2016- '17	Change
M-PESA	Financial – General	1	1	0
Safaricom	Telecommunications, Broadband & Software	3	2	1
Kenya Red Cross	Relief Organisations	2	3	-1
The Daily Nation	Media – Newspapers & Magazines	4	4	0
Citizen TV	Media – TV Stations	9	5	4
Nakumatt	Retail – Supermarkets, Grocers & General Merchandise	8	6	2
Total	Oil & Gas	25	7	18
Coca-Cola	Drinks – Non-Alcoholic – Carbonated Soft Drinks	11	8	3
KENTANK	Household – Water Storage	Not surveyed	9	New Entry
Samsung	Household – Appliances & Electronic Goods	12	10	2
Radio Citizen FM	Media – Radio Stations	27	11	16
Blue Band	Food – Dairy Products & Ice Cream	21	12	9
SportPesa	Leisure & Entertainment – Gambling	Not surveyed	13	New Entry
Facebook	Information, Search & Online Shopping Portals	5	14	-9

Brand Name	Category	Official Ranking 2015-16	Official Ranking 2016- '17	Change
Dettol	Household – Cleaning Products	15	15	0
Google	Information, Search & Online Shopping Portals	6	16	-10
TUSKYS	Retail – Supermarkets, Grocers & General Merchandise	34	17	17
Brookside	Drinks – Non-Alcoholic – Dairy Drinks, Milk & Cream	22	18	4
Bata	Clothing & Footwear	17	19	-2
Colgate	Household – Personal Hygiene	14	20	-6

20 Kenyan Consumer Superbrands 2017. Source: Brand Analysis Company

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for this study included 11 consumer super brands companies. The bases of the selection were that eleven companies out of the 20 super brands had utilised celebrity endorsements.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling refers to the selection of the elements of the population to be included in the study. A sample is a part of the entire population that can be used for study and has all the characteristics of the entire population. According to Kothari (2004), the ultimate test of a sample is how well it represents the characteristics of the entire population. The study sample was 40 professionals divided into three cohorts consisting of lecturers, students, and professionals. These respondents had different demographics in age and education. This study sampling design was of non-probability nature. The sampling technique was purposive sampling that targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. The procedure allowed the researcher to use rich cases of consumers that had knowledge with respect to the objectives of the study. Kombo and Tromp (2006) note that the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issue being studied.

Data collection Procedures and Instruments

This study utilized primary data sources by administering open and close ended questionnaire and secondary sources as the main instruments for data collection. The secondary data reviewed mainly concerned review of literature from expert opinion in the area of celebrity endorsement and brand equity from a consumer's perspective.

The questionnaire included Likert scale psychometric constructs with a scale ranging from 1-5 where each respondent was required to rate each and every statement given describing a given variable. The scale ranged from 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree. Each and every item in the psychometric constructs was meant to measure a certain attribute of the main variable. These constructs were set in unambiguous terms allowing the respondents to react to them without wasting time. At the end of each Likert scale question, open-ended questions were included to allow the respondent to give additional information that is not captured in the Likert scale questions. This is the section that enabled the study to capture vital information directly from the respondents based on their understanding of the independent and dependent variables. This study was a pilot study, and where anomalies were noticed, they shall be corrected. The

research instrument will further be subjected to reliability and validity tests.

Table 2: operational measurements of variables

Dependent Variable	Consumers' brand equity	brand preference, awareness, loyalty, association, brand attitudes, brand relevance, differentiation
Independent Variables	Celebrity endorsement	Credibility and Attractiveness
Credibility	Knowledge of the brand, believable, trustworthiness, expertise	
Attractiveness	Intellectual skills, celebrity traits, lifestyle, physical attractiveness, respect, similarity, purchase timing	

Measurement of Variables

The psychometric instruments developed to measure variables in this study were based on the philosophy of logical positivism (Scotland, 2012), where logical analysis is used as a major instrument in resolving philosophical issues or disputes. Several statements which attempt to establish the correlation between real objects or processes and the abstract concepts of the theory were developed as psychometric measures of the independent variables (celebrity endorsement) and dependent variables (consumers' brand equity) in this study.

Respondents were required to identify themselves in the cohort as; students, lecturers, or professionals (see *Table 3*). The respondents were classified according to gender as in *Table 3*; from the table, the number of men was equal to the number of women. The respondents' ages are listed in *Table 3*; the results indicate that most of the respondents are young, below 30 years of age. The study inquired on the level of education for each respondent, the results were as shown in *Table 3*; most respondents had the highest level of education, an undergraduate degree (82%)

RESULTS

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Table 3: Demographic Information of eth Respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cohort	Student	13	34.2	34.2
	Lecturer	11	28.9	63.2
	Professional	14	36.8	100.0
	Total	38	100.0	
Gender	Male	19	50.0	50.0
	Female	19	50.0	100.0
	Total	38	100.0	
Age	Less than 25 years	9	23.7	23.7
	25 -30	13	34.2	57.9
	31 - 40	9	23.7	81.6
	41 - 50	5	13.2	94.7
	Above 50 years	2	5.3	100.0

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Total	38	100.0	
Education Level	Certificate/Diploma	12	31.6	31.6
	Undergraduate/Degree	19	50.0	81.6
	Masters	5	13.2	94.7
	Others	2	5.3	100.0
	Total	38	100.0	

Brands Using Celebrity Endorsement

A list of 20 super brands was presented to respondents. Consumers were asked to identify the

companies that have used celebrity endorsement to advertise their products (see *Table 4*). The local brands were highly rated.

