Brand Values, Dilution and Authenticity: Evaluating Celebrity Co-Branding Partnerships

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Celebrity endorsements both Australia and worldwide are growing, with one in five ads now featuring a celebrity (Time Inc. 2006; Solomon, 2009). Today, celebrities commonly endorse multiple products, brands and organisations and are themselves referred to as human brands (Thomson, 2006). Celebrity brands can encompass unique and original associations that craft their authenticity and distinctiveness. A celebrity's image is crucial to understand when paired with any brand in a co-branding situation. Research within the area of celebrity endorsements mainly focuses on identifying the characteristics of celebrities that make them appropriate endorsers of particular brands. Surprisingly, little research examines why consumers value celebrities and the brands with which they are paired. Research in co-branding is limited to examining the combination or collaboration of product brands. This thesis examines co-branding partnerships between corporate and celebrity brands. This thesis presents four studies that examine how consumers value celebrity and corporate brands and the ways in which consumer judgments can be diluted when brands are paired collectively in a co-branding context.

The first study is both qualitative and quantitative and designed to explore why consumers value brands. The aim of the study is to identify the core brand features associated with a corporate brand, the Greater Building Society, and a celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld, that are essential to the development of personal meaning and value to consumers. Results suggest the brand associations of *Local*, *Friendly* service which focuses on *Real People* highlights the Greater Building Society's desired *Accessibility* and *Authenticity* providing consumers with a

sense of *Security* and *Convenience* and also aiding in the development of a *Relationship* with consumers and increased *Satisfaction*, *Trust* and *Loyalty* to the corporate brand. The results also identify core associations desired by consumers for celebrity brand endorsers. *Success*, *Expertise* and *Authenticity* generate consumers' *Trustworthiness* for Jerry Seinfeld, which ultimately gives personal meaning to consumers by providing them with a sense of *Inner Harmony*, *Accomplishment* and the development of a *Relationship* with the celebrity brand. The results assist in the development of a positioning strategy based on the key positive brand features that consumers find personally meaningful. The distinctive importance of brand authenticity within this study mirrors the recent growth of interest in the marketing literature and illustrates the value of examining authenticity in further research.

The second and third studies are quantitative, experimental studies designed to provide an understanding of consumer judgment dilution, or weakening, effects in the same co-branding context. Celebrity brands encompass numerous image attributes and associations that may be important to the brand partner, providing relevant or image congruent information about both brands and potentially assisting consumers when making judgments about the brand. Alternatively, celebrity co-branding partners may provide irrelevant information that may damage consumer judgments, when they provide unrelated brand partner information, mentioning neither the brand nor brand benefits. The second study investigates whether irrelevant information presented by a celebrity dilutes consumer brand benefit beliefs, attitudes towards the advertisement, purchase intentions and perceptions of congruence. The third study extends the second and examines the effect of irrelevant celebrity information on consumer brand, celebrity brand and advertisement attitudes based on brand familiarity and perceptions of match-up. Results of the second study show that celebrities playing a peripheral role, where

they do not provide information about the partner brand or its benefits, cause a dilution of judgments related to the ability of the partner brand to deliver particular benefits and purchase intent, when a mismatch between the celebrity and brand is perceived. Results of the third study draw attention to the reciprocal effect of co-branding partnerships. Celebrity brand endorsers are able to enhance consumers' partner brand attitudes for those consumers who are familiar with the endorsed brand. However, partner brands, are able to dilute consumers' celebrity brand attitudes for those consumers familiar with the celebrity.

The fourth study is quantitative and investigates the concept of brand authenticity highlighted from the first study to develop a scale to measure brand authenticity. The study examines the applicability of the psychological scale for authenticity, the Authenticity Inventory, to the brand context. Results of this study indicate that celebrity and corporate brand authenticity has one dimension relating to positive consumer-brand relationships, *Relational Orientation*. Relational orientation involves valuing and striving for openness, sincerity, and truthfulness in close relationships with others. Celebrity brand authenticity centers on the need for public recognition and appreciation of their identity and values. Perceptions of corporate brand authenticity are based on the relations the brand has with its customers and its actions and conduct towards those customers. Although, brand authenticity consists of relational components, this study identifies that it is a distinct construct from brand attachment, a form of brand relationship.

This thesis provides vital insights into understanding the complex co-branding strategy undertaken by corporate brands in the brand image building process. The thesis identifies the value that both celebrities and corporate brands can present in a co-branding situation. This

thesis also identifies the potential risks of consumer judgment dilution when the

advertisements featuring the partnership are executed in a manner that presents the celebrity as

irrelevant to the co-branding partner.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work embodied in this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Undertaking this thesis has involved human intervention, for which I received approval from the Macquarie University Ethics Committee (Approval No. HE31JUL2009-D00081).

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Signed

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

With the onset of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), 2009 saw Australian consumer

confidence in small banking and non-bank financial institutions diminish. The GFC resulted in

Australian consumers returning to the 'big four' Australian banks, who offered a sense of

security (Baumann and Valentine, 2010). Consequently, overall market share in retail banking

for the 'big four' during the GFC rose from 57% to 70% (Baumann and Valentine, 2010). The

smaller financial institutions, such as building societies and credit unions, needed to identify a

way in which they could capture consumer attention. As such, the Greater Building Society, a

regional Australian financial institution, decided to embark on a corporate brand image

building campaign drawing on the trustworthiness and credibility of well-known comedian,

Jerry Seinfeld. This thesis examines this recent campaign featuring Jerry Seinfeld with

corporate brand, the Greater Building Society. The overall aim is to consider the impact of

celebrities as not merely endorsers of brands, but as crucial co-branding partners. Although it

is essential to understand the effectiveness of a celebrity partner, it is ultimately what

consumers value from each brand that can provide the most meaning and insight to marketers. Personal values and meaning is used as evaluative criteria for consumers' assessments of not only advertisements featuring celebrities but also of co-branding partnerships themselves. The partnership between the Greater Building Society and Jerry Seinfeld is an ideal case to examine these issues as both the celebrity human brand and the corporate financial brand have well developed images and both have had little involvement in co-branding partnerships previously.

The Business Spectator (2009) called it the "The Seinfeld Effect", and The Newcastle Herald (2009), The Daily Telegraph (2009), Brand Republic (2009), and ninemsn (2009) termed it a "major", "absolute" and "big" "coup" for the Greater Building Society. The campaign generated incredible interest and exposure in the media immediately prior to and following its launch on July 12th 2009. In addition to ample media attention, public interest and opinion about the corporate brand grew. The public highlighted their attitude towards the campaign by posting comments on public websites linked to articles related to the endorsement. Some consumers raised their concerns over such a large campaign during difficult financial times. It was deemed "irresponsible" and "unnecessarily extravagant" to be spending money during the financial climate of the time (ninemsn, 2009). One concerned citizen stated that he was "disgusted" and "concerned" with the brand's management style, stating it to be "risky" and "adventurous" (The Daily Telegraph, 2009).

Whilst some members of the public disapproved of the partnership between Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater Building Society, others found it interesting and creative. It was called a "winner" for the Greater (The Newcastle Herald, 2009). Some consumers even highlighted the

relationship they had with Seinfeld and declared their "love" for him. One consumer exclaimed "LOVE Jerry! Very impressed that MY building society has managed to score such an icon. Anyone who says otherwise is just sad and OBVIOUSLY has no sense of humour…go Jerry! Go GBS. I'm proud to be part of the Greater" (The Newcastle Herald, 2009). Another stated "Love Jerry Seinfeld. Welcome back to the TV screen. Much needed laughs for us all" (The Newcastle Herald, 2009).

As an introduction, Chapter 1 broadly examines corporate branding and the use of celebrities as endorsers or co-branding partners for brands from both practical and theoretical perspectives. Identification of gaps within the literature provides justification of the significance of the research. The research problem and specific research objectives delineate the focus and scope of the thesis. Finally, Chapter 1 concludes with a summary of the subsequent chapters in the thesis.

1.1 Background to the Research

1.1.1 Corporate Branding

With the recent rise of research on corporate branding, we see a substantial shift from traditional product branding towards organisational branding (Anisimova, 2010). This shift is attributed to the emerging challenge for organisations to maintain brand differentiation in a highly competitive yet homogeneous market. An organisation employs corporate or organisational branding when it markets the whole organisation as a brand (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004). A fundamental benefit of branding at the corporate level is the ability to integrate corporate-level intangible assets into the branding efforts. Creating and maintaining a

positive reputation and favourable image of the company are the end goals of the corporate branding process (Hawabhay, Abratt and Peters, 2009). In the corporate brand building process the core values that summarise the brand become the theme of communication and are suggested as common starting points (Van Riel, 1995) to communicate the brand essence in accordance with its identity (Urde, 2003).

In the financial industry specifically, we see that technology and functionality are not enough to differentiate competitors (Silver and Berggren, 2010). Products offered under a financial corporate brand are highly intangible and easily copied, with banks frequently launching the same products simultaneously (Levy, 1996; Silver and Berggren, 2010). Product brands are less prevalent in service industries. Some product brands do exist in the Australian financial industry with banks such as ANZ launching its "Falcon" credit card and Westpac introducing their "Earth" credit card, although these products are more or less identical. As such, product branding is less effective within this context and the formation of a corporate brand instead is vital (Balmer, 1995; McDonald, de Chernatony, and Harris, 2001). Creating and communicating corporate brand image represents an asset that allows firms to differentiate and increase their chances of success. Recent research undertaken by J.D. Power and Associates (cited in Paid Connect, 2009) finds that 39 percent of consumers' bank selection decisions are driven by the bank's corporate brand image, consisting of perceived financial stability, reliability and personal service. What is unknown is what consumers value from corporate brands. Understanding consumer personal meaning derived from corporate brands is crucial in building corporate brand image. It is also vital to recognise the values that consumer translate from any co-branding partners tied to the brand, such as authenticity, as they have the ability to translate meaning onto the other brand in the partnership.

The Greater Building Society's corporate brand image building campaign featuring the unconventional co-branding partnership with globally well-known comedian and actor, Jerry Seinfeld, brought with it increased corporate brand and campaign awareness of 49.3% within only weeks following its launch (Greater Building Society, 2009). Celebrity endorsers no doubt draw consumer attention to the brand, helping it stand out from the advertising clutter and leading to higher recall rates (Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Croft, Dean and Kitchen, 1996; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997/1998). In addition to increasing brand awareness, celebrity endorsers also are able to support and create brand image (Keller, 2008).

1.1.2 Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is nothing new. We only need to turn to our TV screens to see one in five ads (Time Inc. 2006, Solomon, 2009) featuring the hottest celebrity of the month. In fact, the use of celebrities as endorsers appears to be on the rise. The collaboration between brands and celebrities is such a common feature in the contemporary marketplace, that we see many celebrities often becoming the face, or image, not only of consumer products and brands, but of organisations themselves. In Australia, for example, John Travolta is the Ambassador for Qantas airline, Hugh Jackman lends his image to Lipton Ice Tea and Nicole Kidman supports the Nintendo DS gaming console. Research shows that even announcements of celebrity endorser contracts positively affect stock returns, making celebrity endorsers a valuable asset to any organisation (Agrawal and Kamakura, 1995; Marthur, Marthur and Rangan, 1997).

The benefits of celebrity endorsers are evident. Celebrities are able to improve the marketer's ability to communicate with the audience by establishing a connection between the audience and the advertised brand (Atkin and Block 1983; Sherman 1985). Celebrities also can assist in

global marketing by breaking down cultural barriers such as "time, space, language, religion, relationship, power, masculinity and femininity" (Mooij, 2004: 4). Moreover, celebrities can aid in polishing a tarnished company image (Till and Shimp, 1998), facilitate brand repositioning by transferring a strong and positive image onto the brand, and ultimately, improve sales of the endorsed products (Kaikati, 1987).

Celebrity endorsers may, however, also embody possible risks for the endorsed product or brand. For example, consumers' brand evaluations may be affected negatively if the celebrity endorser loses popularity or becomes controversial and attracts negative media attention (Louie and Obermiller, 2002; Till, 1998). Examples include the negative impact on the Pepsi cola brand associated with Mike Tyson's, Madonna's and Michael Jackson's controversial anti-social behaviours (Till and Shimp, 1998) and the recent dropping of endorsement deals for Tiger Woods, the pro golfer, following his unfaithful actions and split with his wife. Other potential risks include a celebrity playing a peripheral role in a partnership, providing irrelevant information about a brand partner and potentially diluting consumer assessments of the partner brand. Inauthentic celebrities, those who are not true to themselves, are seen as disingenuous and fake, not real, may also dilute partner brand evaluations.

Much of the research primarily focuses on identifying what constitutes an effective celebrity endorser in terms of their perceived personal attractiveness (McGuire, 1985), familiarity (Misra and Beatty, 1990; Kamins, 1990), likeability (Erdogan, 1999), credibility, believability and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Other research focuses on the efficiency gains of celebrity endorsements including consumers' attitudes towards the brand and/or the advertisement,

purchase intentions, and brand and product recall (Tripp, Jensen and Carlson, 1994; Till and Shimp, 1998; Lynch and Schuler, 1994; Misra and Beatty, 1990). Another topic of research revolves around the concept of fit or match-up and explores whether the perceived image of the celebrity endorser is consistent with the image of the product or brand in order for the image or meanings associated with the celebrity to transfer successfully onto that product or brand (Kamins, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Lynch and Schuler, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998). Findings from the literature suggest that different celebrities may be more or less adequate and effective for different products, brands or organisations based on image congruency or match-up (Kamins 1990; Kamins and Gupta 1994; Lynch and Schuler 1994; Till and Busler 1998, 2000; Till, Stanley, and Priluck, 2008). More recently, marketing research has shifted to explore the relationship that consumers have with celebrities as brands themselves (Thomson, 2006; Escalas and Bettman, 2009). Although these recent studies examine the deeper emotional bonds that consumers feel for celebrity brands, they fail to examine why consumers value celebrity brands and the meaning that celebrities can impart on brand partners. They also overlook the effect that celebrity authenticity can have on consumer brand evaluations. Research highlights the importance of celebrity authenticity in terms of creating an image of individuality (Tolson, 2001; Thomson, 2006). Authenticity is one of the distinctive features linked to a celebrity and key to the development of their own personal human brand.

1.1.3 Celebrities as Human Brands

Celebrities represent meanings that they encompass not only through their stage personas but also through their personal lives (McCracken, 1989). A *celebrity* is a person who is highly

skilled in their chosen field, and because of these accomplishments, they have acquired public recognition (Pringle and Binet, 2005; Cronin, 2003). Celebrities can include movie stars (e.g. George Clooney, Cameron Diaz), TV stars (e.g. Kim Kardashian, Ellen DeGeneres), models (e.g. Elle MacPherson, Heidi Klum), athletes (e.g. Tiger Woods, David Beckham), vocal artists (e.g. Justin Beiber and Lady Gaga) and other popular public figures like businessmen (e.g. Richard Branson, Steve Jobs) and politicians (e.g. Barak Obama, Julia Gillard) (Belch and Belch, 2011).

The concept of *celebrity endorsement* refers to "any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement" (McCracken, 1989: 310). Celebrity endorsement provides a process of meaning transfer (McCracken, 1989), where the meanings residing within the celebrity (such as status, class, gender, age, personality, lifestyle characteristics and authenticity) are coupled with a brand in order to transfer those meanings, associations, images and reputation of the celebrity onto the brand.

Recently, celebrities have been defined as *human brands*. Human brands are "any well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communications efforts" (Thomson, 2006: 104). Celebrities are brands themselves since "they can be professionally managed and because they have additional associations and features of a brand" (Thomson, 2006: 105). Perceived brand image and brand quality are important factors that celebrities need to manage, in the same way as product and organisation brands (Thomson, 2006).

1.1.4 Co-Branding

Co-branding is a brand alliance strategy in which two or more brands are simultaneously presented to consumers (Geylani, Inman and Hofstede, 2008). James (2006) refers to celebrity endorsement as form of symbolic alliance where a celebrity is used to add meaning to a consumer through the transfer of associations i.e. endorser qualities onto the brand. The various forms of strategic alliances in the marketing literature are often, however, referred to interchangeably including co-branding (Washburn, Till and Priluck, 2000; Seno and Lukas, 2007) and brand alliances (Rao and Ruekert, 1994). However, Blackett and Boad (1999) distinguish between an alliance and co-branding partnership and argue that alliances have a long duration, where both brands moderately shared value creation, whereas co-branding tends to have a shorter duration with both brands highly sharing value creation. Since celebrities can be considered brands themselves, Seno and Lukas (2007) argue that the endorsement process becomes a *co-branding partnership* where the celebrity and endorsed brand create a reciprocal relationship, jointly coordinated by both the brand manager and the manager of the human brand. Till and Shimp (1998: 69) argue that "repeated pairings of the celebrity endorser and brand facilitate the celebrity and brand becoming part of each other's association set", which further justifies the existence of a reciprocal relationship created through the endorsement process. A celebrity not only affects the endorsed brand's equity, but the endorsed brand also has the ability to affect the celebrity's equity (Seno and Lukas, 2007). As such, celebrity endorsement constitutes a co-branding partnership since the "two brands are deliberately paired with one another in a marketing context such as in advertisements" (Grossman, 1997: 191). This thesis utilises Seno and Lukas' (2007) reference to celebrity endorsement as a form of co-branding partnership.

Co-branding partnerships provide an effective differentiation tool through leveraging and transferring positive associations from one brand onto the other, such as brand image, quality and awareness (Simonin and Ruth, 1998; Washburn, Till, and Priluck, 2000; Besharadt, 2010). However, not all co-branding partnerships transfer positive associations. Consumers' familiarity and perceptions of fit, or consistency between the images of both brands, have the potential to influence their evaluations of the partnership causing dilution or a weakening of consumer judgments (Simonin and Ruth, 1998). As such, the use of co-branding strategies presents the problem of communicating a clear brand message when associated with another brand in an alliance. The image attributes associated with a human brand and the information they specifically provide within any marketing communications may interfere with the brand partners' meaning and, as a result, may dilute consumer judgments. Although dilution has been explored in a co-branding context between product brands, it has not been examined between celebrity and corporate brands. And despite research in co-branding and celebrity endorsement focusing on the concept of brand fit (Simonin and Ruth, 1998; Dickinson and Heath, 2006) or match-up (Kamins, 1990: Misra and Beatty, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998; Till et al., 2008), these studies rely heavily on the conceptualisation of fit or match-up as the consistency between the image attributes of both brands. It is likely that consumer co-branding judgments may also be influenced by the perceived authenticity associated with both brands in addition to any specific information the celebrity provides about the brand. In fact, any specific relevant verbal endorsements about the brand partner within the advertisements are able to influence consumer judgements. Moreover, any irrelevant information that does not specifically relate to the partner brand may impede consumer judgements and cause dilution.

1.2 Significance of the research and thesis structure

Many brands are now engaging in co-branding partnerships in order to build their brand image and ultimately, their brand equity. Yet any partnership, in fact, may potentially have a negative effect on consumer perceptions and assessments of the brand. Given this challenge faced by brand managers and the limited research devoted to celebrity co-branding, the overall aim of this thesis is to develop a deeper understanding of co-branding effects when a celebrity is paired with a corporate brand. The importance of this thesis is in merging two growing areas of interest in branding research and practice, corporate branding and human brands. This thesis examines these issues from the perspective of an actual and real-time co-branding partnership between corporate brand, The Greater Building Society and celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld.

This thesis consists of four related studies within the same co-branding context, with each study written in journal article format. The first study is both qualitative and quantitative and explores consumer values derived from corporate and celebrity brands. The study identifies the influential brand features, or associations, that consumers find personally meaningful and proposes a positioning strategy for the co-branding partnership. The second and third studies are quantitative, both utilising an experimental research design, and examine the executional aspects of the advertisements that feature the partnership. These studies examine irrelevant information presented in advertisements by a celebrity co-branding partner on consumer judgments. The second study investigates whether irrelevant information presented by a celebrity dilutes or weakens consumer brand benefit beliefs, attitudes towards the advertisement, purchase intentions and perceptions of congruence. The third study extends the

second, by further exploring celebrity co-branding partners as irrelevant information by uncovering its effect on consumer brand, celebrity and advertisement attitudes, based on brand and celebrity familiarity and perceptions of match-up. The fourth study is quantitative and is based on the key insight of brand authenticity generated from the first study. The study first explores the development of brand authenticity in the marketing literature and then adapts a framework from the psychology literature to develop a scale to measure both corporate and celebrity brand authenticity. Figure 1 conceptualises the flow of thesis chapters in a diagrammatic form.

Figure 1: Framework of Thesis

Chapter 1	**Introduction** Background to the research. Significance of the research.
	⇓
Chapter 2	**Study I- Consumer Values of Corporate and Celebrity Brand Associations** Qualitative and Quantitative exploratory study to guide positioning strategy.
	⇓
Chapter 3	**Study II- Celebrity Co-branding Partners as Irrelevant Brand Information in Advertisements and Study III- Attitude Dilution Effects and Irrelevant Celebrity Co-branding Partners** Quantitative Experimental Design tests the effect of irrelevant information presented in advertisements by a celebrity co-branding partner on consumer judgments of a partner brand. Study II tests consumer brand benefit beliefs, advertisement attitude, purchase intention and perceptions of match-up. Study III tests consumer brand, celebrity brand and advertisement attitudes for those familiar with both brands.
	⇓
Chapter 4	**Study IV- Measuring Celebrity and Corporate Brand Authenticity** Quantitative study examines the concept of celebrity brand and corporate brand authenticity as true to itself. Adapts and confirms the relevance of the Authenticity Inventory scale from psychology to the brand context.
	⇓
Chapter 5	**Conclusion** Explanation of the results. Implications of results to marketing and brand managers and academic researchers. Limitations of the research. Future Research.

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1.3 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the background to the research based on the campaign featuring the co-branding partnership between corporate brand, the Greater Building Society and celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld. The chapter provides a comprehensive background surrounding corporate branding specifically related to the financial services industry and celebrity endorsements, more specifically celebrities as brands and co-branding partners. With traditional research in the area of celebrity endorsement focused on the attributes that make a celebrity effective, little research explores how consumers value brands, how they value and perceive brand authenticity, how consumer brand values can drive a positioning strategy and how a celebrity that provides consumers with irrelevant brand information may cause consumer dilution effects. In addition, a modest amount of research examines the concept of brand authenticity and no research to date employs the psychological perspective of authenticity to explore and measure in a brand context. This chapter presents a solid justification for conducting the research. Chapter two presents the first of four studies and explores the values and associations tied to both corporate and celebrity brands.

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Chapter 2: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY I

The first study in the thesis, **Consumer Values of Corporate and Celebrity Brand Associations**, is an exploration of the values that consumers derive from both corporate and celebrity brands. The aim is to identify brand associations tied to corporate and celebrity brands and to explore the value consumers may acquire from corporate brands and celebrity brands in general. By identifying influential brand features, or associations, that consumers find personally meaningful, a positioning strategy for a co-branding partnership can be formulated.

Consumer Values of Corporate and Celebrity Brand Associations is currently under review for publication in Psychology and Marketing. As such, the study is presented in this thesis in the journal's required publication format. This study evolved from two papers presented at the Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference, 2010 and 2011. The conference papers are authored by Jasmina Ilicic and Cynthia M. Webster with the same contribution ratio as the thesis paper (outlined in Acknowledgments on page viii) and are included in Appendix A and B.

Consumer values of corporate and celebrity brand associations

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Consumer values of corporate and celebrity brand associations

Abstract

This study explores consumer brand associations and values derived from a corporate brand and a celebrity brand endorser prior to their co-branding partnership. Results from Brand Concept Maps, Social Network Analysis and Hierarchical Value Maps show consumers value accessibility and customer service in financial corporate brands. Consumers value expertise in celebrity brands and respect success in both corporate and celebrity brands. A central finding is the importance of brand authenticity. Corporate brand authenticity establishes a sense of security and assists in the development of brand relationships. Celebrity brand authenticity creates consumer attention and enhances celebrity trustworthiness aiding in the development of a consumer-celebrity brand relationship. The findings have implications for corporate brands utilizing celebrity endorsers. In terms of strategic positioning, corporate brands need to center their marketing communications on desired brand associations at the core of both the corporate and celebrity brand that translate to personal meaning for consumers.

Key words: authenticity, co-branding, corporate and celebrity brands, brand value, brand associations, social network analysis.

Introduction

Marketers and brand managers recognize and accept that consumers acquire personally relevant meanings from brands. Research investigating the meanings consumers derive from brands focuses predominantly on tangible products (Bagozzi & Dabholkar, 2000), and typically examines fast moving consumer goods such as orange juice (Woodside, 2004), wine (Mort & Rose, 2004), food (Sondergaard & Harmsen, 2007) and ice-cream (Wansink, 2003). Surprisingly little research explores the value consumers gain from *corporate* or *organizational* brands. Also lacking is an understanding of what consumers' value in *celebrity* or *human* brands. And, no research to date explores the value of corporate and celebrity brands collectively in a co-branding context.

With the recent growth of research on corporate branding, there has been a substantial shift from traditional product branding towards organizational branding (e.g. Balmer, 2001; Ind, 1997; Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Schultz & de Chernatony, 2002). Brands such as LG, Toyota and HSBC emphasize their corporate brands and put their efforts into corporate branding strategies due to the need for increased differentiation in increasingly commoditized markets (e.g. Ind, 1997). The corporate branding literature focuses attention on identifying the key differences between corporate and product brands (Balmer & Gray, 2003; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). The main difference lies in the addition of organizational associations regarding attributes, image and reputation to product based associations (Aaker, 2004; Ind, 1997). Corporate brand research also examines employees in the development of organizational culture (Hatch & Schultz, 2003), corporate brand personality (Keller & Richey, 2006) and the brand building process (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Research within corporate branding highlights the importance of reputation management in overall corporate brand identity and impression management (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004; de Chernatony &

Harris, 2000; Srivoravilai, Melewar, Liu & Yannopoulou, 2011). Other research emphasizes brand building through the creation and consistency of strategic vision, corporate image (Hatch & Schultz, 2003), and organizational core values (de Chernatony, 1999; Urde, 1999, 2003). Research, however, fails to explore the value consumers derive from corporate brand attributes and associations.

More and more corporate brands are enlisting celebrities to differentiate their brand and create a competitive advantage. The role of celebrities in our current celebrity dominated culture and the value celebrities can provide to brands is of increasing importance to marketers. Celebrities lending their names and images to brands are a common feature in the contemporary marketplace, with 14 percent of advertisements in America featuring a celebrity, 24 percent in India and 45 percent in Taiwan (New York Times, 2008). In Australia, we see John Trovolta as the ambassador for Qantas, Simon Baker lending his image to ANZ bank, Oprah Winfrey supporting Tourism Australia and Bear Grylls as the face of Scouts Australia. Brands benefit from the use of celebrities as endorsers as they are able to draw consumers' attention to the product category, help a specific brand to stand out from the clutter, and aid in higher recall rates (Croft, Dean, & Kitchen, 1996; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997/1998). In addition, celebrity endorsements are able to facilitate brand repositioning by creating a new image with different characteristics transferred onto the brand (McCracken, 1989), and improve sales of the endorsed products (Kaikati, 1987).

Studies on celebrities, or *human brands*, pay little attention to the meanings derived from human brand attributes or characteristics. Only Langmeyer and Walker (1991) identify the symbolic meanings celebrities pass on to the brands they endorse. In their study, they find Cher's attractiveness, fitness, hard work, sex, independence, and confidence transfer onto the Scandinavian Health Spa brand with her endorsement. Although Langmeyer and Walker

(1991) explore the meanings associated with a specific human brand, much of the celebrity endorsement literature instead examines the extent to which effectiveness of an endorsement relies on ideal attributes a celebrity endorser should possess such as their attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990), credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Other studies highlight the importance of the match-up between the celebrity's image and the brand's image (Kamins, 1990: Kamins & Gupta, 1994). More recently, the deeper connections that consumers feel for celebrity endorsers has been explored in terms of the degree of attachment a consumer feels for the human brand (Thomson, 2006; Ilicic & Webster, 2011), the relationships and emotional interactions that consumers express and share with other members of celebrity online communities (Hamilton & Hewer, 2010), and the extent to which a consumer uses the celebrity endorsement process to construct and communicate their self-concepts (Escalas & Bettman, 2005, 2009). Limited research identifies the sources of celebrity brand value, specifically in terms of the associations that make up celebrity brand image. The associations tied to a celebrity brand need to be understood as they have the potential to influence partner brand equity through the endorsement, or co-branding, process (McCracken, 1989).

The main aim of this research is to identify the core brand features associated with a corporate brand and a celebrity brand key to the development of personal meaning and value to consumers. The pre-launch stage of an actual campaign for a corporate brand featuring a celebrity brand endorser is used to 1) investigate the existing brand associations tied to the corporate and celebrity brands and 2) explore the possible value consumers may derive from corporate brands and celebrity brands in general. The essential research questions addressed are as follows: What are the associations tied to the corporate and celebrity brands? What corporate and celebrity brand attributes, consequences and values do consumers desire? Do

the brands encompass relevant attributes from which consumers derive personal meaning?

This paper begins by discussing the brand association and means-end chain literatures. The research design follows with results presented and discussed in the context of corporate branding and celebrity endorsement. This study has implications for brand managers in identifying a positioning strategy based on the core brand associations desired by consumers. Understanding the desired characteristics and actual associations tied to a corporate and celebrity brand is crucial for brand managers, and the unique combination of recommended techniques provides promising results with significant strategic applicability.

Consumer brand associations and brand concept maps

Brands are important because they simplify consumer decision-making processes, reduce purchase risk and provide consumers with a signal of quality and performance (Keller, 2008). For this reason, it is essential to understand the characteristics that consumers associate with a brand. Brand associations consist of consumer brand experiences that influence perceptions, preferences, and choices that ultimately become linked to a brand in memory (Aaker, 1991; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Romaniuk & Gaillard, 2007). According to the Associative Network Theory (Anderson, 1983; Collins & Loftus, 1975; Martindale, 1991), memory is structured as an associative network containing nodes connected via related links. These nodes in memory are portions of brand information. For corporate brands, consumers may link the brand's reputation based on their experiences with the brand or through word-of-mouth, the competitive products the brand offers, perceptions of service quality and attitudes towards their advertisements and promotional materials. Associations tied to celebrity brands can consist of celebrity attributes, the advertisements they feature in, brands they endorse, attitudes towards endorsements as well as consumers' perceptions of experiences they have had with

the celebrity themselves (e.g., autograph signing, fan clubs, media articles, blogs and social networking sites such as Twitter). Links connecting the nodes show how the information is related to form the consumer's overall knowledge structure of the brand.

Identifying brand associations provides useful information for brand managers to better differentiate their brand from competitors, create a positive brand image and aid in the retrieval of brand information (Aaker, 1991; Low & Lamb, 2000). It is the brand image components of brand knowledge, i.e. the associations linked to a corporate and celebrity brand in memory, that are important for brand managers in their strategic positioning. Brand managers should be aware of the positive and negative associations that are tied to their brands and to any co-branding partners, so that they emphasize the positive associations tied to their brands and avoid the negative associations in their corporate promotional campaigns (Keller, 2008).

Knowledge and understanding of brand associations is crucial for marketers, yet the identification and measurement of brand associations tends to be more artful than precise. Roedder John, Loken, Kim, and Monga (2006) introduce the Brand Concept Mapping (BCM) procedure to identify important consumer brand associations, and also to graphically represent how these associations connect to the brand and to one another. BCM is a straightforward and effective technique structured in three stages: elicitation, mapping and aggregation (Joiner, 1998; Roedder John et al., 2006). In the elicitation stage consumers recall important brand associations for a specified target brand. Consumers then show how the associations connect to the target brand and to one another by structuring the information in a diagram. In the third stage, researchers aggregate the individual brand maps to produce a consensus brand map.

Consumer values and means-end chains

Consumers derive personally relevant meaning from product and brand elements and consumers use this information to make decisions between alternatives. Means–end chain (MEC) theory is closely related to expectancy-value theory (Rosenberg, 1956), which also suggests that consumers choose to consume or use products and services based on product attributes that are thought to produce outcomes that consumers either desire or try to avoid (Gutman, 1982, 1997). Means-end theory maintains that consumers' knowledge structures consist of concrete brand attributes that link to more abstract benefits tied to the brand and ultimately link to relevant values held by consumers. Self-relevance, or meaning, develops from the benefits of particular brand attributes. As such, consumption or use of a brand is seen as the means to attain an end, an outcome that is consistent with one's personal values and goals. A physical brand attribute is only able to give meaning to a consumer if it provides desirable consequences or benefits from consumption (Claeys, Swinnen, & Abeele, 1995). Identifying and understanding how consumers obtain meaning from brands through personal values is important for marketers as these values are said to be the motivating end-states that individuals strive for in their lives (Custers & Aarts, 2005; Rokeach, 1973).

The meanings consumers relate to corporate or organizational brands can vary from basic concrete attributes, such as *helpful service*, to the most influential goals, motives, and values, such as a *sense of inner harmony* (Gutman, 1997). The meanings consumers connect to celebrity brands can include concrete attributes, such as *well-spoken*, to values such as a *sense of accomplishment*. Our most abstract beliefs, or associations, stemming from brands are elements of the self. These beliefs, if transferred onto the brand through marketing communication processes, may aid in the enhancement of consumers' self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2005, 2009).

To identify consumer values and brand attributes and to gain an understanding of how consumers translate these into meaningful associations with respect to the self, a laddering method can be used (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988). Laddering begins with consumers specifying a set of desired brand attributes or characteristics. Next, consumers reveal why they believe these attributes are important for the brand to possess. A series of direct probes using questions such as 'Why is that important to you?' elicits the links and connections among the attributes, consequences or benefits, and consumer values. The resulting means-end-chain, graphically represented in a Hierarchical Value Map (HVM), illustrates the ordered structure of consumers' desired attributes of a brand and the identified underlying consequences and values related to those attributes.

Interestingly, no research to date uses a combined methodological approach to understand the values and associations tied to brands. Research has explored either the personal meaning derived from brands or the associations tied to brands. This study uses both Hierarchical Value Mapping and Brand Concept mapping to first identify brand attributes that translate to personal meaning for consumers and then to identify whether these attributes are encompassed by a specific brand. Both corporate and celebrity brands are explored.

Method

To gain a better understanding of the value consumers derive from corporate and celebrity brands, this research examines one corporate brand and one celebrity brand endorser prior to their co-branding partnership. The corporate brand is a leading regional financial institution in Australia, the Greater Building Society, and the celebrity is Jerry Seinfeld, an internationally known comedian and actor. The 37 study participants are from a regional area in New South Wales, Australia and take part in one of four separate focus group sessions. Eighteen

participants, 9 males and 9 females, in two of the focus groups provided their opinions for the Greater Building Society. In the other two focus groups, 19 participants, 9 males and 10 females, discussed the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld. In all four focus groups participants completed brand concept maps and means-end chains for their respective brand. Each focus group lasted approximately one and a half hours in duration.

Mapping brand associations

To elicit brand associations and generate individual brand concept maps, this study uses Joiner's (1998) nondirective, free association approach to concept mapping. This unstructured technique allows participants to include any salient association directly or indirectly linked to the brand, be it a tangible characteristic of the brand or an intangible quality (Elliott, 1994; Koll, von Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010; Krishnan, 1996; Steenkamp, Van Tripp, & Ten Berge, 1994). Participants are told to think about '*anything* that comes to mind when you think about the corporate (celebrity) brand'. Once participants identify the brand associations, they then generate their individual concept maps by drawing different types of lines (single, double, or triple) between the associations to signify the strength of the connections (Roedder John et al., 2006).

Brand concept mapping gives a more precise way to generate visual representations of brand associations, but the technique provides no means for conducting a structural analysis of the associations. Henderson, Iacobucci, and Calder (1998, 2002) and more recently, Teichert and Schontag (2010), demonstrate the value of Social Network Analysis (SNA) for analysing brand associations. SNA is a quantitative, relational approach that goes beyond basic mapping of consumer perceptions to analyzing structural aspects of network connections (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982). The information from the individual brand concept maps needs to be

aggregated and entered into a relational matrix for SNA. The software packages Ucinet 6 (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002) and Netdraw software (Borgatti, 2002) are used to analyze the brand associations and create the network maps showing the interconnections among the brand associations.

Following the direction of Henderson et al. (1998), centrality measures are calculated to identify key brand features. Although a number of different measures exist (see Wasserman & Faust, 1994), three standard centrality measures are used here: Degree, 2-Step Reach and Betweenness (Freeman, 1979). Degree centrality takes into consideration only the direct ties connected to each brand node, giving a basic measure of local popularity. The measure of 2-Step Reach is somewhat more encompassing and indicates the proportion of other nodes that can be reached within two ties from each node. The idea is that if a node is closely linked to many other nodes both directly and indirectly, then it is central because it is close to all other nodes in the network and these close connections tend to be recalled more readily. Betweenness centrality takes into account all network connections and measures centrality in terms of power. It is the proportion of times a node sits in the path between all pairs of other nodes. As such, a brand node high in betweenness centrality is a type of power broker able to connect otherwise detached nodes and is central to the flow of information within the network.

Laddering and hierarchical value maps

The laddering technique used to uncover consumers' means-end chains can be undertaken using an in-depth, one-on-one interview method (Reynolds & Gutman, 1988) or a self-administered paper-and-pencil method (Botschen & Hemetsberger, 1998; Pieters, Botschen, & Thelen, 1998; Walker & Olson, 1991). To obtain mean-end chains, this study uses a modified paper-and-pencil version of Walker and Olson's (1991) original laddering technique.

Participants write down the four most important attributes a financial corporate brand and celebrity brand endorser should possess. They then complete a self-administered laddering task for each of the four named attributes. The task requires participants to indicate why the particular attribute is important to them and to repeat this step with each subsequent answer until they can go no further and have reached the end of the means-end chain. To reduce participants' mean-end chain responses to a common set of meanings and create a collective Hierarchical Value Map (HVM), Reynolds and Gutman's (1988) aggregation method is applied. Individual ladders are summarized in implication matrices, expressing the number of times each element leads to another element in the chain. The resulting HVM identifies the ordered structure of consumers' desired brand attributes and resulting benefits and values.

Findings

The results first look at consumer brand associations found using Brand Concept Mapping and then move to consumer values identified through Hierarchical Value Mapping. Finally, the core corporate and celebrity brand attributes that activate personal meaning to consumers are identified. Direct quotes from participants clarify and enrich the research findings.

Corporate and celebrity brand associations

The discussion of the findings focus on the first research question to identify the associations tied to a specific corporate brand, the Greater Building Society and celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld. The purpose here is to identify the core associations tied to both brands. Figure 1 presents the graphical representations of the brand associations for the Greater Building Society and Figure 2 presents the graphical representations of the brand associations for Jerry Seinfeld. The nodes in the graphs specify the characteristics and items reported to be

associated with the brands and the lines show the connections among the nodes, with the

thicker lines indicating core associations.

Corporate brand associations: Greater Building Society

With 26 direct associations, the Greater Building Society node dominates the graph in Figure

1. Moving from left to right, other nodes such as *Friendly*, *Local*, *Advertising*, *Free Holiday,*

Home Loans, Online Banking and *Convenient* are tied to the Greater also with many

associations. The thicker lines from the Greater highlight these core associations. The

interconnections among the associations reveal that *Local* leads to both *Friendly* and

Convenient. Not surprising, *Online Banking* is *Convenient* and *Flexible*, *Free Holiday* brings

together *Home Loans, Advertising* and *Flexible*, and the Greater brand's *Advertising,* is

considered *Recognizable* and *Friendly.*

Figure 1 Network map with Greater Building Society node present
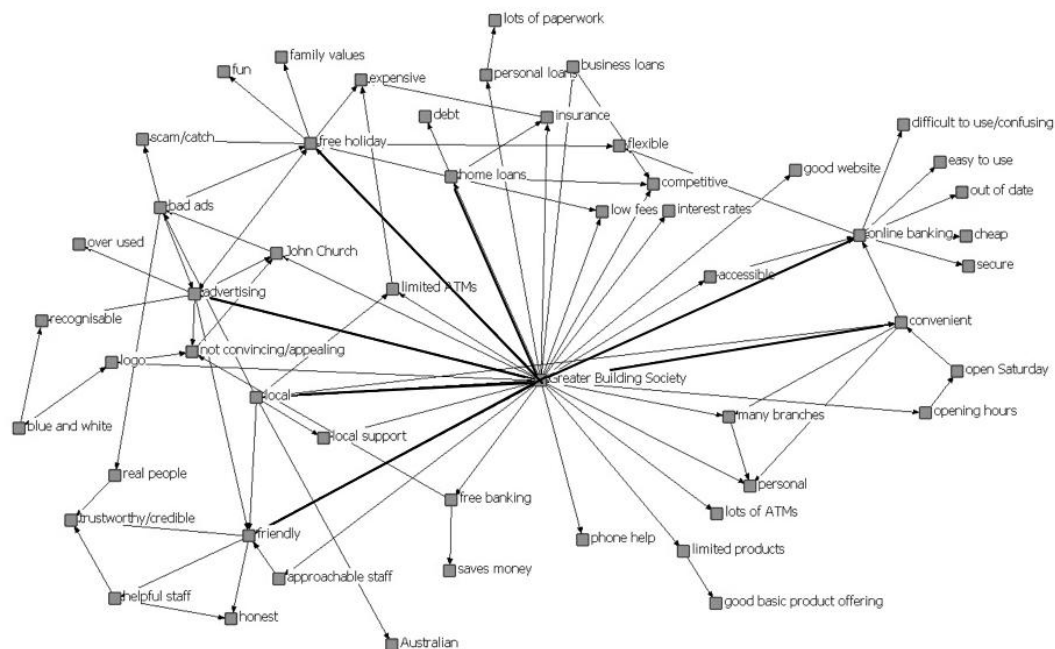
To confirm the prominence of these associations, Social Network Analysis (SNA) is incorporated. Table 1 presents the different centrality measures for the Greater Building Society. Besides the Greater Building Society node itself, *Free Holiday* and *Online Banking* are the most 'popular', followed by *Local* and *Friendly*. Looking at the measure of 2-Step Reach and after the Greater node, *Advertising* followed by *Free Holiday* are the closest to most other nodes, next are *Friendly*, *Local* and *Convenient*. With Betweenness centrality, again we see the importance of *Online Banking, Advertising, Free Holiday* and *Friendly*.

Participants' in-depth discussions provide strong support for focussing on the brand's *Local* and *Friendly* service. Some state that the Greater offers 'helpful service and interaction with people' where 'you will go in and they will call you by name'. Others talk about how the employees 'get to know the people [customers], their circumstances and their history.' Participants also mention the Greater as a highly *Recognizable* brand name that is *Honest*, *Helpful*, *Approachable*, *Trustworthy*, *Credible* and a brand that focuses on *Real People*.

Advertising receives a more mixed response with some participants positive about the Greater's free holiday offering. Many find the offering 'fun' unlike other financial corporate brands, emphasizing 'family values.' Others give more negative opinions, describing it as 'a scam,' one where 'there's got to be a catch.' One participant describes the offering as 'something that wouldn't drag me in because I would immediately go, well I'd rather my repayments were reduced if I want a holiday I'll take myself on a holiday.'

Table 1 Network centrality measures for the Greater Building Society brand

associations

Brand Node	Degree	2-Step Reach	Betweeness
Greater Building Society	**51.923**	**96.15**	**70.585**
Free Holiday	**17.308**	**73.08**	**15.133**
Advertising	**15.385**	**78.85**	**11.132**
Logo	5.769	57.69	3.567
Blue and White	3.846	9.62	0.075
Home loans	**11.538**	**65.38**	**4.494**
Competitive	5.769	53.85	0.075
Online banking	**17.308**	**65.38**	**19.363**
Convenient	**11.538**	**69.23**	**3.783**
Flexible	3.846	32.69	1.158
Local	**13.462**	**69.23**	**6.414**
Friendly	**13.462**	**69.23**	**11.186**
Trustworthy/Credible	5.769	17.31	0.666
Personal	5.769	53.85	0.000
Real People	3.846	17.31	0.323
Helpful staff	5.769	15.38	0.075
Approachable staff	3.846	57.69	0.000
Honest	3.846	13.46	0.000

These results suggest that a promotional campaign drawing on the Greater Building Society's key brand features of a friendly, local brand that understands real people and offers convenient financial banking would be effective. The question remains as to whether consumers derive personal meaning from these attributes. Currently, online banking and home loans combined with a fun free holiday are the basic offerings that are prominently associated with the brand.

Celebrity brand associations: Jerry Seinfeld

Not surprising the *Jerry Seinfeld* node dominates the celebrity brand graph, with 18 direct associations in Figure 2. The thicker lines to *Comedian* and *Actor* emphasize his core activities and both are linked to other key traits, *Comedian* with *Stand-up* and *Actor* with the *Characters* featured in his TV Show. Participants' in-depth discussions provide strong support for focussing on his comedic style. Of potential importance, Seinfeld's comedy is not necessarily always seen in a positive light. While some participants think his comedy is 'a bit quirky, similar to Tim the Tool Man', others are more negative describing it as 'contrived' and 'manufactured.' One participant characterizes his style as 'picky, he is always nitpicking at people.'

Figure 2 Network map with Jerry Seinfeld node present
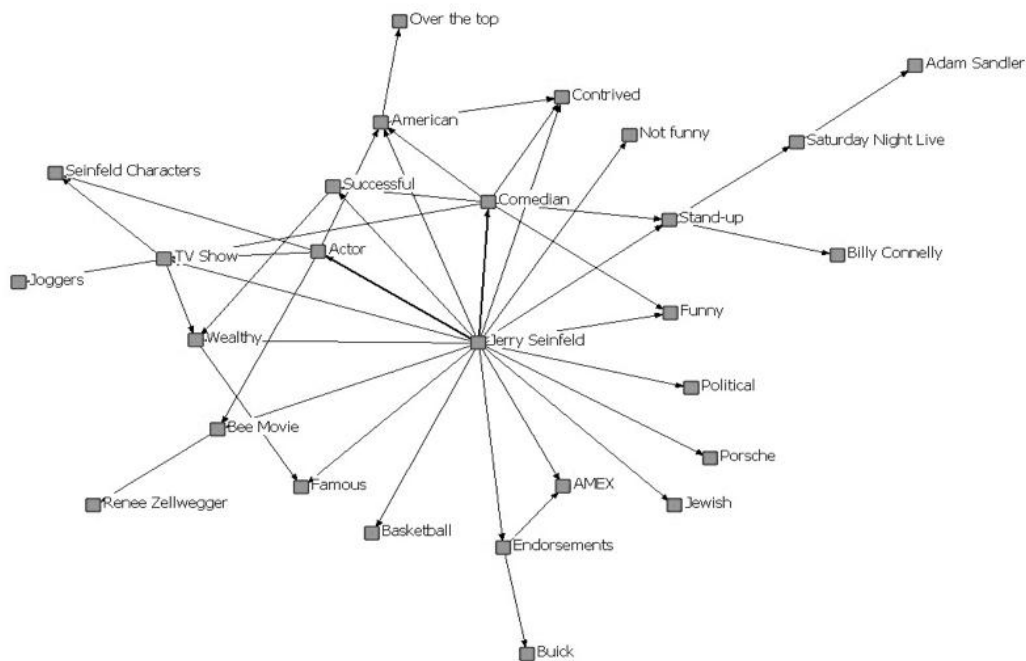
A visual inspection of the graph reveals one main component connecting most of the nodes either directly or indirectly, with some brand nodes becoming disconnected when the Seinfeld node is removed. Here Seinfeld's personal characteristics and likings (he's Jewish, a basketball fan, has a great Porsche collection) turn out to be isolated points and, apparently, are not of great consequence. Even his previous endorsements become disconnected from the main component of the graph, indicating that they are not well-integrated into his core brand. Interestingly, the two key associations, *Comedian* and *Actor*, are not directly linked, but are indirectly linked through *Success*. Although there are disagreements regarding Seinfeld's comedic style, all participants admire his success. Comments revolve around Seinfeld's wealth, with participants stating: 'he is the richest comedian,' 'getting about $1.5 million an episode' and 'he'd be the most successful of his type.' One participant in particular attributes Seinfeld's success to creating his own brand:

> 'Well he's successful in what he's made himself. He's branded himself
>
> and I think he's one of the highest paid TV personalities.'

Again SNA is undertaken with the same three centrality measures. Besides *Jerry Seinfeld* himself, the network graph indicates that both *Actor* and *Comedian* are core associations. Whilst it is difficult to determine from a visual inspection which of the two is more central, the centrality scores presented in Table 2 make clear that of the two, *Comedian* is more central. Focussing on the brand features that are compatible with *Comedian*, unexpectedly that *Stand-up* is highly central followed by *Successful* and *Wealthy*. Even his *Contrived* humor is highlighted. Of his personal characteristics, Seinfeld being *American* is the only one of note. The centrality results suggest that a promotional campaign featuring Jerry Seinfeld's stand-up comedy act, showing him as successful, using his contrived humor and even emphasizing his American nationality would be drawing on his key brand features.

However, it is still unknown whether these features translate to personal meaning for consumers.

Table 2 Network centrality measures for Jerry Seinfeld brand associations

| Brand Node	Degree	2-Step Reach	Betweeness
Jerry Seinfeld	**0.679**	**0.964**	**0.758**
Comedian	**0.250**	**0.893**	**0.070**
Actor	0.179	0.857	0.050
Stand-up	**0.143**	**0.786**	**0.204**
Successful	0.143	0.714	0.031
Wealthy	0.143	0.786	0.009
Contrived	0.107	0.750	0.000
Funny	0.071	0.679	0.000
Famous	0.071	0.679	0.000
Branding	0.071	0.286	0.002
Saturday Night Live	0.071	0.179	0.071
Over the top	0.036	0.214	0.000
American	**0.214**	**0.786**	**0.110**
Jewish	0.036	0.679	0.000
Basketball	0.036	0.679	0.000
Political	0.036	0.679	0.000
Porsche	0.036	0.679	0.000
Joggers	0.036	0.214	0.000
TV Show	**0.214**	**0.750**	**0.107**
Bee Movie	0.107	0.750	0.071
Seinfeld Characters	0.071	0.286	0.000

Consumer brand values

The discussion of the findings next turns to address the second research question regarding the desired attributes, consequences and values that consumers want from financial corporate brands and celebrity brand endorsers in general. The purpose here is to illustrate the

hierarchical structure of consumers' desired brand attributes, their underlying consequences (middle level) and values (top level) related to those attributes. Figures 3 and 4 present the graphical representations (HVM) of the means-end chain for financial corporate brands and celebrity brand endorsers.

Financial corporate brands: desired attributes

The overall HVM for financial corporate brands seen in Figure 3 highlights the key desired attributes of *Accessibility, Attractive Products, Service, Success* and *Authenticity*. Participants mention the *Accessibility* of a financial corporate brand frequently, in terms of the necessity for a financial corporate brand to be 'local,' have 'easy e-banking options,' 'many branch locations' and 'lots of ATM's.' There is agreement among participants that financial corporate brands should have *Attractive Products* and offerings in what they provide customers with 'competitive' offers, some of which include 'low fees,' 'high interest on savings', 'low interest on credit' and the ability to provide 'bundling discounts.' Participants also mention the need for financial corporate brands to have high levels of *Service*, with staff being 'professional,' whereby they are able to offer 'financial management skills.' In addition, service staff ought to offer 'personal' and 'friendly' service with a 'proactive' approach to customer needs where customers feel as though they are 'being looked after.' In addition, *Successful* is seen as an important characteristic for financial corporate brands with participants stating that the brand must have a 'good reputation,' be 'recognizable,' 'well-known,' 'credible' and 'not about to go bust.' Unexpectedly, participants also note financial corporate brands should be *Authentic*. Participants sense that consumers would be more likely to join financial corporate brands that are perceived to be 'genuine,' 'honest' and 'upfront' about what they stand for and who they are.