Table 4: Super Brands

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Mpesa	3	7.9	7.9
Safaricom	3	7.9	15.8
The daily nation	2	5.3	21.1
Citizen Tv	3	7.9	28.9
Nakumatt	4	10.5	39.5
Total	2	5.3	44.7
Coca-Cola	3	7.9	52.6
Samsung	2	5.3	57.9
Radio citizen	1	2.6	60.5
BlueBand	2	5.3	65.8
Sports Pesa	7	18.4	84.2
Facebook	1	2.6	86.8
Dettol	2	5.3	92.1
Google	1	2.6	94.7
Colgate	2	5.3	100.0
Total	38	100.0	

Celebrity Credibility

This study considered credibility as an important variable; hence various parameters were used to capture credibility with responses as in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Identifiers of celebrity credibility

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge of the brand	38	3.4737	.92230
Celebrity being believable	38	3.1053	1.18069
Celebrity trusted as an info source	38	2.9474	1.25089
Celebrity is an expert in brand advert	38	3.2368	1.23975

Source: Research Data (2017)

The issue representing credibility were rated on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = No extent, 2 = low extent, 3 = Moderate extent, 4 = Great extent and 5 = very great extent.

The response indicated a mean of between 2.95 to 3.5. This indicates that celebrity credibility influences to a great extent, consumers' brand equity. The standard deviations from *Table 5* indicate that there is relative homogeneity in the rating of celebrity credibility as a factor influencing consumers' brand equity. Credibility is the extent to which the recipient sees the source as having knowledge, skill, or experience and trusts the source to give unbiased and objective information. Accordingly, two important dimensions of credibility are expertise and trustworthiness.

According to the somewhat contrasting argument made by Seno & Lukas (2007), it stated that there are five factors affecting the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. Those factors can be divided into two categories as the source-based factor (controlled by the celebrity). Credibility and attractiveness were classified under this category. Management-Based Factors relate to how the marketing department manages the celebrities and could be controlled through management. This referred to Celebrity-Product Congruency, Celebrity Multiplicity, and Celebrity Activations.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the first dimension of endorser credibility (McCracken 1989); and the T term in the

TEARS model (Shimp, 2003). Erdogan (1999) defined trustworthiness as a consumer's perception of the honesty, integrity, and believability of an endorser. Further, Shimp (2003) argues that a celebrity endorser is trusted by the target audience due to the life he or she lives professionally and personally, as revealed to the general public through the mass media.

As O'Mahony and Meenaghan (1997) showed, source trustworthiness is a basic attribute underlying source credibility that fundamentally affects attitudinal change in consumers. Without trustworthiness, the other attributes possessed by the endorser are unlikely to be effective in changing consumers' attitudes. This is consistent with Atkin and Block (1983), who postulated that celebrities are perceived to be more trustworthy than non-celebrities since consumers are more easily influenced by someone they perceive to have higher standards. Priester and Petty (2003) noted that if a celebrity endorser is perceived to be highly trustworthy, a consumer might not scrutinise the advertising message as much and may unthinkingly accept the conclusion as valid. Part of this effect is also derived from explanations of the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

The attractiveness of a Celebrity

The identification in terms of the attractiveness of a celebrity in endorsing a brand was made in terms of the following parameters in *Table 6*.

Table 6: Attractiveness parameters of a celebrity

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intellectual Skills	38	3.4737	1.17948
Personality Traits	38	3.2632	1.34936
Life Style	38	3.2895	1.20602
Celebrity physical attractiveness	38	3.5526	.97807
Respect for Celebrity	38	3.5526	1.08297
Similarity to Celebrity	38	3.5526	1.00532

Source: research data (2017)

The values of means in *Table 6* indicate a great extent of agreement among respondents that attractiveness influences consumers' brand equity. The most agreement was on the issue of celebrity attractiveness as indicated by the smallest standard deviation of 0.98, physical attractiveness. This result is consistent with Ohanian (1990) who notes that Physical Attractiveness is the A component in the TEARS model and is a key consideration in many endorsements relationship. Physical attractiveness includes any number of virtuous characteristics that consumers may perceive in an endorser: intellectual skills, personality properties, lifestyle characteristics, athletic prowess, and so on (Shimp, 2003).

Research has supported the intuitive expectation that physically attractive endorsers generally produce more favourable evaluations of advertisements and brands than do less attractive communicators (Kahle & Homer, 1985). However, Bryne et al. (2003) found that their influence on

repeat purchase intentions is ambiguous, as attractiveness alone may not be sufficient. There is also a risk that celebrities may overshadow brands. Nevertheless, Belch and Belch (2004) contend that companies spend huge amounts of money to have celebrities endorse their products because celebrities have what they call 'stopping power' – they can make advertising messages stand out in a cluttered media environment. Furthermore, Till & Busler (2000) found that there is a "physical attractiveness effect" on individuals' attitudes to brands and purchase intentions.