Figure 3 HVM for financial corporate brands
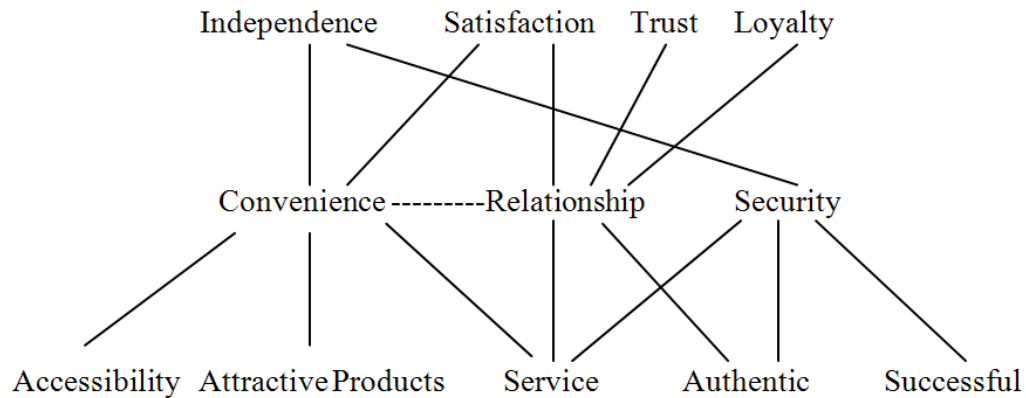
These desired attribute findings are consistent with ideal characteristics identified in bank marketing research. According to Bravo, Montaner and Pina (2009) the *Accessibility* of the brand including their location, the services offered, the personnel and their overall impression are factors that influence consumers' intentions to patronise a financial brand. It also is argued that, in the financial sector, consumers place greater trust in their local brands, due to closeness to the branch and familiarity with the staff (Levitt, 1983). Offering *Attractive Products* and customer *Service* are identified as important to consumers as they are concerned with low fees, the range of services and types of products financial brands are able to offer and maintain (Lee & Marlowe, 2003). Gronroos (1988) indicates that a financial firm's reputation and credibility, or their perceived *Success*, are the main dimensions that form consumers' impressions and expectations. While some components of *Authenticity* are marginally investigated by Morgan and Hunt (1994) who identify a link between the reliability and honesty of transaction partners and consumers' perceived trust, the components of genuineness and realness are not examined in any detail in the literature. Although these

identified attributes are of importance to consumers when deciding which financial corporate brand to join, understanding how these attributes provide deeper meaning to consumers gives greater insights that can aid marketers with their branding strategies.

Financial corporate brands: attribute consequences or benefits

The underlying benefits linked to financial corporate brand attributes, represent the next level of the HVM. The key benefits that appear at this level include *Convenience*, *Relationships* and *Security*. Participants believe that a financial corporate brand that is high in *Accessibility* is high in *Convenience*. Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu (1992) find that convenient location is of paramount importance to the choice of financial corporate brand. In addition, Gerrard and Cunnigham (2001) recognize that consumers find the location of branches, in terms of geographical proximity, a more convenient brand option. *Convenience* is also perceived as the most important consequence of *Attractive Products*, mentioned 22 times in total. In the bank marketing literature, Alfansi and Sargeant (2000) find that consumers who are more concerned with the cost of a banking service, in terms of the cost of the actual service or the costs associated with loss of time, have the highest need for promotional incentives and attractive products in terms of product bundles. Interestingly, *Convenience* is also linked to the development of a *Relationship* with the financial corporate brand. Participants mention the development of a *Relationship* with the brand as a core consequence of the brand's *Service* and perceived *Authenticity*. Srivoravilai et al. (2011) also identify a connection between the emotional attachment that customers feel towards an organization and the quality of services it provides. Consistent with Aldlaigan and Buttle's (2005) research, various service factors such as knowing the service people, liking them, having a good rapport and understanding, as well as the pleasure of being recognized as a customer, are identified as relating to the development

of a close personal relationship with the service provider. Results of this study show that *Security* is seen as an important consequence of an organization's *Authenticity* and *Success*. Safety and security of funds have been rated as the most important criteria for consumers in their choice of financial corporate brand (Javalgi, Armacost, & Hosseini, 1989), as they are crucial for an organization having a reputation of financial stability (Gerrard & Cunnigham, 2001).

Financial corporate brands: consumer values

The corporate branding and bank marketing literatures are limited as they tend to focus on the image and reputation of the brand, the product and service attributes, and tangible benefits gained from being a customer of a financial corporate brand. The highest level in the HVM, the value level, helps to explain why image, product and service attributes and consequences are personally meaningful to consumers. Participants easily link the benefits of image, product and service attributes to their own personal values.

Financial corporate brands that are *Convenient* bring about a feeling of *Satisfaction* and also help to create a sense of *Independence*. Participants mention that a life that offers convenience makes them 'happy,' 'less stressed,' 'feel good,' and creates a sense of 'freedom,' 'control' and 'flexibility' 'without restrictions.' Financial corporate brands that offer a high level of customer *Service* and are perceived as *Authentic* corporate brands are able to build a *Relationship* with the consumer and this relationship ultimately influences customer *Satisfaction, Trust* and *Loyalty* towards the organization. Participants state that if they are able to develop a relationship with the financial corporate brand and its employees, they are more 'at ease,' 'trusting' and 'more likely to stay with the organization' and remain 'loyal.' In addition, participants mention that a financial corporate brand that offers consumers a sense of

Security raises feelings of *Independence*. Participants discuss that feeling secure makes them feel as though they are 'important' and 'in control', which makes them 'feel comfortable with choices made.' The financial corporate brand HVM in its entirety suggests that consumers value financial corporate brands that offer them convenience and that are authentic so that they are able to build a relationship and feel secure. Such financial corporate brands provide consumers with a sense of independence and help consumers have a higher level of satisfaction, trust and loyalty.

Celebrity brand endorsers: desired attributes

As seen in Figure 4, participants believe a celebrity co-branding partner should be *Authentic*, *Attractive, Successful* and *Experts.* Participants require celebrity brands to be *Authentic*, in a sense that they are 'real,' 'not fake' but 'genuine,' and someone who is 'being their own person.' *Attractiveness* is also discussed. Participants state that a celebrity co-branding partner should be 'good looking,' 'beautiful,' 'healthy,' have 'charisma' and 'personality.' Participants agree that a celebrity co-branding partner needs to possess *Expertise*, in that they should have a certain level of knowledge about the brand they are endorsing so that there is an appropriate 'fit' between the celebrity and product brand. One participant comments on a particular mismatched celebrity endorsement: 'What does he know, really? He's a comedian … OK you may like him or not, but I just don't see where he fits in.' A celebrity endorser being *Successful* is the final and only attribute also identified in the brand concept mapping task. Participants believe that for a celebrity to be an effective endorser they have to be widely recognized as successful in their particular field and be 'well known' and highly 'familiar.'

Although *Authenticity* and *Success* are not the focus of research in the area of celebrity endorsements, the findings of *Expertise* and *Attractiveness* are consistent with the literature. For celebrity endorsers to be effective, research indicates that the celebrity must be physically attractive (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Debevec & Kerman, 1984; Kahle & Homer, 1985) and must be seen to have a high level of knowledge, experience and skills for the brand they are endorsing (Hovland et al., 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Further research also shows the importance of the match-up between an *Attractive* celebrity and an attractiveness related product (Kamins, 1990: Kamins & Gupta, 1994). Although these attributes are of importance when pairing celebrity and product/service brands, understanding why these attributes are influential to consumers provides greater value to marketers.

Figure 4 HVM for celebrity brand endorsers
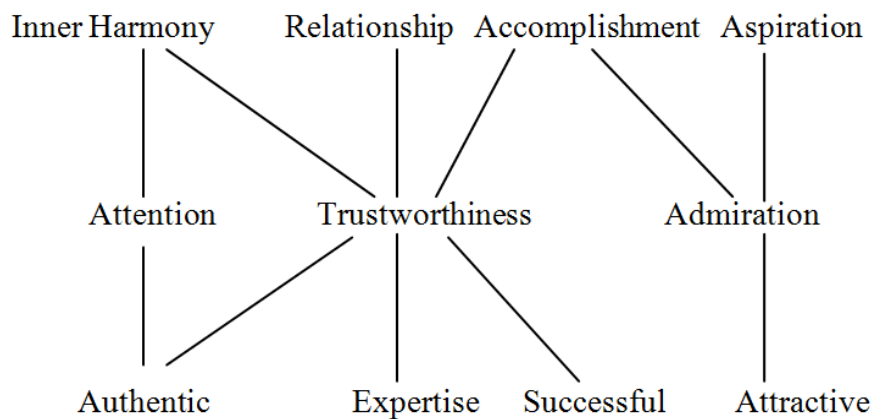
Celebrity brand endorsers: attribute consequences or benefits

The next level of the HVM depicts the underlying benefits linked to desired celebrity brand attributes. At this consequence level, a few clear central benefits appear including consumer admiration for the celebrity, the attention they assign to the celebrity and the increased

trustworthiness consumers have for the celebrity. Each of these consequences has been investigated in both the psychology and celebrity endorsement literature. The HVM shows that *Attractiveness* of the celebrity brand is the key attribute leading to participants' *Admiration* for the celebrity brand. Celebrity admiration links to individuals' deep and meaningful connections to a celebrity and celebrity worship (McCutcheon, Lange, & Houran, 2002). Participants think that celebrities who are *Authentic* or real to their own character increase their interest and *Attention*. Celebrities have been found to contribute significant efficiency gains in advertising by drawing consumer attention to the product category and helping a specific brand to stand out from the clutter, leading to higher recall rates (O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997/1998). Results of this study show that *Trustworthiness* is considered the most important consequence of *Success* and *Expertise*, being mentioned 16 times in total. Celebrity endorsement research finds trustworthiness and believability of an endorser significantly influences consumers' intentions to purchase endorsed products (Hovland et al., 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951).

Celebrity brand endorsers: consumer values

Most celebrity endorsement research tends to focus on celebrity attributes and tangible benefits gained from endorsement situations and the connections or relationships between them. It is the next level in the HVM, the value level, which helps to explain why celebrity brand endorsers are personally meaningful to consumers. When probed further, participants are able to link benefits to particular values. Celebrities who are 'well-known,' 'familiar' and 'trusted' ultimately lead to a sense of *Inner Harmony*. Celebrity endorsers make participants feel 'comfortable' with their purchase decisions. Celebrities who are admired bring about *Aspirations* to 'be like them' but also help to create a sense of *Accomplishment*. Participants

link emotions such as 'feeling good,' being 'confident' and 'happy' with themselves to their purchase decisions. Trustworthy and admired celebrities also raise feelings of connectedness. Participants value *Relationships* with celebrities, even if it is only an impression, or perceived appearance of relatedness to the celebrity. They value someone they can 'warm to' and someone they can 'relate to' and 'respect.'

Taken as a whole, the HVM for celebrity brand endorsers suggests that consumers value trusted celebrity brand endorsers because they: 1) help consumers feel at peace with their decisions, reducing post-purchase cognitive dissonance; 2) provide a sense of being connected, perhaps increasing product brand loyalty and 3) add to consumers' sense of accomplishment, their feelings of being a winner.

Attributes that provide personal meaning

The discussion next turns to the last research question surrounding whether both brands encompass the attributes that deliver personal meaning to consumers. Here the findings from the BCM and HVM for the corporate and celebrity brands are integrated in an attempt to identify the extent to which the corporate and celebrity brands possess consumers' desired attributes or characteristics. The importance of both brands containing the characteristics considered necessary for financial corporate and celebrity brands to embody lies in the attributes that provide personal meaning to consumers.

Greater Building Society: desired brand attributes

The Greater Building Society clearly possesses the five desired characteristics of a financial corporate brand, including *Accessible*, *Attractive Products*, *Service*, *Successful* and *Authentic*. Participants map the Greater as a *Local* and *Convenient* financial corporate brand, that is

easily *Accessible* through *Online Banking*. Many *Attractive Products* offered by the Greater

are mapped including their *Free Banking*, *Low Fees*, attractive *Interest Rates* and

Competitiveness. Many *Service* characteristics are also identified, such as the service staff

being *Friendly*, *Personal*, *Helpful* and *Approachable*. The corporate brand is also seen as

Authentic as it understands and consists of *Real People* and is perceived to be *Honest*. The

Greater is also associated with being a *Successful* financial corporate brand as it is perceived

to be highly *Recognizable*, *Trustworthy* and *Credible*. Being an accessible financial corporate

brand that offers attractive products and a high level of service, in addition to being authentic

and successful are attributes that translate to its convenience, the development of a relationship

with the customer and an increased sense of security. According to the HVM, a financial

corporate brand high in convenience gives consumers a degree of independence, a high level

of satisfaction and encourages the formation of a customer-brand relationship. The formation

of a relationship between the brand and the consumer increases consumers' trust and

commitment to the brand and their satisfaction with the products and services offered. A sense

of security is personally relevant to consumers as it provides them with a feeling of

independence and control.

Jerry Seinfeld: desired brand attributes

Jerry Seinfeld arguably possesses four desired celebrity brand endorser characteristics

highlighted by participants: *Successful*, *Attractive*, *Authentic* and *Expert*. Participants agree

that Seinfeld is a highly successful comedian and actor. Seinfeld is arguably an attractive

source as he is likeable and familiar (McGuire, 2001). Participants also supply and map Jerry

Seinfeld's attractiveness in terms of being a *Funny* and *Quirky* individual, which is consistent

with research identifying humor as increasing a source's attractiveness (Erdogan, 1999).

Participants believe that a celebrity brand should be an authentic individual, one that is real, genuine and one that has an original and distinct style (Van Leeuwen, 2001). Participants maintain that Seinfeld's *Unique Style* of humor is *Contrived* and *Over the Top*. Seinfeld's authentic style that he has built and maintained over time would be instantly recognized if imitated. Participants agree that Jerry Seinfeld is an expert since he is seen as highly experienced and skilled (Ohanian, 1990). Participants think that 'he'd (Seinfeld) be the most successful of his type' and that 'he has longevity'. Celebrity brand attributes of successful, attractive, authentic and an expert translate to gaining consumer attention, increasing trustworthiness and admiration for the celebrity brand. According to the findings in the HVM, consumer attention and attraction to a celebrity brand increases a sense of inner harmony and enables the development of a relationship with the celebrity brand. A highly trustworthy celebrity brand enables the creation and formation of a relationship and also provides consumers with a sense of accomplishment. Admiration for a celebrity leads to aspiring 'to be like them' and a sense of accomplishment in purchase decisions.

Conclusion and future research

Findings from this study demonstrate that by using a combination of techniques such as BCM, SNA and HVM, brand managers are able to identify the core brand associations that have personal meaning to consumers. Previous research examines personal meaning and consumer associations in isolation. However, results of this study show that the examination of a combination of both consumer value and associations provides a much richer understanding of consumer memory structures. Results of the study suggest that the core Greater Building Society brand associations of *Local* and *Convenient* highlights the brand's desired *Accessibility*, which provides consumers with a sense of *Independence* and also aids in the

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development of a *Relationship* with the consumer, resulting in increased *Satisfaction*, *Trust* and *Loyalty* to the brand. The corporate brand should also consider the core brand association of *Friendly* service which focuses on *Real People,* as this highlights the brand's desired superior *Service* and *Authentic* attributes that benefit consumers in a sense that they perceive the brand to be *Convenient* and *Secure*, assisting in the formation of a *Relationship* with the brand. These corporate brand benefits are ultimately valued by consumers as they provide consumers with a sense of *Independence*, *Satisfaction*, *Trust* and *Loyalty.* The results also identify the core associations desired by consumers for celebrity brand endorsers. Within its campaign, the Greater Building Society should focus on Jerry Seinfeld's *Success*, *Expertise* and *Authenticity* as these generate consumers' *Trustworthiness* for the brand, which ultimately gives personal meaning to consumers by providing them with a sense of *Inner Harmony*, *Accomplishment* and the development of a *Relationship* with the celebrity brand.

Brand concept mapping proves to be a useful technique to elicit consumer associations, with SNA effectively aggregating and mapping consumer knowledge structures for a specific corporate and celebrity brand. Findings from this study identify many factual, concrete attribute associations tied to both the Greater Building Society and Jerry Seinfeld brands, such as the services and products the Greater offers, and Jerry's TV shows and hobbies. Interestingly, by using the BCM technique, participants automatically identify tangible, concrete or 'factual' descriptors of the brand as well as more abstract attributes such as corporate and celebrity brand success. However, the consumer associations in isolation lack meaning and strategic branding applicability unless brand managers are aware of what consumers ultimately value from these attributes and how they translate to a self-brand connection.

Although Bagozzi and Dabholkar (2000) argue that the laddering method for uncovering means-end chains is not well-suited to intangible entities such as goals (showing compassion toward others, as relevant to many service organizations) or persons (actors or media figures), this study shows evidence of the appropriateness of the application of the theory and method to different types of brands such as organization and celebrity brands. The HVM technique moves beyond merely identifying concrete or abstract characteristics to identifying much more intangible, abstract 'personal' brand associations linked to the self. Results of this study suggest that a financial corporate brand that provides personal and friendly service links to consumers' perceived convenience, security and relationship with the corporate brand, which ultimately gives meaning to the consumer through their developed sense of independence, satisfaction, trust and loyalty. The results also suggest that a celebrity brand who is authentic, has expertise and is highly successful links to consumers' perceived trustworthiness, which ultimately gives meaning to the consumer through their developed sense of inner harmony, accomplishment, and the relationship they feel with the brand.

The results highlight the significance of self-brand connections through consumer-brand relationships. Findings from this study suggest that the authenticity, service and convenience of a corporate brand lead to the development of a relationship with the brand. In addition, the authenticity, expertise, success and trustworthiness of a co-branding partner translate to consumers' relationships with a celebrity brand. These findings are highly relevant given the recent interest in consumer-brand relationships and relationship marketing. Recent marketing research draws attention to how consumers' brand relationships have implications for brands, particularly with regards to their enduring nature (Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005) and their role in creating brand resonance (Keller, 2008), a critical driver of brand equity (Keller, 2008; Park, MacInnis, & Priester, 2007). The attributes that

translate to a brand relationship are possible antecedents to consumers' relationships with brands. Future research should examine the relationship between the identified corporate brand attributes (authenticity, service and convenience) and celebrity brand attributes (authenticity, expertise, success and trustworthiness) and consumer-brand relationships.

Another central finding in this study is the importance of corporate and celebrity brand authenticity. Findings from this study suggest that corporate brand authenticity creates a sense of security and enables the development of a relationship with the brand. The findings also propose that celebrity brand authenticity creates consumer attention and also enhances celebrity trustworthiness as a co-branding partner. Despite being coined one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing (Belk & Costa, 1998; Holt, 1997; Kozinets, 2001), brand authenticity has generated modest discussion in the marketing literature. The term *authentic* is used frequently by consumer researchers, yet few define it and no generally acceptable definition is available. This has allowed for the term to be used in different ways and with varying meanings (Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

The authenticity research in marketing to date tends to take a production perspective, assessing whether or not a product or brand's origins are authentic (Chalmers, 2008). Within this viewpoint, consumer researchers examine authenticity based on a product, brand or consumption experience being grounded in history (Chronis & Hampton, 2008; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Hede & Thyne, 2010; Munoz, Wood & Solomon, 2006; Rose & Wood, 2005) or following a traditional production approach (Beverland, 2005). Alternatively, Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003, p. 21) argue that authenticity is 'composed of the brand elements that consumers perceive as unique', the brand's essence. Brown et al. (2003) provide a related argument to that of authenticity in the philosophy literature, which contends that authenticity is being true to the essence of the self (Van Leeuwen, 2001). Being true to the self signifies

being 'genuine', 'original', having a 'unique' and 'distinctive' style, and not being an imitation or copy (Van Leeuwen, 2001). Tolson (2001) attributes celebrity authenticity to 'being yourself' in terms of creating an image of individuality. Fairchild (2004), in a study exploring 'building the authentic celebrity' within Australian Idol contestants, argues that the creation of a persona and the consistency of this persona is what makes a celebrity authentic. The philosophical interpretation of authenticity is closely tied to the concepts drawn from this research in which participants describe the necessity of corporate brands as 'genuine', 'honest' and 'upfront' organizations and celebrities as 'real', 'not fake', 'genuine', and someone who is 'being their own person'. The research undertaken on authenticity to date provides a promising avenue for the exploration of corporate and celebrity brand authenticity in the future.

The study results have significant implications for brand managers who are interested in identifying characteristics that consumers use to derive personal meaning, especially characteristics that encourage the development of a relationship with the brand. The attributes that derive personal meaning for consumers can be highlighted in the brand's marketing communications in order to attempt to influence consumer decision-making behavior. For consumers to infer or construct brand meaning within promotional messages (Graeff, 1997) and to develop self-brand connections, the links between the attributes, consequences and values also can be clearly connected in promotional campaigns, using a framework such as the Means End Conceptualization of Components of Advertising Strategy (Olson and Reynolds, 1983). In addition, the results provide valuable information on the key positive brand features that may be used to position the brand in future promotional campaigns, providing consistent alignment with consumers' core associations and desired characteristics.

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CONCLUSION TO STUDY I

The first study of the thesis provides the basis for understanding how consumers value both corporate and celebrity brands. Results suggest the importance of consumer-brand relationships and brand authenticity in translating to personal meaning for consumers. The findings provide a foundation for identifying an appropriate positioning strategy for celebrity co-branding partnerships based on the core and meaningful associations consumers tie to both brands.

Although Study I reveals key insights into consumer perceptions of both corporate and celebrity brands, Studies II and III further examine co-branding partnerships based on consumer judgments of both brands. As Study I highlights the importance of brand authenticity, Study IV of the thesis concentrates on authenticity and how authenticity can be conceptualised and measured in a brand context.

Chapter 3: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY II

The second study in the thesis, **Celebrity Co-branding Partners as Irrelevant Brand Information in Advertisements**, is a quantitative experimental study that extends Study I and examines the executional aspects of the positioning of a co-branding partnership. Although a celebrity may be positioned within advertisements in a manner that is consistent with consumers' associations that derive personal meaning, they may feature in advertisements and provide irrelevant co-branding partner information. Managers may develop particular advertisements where the celebrity is peripheral to the brand and does not provide any information about the brand or its benefits. As such, the celebrity does not provide information that is useful for consumers to make a judgment about the partner brand, resulting in a dilution or weakening effect.

Celebrity Co-branding Partners as Irrelevant Brand Information in Advertisements incorporates changes made following reviewers' comments from the La Londe Conference in Marketing Communications and Consumer Behavior, 2011. The paper is currently in press in the Special Issue on Marketing Communications and Consumer Behavior in the

Journal of Business Research. The paper is presented in this thesis in the journal's required

publication format yet for ease of reading tables and figures are embedded throughout. The

contribution ratio for the thesis paper is outlined in the Acknowledgments on page viii.

Celebrity Co-branding Partners as Irrelevant Brand Information in Advertisements

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of irrelevant information presented in marketing communications by a celebrity co-branding partner on consumer judgments of a partner brand. Three experimental conditions manipulate the relevancy of information: relevant information, irrelevant information, and relevant plus irrelevant information. Findings from this study suggest that when a celebrity co-branding partner does not provide information about the partner brand nor brand benefits, consumer judgments in the ability of the partner brand to deliver benefits, their purchase intent and their match-up perceptions become less positive. Consumer brand benefit beliefs and purchase intentions show evidence of a dilution effect only when consumers perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand and when presented with irrelevant information supplied by a celebrity in addition to relevant brand information. Interestingly, not only the relevant celebrity characteristics associated with the brand but also the irrelevant information provided by the celebrity in the advertisement influence perceptions of match-up or congruence. Brand managers should ensure a celebrity co-branding partner does not provide irrelevant brand information within advertisements to avoid brand benefit belief, purchase intent and match-up dilution.

Keywords: dilution, celebrity co-branding, match-up, judgment, beliefs

Celebrity Co-branding Partners as Irrelevant Brand

Information in Advertisements

1.0 Introduction

Consumers often evaluate brands on whether they are able to deliver a particular benefit. Aware of this predisposition in consumer behavior, brand managers attempt to highlight specific brand benefits in their advertisements in order to create competitive points of difference and encourage ease in consumer decision-making. As a result, brand managers create advertisements that contain relevant (diagnostic) information, useful for consumers in making their judgments about the brand. However, brand managers also endeavor to draw attention to their advertisements using means that are not always relevant to the brand or the brand's benefits.

The use of celebrity endorsers provides a means by which brands are able to capture attention, helping the brand stand out from the clutter (Friedman and Friedman, 1979; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997/1998). Today consumers recognize celebrities as human brands (Parulekar and Raheja, 2006; Thomson, 2006) since celebrities employ branding techniques such as managing, trademarking and licensing their names, launching their own product lines and agreeing to product endorsements to enhance their perceived value and brand equity (Pappas, 1999; Thomson, 2006; Towle, 2003). Advances in branding research identify celebrities as co-branding partners (Seno and Lukas, 2007), where "two brands are deliberately paired with one another in a marketing context such as in advertisements" (Grossman, 1997: 191). Celebrity brand endorsement is a co-branding activity jointly coordinated by both the brand manager and the manager of the human brand (Seno and Lukas, 2007).

In a co-branding situation, either between two product brands or between a product and human brand, the separate relevant brand attributes tied to each brand come together. Human and product brands encompass several image attributes, some of which are more important to a consumer in determining preference and purchase behavior (Alpert, 1971). When celebrities feature in advertisements as co-branding partners, their well-known attributes and image associations may also be important to the product brand endorsed providing relevant information about both brands and potentially assisting consumers when making judgments about their product benefit beliefs, attitudes and purchase intentions. However, celebrity co-branding partners arguably provide irrelevant (nondiagnostic) information that may in fact impair consumer judgments, when they play purely a peripheral role in the advertisement and provide unrelated brand partner information, mentioning neither the brand nor brand benefits. For example, the relevant information consumers' associate with the comedian Jerry Seinfeld may be that he is funny, loves basketball, is Jewish and American. This information, however, may be completely irrelevant to consumer judgments when the Jerry Seinfeld brand pairs with another brand such as an Australian financial institution, like the Greater Building Society. In addition, when Jerry Seinfeld features in an advertisement with a brand and does not refer to the brand or any of the brand's attributes or benefits, he presumably is a piece of irrelevant brand information.