Customers Brand Equity

Customers' brand equity was operationalised as presented in *Table 7*. From *Table 7*, the issues captured represent brand equity to a great extent. The standard deviation on brand loyalty is largest at 4.87285 indicating a high level of disagreement among respondents towards parameters associated with Brand Equity.

Table 7: Factors promoting consumer brand equity

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brand preference	38	3.4737	1.15634
Brand awareness	38	3.9211	.94101
Brand loyalty	38	4.3421	4.87285
Brand association	38	3.6053	.94553
Brand attitude	38	3.8947	.83146
Brand relevance	38	3.6842	1.01623
Brand Differentiation	38	3.8158	1.08691

Source: Author (2017)

The results are supported by literature that celebrity endorser attributes are not the only factors that affect brand equity. Many studies have been carried out on customer-based brand equity with other variables such as selected marketing mix elements (Yoo et al., 2000), services marketing mix elements (Al-Dmour et al., 2013), brand preference and purchase intentions (Chen & Chang, 2008), product attributes and purchase intention (Thammawimutti & Chaipoopirutana, 2005), ownership structure and

customer satisfaction (Torres & Tribo, 2017), promotional mix (Karunanithy & Sivesan, 2013), Guerilla Marketing (Prevot, 2009), and service quality. Many scholars have implied that several other aside from study variables and dimensions impact on celebrity endorsement and customer-based brand equity. Inferential Statistics

Credibility and Brand Equity

Table 8 shows that there is a positive correlation between celebrity credibility and brand equity

Table 8: Correlational analysis of celebrity credibility and brand equity

		Brand equity	Credibility
Brand equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.406*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	38	38

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 9: Regression analysis of celebrity credibility and brand equity

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	17.671	3.527		5.009	.000
	Credibility	.710	.267	.406	2.665	.011

a. Dependent Variable: brand equity

The regression equation is $Y = 17.671 + 0.71 X_1$

Attractiveness and Consumers' brand equity

Credibility has an influence on brand equity. From Table 9 there is brand equity at 17.671 without celebrity credibility. Credibility improvement of one unit will improve brand equity by 0.71

The association between attractiveness and consumers' brand equity was carried out and the results are in Table 10. There is a significant positive correlation between identification and brand with a measure of 0.38.

Table 10: Correlational analysis of celebrity attractiveness and brand equity

Category		Brand equity	Attractiveness
Brand equity	Pearson Correlation	1	.377*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020
	N	38	38

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 11: Regression of Attractiveness and consumers' brand equity

Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.949	4.121		4.113	.000
	Attractiveness	.473	.194	.377	2.441	.020

Dependent variable: consumers' brand equity

The regression equation is $Y = 16.95 + 0.473 X_2$

Attractiveness determines consumers' brand equity; brand equity will be at 16.95 without attractiveness,

and however, it will increase by 0.473 when identification improves by one unit.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumers' brand equity. Other than celebrity characteristics, other factors such as the marketing mix and customer demographics also influence customer's perception of a company's brand equity

Areas of Further research

The study findings have an implication for theories of marketing communication, buyer behaviour, and branding, as well as methodology

Theoretical and Academic Implications

The TEARS model views the characteristics of an effective celebrity when endorsed by a company as a significant source of a company's financial, market, sales and corporate performance from brand equity perspective. Most of the studies carried out are in western countries. There remains a need for more studies in the field of celebrity endorsement. Studies in Kenya focus more on the buyer decision process of social classes but not brand equity hence the need for more studies of source credibility and consumer behaviour. Other studies in Kenya can be carried out using the theories of source credibility, source attractiveness, match-up hypotheses and meaning transfer model. These models emphasize that the source of information must have power. Scholars can further explore research areas in psychological and consumer behaviour theories in relation to Celebrity endorsement.

Sports Celebrity endorsement in Kenya is becoming very popular, research could explore why companies have pursued this marketing strategy. Scholars could identify a research problem in celebrity endorsement within a particular sector, e.g., sports, media, politics and automobiles in

Kenya. A lot of gray areas in the domain of how celebrities affect the buyer Purchase decision process, Impulse buying and buyer repurchase decision among different products in different stages in the product life cycle with the intention of improving sales.

Most studies in Kenya have been carried out in the area of middle class and purchase decisions. More studies on whether celebrity endorsement increases sales and profits in other types of companies other than super brands. Research could be carried out on celebrity endorsement and measurements of brand equity.

Many of the older models and theories do not include the consumer's attitude toward endorsement. Instead, the study would focus on how source and endorsement factors affect consumer attitudes towards a brand. Marketing Mix variables and Celebrity endorsement create a new focus for Kenyan researchers and scholars.

Very little is also documented in the area of services marketing and celebrity endorsement, given that the 21st century is a service economy. Bergkvist et al. (2016) have come up with a new model that introduces a new variable, attitude towards the endorsement, which functions as a mediator between attitude towards a brand and source and endorsement factors.

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