Although the role of a celebrity, like Jerry Seinfeld, may be simply to grab attention, consumers may in fact use information about the celebrity's image and transfer the meanings that reside within the celebrity onto the endorsed brand (McCracken, 1989). Consumers also may use the information associated with the product brand and transfer these associations onto the celebrity endorser. Celebrity endorsements are mutually beneficial partnerships between the celebrity and the endorsed brand, as both individually

require the management of their image attributes and have the potential to exchange their image with other brands (McCracken, 1989). As a result, consumers may create their belief in the consistency of the celebrity in providing information about the product brand and brand benefits. Brand managers at times strategically place a celebrity with a product brand, whereby the image of the celebrity is consistent with that of the endorsed brand (Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000; Till, Stanley, and Priluck, 2008) providing consumers with ostensibly coherent information about the brand. For example, Madonna's eccentric and mischievous, yet classic and chic image matches that of the Versace brand, highlighting consistent brand partner information. On the other hand, Nicole Kidman's gentle, sophisticated and classy style is not obviously consistent with that of Nintendo's young, fun and cool image, therefore, providing consumers with inconsistent information. Research suggests that consistent celebrity information, referred to as a match-up in the celebrity endorsement literature, results in a positive effect on consumer attitudes towards the products and brands with which they appear and the advertisements in which they feature (Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000; Till et al., 2008).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Celebrity Information and Match-Up Hypothesis

In the celebrity endorsement literature a match-up occurs when "highly relevant characteristics of the spokesperson are consistent with highly relevant attributes of the brand" (Misra and Beatty, 1990: 160). A spokesperson is effective when a fit exists between the endorser's brand attribute associations and the endorsed brand's attribute associations (e.g. Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998; Till et al., 2008), just as a co-branding partnership is effective if consumers perceive a fit between the similarity of the images of the two brands (Dickinson and Heath, 2006; Simonin and Ruth,

1998). Research identifies that an endorser is more consistent and, therefore, congruent when they are an expert in the associated product category (Lynch and Schuler, 1994) or when they are attractive and endorse an attractiveness-related product, such as cosmetics (Kamins, 1990). Kamins (1990) shows that an attractive celebrity (Tom Selleck) endorsing an attractiveness-related product (luxury car) results in increased spokesperson credibility (expertise and trustworthiness) and attitude towards the advertisement, than when they endorse an attractiveness-unrelated product (computer). Importantly, Kamins (1990) finds no effect of celebrity-brand attractiveness match-up on brand attitude or purchase intention. An incongruent endorser, however, results in negative consumer brand evaluations (Kamins and Gupta, 1994). Till and Busler's (1998) study identifies celebrity expertise as more important than physical attractiveness for matching a brand with an appropriate endorser. They find a match-up effect on expertise, where matching an athlete with an energy bar positively influences brand attitudes and purchase intentions.

The match-up hypothesis focuses on two distinct concepts: congruence and relevance. Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson, and Unnava (1991: 105) argue that judgments of relevance depend on whether a "stimulus conveys issue-pertinent information" and judgments of appropriateness (or congruence) rest on "perceptions of what is deemed proper" or suitable. The literature to date on match-up focuses primarily on celebrity relevance in terms of the celebrity possessing characteristics pertinent to the endorsed brand. However, the celebrity in an advertisement may also convey relevant information when they mention the brand and the brand's benefits. In other words, a celebrity not only provides consumers with relevant brand information when they convey characteristics pertinent to the brand but also when they mention information relevant to the endorsed brand. For example, although the fun characteristic of Jerry Seinfeld is relevant to the fun and laid back positioning of the Greater Building Society, Seinfeld may also provide

consumers with relevant brand partner information when he features in an advertisement for the Greater and mentions details or features about the Greater brand. As such, consumers perceive an endorser or human co-brand to be more congruent when they not only communicate relevant brand information through a) possessing characteristics pertinent to the partner brand, but also when they b) provide relevant information concerning the brand and the brand's benefits. In effect, if co-branding partners are an appropriate or good fit based on their relevant brand attributes, then their perceived match-up leads to positive consumer perceptions and purchase intent. Conversely, if co-branding partners are a bad fit then their perceived mismatch leads to more negative (weaker) consumer perceptions and purchase intentions.

Research in social judgment focuses on individuals' assessments or evaluative judgments of particular people based on the information they receive about those people. This theoretical perspective is particularly appropriate for investigating consumers' evaluations of co-branding partners based on the information they receive from the celebrity co-brand, in particular, the effect of the use of a combination of relevant and irrelevant information when making brand judgments.

2.2 Irrelevant Information: Social Judgment Dilution Effects

Studies in social and non-social judgment show that although individuals are aware of irrelevant information (information not germane to the issue) they still use this information in making judgments (Troutman and Shanteau, 1977). For example, although a consumer is aware that a celebrity endorser, who does not mention any brand benefits, does not provide information relevant to a brand delivering a particular benefit, they may use the information conveyed by the celebrity's image attributes as information in making a judgment about whether the brand is able to deliver the benefit. Several studies suggest that irrelevant information causes a dilution effect (Kemmelmeier, 2004; Nisbett, Zukier,

and Lemley, 1981; Troutman and Shanteau, 1977; Zukier, 1982), whereby an individual's use of irrelevant information when in combination with relevant information causes their judgments to become less extreme.

The premise underlying the dilution effect is that judgments made from a combination of diagnostic and nondiagnostic information (relevant and irrelevant information) tend to be less extreme than judgments based on diagnostic or relevant information alone (Nisbett et al., 1981). Nondiagnostic, uninformative or irrelevant information presented alone results in more extreme predictions than when in combination with relevant information (Tetlock and Boettger, 1989). According to the dilution effect, the irrelevant brand information provided by a celebrity co-branding partner in combination with relevant brand information may cause consumer evaluations of the partner brand to become either less positive or more positive (depending on consumer judgments of the relevant information alone). In effect, the use of irrelevant information causes consumer judgments to regress towards the midpoint of the scale.

Social judgment studies manipulate the presence of irrelevant information between subjects and ask these subjects to make judgments regarding a stereotypic trait of a target person (Kemmelmeier, 2004; Nisbett et al., 1981; Peters and Rothbart, 2000; Tetlock and Boettger, 1989; Zukier, 1982). In their study, Zukier and Jennings (1983) ask subjects to act as jurors in the trial of a man accused of murdering his aunt. Results show subjects in the combined relevant and irrelevant information condition (i.e. those who receive both relevant information implying the man's guilt and irrelevant information that has no implication for the defendant's guilt) are less likely to believe the suspect committed the murder than are subjects in the relevant information condition only. In another study, Nisbett et al. (1981) ask subjects to make predictions about the behavior of a target individual's tolerance of electric shock in a psychological experiment. Although

individuals judge an engineer (relevant information) more likely to handle a great deal of electric shock, individuals judge a Catholic engineer with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.1 whose mother is a housewife (irrelevant information), likely to handle only a moderate amount of shock. Kemmelmeier (2004) invites undergraduate students to predict the likelihood that a target person is a child abuser. Findings show subjects unable to disregard irrelevant information in making judgments, even when they inform the researcher that the information is not useful in making their judgment.

Despite some research in the marketing literature on brand dilution (Loken and Roedder John, 1993; Pullig, Simmons, and Netemeyer, 2006; Roedder John, Loken, and Joiner, 1998; Simonin and Ruth, 1998), the examination of dilution effects in marketing to date focuses purely on a weakening effect of consumer judgments and not on dilution in terms of less extreme judgments. Research in marketing using dilution theory from the social and non-social judgment literature is scarce, with only two studies investigating the impact of irrelevant information on consumer brand judgments (Gierl and Grossman, 2008; Meyvis and Janiszewski, 2002).

2.3 Dilution Effect in Marketing

Meyvis and Janiszewski (2002) examine the social and non-social judgment theoretical perspectives in explaining consumers' beliefs in a product's ability to deliver a desired benefit. Results of their study show that the addition of irrelevant information to relevant benefit information dilutes consumers' beliefs in the product's ability to deliver the benefit, whereby consumer benefit beliefs become less positive. In another study, Gierl and Grossman (2008) examine consumer dilution effects in a celebrity endorsement context with multiple product endorsements. Subjects view an initial endorsement of a brand (A) that encompasses diagnostic information of a specific target attribute. They then view non-diagnostic information in terms of additional brand endorsements (B and C) that

do not encompass the target attribute. Their results show strong support for the occurrence of a dilution effect in only one case. Consumers' evaluations of Brand A (which contains the target attribute) decreases when the celebrity is seen to endorse other brands that do not encompass the target attribute of Brand A.

Although Meyvis and Janiszewski (2002) explore dilution effects in a product judgment context, they do not examine irrelevant information deliberately provided to consumers by brand managers through celebrity co-branding partners. Gierl and Grossman (2008) attempt to fill this research gap by exploring dilution in a celebrity endorsement context, however, their study specifically explores whether a dilution effect occurs in terms of consumer evaluations of a target attribute when a celebrity is seen endorsing multiple brands. What is unknown, however, is whether consumer judgments about a brand and the brand's benefits dilute when consumers view an advertisement that features both a brand providing relevant brand and brand benefit information and a celebrity who provides irrelevant brand information by neither mentioning the brand or any brand benefits.

Applying the social and non-social judgment results to the celebrity co-branding context suggests that consumers will use irrelevant information provided by a celebrity co-branding partner in forming their judgments about a brand partner and the brand's benefits, regardless of whether consumers perceive the celebrity to match or mismatch the brand. H1: Consumers report less positive beliefs in the ability of a brand to deliver a benefit when exposed to a combination of both relevant brand information and irrelevant brand information supplied by a celebrity co-branding partner, compared to when only exposed to relevant brand information. H2: Consumers display less positive attitudes towards the advertisement and purchase intentions when exposed to a combination of both relevant brand information and irrelevant brand information supplied by a celebrity co-branding partner, compared to when only exposed to relevant brand information. H3: Consumers

exhibit less positive beliefs in the perceived match-up between the celebrity and brand when exposed to a combination of both relevant brand information and irrelevant brand information supplied by a celebrity co-branding partner, compared to when only exposed to relevant brand information. H4: Consumers demonstrate less positive judgments when exposed to a combination of both relevant brand information and irrelevant brand information supplied by a celebrity co-branding partner perceived as a mismatch, compared to when only exposed to relevant brand information.

3.0 Method

A research company recruited subjects from regional areas within Australia to evaluate their perceptions and purchase intentions for the Greater Building Society, a financial institution. Seven hundred and ninety four subjects examine one of three conditions: 1) irrelevant information only featuring the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld with no mention of the Greater Building Society brand nor any brand benefits, 2) relevant information only featuring a Greater customer only stating the brand benefits of high interest rate on savings and implying the benefit of customer satisfaction and 3) the combined relevant plus irrelevant information featuring a combination of the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater brand customer. Of the 794 subjects recruited, 45.6% are male and 54.4% are female. Subjects are predominantly between 25-34 and 35-44 years of age (37.5% and 36.7%, respectively). Two hundred and seventy-two subjects examine the irrelevant condition, 266 the relevant condition and 256 the combined relevant plus irrelevant information condition. A median split categorizes subjects as either perceiving a match-up or a mismatch between the celebrity and the brand. Of those subjects who perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand, 134 belong to the irrelevant condition, 111 to the relevant plus irrelevant condition and 139 to the relevant only condition. Of those subjects who perceive a match between the celebrity and brand, 138

belong to the irrelevant condition, 145 to the relevant plus irrelevant condition and 127 to the relevant only condition.

3.1 Measures

Subjects evaluated on 7-point likert scales the extent to which they believe the Greater Building Society does or does not deliver the benefit of a high interest rate on savings accounts and customer satisfaction. Adapted items from Meyvis and Janiszewski (2002) measures brand benefit beliefs. Mitchell and Olson's (1981) 5-point semantic differential scales bad/good, dislike/like, not irritating/irritating and uninteresting/interesting measures Attitude towards the Advertisement. Measures for Purchase Intent are one item from Mitchell and Olson (1981) of consideration to purchase the brand and one item from Choi (2002), examining the extent to which subjects would inquire about the brand. Till and Busler's (2000) three item 7-point scale, does not belong with/belongs with, does not go together/goes together, does not fit together/fits together, measures match-up between the image of the brand and the image of the celebrity co-branding partner.

3.2 Procedure

Subjects first view one of three advertisements. In the irrelevant information condition, subjects view Jerry Seinfeld in an advertisement for the Greater making no reference to the Greater brand or any Greater brand benefit. Instead, Jerry makes a joke about ice cream. In the relevant information condition, subjects see an advertisement that features a Greater customer enthusiastically discussing her positive experience with the Greater brand highlighting her satisfaction and clearly stating the brand benefit of high interest on savings. Jerry Seinfeld does not feature in the advertisement. In the combined relevant plus irrelevant information condition, subjects view the entire advertisement that combines the Greater customer discussing the brand and brand benefit and Jerry Seinfeld

joking about ice cream (YouTube, 2009). The advertisements for each condition feature the Greater Building Society's brand logo at the end. Once subjects view their allocated advertisement, they evaluate the Greater brand based on the advertisement they just viewed. Firstly, subjects assess the extent to which they believe the Greater brand delivers the benefits of high interest on savings and customer satisfaction, followed by their attitude towards the advertisement and purchase intentions for the Greater Building Society. Finally, subjects evaluate the degree to which they believe the image of Jerry Seinfeld matches that of the Greater Building Society's image.

4.0 Results

A one-way ANOVA manipulation check finds no significant difference between experimental conditions for the benefit of no account keeping fees (F= .834, $p < 0.05$), a benefit not explicitly highlighted within the advertisements. Table 1 presents univariate statistics for belief in the ability of the brand to deliver the benefits, attitude towards the ad, purchase intention and match-up for the three conditions. The statistics are also broken down by perceptions of match and mismatch. Beliefs in the benefits and purchase intent are highest in the relevant condition followed by the combined relevant plus irrelevant condition, with the irrelevant condition receiving the lowest score. In each condition consistently higher scores occur when subjects see Jerry Seinfeld as a good match with the Greater Building Society.

Separate one-way between subjects ANOVAs compare the effect of the three information conditions overall and by perceptions of match and mismatch on subjects' benefit beliefs, ad attitude, purchase intention and perceptions of match-up. Brand benefit beliefs and attitude towards the ad differ significantly across the three conditions and perceptions of match-up (see Table 2). Purchase intentions differ significantly between the three conditions only when subjects perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand,

and match-up perceptions overall. Table 3 shows the post hoc comparisons between the

conditions using the Tukey HSD.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations by Experimental Condition

Condition	Match	Mismatch	Overall
Irrelevant Only			
High Interest on Savings Benefit	4.2 (1.43)	3.2 (1.56)	3.7 (1.57)
Customer Satisfaction Benefit	4.8 (1.39)	3.5 (1.75)	4.1 (1.71)
Attitude towards the Ad	3.9 (.80)	2.1 (.96)	3.1 (1.27)
Purchase Intention	5.0 (1.56)	4.1 (1.73)	4.6 (1.66)
Match-up	5.2 (1.09)	1.7 (.88)	3.5 (2.01)
Irrelevant and Relevant			
High Interest on Savings Benefit	5.3 (1.39)	4.2 (1.47)	4.9 (1.52)
Customer Satisfaction Benefit	5.3 (1.33)	4.2 (1.51)	4.8 (1.50)
Attitude towards the Ad	4.3 (.69)	2.7 (1.00)	3.6 (1.16)
Purchase Intention	5.2 (1.44)	3.9 (1.73)	4.7 (1.66)
Match-up	5.4 (1.08)	1.9 (.95)	3.9 (2.04)
Relevant Only			
High Interest on Savings Benefit	5.2 (1.52)	5.1 (1.43)	5.2 (1.47)
Customer Satisfaction Benefit	5.3 (1.42)	5.0 (1.37)	5.1 (1.40)
Attitude towards the Ad	3.7 (.78)	3.2 (.83)	3.5 (.81)
Purchase Intention	5.2 (1.44)	4.5 (1.75)	4.9 (1.62)
Match-up	5.1 (1.12)	1.7 (.89)	3.3 (1.99)

Results for subjects' beliefs in the brand's ability to deliver benefits of high interest

on savings and customer satisfaction are similar. Subjects who perceive a mismatch

between Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater Building Society brand report significant

differences between all conditions. Significantly less positive judgements result when

relevant information is in combination with irrelevant information provided by the

celebrity than when relevant information is alone. The irrelevant only condition receives

significantly lower judgments than the other two conditions with scores reflecting more

neutral judgments. Results slightly differ for those subjects who perceive a match or

congruency between Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater Building Society brand. As with the

subjects who perceive a mismatch, the irrelevant condition receives the lowest judgments

and differs significantly from the other two conditions. While judgements for the relevant only and the relevant plus irrelevant combined conditions are more positive than the irrelevant condition, they do not differ significantly from one another. As such, findings show only partial support for H1. Apparently, irrelevant brand information provided by a celebrity in addition to relevant brand information significantly brings about less positive beliefs in the brand's ability to deliver benefits of high interest on savings and customer satisfaction for those who perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand.

These findings suggest that when consumers view an advertisement that features relevant brand information in combination with a celebrity co-branding partner, who does not supply consumers with relevant information about the brand and who also does not encompass characteristics relevant to the brand; their overall belief in the ability of the brand to deliver a particular benefit becomes more neutral.

The post hoc comparisons for attitudes towards the advertisement show significant differences among all conditions for subjects who perceive a mismatch as well as for those who perceive a match between the celebrity and brand, however, the patterning for the two groups differs. For the mismatch group, the irrelevant condition receives the lowest scores and the relevant condition receives the highest scores. Those subjects who believe Seinfeld is a good match with the Greater, however, actually tend to report more positive attitudes when the celebrity features in combination with the brand and the most negative ad attitudes for the relevant condition featuring no celebrity. These results provide partial support for H2.

Table 2. Between-Subjects ANOVA

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stated Benefit: High interest rate on savings	Overall	Between Groups	304.22	2	152.11	65.45	.000
		Within Groups	1838.29	791	2.32		
	Mismatch	Between Groups	238.52	2	119.26	53.59	.000
		Within Groups	847.97	381	2.23		
	Match	Between Groups	104.10	2	52.05	24.97	.000
		Within Groups	848.25	407	2.08		
Implied Benefit: Customer Satisfaction	Overall	Between Groups	138.96	2	69.48	29.07	.000
		Within Groups	1890.82	791	2.39		
	Mismatch	Between Groups	159.90	2	79.95	33.30	.000
		Within Groups	914.84	381	2.40		
	Match	Between Groups	21.65	2	10.82	5.71	.004
		Within Groups	771.75	407	1.90		
Attitude towards the Ad	Overall	Between Groups	39.90	2	19.95	16.38	.000
		Within Groups	963.55	791	1.22		
	Mismatch	Between Groups	87.42	2	43.71	50.82	.000
		Within Groups	327.66	381	.86		
	Match	Between Groups	24.75	2	12.37	21.63	.000
		Within Groups	232.80	407	.57		
Purchase Intention	Overall	Between Groups	10.79	2	5.40	1.90	.150
		Within Groups	2248.51	791	2.84		
	Mismatch	Between Groups	23.38	2	11.69	3.87	.022
		Within Groups	1150.87	381	3.02		
	Match	Between Groups	2.94	2	1.47	.67	.513
		Within Groups	894.14	407	2.20		
Match-up	Overall	Between Groups	37.73	2	18.86	4.65	.010
		Within Groups	3210.15	791	4.06		
	Mismatch	Between Groups	1.85	2	.93	1.14	.322
		Within Groups	310.37	381	.81		
	Match	Between Groups	5.00	2	2.50	2.08	.126
		Within Groups	488.65	407	1.20		

Although overall, and for those who perceive a match between the brand and celebrity, no significant differences exist for purchase intentions, those subjects who perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand report significantly less positive purchase intentions. Subjects' purchase intentions are less positive when they view a combination of irrelevant and relevant brand information, than when they view relevant brand information only, again indicating partial support for H2 for those who perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand. Interestingly, no significant differences lie between the relevant and irrelevant information conditions with both resulting in more positive judgments.

Less positive perceptions of a match-up or congruency between the brand and celebrity occur when irrelevant brand information presented by a celebrity features in combination with relevant brand information than when relevant brand information features alone. Overall, subjects who view a combination of both irrelevant brand information and relevant brand information report significantly less positive judgments than in the relevant information only condition, indicating a dilution effect on consumer match-up perceptions and support for H3.

The findings support H4 since in every case a significant difference exists between the relevant only condition and the combined relevant and irrelevant condition for subjects who perceive a mismatch between Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater Building Society brand.

Table 3. Post Hoc Comparisons: Overall vs. Mismatch vs. Match

Dependent Variable	Conditions			Mean Diff.	Std. Error	Sig.
Stated Benefit: High interest rate on savings	Overall	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-1.12	.13	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.43	.13	.000
	Mismatch	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-1.01	.19	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.87	.18	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.86	.19	.000
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-1.11	.17	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.00	.18	.000
Implied Benefit: Customer Satisfaction	Overall	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.67	.13	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.99	.13	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.32	.13	.046
	Mismatch	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.74	.20	.001
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.53	.19	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.79	.20	.000
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.48	.16	.010
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.49	.17	.010
Attitude towards the Ad	Overall	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.52	.096	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.40	.095	.000
	Mismatch	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.55	.12	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.13	.11	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.58	.12	.000
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.31	.09	.002
		Irrelevant	Relevant	.29	.09	.005
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.60	.09	.000
Purchase Intention	Mismatch	Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.60	.22	.020
Match-up	Overall	Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.52	.18	.009

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

Practitioners continually face the difficulty of strategically executing their advertisements in order to draw consumers' attention and influence consumer judgments. Although previous work in celebrity endorsement research focuses on the effectiveness of an endorsement based on the match-up of relevant characteristics between the celebrity and endorsed brand (Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000;

Till et al., 2008), findings from this study suggest that the irrelevancy of celebrity information presented in an advertisement also influences consumer judgments. Results identify that celebrities playing a peripheral role, where they do not provide information about the brand or brand benefits, affect consumer judgments in the ability of the partner brand to deliver particular benefits, their intent to purchase and their perceptions of a match-up or congruency between the celebrity and brand.

Many findings from this study are consistent with a dilution effect (Kemmelmeier, 2004; Nisbett et al., 1981), whereby consumer brand judgments become less positive when irrelevant information features in combination with relevant information, than when relevant information features alone. The results show support for the occurrence of a dilution effect on consumer brand benefit beliefs, purchase intentions and perceptions of match-up. Importantly, consumer benefit beliefs and purchase intentions dilute only when consumers perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand and when they view irrelevant information supplied by a celebrity in addition to relevant brand information. This finding may result from the perceived incongruence between the celebrity and brand providing consumers with additional irrelevant brand information, intensifying the dilution effect.

Consumers who perceive the celebrity to match the brand report no significant differences in both the stated and implied brand benefit beliefs and purchase intentions in the relevant information only and combination of relevant and irrelevant conditions. In this case, the perceived congruence between the celebrity and brand may provide consumers with relevant brand information, reducing the impact of the irrelevant information provided by the celebrity and, therefore, the dilution effect. These results also suggest that although a celebrity does not provide consumers with relevant information about a brand partner, consumers may construct the relevancy of the celebrity as a co-branding partner

by drawing on the information they have in their memory about the celebrity's image. As a result, consumers transfer the meanings tied to the celebrity onto the brand partner and create their belief in the consistency of the celebrity in providing relevant information about the brand. Future research should draw on the associative network theory of memory (Anderson, 1983; Collins and Loftus, 1975; Martindale, 1991) in order to identify the brand image associations tied to both brands and the information transferred during the co-branding process.

Subjects' judgments of congruence become less extreme when exposed to a combination of both irrelevant information provided by the celebrity and relevant brand information. This result suggests the relevant celebrity characteristics associated with the brand, and also the relevant information provided by the celebrity in the advertisement affect perceptions of congruence. This finding supports the notion of irrelevance in celebrity endorsement as comprising of two components: the celebrity not encompassing characteristics pertinent to the endorsed brand and the celebrity not presenting relevant brand information by not mentioning the brand and the brand's benefits.

Although overall consumer attitude towards the advertisement does not become less positive when the irrelevant information presented by the celebrity features with relevant brand information, ad attitude significantly weakens when a perceived mismatched celebrity is shown in combination with the brand than when the brand features alone. This result suggests that advertisements should feature an irrelevant and incongruent celebrity in combination with relevant brand information. Alternatively, attitude towards the ad strengthens when the perceived congruent celebrity is shown in combination with the brand than when the brand features alone.

A perceived match between the brand and celebrity results in superior ad attitudes, even if the celebrity does not provide consumers with relevant brand information in terms

of mentioning the brand. This finding suggests that the irrelevant brand information presented by the celebrity in the advertisement affects the development of ad attitudes.

The results of this study suggest that consumers evaluate brands on the information that a celebrity co-branding partner presents in an advertisement. However, longer advertisement exposure time for the combined condition can affect consumers' responses to the relevant plus irrelevant condition. In addition, the research design does not include a control condition against which to compare the experimental conditions. A second study is currently underway to address these limitations.

This research employs explicit belief and attitude measurements in which subjects are fully aware that a self-report of their attitude is being requested. Recent research stresses the core importance of exploring implicit attitude measures in which respondents are unaware of what the measure is assessing with the elicitation of automatic beliefs (Petty, Fazio, and Brinol, 2009). Future research can attempt to use implicit attitude measures to identify dilution effects in advertising such as the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz, 1998). Future research also can explore the effect of irrelevant information presented in advertisements for those who are familiar versus those who are unfamiliar with both brands in the co-branding partnership. Consumers who are highly familiar with both brands have well developed brand schemas that may withstand irrelevant information, whereas unfamiliar brand schemas may be susceptible to irrelevant information. As this is the first study to explore the irrelevancy of information presented by a celebrity co-branding partner in television advertisements, this research can be extended to explore whether these effects are transferable to other mediums, such as print, and other co-branding situations, since the concept of fit is suitable and the goal of leveraging secondary associations or image attributes also applies.

Role of the Funding Source

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CONCLUSION TO STUDY II

The second study identifies a dilution effect on consumer judgments when irrelevant information is presented by a celebrity in an advertisement. Results show consumer brand benefit beliefs and purchase intentions dilute when they perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and the brand and view the celebrity providing irrelevant information about the brand partner. Irrelevant information presented by a celebrity does not influence consumer brand benefit beliefs, ad attitudes and purchase intentions when consumers perceive a match between the celebrity and brand. Perceptions of match-up, however, are influenced by the irrelevant information provided by a celebrity in an advertisement.

Study III further explores the effect of irrelevant information provided by a celebrity on consumer partner brand judgments. The third study explores the reciprocal effect of co-branding partnerships on celebrity brand attitudes. Study III also addresses the limitation of Study II in relation to advertisement exposure time. Moreover, Study III explores the influence of brand familiarity in addition to match-up on consumer judgments.

Chapter 3: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY III

The third study in the thesis, **Attitude Dilution and Irrelevant Celebrity Co-branding Partners**, is an experiment that extends Study II. The study investigates the effect of brand familiarity and perceptions of match-up on brand, celebrity and advertisement attitudes. Since celebrities endeavor to reveal a coherent persona and maintain their image of authenticity when they partner with brands, they are increasingly featuring in advertisements providing consumers with relevant information about their own brand yet irrelevant information regarding the partner brand. Although this may have a detrimental or dilution effect on the partner brand, little research examines the effect of celebrities providing irrelevant information on consumers' attitudes towards the celebrity brand. Given that celebrities are brands themselves, this study investigates the reciprocal nature of co-branding partnerships.

Attitude Dilution and Irrelevant Celebrity Co-branding Partners is targeted to the Journal of Advertising. The paper is presented in this thesis in the journal's required publication format yet for ease of reading tables and figures are embedded throughout.

This study evolved from a paper presented at the International Conference on Research in Advertising, 2012. The conference paper was one of 18 selected (out of 98 papers) to be included in the ICORIA Practitioner Proceedings. The conference paper is authored by Jasmina Ilicic and Cynthia M. Webster with the same contribution ratio as the thesis paper (outlined in Acknowledgments on page viii) and is included in Appendix C.

Attitude Dilution and Irrelevant Celebrity Co-branding Partners

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Attitude Dilution and Irrelevant Celebrity Co-branding Partners

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of irrelevant information presented in advertisements by a celebrity co-branding partner on consumer judgments of a partner brand, celebrity brand and attitude towards the advertisement. Three experimental conditions manipulate the relevancy of information: 1) relevant information, 2) irrelevant information and 3) relevant plus irrelevant information. Results show the reciprocal effect of co-branding partnerships. Findings suggest celebrity endorsers are able to enhance consumers' partner brand attitudes for those consumers who are familiar with the endorsed brand. Partner brands, on the other hand, can dilute consumers' celebrity brand attitudes for those consumers familiar with the celebrity.

Keywords: Dilution, Celebrity, Co-branding, Attitudes, Match-up.

Using celebrity endorsers in advertisements attracts consumer attention, increases brand awareness and helps brands get noticed in an increasingly cluttered media space (Friedman and Friedman 1979; O'Mahony and Meenaghan 1997/1998). Advertisers realize that consumers see celebrities today as brands themselves, as human brands (Thomson, 2006), with their own well-developed images and brand associations. As such, celebrity brand images are strategically presented together with endorsed brand attributes in co-branding partnerships (Seno and Lukas, 2007). When consumers view advertisements featuring celebrity endorsers, they make judgments about both the product brand and the human brand.

Typically, celebrities feature as direct spokespeople, where they provide relevant information about the brand they endorse. For example, Katy Perry discusses the importance of Proactiv skin care in her life. In advertisements we see her using the product and hear her praising the brand. Katy Perry's fun, youthful and eccentric image matches that of the Proactiv brand, providing consumers with consistent partner brand information. These advertisements point out Katy Perry's celebrity status, but spend most of the time explicitly highlighting the benefits of Proactiv, the partner brand.

More and more advertisements today spotlight the celebrities, emphasizing information on the human brands and providing little or no relevant partner brand information. In recent advertisements for American Express (AMEX), the celebrities dominate. The one minute television commercial featuring Kate Winslet takes 55 seconds going through her starring film roles and leaves the last five seconds to AMEX. The print advertisement is similar with a glossy image of Kate Winslet occupying half of the space with much of the remaining devoted to information about her memories, ambitions and achievements. Only at the end of the advertisement, on one line, does she state that the card she uses is AMEX. These advertisements include a clear endorsement for the partner brand, but also contain personal information about the celebrity, information relevant to the human

brand, but arguably irrelevant and not useful to consumers in making their judgments about the partner brand.

Recent research shows irrelevant information provided by a celebrity dilutes consumer perceptions of partner brand benefits when the celebrity is seen as a mismatch (Ilicic and Webster 2012). To date, research examines consequences for the partner brand, however, no research empirically explores the reciprocal effect of co-branding partnerships on celebrity brands. Since consumers consider celebrities as "selling out" by pairing with brands purely for monetary reasons (Bailey 2007), celebrities are increasingly concerned with protecting their own brand image and maintaining consumer perceptions of their authenticity. Research is yet to examine the conditions under which co-branding partnerships are mutually beneficial and when they are detrimental to celebrities and to partner brands.

Despite extensive research on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers, little research specifically examines the executional aspects of advertisements that feature celebrities. Most of the advertising research focuses on the effectiveness of celebrities as direct spokespeople, who provide relevant partner brand information through their consistent brand image and by describing brand benefits, demonstrating functionality and clearly endorsing the partner brand. We maintain that celebrities, as human brands, provide irrelevant partner brand information when their images are inconsistent and when they feature in advertisements emphasizing their human brand talents but providing no clear endorsement of the partner brand. Our aim here is to further the research on celebrity endorsers by considering celebrities as co-branding partners and examining the effects of irrelevant information on consumer evaluations of celebrity and partner brands. We examine the role of celebrity and partner brand match-up (or co-branding fit), brand

familiarity and use on consumer attitudes towards the brand as well as attitudes towards the advertisement.

We first examine the key aspects of consumer perceptions of match-up or fit and its influence on brand dilution and then follow with a discussion of dilution effects in the brand extension and co-branding literatures. Here, we discuss the role of unfit partnerships, brand familiarity and brand use on brand evaluations. Based on these discussions, we offer hypotheses relating to the effects of irrelevant brand information presented by a celebrity and the effects of consumer perceptions of match and familiarity. An experiment tests these hypotheses followed by discussions of the results with implications for researchers and brand managers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Match-up and Celebrities as Irrelevant Information

Advertisers attempt to tactically place a celebrity with a brand, whereby the image of the celebrity is seen to match with that of the endorsed brand, providing consumers with consistent and presumably relevant information about the brand (Kamins 1990: Kamins and Gupta 1994; Till and Busler 1998, 2000; Till, Stanley and Priluck 2008). This *match-up* is said to occur when "highly relevant characteristics of the spokesperson are consistent with highly relevant attributes of the brand" (Misra and Beatty 1990 p. 160). Research in celebrity endorsement suggests that consistent celebrity-brand information results in a positive effect on consumer attitudes towards the endorsed brands and the advertisements in which they feature (Kamins 1990: Kamins and Gupta 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000; Till et al. 2008) with a perceived mismatch leading to brand benefit belief dilution (Ilicic and Webster 2012). As such, the effectiveness of a spokesperson is determined by the perceived match between the endorser's human brand attribute associations and the

endorsed brand's attribute associations (e.g. Kamins 1990: Kamins and Gupta 1994; Till and Busler 1998; Till et al. 2008).

The literature on match-up focuses primarily on whether the celebrity possesses characteristics pertinent to the endorsed brand. Judgments of relevance are not only contingent on whether a celebrity endorser is seen to be an appropriate match, but also whether the celebrity communicates information related to the partner brand (Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson and Unnava 1991). Celebrities can convey relevant information through their desirable human brand attributes. They also can explicitly recommend the partner brand, provide information about the brand's benefits or use the brand's product within an advertisement. In other words, celebrities not only provide consumers with relevant, congruent brand information when their image conveys characteristics pertinent to the brand but also when they mention information relevant to the endorsed brand.

Conversely, celebrities provide irrelevant information about the brand when their images do not match the brand. Celebrities also are irrelevant when they do not use or provide any partner brand information, but instead provide information regarding themselves. Such information is relevant to their personal human brand, but irrelevant to the partner brand. For example, Beyonce's 2010 Superbowl advertisement for Vizio home electronics includes no explicit statement recommending the brand. Instead, she dances and sings one of her popular songs next to a television relaying her same image. Here, Beyonce features with Vizio but does not refer to the partner brand. In fact, she turns her back on the partner brand and stomps off the set, which could be interpreted as a distinct rejection of the partner brand.

Match-up, Brand Fit and Dilution Effect

Research in co-branding similarly examines the issues of consistency and relevance. The concept of match-up or *fit,* as it is referred to in the co-branding literature, is consumer perceptions of brand image cohesiveness and associative consistency between partner brands (Simonin and Ruth 1998; Park, Jun and Schocker 1996). The effectiveness of a co-branding partnership is influenced by the perceived fit between the similarities of the images of the two brands (Simonin and Ruth 1998; Dickinson and Heath 2006). As such, the terms match-up and fit are the same when referring to the pairing of human brands and product brands in a co-branding partnership.

Many successful brands strategically execute line and category extensions in order to leverage and increase the equity of the parent brand. Most of the research on brand dilution appears in the brand extension literature. Brand dilution of the parent brand consistently occurs when consumers have a negative extension experience (Sood and Keller 2007). Dilution also follows after the introduction of inappropriate brand extensions, again resulting in damage to the image of the parent brand (Loken and Roedder John 1993; Roedder John, Loken and Joiner 1998). An extension experience that is consistent with a consumer's image of the parent brand is less likely to change that consumer's impression (Keller and Sood 2003). In other words, perceptions of fit affect consumer judgements. Consumer evaluations of unfit extensions result in negative brand assessments, whereas evaluations of appropriate extensions result in positive brand assessments.

Dilution also extends to the service context. Pina, Martinez, de Chernatony and Drury (2006) uncover evidence to suggest risk of image deterioration for those extensions with low fit. They find that when two Spanish banking (BBVA and Banest) and telecommunications (Telefónica and Vodafone) corporate brands extend to low fit service

brand extensions (message and parcel post consignment and insurance sales, respectively),

corporate image dilutes. Additionally, results of their study show that a service brand

extension is likely to have a better image if the starting situation of the parent corporate

brand is favorable, whereas a poor initial image is a liability for the extension and the

overall corporate image, despite launching suitable new services.

Simonin and Ruth (1998) investigate dilution in a co-branding context. Their study

specifically explores whether consumers' brand attitudes dilute (weaken) or enhance

(strengthen) for each of the individual partner brands. They examine the co-branding

partnership between a corporate car brand (Ford, Toyota, Volkswagen, or Hyundai) and a

microprocessor brand (Motorola, Fujitsu, Siemens, or Samsung). Findings from their study

show that attitudes towards individual partners in the alliance enhance when a relatively

high degree of brand fit exists and dilute when there is a low degree of brand fit. Simonin

and Ruth (1998) also explore the effect of brand familiarity on perceptions of brand fit and

brand attitude and find that brand familiarity plays a key role in brand dilution or

enhancement.

Unfamiliar Brands and Dilution Effect

Research suggests that a consumer's degree of familiarity through experience, ownership

and usage of a brand also influences the likelihood of brand dilution. Users of a brand have

much richer and more developed knowledge structures of the brand due to their

experiences with the brand, which lead them to develop deeper confidence in their

knowledge of the brand and the brand's benefits than non-users (Swaminathan, Fox and

Reddy 2001; Bettman and Sujan 1987). Consumers, when asked about unfamiliar brands,

report either unformed or weak associations resulting in weaker attitude strength and

accessibility (Fazio 1986, 1989). It is feasible that consumers who are highly familiar with

both brands in a co-branding partnership and who have well-developed brand schemas simply dismiss irrelevant information. Conversely, consumers with unfamiliar brand schemas may be more susceptible to irrelevant information, whereby they incorporate the irrelevant information to formulate their evaluations of the brands. As such, brand users or owners, who are highly familiar with a brand, are valuable to the brand and a dilution effect on brand users implies the dilution of total brand equity.

Kirmani, Sood and Bridges (1999) examine brand dilution based on whether or not consumers own the brand being extended. They find an "ownership effect" occurs, whereby owners of the brand have more favourable responses than non-owners to the brand's line extensions. Simonin and Ruth (1998) suggest that the "spillover" impact of the partnership on a low-familiarity brand is expected to be relatively strong due to its small existing network of associations which is weak in accessibility. Alternatively, Swaminathan, Fox and Reddy's (2001) evidence suggests that a dilution effect occurs for prior users of the parent brand but not among prior nonusers. Results of their study suggest that successful extensions are still at risk of brand dilution since the basis of brand meaning may be different for users and nonusers.

Although Simonin and Ruth (1998) explore dilution effects in a co-branding context, they do not explore celebrities as co-branding partners. In addition, the brand dilution literature has yet to explore the effect of irrelevant information on consumers' perceptions of fit. Applying the identified effects of dilution found in the co-branding and brand extension literature to the celebrity co-branding context suggests that advertisements containing irrelevant information provided by a celebrity (either through a mismatch or by not mentioning relevant partner brand information) dilutes consumer attitudes towards the partner brand in the alliance. Irrelevant information with regard to the partner brand, however, maybe relevant information pertaining to the celebrity brand and actually

strengthen consumer attitudes for the celebrity brand. In addition, consumers who perceive a mismatch and are unfamiliar with the brand are more receptive to irrelevant information provided by a celebrity co-branding partner, resulting in a dilution effect for attitude towards the partner brand. As such, the following hypotheses are put forward regarding main effects for advertisement condition, match-up and familiarity plus interaction effects for match-up and familiarity:

Hypothesis 1: Consumers report less positive evaluations in terms of attitude towards the advertisement when they are exposed to irrelevant partner brand information supplied by a celebrity co-branding partner compared to when consumers are exposed to relevant partner brand information.

Hypothesis 2: Consumers report less positive evaluations in terms of attitude towards the partner brand when they are exposed to irrelevant partner brand information supplied by a celebrity co-branding partner compared to when consumers are exposed to relevant partner brand information.

Hypothesis 3: Consumers report less positive judgments relating to attitude towards the celebrity brand when they are exposed to irrelevant celebrity human brand information by viewing an advertisement with no celebrity featured compared to when consumers are exposed to an advertisement featuring relevant celebrity human brand information.

Hypothesis 4: Consumers who perceive a mismatch, or low degree of fit, between the partner brand and celebrity human brand report less positive judgments relating to a) partner brand attitudes, b) celebrity brand attitudes and c) attitude towards advertisement, than consumers who perceive a match, or high degree of fit.

Hypothesis 5: Consumers unfamiliar with the partner brand report less positive judgments relating to a) partner brand attitudes, b) celebrity brand attitudes and c) attitude towards advertisement compared to consumers familiar with the partner brand.

Hypothesis 6: Consumers unfamiliar with the celebrity brand report less positive judgments relating to a) partner brand attitudes, b) celebrity brand attitudes and c) attitude towards advertisement compared to consumers familiar with the celebrity brand.

Hypothesis 7: Consumers who perceive a match, or high degree of fit, between the partner brand and celebrity human brand report more positive evaluations relating to a) partner brand attitudes, b) celebrity brand attitudes and c) attitude towards advertisement, when exposed to an advertisement that features both relevant and irrelevant information, compared to consumers who perceive a mismatch.

Hypothesis 8: Consumers familiar with the partner brand report more positive evaluations relating to partner brand attitudes, when exposed to an advertisement that features both relevant and irrelevant information, compared to consumers who are unfamiliar with the partner brand.

Hypothesis 9: Consumers familiar with the celebrity brand report more positive evaluations relating to celebrity brand attitudes, when exposed to an advertisement that features both relevant and irrelevant information, compared to consumers who are unfamiliar with the celebrity brand.

METHOD

This research examines the alliance between a corporate and celebrity brand during their co-branding partnership. The corporate brand is a leading regional financial institution in Australia, the Greater Building Society, and the celebrity is Jerry Seinfeld, an internationally known comedian and actor. A research company was used to recruit

subjects from regional areas within Australia to evaluate their attitudes towards a financial corporate brand, the Greater Building Society, and celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld. A total of 350 subjects were assigned to one of three conditions: 1) irrelevant partner brand information (but relevant celebrity brand information), an advertisement only featuring the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld who does not mention the Greater Building Society brand nor any brand benefits, 2) relevant partner brand information (but irrelevant celebrity brand information), an advertisement only featuring a Greater Building Society customer who clearly states the Greater's brand benefit of high interest rate on savings and implies the benefit of customer satisfaction and 3) relevant plus irrelevant information featuring a combination of the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater brand customer. Of the 350 subjects recruited, 48.9% were male and 51.1% were female. Subjects were predominantly between 35-49 and 50-64 years of age (25.1% and 28.6%, respectively). One hundred and twenty-two subjects were assigned to the irrelevant condition, 114 to the relevant condition and 114 to the combined relevant plus irrelevant information condition. Customers of the Greater brand accounted for 40.3% and non-customers for 59.7% of subjects.

A median split was used to categorize subjects' familiarity with the celebrity, and perceptions of match-up between the celebrity and brand. Familiarity with the partner brand was based on whether the respondent was a Greater Building Society customer or not. Table 1 presents the number of subjects per condition by their partner brand familiarity, celebrity brand familiarity and perceptions of match-up.

TABLE 1
Subjects by Experimental Condition

Subjects	Irrelevant Only	Relevant and Irrelevant	Relevant Only
Partner Brand Familiarity			
Customers	n= 49	n= 45	n= 47
Non-customers	n= 73	n= 69	n= 67
Celebrity Brand Familiarity			
Unfamiliar	n= 52	n= 41	n= 33
Familiar	n= 70	n= 73	n= 81
Match-up			
Mismatch	n= 68	n= 58	n= 57
Match	n= 54	n= 56	n= 57

Measures

Attitude towards the Brand and Celebrity Brand was measured using Mitchell and Olson's (1981) 5-point semantic differential scales which included four items good/bad, pleasant/ unpleasant, like very much/ dislike very much, high quality/poor quality (brand attitude Cronbach alpha= .932, celebrity attitude Cronbach alpha= .743). Mitchell and Olson's (1981) 5-point semantic differential scales which included four items bad/good, dislike/like, not irritating/irritating and uninteresting/interesting (Cronbach alpha= .945) measured *Attitude towards the Advertisement*. *Familiarity with the Partner Brand* was measured by asking subjects to indicate whether they were a customer of the partner brand. *Celebrity Familiarity* was a reported measure on a 7-point likert scale with 1 not familiar at all to 7 very familiar. *Match-up* between the image of the brand and the image of the celebrity co-branding partner was measured using Till and Busler's (2000) three item 5-point scale consisting of does not belong with/belongs with, does not go together/goes together, does not fit together/fits together (Cronbach alpha= .984).

Procedure

Subjects were directed first to view one of three advertisements. In the irrelevant information condition, subjects viewed Jerry Seinfeld in an advertisement for the Greater making no reference to the Greater brand. Instead, Jerry crawls along a desert. In the relevant information condition, subjects saw an advertisement of a Greater customer enthusiastically discussing her positive experience with the Greater brand highlighting her satisfaction and clearly stating the brand benefit of high interest on savings accounts. Jerry Seinfeld is not featured. In the combined relevant plus irrelevant information condition, subjects viewed the entire advertisement that combined the customer discussing the Greater brand and Jerry Seinfeld crawling along the desert (YouTube, 2011). The advertisements for each condition featured the Greater Building Society's brand logo at the end, with subjects exposed to one of the advertisements for approximately 20 seconds. Once subjects viewed their allocated advertisement, they were then asked to evaluate the Greater brand based on the advertisement they just viewed. Subjects were asked about their familiarity with the Greater brand, their attitude towards the Greater brand, followed by their attitude towards the advertisement, familiarity with the celebrity brand, attitude towards the celebrity brand and the degree to which they believe the image of Jerry Seinfeld matches that of the Greater Building Society's image.

RESULTS

A one-way ANOVA manipulation check finds no significant difference between advertisement conditions for beliefs in the benefit of low interest rate on home loans (F= .243, $p < 0.05$), a benefit not explicitly highlighted within the advertisements. Significant differences are found, however, between the advertisement conditions for beliefs in the benefits of high interest rate on savings accounts (F= 69.379, $p < 0.001$) and

no account keeping fees (F= 47.665, p<0.001), benefits highlighted explicitly in the relevant and combined relevant and irrelevant conditions and not mentioned in the irrelevant condition. Table 2 presents univariate statistics for attitude towards the partner brand, attitude towards the celebrity brand and attitude towards the advertisement for the three conditions. The statistics are also broken down by brand familiarity and perceptions of match-up. Overall, attitude towards the partner brand and attitude towards the advertisement are highest in the relevant condition followed by the combined relevant plus irrelevant condition, with the irrelevant condition receiving the lowest score. Consistently higher scores occur when subjects see Jerry Seinfeld as a good match with the Greater Building Society. Interestingly, attitude towards the partner brand for those familiar with the brand is highest in the combination condition featuring both relevant and irrelevant information with the relevant condition receiving the lowest score.

Table 3 shows the MANOVA results for the three dependent variables: attitude towards the partner brand, attitude towards the celebrity brand and attitude towards the advertisement, using advertisement condition, matchup, brand familiarity and celebrity familiarity as the independent variables. MANOVA is a recommended procedure when there are multiple dependent variables (Kirk 1982). Results show a significant main effect in advertisement condition only for attitude towards the advertisement, providing support for H1. Subjects report significantly more positive attitudes for the relevant advertisement condition compared to the irrelevant and combination irrelevant and relevant conditions. Even though subjects have more positive partner brand attitudes after viewing the relevant advertisement condition and less positive attitudes for the combination with the least positive for the irrelevant condition, the differences are not significant and H2 is not supported. Advertisement condition also has no effect on attitude toward the celebrity brand providing no support for H3.

TABLE 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Brand Attitude, Celebrity Brand Attitude and Advertisement Attitude

Variable	Mean Overall	Mean Brand Familiarity	Mean Brand Unfamiliarity	Mean Celebrity Familiarity	Mean Celebrity Unfamiliarity	Mean Match	Mean Mismatch
Irrelevant Only							
Brand Attitude	3.79 (1.00)	4.51 (.63)	3.32 (.92)	3.90 (.98)	3.64 (1.02)	3.99 (.87)	3.63 (1.07)
Celebrity Attitude	3.44 (1.29)	3.22 (1.45)	3.59 (1.17)	3.90 (1.26)	2.80 (1.05)	4.19 (.89)	2.83 (1.25)
Ad Attitude	2.72 (1.11)	2.65 (1.17)	2.77 (1.08)	2.96 (1.16)	2.40 (.96)	3.35 (.96)	2.22 (.97)
Relevant and Irrelevant							
Brand Attitude	3.89 (.86)	4.61 (.53)	3.43 (.70)	3.99 (.86)	3.71 (.82)	4.02 (.79)	3.76 (.90)
Celebrity Attitude	3.42 (1.21)	3.29 (1.32)	3.52 (1.13)	3.56 (1.25)	3.18 (1.11)	4.12 (.63)	2.73 (1.26)
Ad Attitude	3.31 (1.07)	3.27 (1.20)	3.33 (.99)	3.35 (1.06)	3.22 (1.10)	3.96 (.80)	2.65 (.90)
Relevant Only							
Brand Attitude	3.99 (.76)	4.42 (.60)	3.68 (.72)	4.06 (.74)	3.83 (.81)	4.11 (.67)	3.86 (.84)
Celebrity Attitude	3.32 (1.31)	2.97 (1.29)	3.57 (1.28)	3.36 (1.41)	3.21 (1.07)	4.17 (.63)	2.45 (1.26)
Ad Attitude	3.77 (.88)	3.98 (.84)	3.61 (.88)	3.72 (.91)	3.82 (.90)	3.93 (.71)	3.60 (1.01)

TABLE 3
Main Effects and Interaction Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Ad Condition	Attitude towards the Ad	66.693	2	33.347	31.466	.000
	Attitude towards the Brand	1.128	2	.564	1.101	.334
	Attitude towards the Celebrity	1.385	2	.692	.434	.648
Matchup	Attitude towards the Ad	73.431	1	73.431	90.720	.000
	Attitude towards the Brand	7.275	1	7.275	9.493	.002
	Attitude towards the Celebrity	190.320	1	190.320	177.004	.000
Brand Familiarity	Attitude towards the Ad	.363	1	.363	.343	.559
	Attitude towards the Brand	90.029	1	90.029	175.805	.000
	Attitude towards the Celebrity	13.294	1	13.294	8.331	.004
Celebrity Familiarity	Attitude towards the Ad	3.298	1	3.298	3.163	.076
	Attitude towards the Brand	5.203	1	5.203	6.733	.010
	Attitude towards the Celebrity	22.728	1	22.728	14.920	.000
Ad Condition*Matchup	Attitude towards the Ad	15.400	2	7.700	9.513	.000
Ad Condition*Brand Familiarity	Attitude towards the Brand	3.606	2	1.803	3.521	.031
Ad Condition*Celebrity Familiarity	Attitude towards the Celebrity	13.471	2	6.736	4.422	.013

As hypothesized, significant main effects occur for match-up in all three dependent variables, supporting H4a, H4b and H4c. Subjects who perceive a match between the partner and celebrity brands report significantly more positive attitudes than those subjects who perceive a mismatch. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD (Table 4) show subjects report significantly more positive attitude towards the advertisement for the relevant advertisement condition compared to the irrelevant advertisement condition. For those subjects who perceive a match, their attitude towards the advertisement is also significantly more positive for the combination ad condition compared to the irrelevant condition but does not differ between the relevant and combination ad condition ($p=0.979$). For those who perceive a mismatch, however, their attitude towards the advertisement is significantly more positive for the relevant ad condition compared to the combination condition but does not differ between the combination and irrelevant ad condition ($p=0.059$).

Significant main effects also occur for partner brand familiarity and for celebrity familiarity. Both partner and celebrity brand familiarity affect attitudes towards partner and celebrity brands, but in different ways. As hypothesized, those subjects unfamiliar with the partner brand and those unfamiliar with the celebrity brand report significantly weaker attitudes towards the partner brand, supporting H5a and H6a. Additionally, those subjects unfamiliar with the partner brand report significantly more positive attitudes towards the celebrity brand, supporting H5b. And, those subjects unfamiliar with the celebrity brand have significantly weaker attitudes towards the celebrity brand, supporting H6b, but those unfamiliar with the partner brand report significantly more *positive* attitudes toward the celebrity brand, which contradicts H5b. Moreover, neither celebrity familiarity nor partner brand familiarity have an effect on attitude towards the advertisement, providing no support for H5c and H6c.

TABLE 4
Post Hoc Tukey HSD Comparisons

Dependent Variable	Conditions			Mean Diff.	Std. Error	Sig.
Attitude towards the Partner Brand	Brand Unfamiliar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.11	.13	.701
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.36	.13	.021
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.25	.14	.155
	Brand Familiar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.10	.12	.716
		Irrelevant	Relevant	.09	.12	.746
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.18	.12	.298
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.03	.15	.978
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.13	.15	.672
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.10	.15	.790
Attitude towards the Celebrity Brand	Celebrity Unfamiliar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.33	.23	.317
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.44	.24	.170
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.11	.26	.904
	Celebrity Familiar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.35	.22	.258
		Irrelevant	Relevant	.57	.21	.024
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.22	.21	.552
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.03	.15	.978
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.13	.15	.672
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.10	.15	.790
Attitude towards the Ad	Brand Unfamiliar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.53	.17	.006
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.81	.17	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.28	.17	.232
	Brand Familiar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.60	.22	.023
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.36	.22	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.76	.23	.003
	Celebrity Unfamiliar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.75	.21	.002
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.44	.23	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.69	.24	.012
	Celebrity Familiar	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.39	.17	.070
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.75	.17	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.37	.17	.077
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.61	.16	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.58	.15	.001
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.03	.15	.979

Three significant interaction effects also exist, as highlighted in Figures 1, 2 and 3. Subjects who perceive a mismatch between the partner and celebrity brands report attitudes towards the advertisement as hypothesized (Figure 1). These subjects report significantly more positive attitudes for the relevant advertisement condition compared to the combination and irrelevant conditions. Yet, Figure 1 reveals that when subjects perceive a match-up between the partner and celebrity brands, they report strong positive attitude towards the advertisement in both the relevant advertisement condition and the combination condition, supporting H7c. No interaction effects, however, are found for match-up and advertisement condition for partner brand attitudes or for celebrity brand attitudes, providing no support for H7a and H7b.

Figures 2 and 3 show the interaction effects for familiarity by advertisement condition on partner brand attitudes and celebrity brand attitudes. Figure 2 shows subjects unfamiliar with the partner brand report the most positive attitudes towards the partner brand for the relevant ad condition and the least positive attitudes for the irrelevant advertisement condition. Conversely, subjects familiar with the partner brand report the most favorable attitudes for the combination advertisement condition followed by the irrelevant advertisement condition and the least positive attitudes for the relevant advertisement condition, providing support for H8. As indicated in Figure 3 subjects familiar with the celebrity report more positive celebrity brand attitudes in the irrelevant advertisement condition, featuring the celebrity only, and the least positive attitudes in the relevant condition, featuring only the partner brand. Subjects familiar with the celebrity report more positive attitude towards the celebrity in the combination advertisement condition than those subjects who are unfamiliar with the celebrity, supporting H9. Interestingly, those subjects unfamiliar with the celebrity brand report more positive

attitude towards the celebrity in the relevant advertisement condition, in which the

celebrity does not feature, than in the irrelevant and combination advertisement conditions.

FIGURE 1
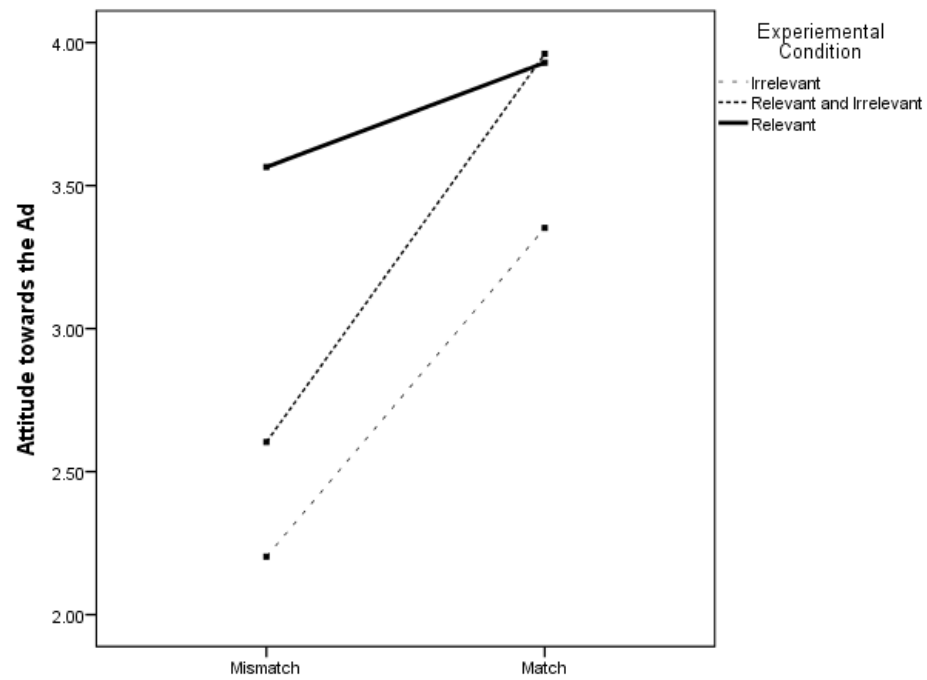**Attitude towards the Ad by Match-up**

FIGURE 2
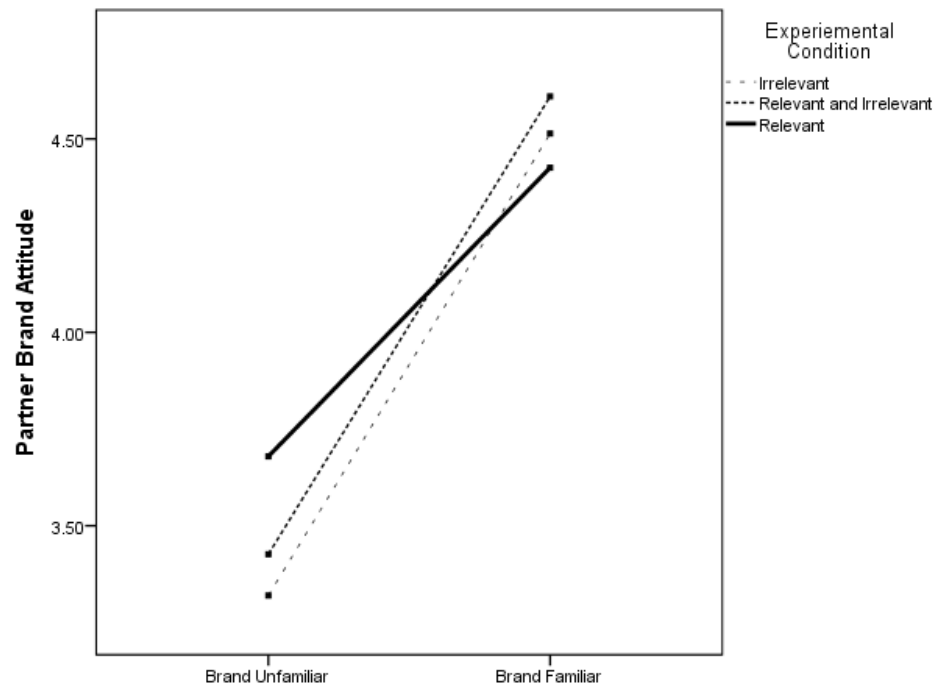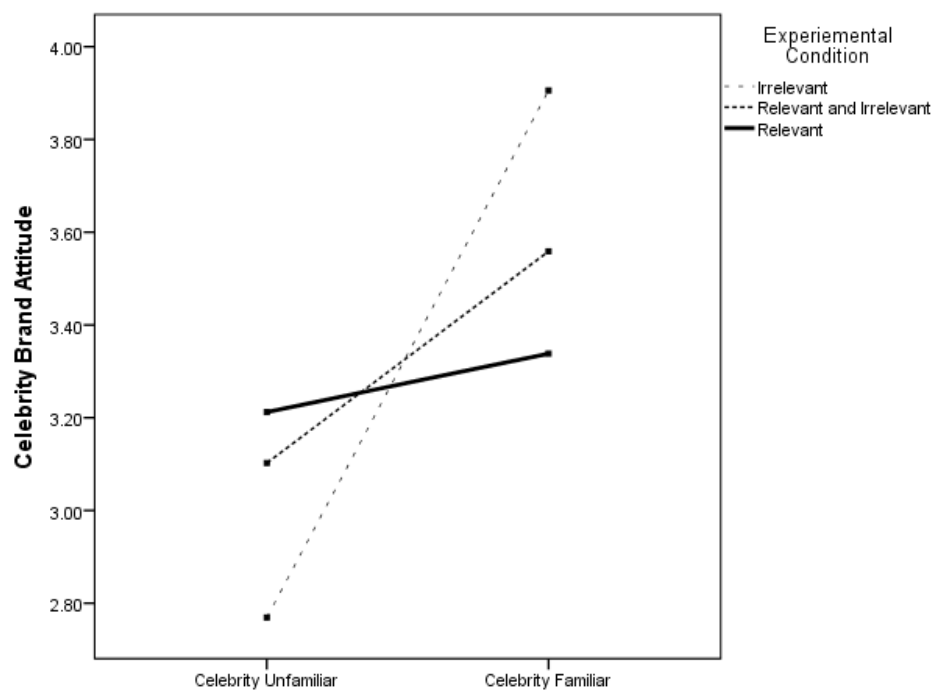**Partner Brand Attitude by Partner Brand Familiarity**

FIGURE 3
Celebrity Brand Attitude by Celebrity Brand Familiarity

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Results of this study identify that when celebrities act as indirect spokespeople in advertisements that feature co-branding partnerships, where they do not provide information about the partner brand, consumer partner brand attitudes, celebrity brand attitudes and advertisement attitudes are affected. While previous research in the celebrity endorsement and co-branding literatures centre on the concept of match-up and fit of relevant characteristics between brand partners (Dickinson and Heath 2006; Kamins 1990: Kamins and Gupta 1994; Simonin and Ruth 1998; Till and Busler 1998, 2000; Till et al. 2008), findings from this study suggest that the irrelevancy of celebrity partner brand information presented in an advertisement can also influence consumer judgments.

Several findings from this study are consistent with a dilution effect (Loken and Roedder John 1993; Roedder John et al. 1998; Simonin and Ruth 1998; Keller and Sood 2003; Sood and Keller 2007), whereby consumer evaluations are less positive when they are unfamiliar with both brands in the partnership and perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and co-branding partner. The results of this study show that consumers who are familiar with and who perceive a high degree of fit between both brands have the strongest partner brand attitude, celebrity brand and attitude towards the advertisement than those who are unfamiliar with and perceive a mismatch between both brands.

Although previous research indicates that brand unfamiliarity results in weak attitude strength, association accessibility and consequently brand attitude dilution (Simonin and Ruth 1998; Kirmani, Sood and Bridges 1999), results of this study show that consumers unfamiliar with the brand are not susceptible to change. Instead, the findings of this study suggest that consumer attitudes towards the partner brand are strengthened when consumers familiar with the brand are exposed to both irrelevant and relevant information within an advertisement featuring a co-branding partnership. It is possible that those who

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are highly familiar with the partner brand find the advertisements more interesting when the celebrity is paired with the brand. In fact, consumers may possibly perceive that the celebrity adds value to the brand and as such, their overall attitude towards the brand is enhanced. This finding suggests that co-branding partnerships may be beneficial in strengthening the attitudes of current customers of the brand.

Empirical research investigating the reciprocal effect that the partner brand has on the celebrity brand has been largely ignored in the celebrity endorsement literature. Seno and Lukas (2007) highlight the importance of testing this relationship in future research. Interestingly, findings from this study identify consumers unfamiliar with the celebrity brand report more positive attitude towards the celebrity brand when the celebrity is not featured in the advertisement. In fact, for those who are familiar with the celebrity brand their attitudes towards the celebrity brand dilute when they are exposed to an advertisement that features both the celebrity and partner brand in combination, than advertisements that feature the celebrity only. This finding suggests that co-branding partnerships are able to have a negative effect on the celebrity brand. In fact, those familiar with the celebrity prefer advertisements that feature the celebrity in a way which is consistent with the celebrity's image, even if the celebrity is providing irrelevant information about the partner brand. Since co-branding partnerships can have a negative effect on celebrity brands, it is especially important for celebrities to manage their own brand image. With consumers becoming more skeptical of the motives of celebrities in brand partnerships (Bailey 2007), celebrities are discovering ways in which to avoid perceptions of selling out and maintaining an image of authenticity. When celebrities feature in advertisements and provide only relevant information regarding their own brand, they are in fact, preserving consumer perceptions of their "real" core identity. Results of this study show that celebrities should indeed feature in advertisements portraying their

true identity in order to avoid tarnishing consumers' attitudes towards them. Future research should explore consumer perceptions of celebrity brand authenticity when in a collaborative partnership with another brand.

Consumer attitude towards the advertisement also is significantly affected by irrelevant brand information provided by a celebrity within an advertisement. Findings from this study show attitude towards the advertisement is more positive in the relevant information condition, featuring only information about the partner brand and negative in the irrelevant information condition, featuring the celebrity only. In fact, even those who are familiar with the celebrity brand report more positive attitude towards the advertisement when relevant only information is presented than when the celebrity features alone. This finding suggests consumers seem to be interested in advertisements that feature information relating to the brand more so than advertisements that convey irrelevant brand information. On the other hand, those who perceive a match-up between the celebrity and brand report enhanced advertisement attitudes when the celebrity and brand feature together in the combination irrelevant and relevant condition than when the brand features alone in the relevant information condition. As such, the findings suggest that information presented in an advertisement alters consumers' cognitive processing in addition to their affective state assisting in the development of advertisement attitudes.

Although previous research focuses on dilution effects for unfit and unfamiliar brands (Loken and Roedder John 1993; Roedder John et al. 1998; Simonin and Ruth 1998; Kirmani et al. 1999; Keller and Sood 2003; Pina, Martinez, de Chernatony and Drury, 2006; Sood and Keller 2007), this study examines fit also in terms of the relevancy of information provided by the celebrity co-branding partner within advertisements. Our conceptualization of match-up incorporating relevancy of the information provided by the co-branding partner is supported for attitude towards the advertisement. Results of this

study uncover advertisement attitude dilution effects by celebrity familiarity, whereby consumer attitude towards the advertisement become less positive when exposed to irrelevant information provided by the celebrity. These results indicate that perceptions of incongruence are not only influenced by the irrelevant characteristics that are associated with a celebrity, but also are affected by the irrelevant information provided by the celebrity in the advertisement. These findings also suggest that consumers may create the relevancy of the celebrity as a co-branding partner by accessing the information they have in their memory about the celebrity. As a result, consumers may believe in the consistency of the celebrity in providing relevant information about the brand through the spreading activation process (Anderson 1983), whereby they transfer the image associations attached to the celebrity in their minds onto the brand partner. Future research should explore the brand image associations tied to both brands in the partnership and identify the associations that transfer when consumers are exposed to the co-branding partnership in marketing communications.

Since we examine the irrelevancy of information presented by a celebrity co-branding partner in television advertisements, future research should be extended to investigate whether dilution effects are transferable to other advertising mediums. Print advertisements may feature celebrities who provide only relevant celebrity brand information and no partner brand information, as in the case of many fragrance advertisements. For example, the Gucci by Gucci fragrance advertisements feature James Franco's face in the foreground with the Gucci fragrance bottle presented at the bottom of the advertisement. Although James Franco may provide relevant brand information by conveying a sexy and modern image, congruent with the Gucci brand, he provides irrelevant information by not explicitly advocating the brand or by actually holding or seen using the product in the advertisement.

Research should also explore whether dilution effects occur in other co-branding situations, where celebrities pair with other product brands in advertisements. Future research could manipulate perceptions of match-up and celebrity brand authenticity investigating multiple celebrities paired with multiple brands. These findings would identify conditions under which co-branding partnerships can be detrimental or beneficial to consumers' evaluations of both co-branding partners.

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CONCLUSION TO STUDY III

The third study confirms findings from Study II that the irrelevancy of celebrity partner brand information presented in an advertisement can influence consumer judgments. The results show brand familiarity and brand fit result in superior partner brand attitude, celebrity brand attitude and attitude towards the advertisement. Results also identify that co-branding partnerships are able to have a negative effect on the celebrity brand. Consumers familiar with the celebrity have a preference for advertisements that feature the celebrity providing irrelevant information about the partner brand. This finding suggests that celebrities should highlight their own image in co-branding partnerships in order to avoid dilution effects. When celebrities emphasise their own image in advertisements they are safeguarding their identity and maintaining their authenticity.

Both Study I and Study III reveal the importance of brand authenticity. Study IV explores the development of brand authenticity in the marketing literature and then adapts a framework from the psychology literature to develop a scale to measure both corporate and celebrity brand authenticity.

Chapter 4: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY IV

The fourth and final study in the thesis, **Measuring Celebrity and Corporate Brand Authenticity**, is a quantitative study that explores the concept of brand authenticity, a key finding from Study I and a concept that may provide the foundation to understanding why dilution effects occur in co-branding partnerships. The study adapts the authenticity inventory from the psychology literature to explore its relevance in measuring authenticity in a branding context. As all research to date in brand authenticity is qualitative and exploratory in nature, this study develops a scale for both celebrity and corporate brand authenticity.

Measuring Celebrity and Corporate Brand Authenticity is targeted for submission to the Journal of Marketing Theory. The paper is presented in this thesis in the journal's required publication format yet for ease of reading tables and figures are embedded throughout. This study evolved from a paper submitted and accepted to present at the Asia Pacific Association for Consumer Research Conference, 2012. The conference paper is authored by Jasmina Ilicic, Cynthia M. Webster and Lawrence Ang with the contribution ratio as Jasmina Ilicic- 70%, Cynthia M. Webster- 25% and Lawrence Ang- 5%. This

conference paper is included in Appendix D. The thesis paper contribution is outlined in

Acknowledgments on page viii.

Measuring celebrity and corporate brand authenticity

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Abstract

This research adapts relevant sections of the Authenticity Inventory from the psychology literature to develop a measure for brand authenticity within a co-branding context between a celebrity human brand and corporate partner brand. The results show one clear dimension of authenticity for both celebrity and corporate brands which consists of consumer relationships with the brand. Although, both celebrity and corporate brand authenticity emphasise relational components, this study identifies authenticity as a distinct and distinguishable construct from brand attachment. This study provides evidence that adapting parts of the Authenticity Inventory to the co-branding context aids in developing a valid and reliable scale for brand authenticity. Brand managers benefit from understanding consumers' perceptions of the authenticity of their brand and other brands they may currently be paired with or consider an alliance with in the future.

Keywords

Brand authenticity, celebrity endorsers, corporate brand, co-branding, brand attachment

Introduction

Increasingly celebrities are forming alliances with brands through co-branding partnerships, making it essential for marketers to understand what each brand contributes to the partnership. Recent marketing research highlights the value of building consumer relationships with product brands (Fournier 1998; Thomson, MacInnis and Park 2005), celebrity brands (Thomson 2006) and corporate brands (Urde 2003) to create brand resonance and build brand equity (Park, MacInnis and Priester 2007; Keller 2008). Recent research also suggests the importance of brand authenticity in brand building and reputation management (Beverland 2005). While some research explores celebrity authenticity from a philosophical perspective (Tolson 2001; Fairchild 2007), no marketing research to date examines consumer perceptions of celebrity brand authenticity and corporate brand authenticity.

In fact, few marketing researchers define the term authenticity and those that do use it in different ways and with varying meanings. Despite being an important marketing concept (Grayson and Martinec 2004), no quantitative measure of brand authenticity exists. Although brand consulting company, Principals, has developed a Brand Authenticity Index, no published academic research to date has established a reliable and valid scale to measure brand authenticity. Marketing research in the area is mostly exploratory in its approach, focusing on the elements that make a specific brand or experience authentic (e.g. Beverland 2005; Chronis and Hampton 2008). The only quantitative scale identified is Kernis and Goldman's (2006) Authenticity Inventory in the psychology literature. Since the Authenticity Inventory focuses on individuals, some components may be applicable to human brands but may have little relevance for other types of brands.

The aim here is to determine whether the Authenticity Inventory can be used as a basis for measuring consumer perceptions of brand authenticity for both a celebrity human

brand and a corporate brand. The remainder of the paper proceeds with a review of the marketing literature and broadens the focus to research in philosophy and psychology. The Authenticity Inventory forms the basis for measuring brand authenticity in a co-branding context with celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld, and corporate financial brand, the Greater Building Society. Data collected independently for both brands is subjected to exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood. The resulting brand authenticity measure is then compared with a brand attachment measure to determine whether the two are independent constructs. Lastly, confirmatory factor analysis is performed to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the brand authenticity scale.

Authenticity research in marketing

Although regarded as the cornerstone of contemporary marketing (Holt 1997; Belk and Costa 1998; Kozinets 2001), authenticity receives modest attention in the marketing literature. In the consumer context, Arnould and Price (2000) explore the quest for self through meaningful consumption and authenticating acts. Consumers express their *true* self by purchasing and using brands that reflect their self-image and self-identity, providing them with a sense of *individuality* and *uniqueness* (Arnould and Price 2000). In the case of brands, Thompson, Rindfleisch and Arsel (2006) propose that the double meanings identified in the Starbucks Coffee brand image masks its *real* identity. Authenticity in advertising research, explores co-produced meanings derived from the combination of the advertisement's content as well as the consumers' experiences. In her study, Chalmers (2008) asks members of a distance running subculture to respond to 16 print advertisements representing a range of authenticities such as common everyday experiences of running, historical running images and advertisements focusing on product attributes (not authentic). Beverland, Lindgreen and Vink (2008) suggest that

understanding authenticity from a strategic communication approach requires an

assessment of the organisational crafting of authenticity claims and the consumers'

perceptions of these claims.

Authenticity as perception

 The term authenticity broadly refers to what is genuine, real and true (Arnould and Price

2000; Bendix, 1992; Thompson et al. 2006). There is general agreement that authenticity is

not an attribute inherent in an object. Rather, authenticity is a socially constructed

interpretation or an assessment made by an evaluator of the essence of what is observed

(Beverland 2005, 2006; Beverland et al. 2008; Grayson and Martinec 2004; Rose and

Wood 2005; Thompson et al. 2006). Authenticity is a claim that is made by or for someone

or something, and is either accepted or rejected by relevant others (Peterson 2005).

According to Thompson et al. (2006), consumers are in constant search for the authentic in

an increasingly standardised and homogenised marketplace. In this sense, consumers can

be seen as co-creators of authenticity (Leigh, Peters and Shelton 2006), through interaction

with the authentic object and the person experiencing that object (Rose and Wood, 2005).

In a study undertaken by Rose and Wood (2005), consumers consciously negotiate, or

actively produce meaning, in the inconsistency between that which is real and contrived or

fake in reality television. Although some consumers may perceive an object or

consumption experience to be fabricated or fake, others may, in fact, observe genuine, real,

or true elements (Grayson and Martinec 2004; Rose and Wood 2005).

Indexical and Iconic Authenticity

In an early study, Grayson and Martinec (2004) categorise authenticity as indexical or

iconic authenticity. A brand has indexical authenticity if it is thought to be the original, not

a copy or an imitation (Bruner 1994, p. 400; Huntington 1988, p. 157). This perspective focuses on an object being "the real thing," both legitimate and genuine (Benjamin 1969; Kingston 1999). Consumers perceive indexical authenticity if a brand or consumption experience is rare and can be confirmed by facts or evidence. For example, judging a Stradivarius as indexically authentic requires verification of its link to the violin maker, through means such as certification or valuation from a trustworthy expert. In the height of increasing counterfeits, the Louis Vuitton brand provides indexical authenticity to their consumers by exclusively selling their products via their physical stores and always supplying a certificate of authenticity to ensure the item's originality.

Alternatively, iconic authenticity refers to an object that "resembles something that is indexically authentic" (Grayson and Martinec, 2004, p. 298), where an object is an "authentic reproduction" or an "authentic recreation" of the original (Bruner 1994, p. 399; Peterson 1997, p. 208). For example, the iconic status of the VW Beetle allows for the reinvigoration of the brand. Although the new VW Beetle stylistically looks somewhat different to the original, the VW brand has recreated the product using their production methods ensuring the remodelled product still resembles the original with its connection to time and place (Postrel 2003). Authenticity lies in the eye of the beholder (Patterson and O'Malley 2006) and emerges from an individual's own personal experiences (Cohen 1988).

Authenticity as Heritage

Authenticity research by Beverland and colleagues emphasises whether a brand's origins are authentic and whether the origins are rooted in tradition and heritage (Beverland 2005; Beverland et al. 2008). Beverland (2005, p. 1008) defines brand authenticity as: "a 'story' that balances industrial (production, distribution and marketing) and rhetorical attributes to project sincerity through the avowal of commitments to traditions (including production

methods, product styling, firm values, and/or location), passion for craft and production excellence, *and* the public disavowal of the role of modern industrial attributes and commercial motivations." Beverland (2005) explores the way in which luxury wine brands are commitment to tradition, place of origin and history (Beverland 2005; Beverland et al. 2008). Brands create and maintain images of authenticity through committing to the traditional values for which the brand stands.

Other researchers also emphasise heritage and examine authenticity based on a product, brand or consumption experience being grounded in history (Chronis and Hampton 2008; Munoz, Wood and Solomon 2006; Grayson and Martinec 2004; Rose and Wood 2005). For example, Costa and Bamossy (1995) find that coins in a museum gift shop are perceived to be authentic reproductions if they appear identical to coins made in the sixteenth-century Spanish colonies. Consumers perceive Gettysburg, a significant and popular heritage site in the United States, as an authentic reproduction since it is aligned with their pre-existing knowledge of the battle from reading books and through mass media (Chronis and Hampton, 2008). Here the "composite photograph" (Grayson and Martinc, 2004: 298) within consumers' minds is analogous to the experience recreated at the site.

Authenticity as DNA

Alternatively, Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003, p. 21) argue that authenticity is "composed of the brand elements that consumers perceive as unique." In other words, authenticity is the brand's essence or DNA, which is the core or the heart of the brand's identity (Aaker 1996; Beverland 2005; Kapferer 2001; Keller 2008). Authenticity comprises the unique characteristics of a brand's values, people, product, services, and place that are shown through an organisation's vision and actions (Morin, 2010). For

example, the Wal-Mart organisation consistently highlights its value of frugality with corporate headquarters comprising plastic chairs and linoleum-floored offices, in addition to corporate personnel flying economy, staying at standard hotels, and often sleeping two to a room (McGehee, 2001). Gilmore and Pine (2007) suggest authenticity communicates what a brand stands for through conveying its core values and traditions. Consumers then assess a brand's identity and either validate or reject the communicated brand promises (Molleda 2009).

Authenticity as 'being true to self"

Much of the marketing research on brand authenticity focuses on the crafting of authenticity and understanding the attributes that make a brand authentic (Beverland 2005). It is in the philosophy and psychology literatures where discussions of authenticity are most extensive and where most perspectives on authenticity highlight the extent to which an individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviours reflect being true to the essence of the self (Van Leeuwen 2001). Remaining true to the presentation of the self one claims (Goffman 1959), signifies being genuine, original, having a unique and distinctive style, and not being an imitation or copy (Van Leeuwen 2001). This conceptualisation is analogous with Grayson and Martinec's (2004) "indexical authenticity".

The limited research on celebrity authenticity also follows a similar perspective. Tolson (2001) attributes celebrity authenticity to "being yourself" in terms of creating an image of individuality, uniqueness and differentiation. Fairchild (2007) argues that the creation of a persona and the consistency of this persona is what make a celebrity authentic. In Ilicic and Webster's (under review) research, consumers define celebrity authenticity as an individual who is real, not fake, genuine, and someone who is being their own person.

Authenticity defined in the psychology literature is "the unobstructed operation of one's true- or core-self in one's daily enterprise" (Kernis and Goldman 2006: 294). According to Kernis and Goldman (2006), authenticity contains four separate, yet interrelated, components: awareness, unbiased processing, behaviour and relational orientation. Awareness refers to having knowledge of your motives, feelings and desires. This component of authenticity involves being motivated to learn about your strengths, weaknesses, goals and aspirations. Those who possess greater authenticity are more aware of and accept their complex multifaceted or opposing self-aspects. Unbiased processing refers to objectively discerning both positive and negative self-aspects. This component involves not denying, distorting, or exaggerating self-relevant information. The behaviour component of authenticity entails behaving in accordance with one's values, preferences and needs and not acting in a false way to obtain rewards or evade punishment. Finally, relational orientation involves valuing and striving for openness, sincerity, and truthfulness in close relationships with others. In other words, the relational orientation component of authenticity refers to being genuine, not fake, in relationships.

Measuring authenticity

Kernis and Goldman (2006) use confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the multidimensionality of authenticity and identify the four dimensions that create the Authenticity Inventory. Awareness and unbiased processing require individuals to actively assess whether they understand who they are and their core attributes. As these two components are internal evaluations of strengths and weaknesses, they appear more relevant to brand managers when determining the authenticity of their brands' DNA. Brand managers engage in knowing whether they can ignore brand faults or need to recast them in a positive way. Consumers, however, do not necessarily have the information to

answer such questions. The behaviour and relational orientation components explicitly involve others witnessing the real you, your true self. These components appear to be more appropriate with regards to consumer perceptions. Consumers may be able to determine whether a brand performs in an authentic manner and remains true to its core values. Although behaviour and relational orientation may not be relevant to all brands, they do apply to human brands and appear to be suitable components to use as a basis for measuring brand authenticity.

Authenticity distinct from brand attachment

Research in psychology identifies authenticity as associated with relationship behaviours and outcomes (Brunell, Kernis, Goldman, Heppner, Davis, Cascio and Webster 2010). Brunell's et al. (2010) study ascertains that individuals high in authenticity engage in more open and constructive relationships with others and have overall enhanced perceived relationship quality. As such, brand authenticity is distinguished from the brand attachment construct with which it might be correlated. Brand attachment is an appropriate construct to explore consumer relationships with brands as it is at the core of strong consumer-brand relationships (Fournier 1998; Thomson et al. 2005; Thomson 2006).

The relational component of authenticity focuses on being genuine in relationships with others whereas, attachment centres on the bond that is formed between a person and a specific object (Bowlby 1979, 1980). Attachment accepts that a basic human need is the yearning for strong emotional attachments to others. Authenticity, on the other hand, does not emphasise the intention to develop a relationship with others; rather it focuses on the behaviour towards others. Attachment rests on the notion of emotional aspects as a result of close bonds such as separation distress, love, passion, connection, delight (Bowlby 1979, 1980; Thomson et al. 2005; Thomson 2006). Authenticity on the other hand highlights

behavioural aspects in close relationships with others such as openness, honesty and truthfulness (Kernis and Goldman 2006). Although consumers may have the perception that a specific brand is authentic, they may not necessarily have a strong emotional attachment to the brand. As such, a secondary aim of this study is to distinguish authenticity from the attachment construct.

To develop a scale of consumer perceptions of brand authenticity, Churchill's (1979) procedure for scale development is used. First, the measure is purified through exploratory factor analysis then confirmatory factor analysis is performed to assess convergent and discriminant validity of the scale.

Method

This study used a research company to recruit respondents from regional areas within Australia to evaluate the authenticity of celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld, and corporate financial brand, the Greater Building Society. Of the 205 respondents approached for Jerry Seinfeld, 160 valid responses were obtained and of the 343 respondents approached for the Greater Building Society, 147 provided complete and valid responses. For the Jerry Seinfeld respondents, 31.9% are male and 68.1% are female with respondents mainly between 35-49 and 50-64 years of age (27.5% and 40.0%, respectively). For the Greater Building Society, 45.6% of respondents are male and 54.4% are female with respondents predominantly between 35-49 and 50-64 years of age (27.9% and 48.3%, respectively).

Measures

In total 41 survey items measuring the four dimensions are adapted from Kernis and Goldman's (2006) 45 item Authenticity Inventory. Awareness consists of 11 items, unbiased processing 9 items, behaviour 10 items and relational orientation has 11 items. As

indicated previously, only two of the four dimensions, behavior and relational orientation, appear relevant to consumers (see Appendix 1). Respondents indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements on a 5 point likert scale. The degree to which an individual feels separation distress has been argued as a good indicator of the strength of their attachment bond (Berman and Sperling 1994). Separation distress includes three items taken from Hazan and Shaver (1994) (celebrity brand Cronbach α= .951, corporate brand Cronbach α= .879).

Procedure

Respondents first view a brand image, either a photograph of Jerry Seinfeld or the logo for the Greater Building Society and then report their degree of familiarity with the brand. Those unfamiliar with the brand are disqualified from the survey. As an introduction, participants are told to think of the celebrity or the organisation as a brand. They then evaluate the extent to which they believe the Jerry Seinfeld or Greater brand are authentic. Finally, participants assess the degree to they are attached to the brand.

Results

Maximum likeihood factor analysis is performed as it is argued to be the best choice when data are normally distributed (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum and Strahan 1999). Preliminary analyses using maximum likelihood factor analysis confirm that the questions relating to the awareness and unbiased processing dimensions do not form independent factors. As such, the awareness and unbiased processing dimensions are not explored further. The results section focuses on both the behavior and relational orientation dimensions.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Celebrity brand authenticity: Jerry Seinfeld

For Jerry Seinfeld initial Cronbach α reliability analyses show unacceptable results for both the behaviour dimension (α= .530) and relational orientation (α= -.552). Once items are eliminated, internal consistency becomes acceptable (Nunnally 1978). Behavior consists of three items (α= .773) and relational orientation has four items (α=.784).

Table 1 presents results from an exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood with varimax rotation on the combined behaviour and relational orientation items. The first eigenvalue is three times as large as the second and explains 29.2% of the variance. Factor 1 consists of ten items that measure relational orientation and six behavioral items (see Table 2). Of the ten relational orientation items, six show substantial factor loadings on Factor 1 with little cross loading on Factor 2. Two of these items are about "caring for others", three items about "understanding core values" and one item refers to "being true". Only two of the six behaviour items have sizable loadings on Factor 1 with little cross loading. These two items are about "acting consistently". Factor 2, explaining 8.9% of the variance, consists of four behaviour items and one relational orientation item. Only two items have high loadings and both are behaviour relating to the brand's negative aspects.

Table 1: Variance Explained for Celebrity Brand Authenticity

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.133	29.206	29.206	5.494	26.164	26.164	5.385	25.641	25.641
2	1.878	8.945	38.151	1.429	6.807	32.971	1.539	7.331	32.971
3	1.636	7.788	45.939						
4	1.371	6.527	52.466						
5	1.138	5.418	57.884						
6	1.117	5.321	63.205						
7	.981	4.674	67.878						
8	.838	3.992	71.870						
9	.799	3.804	75.675						
10	.711	3.384	79.058						
11	.674	3.207	82.266						
12	.541	2.577	84.843						
13	.488	2.324	87.167						
14	.462	2.198	89.365						
15	.457	2.178	91.543						
16	.371	1.766	93.308						
17	.342	1.628	94.937						
18	.325	1.549	96.486						
19	.276	1.315	97.800						
20	.232	1.107	98.907						
21	.230	1.093	100.000						

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix for Celebrity Brand Authenticity

Dimension	Question	Factor	
		1	2
B	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with his held values, even if others criticise or reject him for doing so	**.787**	-.128
RO	cares about openness and honesty in close relationships with others	**.754**	.017
RO	in general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he truly is	**.727**	.057
RO	believes it is important for people to understand his brand values and goals	-.690	.001
RO	people can count on him being who he his regardless of the situation	**.677**	-.001
RO	makes it a point to express to people how much he truly cares for them	-.623	-.011
B	frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality he really doesn't	-.611	.487
RO	wants people to understand the real him rather than just his public ''image''	**.578**	-.048
B	rarely if ever, puts on a ''false face'' for people to see	.542	-.234
B	behaves in ways that typically expresses his brand values	-.538	.089
RO	wants people to understand his weaknesses	-.463	.056
B	is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing his brand's true beliefs and values	-.390	.005
RO	wants people to understand his strengths	.389	-.083
B	spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to people even though they are unimportant to his brand	.373	.222
RO	would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with someone	.373	-.187
RO	people, if asked, could accurately describe what kind of brand Jerry Seinfeld is	-.304	.103
RO	people would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what he as a brand keeps privileged	-.129	.222
B	finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than his true- brand identity	-.363	.804
B	is willing to change his brand if the reward is desirable enough	-.109	.640
B	often does things that he doesn't want to do merely not to disappoint people	-.069	-.191
B	often uses silence to convey agreement even though he really disagrees	.027	.137

Corporate brand authenticity: Greater Building Society

Initial Cronbach α reliability analyses for the corporate brand show unacceptable results

for the behaviour dimension of authenticity (α= .530), but once five items are eliminated,

internal consistency (α=.752) becomes acceptable (Nunnally 1978). Cronbach α reliability

for relational orientation shows acceptable results for all 11 items (α= .853).

An exploratory factor analysis on the two authenticity dimensions using maximum

likelihood with varimax rotation reveals similar results to the celebrity brand (see Table 3).

Factor 1, explaining 34.6% of the variance, consists of nine of the items that measure

relational orientation and four behaviour items (see Table 4). Of the nine relational

orientation items, four show sizable loadings with little cross loading. These four

relational orientation items also load highly for the celebrity brand. Factor 2, with 12.4% of

the explained variance, again appears to be detecting negative brand aspects. This factor

consists of three behaviour items, two of which are the same as in the celebrity results, and

two relational orientation items.

The results of the exploratory factor analysis for both the celebrity and corporate

brands using the behavior and relational orientation dimensions of Kernis and Goldman's

(2006) Authenticity Inventory show that brand authenticity convincingly consists of four

relational orientation items and one behaviour item. These items load highly for both the

celebrity and corporate brand, with minimal cross loading. These five items now are taken

to determine the distinction between authenticity and attachment.

Table 3: Variance Explained for Corporate Brand Authenticity

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.259	34.569	34.569	6.768	32.229	32.229	5.646	26.884	26.884
2	2.615	12.450	47.019	1.972	9.391	41.619	3.094	14.735	41.619
3	1.418	6.754	53.773						
4	1.120	5.333	59.106						
5	1.003	4.775	63.881						
6	.810	3.859	67.741						
7	.802	3.818	71.559						
8	.766	3.646	75.205						
9	.657	3.130	78.336						
10	.594	2.829	81.165						
11	.563	2.679	83.845						
12	.514	2.445	86.290						
13	.471	2.242	88.532						
14	.431	2.053	90.585						
15	.389	1.852	92.438						
16	.366	1.741	94.179						
17	.293	1.396	95.575						
18	.271	1.292	96.867						
19	.249	1.188	98.054						
20	.228	1.086	99.140						
21	.181	.860	100.000						

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix for Corporate Brand Authenticity

Dimension	Question	Factor	
		1	2
RO	cares about openness and honesty in close relationships with customers	**.832**	.218
RO	in general, places a good deal of importance on customers understanding who they truly are	**.778**	.345
RO	wants customers to understand the real them rather than just their public ''image''	**.709**	.204
RO	customers can count on them being who they are regardless of the situation	**.702**	.273
RO	makes it a point to express to customers how much they truly care for them	-.653	-.315
RO	believes it is important for customers to understand their brand values and goals	.652	.325
B	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with their held values, even if customers criticise or reject them for doing so	**.651**	.099
B	behaves in ways that typically expresses their brand values	.630	.302
RO	wants customers to understand their strengths	-.624	-.267
B	rarely if ever, puts on a ''false face'' for customers to see	.553	.213
RO	wants customers to understand their weaknesses	-.471	.175
B	is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing the brand's true beliefs and values	.415	-.153
RO	customers, if asked, could accurately describe what kind of brand the Greater Building Society is	.401	.260
B	often does things that they don't want to do merely not to disappoint customers	-.339	.327
B	spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to customers even though they are unimportant to the brand	-.329	-.002
B	is willing to change their brand if the reward is desirable enough	-.264	.142
RO	would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with a customer	.164	.793
B	frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality they really don't	.195	.743
B	often uses silence to convey agreement with their customers even though they really disagree	-.076	-.638
B	finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than their true- brand identity	.258	.560
RO	customers would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what the brand keeps privileged	.019	.488

Authenticity and attachment: celebrity and corporate brand

Factor analytic techniques can be used, in conjunction with confirmatory factor analysis, (see below) to assess the discriminant validity of a scale. When items believed to measure distinct constructs are factor analysed, they should not load together onto the same dimensions (Hinkin, 1995).When combining authenticity and the attachment items for both the celebrity and corporate brands, the results show a clear two factor solution suggesting that brand attachment is distinguishable from brand authenticity (see Table 5 and Table 6). For the celebrity brand, the attachment items load highest on the first factor and for the corporate brand, the attachment items load highest on the second factor.

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix- Celebrity Brand Authenticity and Attachment

Dimension	Question	Factor	
		1	2
ATTACH	if Jerry was permanently gone I would be upset	.941	
ATTACH	losing Jerry forever would be distressing to me	.903	
ATTACH	I miss Jerry Seinfeld when he is not around	.862	
AUTH	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with his held values, even if others criticise or reject him for doing so		.766
AUTH	cares about openness and honesty in close relationships with others		.746
AUTH	in general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he truly is		.675
AUTH	people can count on him being who he his regardless of the situation		.674
AUTH	wants people to understand the real him rather than just his public ''image''		.609

Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix- Corporate Brand Authenticity and Attachment

Dimension	Question	Factor	
		1	2
AUTH	cares about openness and honesty in close relationships with customers	.857	
AUTH	in general, places a good deal of importance on customers understanding who they truly are	.829	
AUTH	customers can count on them being who they are regardless of the situation	.722	
AUTH	wants customers to understand the real them rather than just their public ''image''	.704	
AUTH	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with their held values, even if customers criticise or reject them for doing so	.574	
ATTACH	if the Greater Building Society was permanently gone I would be upset		.851
ATTACH	losing the Greater Building Society forever would be distressing to me		.838
ATTACH	I miss the services and products of the Greater Building Society when they are not available		.711

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis on the proposed model, which consists of a uni-dimensional one factor structure. The model comprises one latent variable (authenticity), with the observed variables loading in accordance with the pattern revealed in the exploratory factor analysis (Figures 1 and 2).

Several tests determine whether a SEM model fits the observed data. The chi-square statistic (χ^2) provides a measure of how well the model fits the data, with a nonsignificant χ^2 supporting that the model is a good fit to the data. The Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), CMIN/DF and Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) also are model-fit indices that help indicate the degree to which the model fits the sample data. A GFI and CFI of around 0.90 indicate a good model fit whereas a RMSEA of around 0.06 indicates a good fit (Bagozzi and Yi 2012). The one-factor model for the celebrity brand (Figure 1) and corporate brand (Figure 2) shows fit

measures that demonstrate an adequate model fit. For the celebrity brand the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .99, the comparative fit index (CFI) = 1.0, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.000 and $x^2(5) = 2.743$, p > 0.05) all indicate good model fit. For the corporate brand the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .98, the comparative fit index (CFI) = .99, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06 and $x^2(5) = 7.640$, p > 0.05) all indicate good model fit. Based on the criteria proposed by Bagozzi and Yi (2012), the uni-dimensional model produces an acceptable fit to the data and confirms the underlying structure of the brand authenticity scale.

Figure 1: Factor Loadings for Uni-dimensional Brand Authenticity Scale- Celebrity Brand
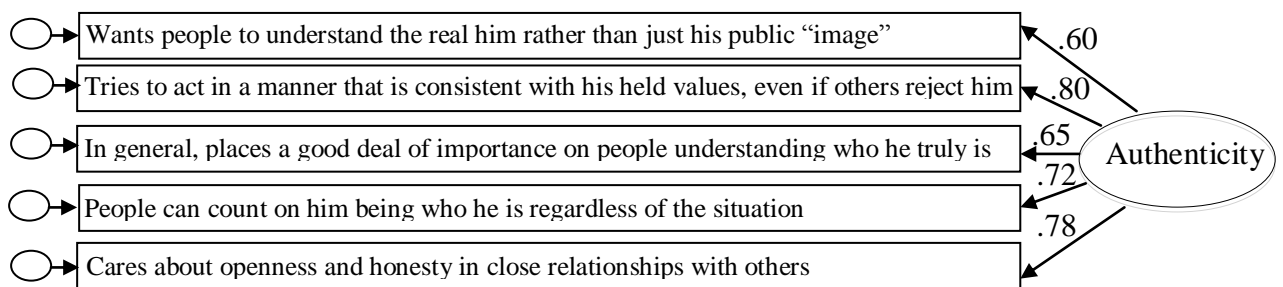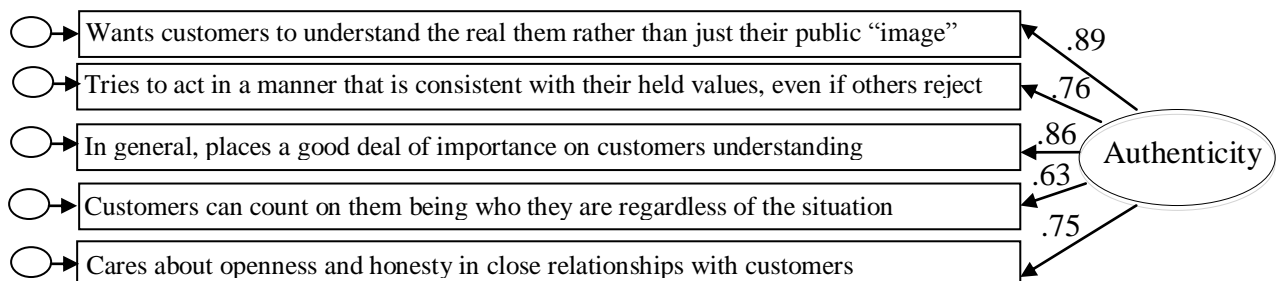

Figure 2: Factor Loadings for Uni-dimensional Brand Authenticity Scale- Corporate Brand

To assess convergent validity, the standardized regression estimates should be 0.5 and ideally exceed 0.7 (Hair, Blake, Babin, Anderson and Tatham, 2006). The CFA results (see

Table 7) indicate that the regression estimates range from .60 to .80 for the celebrity brand and .63 to .89 for the corporate brand. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be over .5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and Composite Reliability (CR) should be above .7 (Nunnally, 1978). The AVE for the authenticity construct for both the corporate and celebrity brand are above .7 with the CR for both the celebrity and corporate brand above .7, supporting convergent validity.

Table 7: Standardized Regression Estimates

		Loadings	CR	AVE
Celebrity Brand	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with his	.80	.89	.74
	cares about openness and honesty in close	.78		
	in general, places a good deal of importance on	.65		
	people can count on him being who he his	.72		
	wants people to understand the real him	.60		
Corporate Brand	cares about openness and honesty in close	.89	.92	.78
	in general, places a good deal of importance on	.86		
	customers can count on them being who they are	.76		
	wants customers to understand the real them	.75		
	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with their	.63		

CR = composite reliability= $(\Sigma$ of standardized loadings$)^2/(\Sigma$ of standardized loadings$)^2 + \Sigma$ of εj. AVE = average variance extracted = Σ of (standardized loadings$)^2/ \Sigma$ of (standardized loadings$)^2 + \Sigma$ of εj.

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is supported if the AVE for each construct for both the celebrity and corporate brand (authenticity and attachment) is greater than its shared variance. Use of both the AVE and shared variance estimates (that account for measurement error) provides a more stringent evaluation of the AVE versus a squared correlation test (Farell, 2009). Results indicate that the AVE for authenticity and attachment for both the celebrity and corporate brand is greater than its shared variance (see Tables 8 and 9), demonstrating the discriminant validity of the brand authenticity scale.

Table 8: Average Variance Extracted and Shared Variance Estimates: Celebrity Brand

Variable	Items	1	2
1 Authenticity	5	**.74**	-.25
2 Attachment	3	-.50	**.93**

Note: Correlation is below the diagonal, squared correlation is above the diagonal and the AVE estimates are presented on the diagonal.

Table 9: Average Variance Extracted and Shared Variance Estimates: Corporate Brand

Variable	Items	1	2
1 Authenticity	5	**.78**	.35
2 Attachment	3	.59	**.84**

Note: Correlation is below the diagonal, squared correlation is above the diagonal and the AVE estimates are presented on the diagonal.

Discussion

Although inconsistencies are found, adapting the Kernis and Goldman's (2006) Authenticity Inventory from psychology to the marketing context does have potential. Results within the current study indicate that brand authenticity has one dimension for both celebrity and corporate brands. The key factor in consumer perceptions of both celebrity and corporate brand authenticity include positive consumer-brand relationships. Celebrity brand authenticity focuses on the celebrity's need for the public to recognise and appreciate their identity and values. Perceptions of corporate brand authenticity are based on the relations the brand has with its customers and its actions and conduct towards those customers.

The significance of consumer-brand relationships is highlighted in both celebrity and corporate brand authenticity. The findings of this study show brand attachment and brand authenticity to be unique and distinct constructs. These findings are highly relevant given recent interest in the consumer-brand relationships literature attempting to

distinguish the construct from other correlated constructs such as brand attitude, satisfaction and involvement (Thomson et al. 2005).

As this study is the first to examine the dimensionality of authenticity and develop a scale to measure authenticity within a branding context, further research is needed to test the generalisability of the scale to other brands. Additional research should be conducted using a number of different brands within different product categories. Future research should also investigate the importance of each of the components in predicting consumer behaviour and relationship outcomes. Future research should explore the effect that perceptions of authenticity have on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions and satisfaction, trust and loyalty in a relationship with the brand. Future research should also incorporate other dimensions of authenticity identified in the marketing literature to the scale such as heritage, tradition, DNA and essence (Chronis and Hampton 2008; Munoz, Wood and Solomon 2006; Grayson and Martinec 2004; Rose and Wood 2005; Aaker 1996; Beverland 2005; Kapferer 2001; Keller 2008). There are interesting examples of celebrity brands in particular that would appear to be inauthentic, selling out to the commercial world. However, there are celebrity brands that are perhaps able to create or craft the illusion of authenticity. For example, well-known singer and songwriter Lady Gaga is recognised for her unique brand identity, however, she is also known for her imitation of other stars such as Madonna. Nonetheless, many consumers perceive her as an authentic, honest and upfront brand. As such, consumer perception of authenticity may be distinguishable from the crafting of brand identity.

Source of Funding

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Appendix 1: Authenticity Inventory and Adapted Items

Original Item	Modified Corporate Brand Version	Modified Celebrity Brand Version
Behaviour		
1. I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don't.	frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality they really don't.	frequently pretends to deliver something when in actuality he really doesn't
2. I've often used my silence or head-nodding to convey agreement with someone else's statement or position even though I really disagree.	often uses silence to convey agreement with their customers even though they really disagree	often uses silence to convey agreement even though he really disagrees
3. I am willing to change myself for others if the reward is desirable enough.	is willing to change their brand if the reward is desirable enough	is willing to change his brand if the reward is desirable enough
4. I find it easy to pretend to be something other than my true-self.	finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than their true- brand identity	finds it easy to pretend to stand for something other than his true- brand identity
5. I try to act in a manner that is consistent with my personally held values, even if others criticize or reject me for doing so.	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with their held values, even if customers criticise or reject them for doing so	tries to act in a manner that is consistent with his held values, even if others criticise or reject him for doing so
6. I've often done things that I don't want to do merely not to disappoint people.	often does things that they don't want to do merely not to disappoint customers	often does things that he doesn't want to do merely not to disappoint people
7. I find that my behavior typically expresses my values.	behaves in ways that typically expresses their brand values	behaves in ways that typically expresses his brand values
8. I rarely if ever, put on a ''false face'' for others to see.	rarely if ever, puts on a ''false face'' for customers to see	rarely if ever, puts on a ''false face'' for people to see
9. I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me.	spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to customers even though they are unimportant to the brand	spends a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to people even though they are unimportant to his brand
10. I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things.	is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing the brand's true beliefs and values	is willing to endure negative consequences by expressing his brand's true beliefs and values

Relational Orientation		
1. I want people with whom I am close to understand my strengths.	wants customers to understand their strengths	wants people to understand his strengths
2. I want people with whom I am close to understand my weaknesses.	wants customers to understand their weaknesses	wants people to understand his weaknesses
3. I make it a point to express to close others how much I truly care for them.	makes it a point to express to customers how much they truly care for them	makes it a point to express to people how much he truly cares for them
4. If asked, people I am close to can accurately describe what kind of person I am.	customers, if asked, could accurately describe what kind of brand the Greater Building Society is	people, if asked, could accurately describe what kind of brand Jerry Seinfeld is
5. People close to me would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what I keep inside me.	customers would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what the brand keeps privileged	people would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what he as a brand keeps privileged
6. It is important for me to understand my close others' needs and desires.	believes it is important for customers to understand their brand values and goals	believes it is important for people to understand his brand values and goals
7. I want close others to understand the real me rather than just my public persona or ''image.''	wants customers to understand the real them rather than just their public ''image''	wants people to understand the real him rather than just his public ''image''
8. If a close other and I are in disagreement I would rather ignore the issue than constructively work it out.	would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with a customer	would ignore an issue rather than constructively work it out if in disagreement with someone
9. In general, I place a good deal of importance on people I am close to understanding who I truly am.	in general, places a good deal of importance on customers understanding who they truly are	in general, places a good deal of importance on people understanding who he truly is
10. The people I am close to can count on me being who I am regardless of what setting we are in.	customers can count on them being who they are regardless of the situation	people can count on him being who he his regardless of the situation
11. My openness and honesty in close relationships are extremely important to me.	cares about openness and honesty in close relationships with customers	cares about openness and honesty in close relationships with others

CONCLUSION TO STUDY IV

The fourth and final study explores brand authenticity. Results suggest that celebrity and corporate brand authenticity has one dimension involving positive consumer-brand relationships. Consumer perceptions of celebrity brand authenticity are based on the celebrity's need for positive public acknowledgment of their identity and values. Corporate brand authenticity centers on the dealings the brand has with its customers and its behavior towards those customers. Results of this study also identify brand authenticity as a distinct construct from brand attachment.

The final study is based on the importance of brand authenticity highlighted in both the first and third studies. The study approaches brand authenticity from findings identified in the first study as being real and genuine. Results show adopting the psychological Authenticity Inventory to the brand context is useful to develop a measure for both celebrity and corporate brand authenticity.

Chapter 5: THESIS CONCLUSION

Celebrities act as powerful opinion leaders and can strongly influence consumer perceptions and judgments. Elements of both the celebrity and partner brand's images may transfer onto each brand in the co-branding partnership, leaving both brands susceptible to possible brand dilution. Although the goal of many partnerships with celebrities is to gain consumer attention, this attention may come at a negative cost to both the brand and the celebrity. Both brands in the partnership are at risk of dilution, therefore, brand managers of both corporate and celebrity brands must ensure they select appropriate brand partners and execute the partnership in a way which avoids dilution and encourages brand image enhancement.

Although we see a growing trend towards corporate brands soliciting celebrities to differentiate their brand and create a competitive advantage, research on co-branding partnerships specifically between celebrities and corporate brands has received little attention. The four studies of this thesis identify what consumers value from both corporate and celebrity brands and the way in which the creative strategic execution of partnerships

can influence consumer judgments. The findings provide an understanding of advertising execution and positioning techniques that are able to dilute or enhance brands in co-branding partnerships. This knowledge will allow managers to identify suitable brand partners and develop effective image enhancing marketing communications programs.

The studies of this thesis reveal that consumers value brands that are authentic. Corporate and celebrity brands that are real, genuine and true to themselves by being honest about who they are and what they stand for are able to create and develop personally meaningful relationships with consumers. With the recent and growing interest in consumer-brand relationships in marketing research (Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005; Park, MacInnis, & Priester, 2007), it is especially important to understand how consumers value relationships with brands. Although authenticity consists of relational aspects concerning the behaviour of brands towards consumers, consumers are able to distinguish between brand authenticity and brand relationships (brand attachment). Modern consumers are on a perpetual quest for the authentic, therefore brands must convey their true selves in order to develop long-term relationships with their consumers. As such, brand managers benefit from understanding consumers' perceptions of the authenticity of their brand.

Marketing research to date on brand authenticity focuses on a brand's origins being rooted in tradition and heritage (Beverland, 2005; Beverland, Lindgreen and Vink, 2008). Although tradition and heritage may be important factors in crafting a brand story, consumers must perceive these as authentic characteristics, characteristics that are genuine, real and true are judged authentic. Consumer perceptions of the authentic are derived from the belief that a brand is truthful in their relationships with consumers. As such, consumers must negotiate between the real and fake to observe whether a brand reflects its true self in

their relationships. The studies of this thesis identify that both celebrity and corporate brands are judged authentic if they focus on creating and maintaining positive relationships with those they interact. Maintaining an image of authenticity is extremely important for brands in an increasingly fake and contrived media cluttered environment. As such, it is important for brands to consistently reinforce their real and true attributes or associations in their interactions with others, especially when pairing with another brand in a co-branding partnership.

Brands should highlight their true core attributes or associations that derive personal meaning for consumers when positioning in a partnership. By emphasising key brand characteristics, the brand can ensure a positioning strategy that is consistent with consumers' attribute perceptions and image associations. It is this consistency that enables consumers to infer brand meaning within promotional messages. Celebrities are increasingly appearing in advertisements providing a coherent brand image, presenting their true authentic identity. Here, celebrities provide consumers with information relevant to their human brand, yet unrelated to the brand partner. Consumers who are familiar with a celebrity have a preference for advertisements that feature the celebrity in a way which is consistent with the celebrity's image, even if the celebrity is providing irrelevant information about the partner brand. Attitudes towards the celebrity dilute when those familiar with the celebrity brand are exposed to advertisements featuring both the celebrity and brand, than advertisements that feature the celebrity only. This thesis provides evidence of a reciprocal effect of co-branding partnerships on celebrity brands. This reciprocal relationship has not previously been explored in the literature. Celebrities should feature in advertisements revealing their true identity in order to avoid tarnishing consumers' attitudes towards them.

Importantly, irrelevant celebrity co-branding partners may both enhance and dilute consumer partner brand judgments. Consumer partner brand benefit beliefs, purchase intent and match-up perceptions dilute when a celebrity co-branding partner does not provide information about the partner brand. Alternatively, celebrities are able to enhance consumers' partner brand attitudes only when consumers are familiar with the endorsed brand. While previous research in the celebrity endorsement and co-branding literatures centre on the concept of match-up and fit of relevant characteristics between brand partners (Dickinson and Heath 2006; Kamins 1990: Kamins and Gupta 1994; Simonin and Ruth 1998; Till and Busler 1998, 2000; Till et al. 2008), this thesis identifies that the irrelevancy of celebrity brand information presented in an advertisement also can influence consumer judgments.

Theoretical perspectives surrounding match-up or fit consider celebrity relevance in terms the celebrity possessing characteristics pertinent to the endorsed brand. To date, the conceptualisation of match-up or fit does not include a component of irrelevancy, where the stimulus (the celebrity) does not provide consumers with issue-pertinent information, where they do not explicitly endorse the brand, by not mentioning the brand partner. Consumers perceive a human co-brand to be more incongruent, or to mismatch and have a low degree of fit, when the celebrity does not communicate relevant brand information through possessing characteristics that are not pertinent to the partner brand, but also when the celebrity does not provide relevant information regarding the brand and the brand's benefits.

Although the studies of this thesis significantly contribute to current knowledge and theory in the co-branding literature, the results are for one specific context that involves a globally

well known celebrity paired with a regional Australian financial corporate brand. For study results to be applicable across multiple co-branding contexts, future research needs to be conducted in a variety of alternative co-branding situations, such as with different combinations of product and celebrity brands. In addition, the influence of country of origin of both the celebrity and brand within different product categories are not given consideration. These factors may have a significant effect on consumers' evaluations of each brand within the partnership. Although the thesis provides important insights into co-branding partnerships for one particular partnership, it is still unknown as to whether the results are applicable to other co-branding contexts.

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Appendix A: Paper Presented at Australian and New Zealand
Marketing Academy Conference 2010

Jerry Seinfeld: Exploring Human Brand Associations

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Abstract

This study uses a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the associations that consumers tie to a specific human brand (Jerry Seinfeld) prior to his anticipated co-branding partnership with a regional Australian financial institution. Results of the study identified strong and unique attribute and attitude associations in consumers' knowledge networks linked to the Jerry Seinfeld brand. These findings have implications for the co-branding partner in terms of the development of strategic positioning focusing on the partners positive salient human brand associations. Interestingly, benefit associations were not identified in this study, suggesting that other methods may be more appropriate in eliciting consumer brand associations for human brands.

Keywords: Brand associations, human brands, positioning, co-branding, brand equity.

Introduction

To state that consumers develop associations about *product* brands is well accepted in marketing. Surprisingly, research has failed to explore the unique associations consumers link to *human* brands, such as celebrities. Studies in the celebrity endorsement literature have highlighted that the effectiveness of an endorsement is reliant on the match-up between the celebrity's image and the endorsed brand's image (Kamins 1990; Misra and Beatty 1990; Kamins and Gupta 1994). However, research has not been directed towards identifying the sources of human brand equity in terms of the unique associations that create a celebrity's brand's image. Understanding the sources of human brand equity, subsequently influences an endorsed partner's brand equity, through the meaning transfer process (McCracken 1989). The knowledge that consumers' hold about a particular brand is central to consumers' brand evaluations and choices. This study examines the associations tied to a celebrity within the pre-launch stage of an actual co-branding partnership. Jerry Seinfeld, a successful human brand known to endorse only a few product brands, has recently been signed to promote a regional Australian financial institution, an organisation new to celebrity co-branding. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is used to explore the human brand associations that have the ability to transfer onto the organisational partner brand from the anticipated co-branding relationship. Within focus group discussions Joiner's (1998) elicitation method is used to identify individual brand associations and Roedder John, Loken, Kim and Monga's (2006) Brand Concept Mapping (BCM) technique is used to aggregate the individual participant brand associations. Following Henderson, Iacobucci and Calder's (1998, 2002) recommendation, social network analysis (SNA) is applied to analyse the structural properties of the brand associations. The main aim of the study is to identify and use, in the forthcoming promotional campaign, the key brand features associated with the human brand (Jerry Seinfeld) that have the potential to increase the equity of both co-branding partners.

Brand Equity and Brand Associations

According to the customer-based brand equity model, brand knowledge, consisting of brand awareness and brand image, is the key to creating brand equity (Keller 2008).

Leveraging human brand awareness and human brand image, in order to enhance partner brand equity, is the basis of using human brands for co-branding purposes (Seno and Lukas, 2007). Brand image is defined as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" (Keller 2008: 51). The associations that consumers tie to a human brand have the ability to transfer onto a brand partner through the co-branding process (McCracken 1989). The sources of brand equity tied to human brand partners can aid in enhancing partner brand awareness and are also able to facilitate the transfer of strong, unique and favourable associations onto the partner brand. Brand awareness for human brands is particularly strong, since by definition they are highly skilled in their chosen field, and because of these accomplishments, they have acquired great public recognition (Pringle and Binet 2005; Cronin 2003). It is the identification of the human brand image component of brand knowledge, i.e. the associations that become linked to a human brand in memory, that are highly important to brand managers in their strategic positioning and they should focus on leveraging the positive and unique secondary associations from the human brand partner (Keller 2008).

Consumers' knowledge of brands is organised in associative networks in memory (Aaker 1991, 1996; Keller 1993). According to the Associative Network Theory (Martindale 1991; Anderson 1983; Collins and Loftus 1975), memory is structured as an associative network containing nodes (brand information) connected via related links. Although Aaker (1991) provides a comprehensive classification of brand information within consumers' knowledge networks, Keller's (2008) categorisation is more appropriate for human brands due to the inclusion of non-product related associations which include attributes (product and non-product related), benefits (functional, experiential and symbolic) and attitudes that consumers hold of the brand in memory. Consumer knowledge for human brands may be more limited than product brands since, for example, functional benefits are unlikely in a human brand context. Associations tied to human brands could consist of celebrity attributes, the advertisements they feature in, brands they endorse, attitudes towards endorsements as well as consumers' perceptions of experiences they have had with the celebrity themselves (e.g., autograph signing, fan clubs, media articles and blogs such as Twitter). The associations that consumers tie to human brands are developed through experiences with the brand and influence consumers' perceptions, preferences, and choices in relation to human brands and the brands they endorse (Aaker 1991). Human brand associations are powerful as they can be transferred onto an endorsed brand (McCracken 1989) and may become part of the endorsed brand's association set. This is due to the spreading activation process, whereby several nodes in memory act as triggers resulting in the simultaneous activation of two connected nodes in the memory network (Anderson 1983). Identifying brand associations provides useful information for brand managers to better differentiate and position their brand from competitors, create positive feelings and attitudes towards their brand and aid in the retrieval of brand information (Aaker 1991; Low and Lamb 2000). Prior to selecting an endorser or co-branding partner, brand managers should be aware of the unique positive and negative associations tied to the human brand, since these associations can be transferred onto the co-brand (McCracken 1989), becoming a part of its association set and ultimately influencing its equity.

Mapping Brand Associations

Knowledge of brand associations is essential for marketers, yet the identification and measurement of brand associations has tended to be more artful than precise. One of the first approaches developed to draw out consumer brand associations is ZMET, Zaltman's

Metaphor Elicitation Technique (Zaltman and Coulter 1995). ZMET uses qualitative research techniques to identify key brand associations followed by in-depth interviews to uncover links between the brand associations. More recently, Roedder John et al. (2006) have introduced Brand Concept Mapping (BCM) to not only identify important consumer brand associations, but also graphically represent how these associations are connected to the brand and to one another. BCM is a simple, yet effective technique that is structured in three stages: elicitation, mapping and aggregation (Roedder John et al. 2006). In the elicitation stage consumers are asked to recall important brand associations for a specified target brand (Joiner 1998). Consumers then show how the associations are connected to the target brand and to one another by structuring the information in a diagram. In the third stage, researchers aggregate the individual brand maps to produce a consensus brand map. BCM gives a more precise way to generate visual representations of brand associations, but the technique provides no means for conducting a structural analysis of the associations.

Social network analysis (SNA) is a quantitative, relational approach that goes beyond basic mapping of consumer perceptions to analysing structural aspects of network connections (Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982). Henderson et al. (1998) demonstrate the value of SNA for analysing brand associations. They discuss five different network properties in relation to 10 different branding effects. Of particular relevance to this study are the different network analytic measures of centrality that can be used to detect critical and complementary combinations of brand features, which may assist in brand positioning. Although a social network analytic approach to aggregating brand associations has been conducted for product brands such as cars (Henderson et al. 1998, 2002) no research to date has used this technique for human brands.

Method

An Australian based research company recruited participants from their panel data consisting of participants who have actively signed up to participate in research studies with the company. Participants took part in one of two separate focus group sessions. Eighteen adults, 9 females and 9 males, between the ages of 18 and 60 completed brand concept maps for the human brand, Jerry Seinfeld. Each of the focus groups lasted approximately forty-five minutes. Joiner's (1998) nondirective, free association elicitation approach was used to generate individual brand associations. This unstructured method allows participants to include any salient association directly or indirectly linked to the brand, be it a tangible characteristic of the brand or an intangible quality (Steenkamp, Van Tripp and Ten Berge 1994). To elicit brand associations, participants were told to think about "*anything* that comes to mind when you think about the human brand: *Jerry Seinfeld*". Once the brand associations were identified, participants were asked to generate their individual concept maps by drawing different types of lines (single, double or triple) between associations to signify the strength of the connections (Roedder John et al. 2006). The information from the individual maps were then aggregated and entered into a relational matrix for SNA. Ucinet (Borgatti, Everett & Freeman, 2002) and Netdraw software (Borgatti 2002) were used to analyse the brand associations and create the network maps showing the interconnections among the brand associations.

Results

Figure 1 presents the graphical representation of the brand associations for Jerry Seinfeld. The nodes in the graph specify the characteristics and items reported to be associated with

the human brand and the lines show the interconnections among the nodes, with the thicker lines indicating core associations. Not surprising, the *Jerry Seinfeld* node dominates the graph, with 19 direct associations. Specific human brand attributes and participants' attitudes towards Seinfeld are identified in the map. The thicker lines to *Comedian* and *Actor* emphasise his core attributes, in terms of his career, and both are linked to other key traits, *Comedian* with *Stand-up* and *Actor* with the *Characters* featured in his TV Show. Participants' in-depth discussions provided strong support for focussing on his comedic style in a co-branding campaign. Of potential importance, Seinfeld's comedy was not necessarily always seen in a positive light. While some participants thought his comedy was "a bit quirky", others held more negative attitudes describing it as "contrived" and "manufactured" and "he is always nitpicking at people."

Figure 1: Jerry Seinfeld's Brand Association Network Map
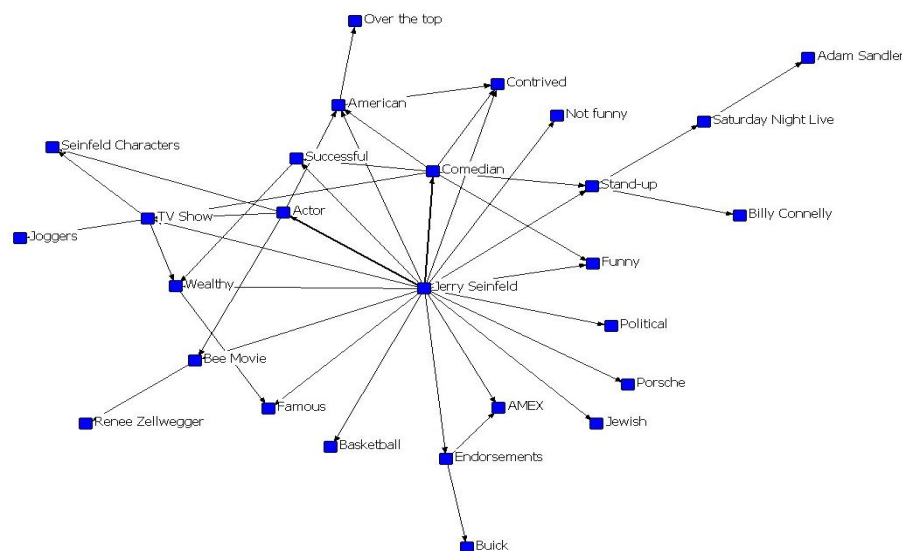
Further insights can also be gained from the graph. For example, Seinfeld's attributes in terms of his personal characteristics and likings (he's funny, Jewish, political, a basketball fan, has a great Porsche collection) turn out to be isolated points only connected to the Jerry node and, apparently, are not at the core of consumers associations. Even his previous endorsements are not integrated into the main component of the graph, indicating that they are not part of his core brand. Interestingly, the two key associations, *Comedian* and *Actor*, are not directly linked to one another, but are indirectly linked through an abstract attribute, *Success*. Although there were disagreements within the focus groups regarding Seinfeld's comedic style, all participants admired his success. Comments revolved around Seinfeld's wealth, with participants stating: "he is the richest comedian", "getting about $1.5 million an episode" and "he'd be the most successful of his type". One participant in particular attributed Seinfeld's success to creating his own brand:

> "Well he's successful in what he's made himself. He's branded himself and I think he's one of the highest paid TV personalities."

The strength of SNA over other concept mapping techniques is in its ability to analyse the network data using well-developed structural measures. Following Henderson's et al. (1998) direction, centrality measures were calculated to identify key brand features. Three standard centrality measures were used here (Freeman 1979; Wasserman and Faust 1994). Degree centrality takes into account only direct ties, giving a basic measure of local

popularity. With 2-Step Reach, direct and first order indirect connections are considered providing a measure of efficiency or influence. Betweenness centrality takes into account all network connections and measures centrality in terms of power and control.

Besides *Jerry Seinfeld* himself, the network graph indicates that both *Actor* and *Comedian* are core associations. Whilst it is difficult to determine from a visual inspection which of the two is more central, the centrality scores in Table 1 make clear that *Comedian* is more central. Focusing on the brand features that are compatible with *Comedian*, we see unexpectedly that *Stand-up* is highly central followed by *Successful* and *Wealthy*. Even Seinfeld's *Contrived* humour is highlighted. Of his personal characteristics, Seinfeld being *American* is the only one of note. The centrality results suggest that a promotional campaign featuring Jerry Seinfeld's stand-up comedy act, showing him as a successful individual, using his contrived humour and even emphasising his American nationality would be drawing on his brand image that highlight his key brand features at the core of consumers' associations.

Table 1: Network Centrality Measures for Jerry Seinfeld Brand Associations

Brand Node	Degree	2-Step Reach	Betweeness
Jerry Seinfeld	**0.679**	**0.964**	**0.758**
Comedian	**0.250**	**0.893**	**0.070**
Actor	0.179	0.857	0.050
Stand-up	**0.143**	**0.786**	**0.204**
Successful	0.143	0.714	0.031
Wealthy	0.143	0.786	0.009
Contrived	0.107	0.750	0.000
Funny	0.071	0.679	0.000
American	**0.214**	**0.786**	**0.110**
TV Show	**0.214**	**0.750**	**0.107**

Discussion

A combination of Brand Concept Mapping and Social Network Analysis proves to be a useful technique to elicit, map and aggregate consumer knowledge structures for human brands, providing a holistic view of consumers' perceptions of a celebrity's brand image. Findings from this study identified many factual, concrete attribute associations tied to the Jerry Seinfeld brand, such as his career, hobbies and the movies or TV shows in which he has starred. These attributes explain the sources of the celebrity's brand equity. By using the BCM technique, participants could move beyond the mere tangible, concrete or "factual" descriptors of the Seinfeld brand, to describe abstract attributes such as his success and attitudes towards his humour. Interestingly, participants were unable to link the attributes tied to Jerry Seinfeld to either functional, experiential or symbolic benefits, suggesting that the brand concept mapping method may not be appropriate for eliciting consumers' meaning tied to human brands, and other methods such as laddering (Reynolds and Gutman 1988), may be more suitable. Future research should be directed towards exploring and mapping other human brand associations in order to identify whether benefit associations could in fact be tied to human brands.

The results of the BCM and SNA analyses provide valuable information on the key human

brand features or attributes that should be focused on to effectively position the brand in future promotional campaigns, providing consistent alignment with consumers' knowledge structures. Results of this study demonstrate that by using a combination of methods, brand managers are able to identify and develop a positioning strategy focusing on the identified strong and unique human brand associations. Future research should explore the co-branding partner's associations to identify compatibilities in brand image to further direct promotional strategies in order to ensure co-branding effectiveness through image congruency (Kamins 1990; Misra and Beatty 1990; Kamins and Gupta 1994). This will also provide consumers with cognitive consistency and assist them in easily encoding advertising messages, thus enhancing the equity of both brands.

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Appendix B: Paper Presented at Australian and New Zealand
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Celebrity Brand Value: Using the MECCAS Model to Evaluate Celebrity Endorsement Advertising Strategy

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Abstract

This study explores what consumers' value from celebrity brands for the evaluation of an actual campaign featuring Jerry Seinfeld as the endorser for the Greater Building Society. Using a laddering method, we identify the attributes, consequences and values of celebrity endorsers. The MECCAS model is then used to evaluate the advertisements featuring the endorsement which link the celebrity brand desired attributes of authenticity, expertise and success to the consequence of trustworthiness and to personal value, in terms of a consumer-celebrity brand relationship. By using a combination of methods brand managers are able to position celebrity endorsers strategically to activate consumer values and develop a consumer-celebrity brand relationship.

Introduction

Celebrities' lending their name and image to brands is a common feature in the contemporary marketplace, with one in five ads in Australia now featuring a celebrity (Time Inc., 2006). For example, we see George Clooney providing support for Nespresso home coffee machines, Nicole Kidman lending her image to Nintendo brain training games and Billy Connolly as the face of international bank ING. In an endorsement context, celebrities aid in enhancing brand awareness and facilitate the transfer of strong, unique and favourable associations. Brands benefit from the use of celebrities as endorsers as celebrities are able to draw consumer attention to the product category, help a specific brand to stand out from the clutter, and help increase recall rates (Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Croft, Dean and Kitchen, 1996; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997/1998). In addition, celebrity endorsers are able to facilitate brand repositioning by creating a new image with different characteristics transferred onto the brand (McCracken, 1989), and improving sales of the endorsed products (Kaikati, 1987).

Research in celebrity endorsement tends to focus on what constitutes an effective celebrity endorser, specifically in terms of their perceived personal attractiveness (McGuire, 1985), familiarity (Misra and Beatty, 1990; Kamins, 1990), likeability (Erdogan, 1999), credibility, believability and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Other research explores the impact of celebrity endorsements for marketing purposes, including consumers' attitudes towards the brand and/or the advertisement, purchase intentions, and brand and product recall (Tripp, Jensen and Carlson, 1994; Till and Shimp, 1998; Lynch and Schuler, 1994; Misra and Beatty, 1990). Findings from the literature suggest that different celebrities are more or less effective for different products, brands or organisations based on image congruency (Kamins, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Lynch and Schuler, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998). More recently, marketing research is exploring the relationship that consumers have with both product brands (Fournier, 1998; Thomson, MacInnis and Park,

2005) and celebrities as human brands (Thomson, 2006). These studies, however, fail to examine the *value* consumers gain from celebrity endorsers.

This paper examines the pre and launch stage of an actual celebrity endorsement featuring Jerry Seinfeld with a regional Australian financial institution, the Greater Building Society. The main aims are 1) to identify the attributes, consequences and values associated with celebrity endorsers and 2) to analyse how the attribute-consequence-value link is embedded within the Greater Building Society's advertisements featuring Jerry Seinfeld. In Study 1 we identify the attributes, consequences and values derived from celebrity endorsers, using means-end laddering (Walker and Olson, 1991) and hierarchical value mapping (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988). Study 2 analyses the executional framework of the advertisements (based on the results of Study 1) using the Means End Conceptualisation of Components of Advertising Strategy framework (or MECCAS Model) developed by Olson and Reynolds (1983).

Literature Review

Means –End Chain

According to the means–end chain (MEC) model consumers choose to consume or use products or services based on product attributes that are thought to produce outcomes which they either desire or want to avoid (Gutman, 1982, 1997). Means-end analysis is based on the premise that consumers' knowledge structures consist of concrete attributes of a brand that link to more abstract benefits tied to the brand and ultimately link to relevant values held by consumers. Self-relevant values or personal meaning is derived from the benefits of particular brand attributes. As such, consumption or use of a brand is seen as the means to attain an end, an outcome that is consistent with one's personal values and goals. Identifying and understanding how consumers obtain meaning from brands through personal values is important for marketers as these values are said to be the motivating end-states that individuals strive for in their lives (Rokeach, 1973).

The meanings consumers relate to celebrities can vary from concrete attributes, such as "well-spoken", through to personal values, such as providing a "sense of inner harmony". Our most abstract beliefs, or associations, stemming from brands are elements of the self. In order to identify these values and the attributes that link to self-relevance in the means-end chain, a laddering method (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988) can be used. These ladders identify brand' attributes and their related consumer values and have the ability to guide advertising strategy.

MECCAS Model

The MECCAS model provides a framework for developing and assessing advertising strategy based on the mean-end chain model (Olson and Reynolds, 1983; Reynolds and Gutman, 1984; Reynolds and Craddock, 1988; Gengler and Reynolds, 2001). Research undertaken by Reynolds, Gengler and Howard (1995) shows that incorporating the associations consumers make between means-end levels of knowledge (i.e., linking the product to attributes, attributes to consequences, and consequences to satisfaction of a personal values) contributes to advertisement effectiveness through influencing brand persuasion. Their results demonstrate the importance of developing and strengthening the associations between the concepts or elements of advertisement content (the structure of an advertisement) for determining advertising effectiveness.

The MECCAS model consists of five key elements, four strategic and one executional, that link to consumers' levels of abstraction (Reynolds and Gutman, 1984). Each of the three levels of the means-end chain (attributes, consequences, and values) relate to the Message Elements, Consumer Benefit and Driving Force, respectively. The Leverage Point is the fourth strategic element by which the advertisement links the brands' physical components and to their benefits and then "taps into" or "activates" the values which are personally relevant to consumers (Reynolds and Rochon, 1991, p. 136). According to Reynolds and Rochon (1991), the Leverage Point can be regarded as the personification of the brand through a personal trait that activates consumers' values within their minds. In this particular case, Jerry Seinfeld acts as a personification of the Greater Building Society brand enhancing consumer happiness and highlighting respect, relatedness and warmth. The Executional Framework is concerned with the creative execution of the advertisement in terms of the plot, scenario or tone for the advertising which links the brand to the consumer. The purpose of linking brand attributes and benefits to consumer values or personal meaning is to build a brand's image through facilitating a self-brand connection.

Method

Study 1

Study 1 is undertaken to identify the desired characteristics of celebrities that have personal meaning for consumers. An Australian based research company recruited nineteen participants within the Newcastle, NSW area to take part in one of two separate focus group sessions. For the study 18 adults, nine females and nine males, are asked to complete means-end chains for the celebrity brand, Jerry Seinfeld. Participants identify the four most important attributes a celebrity endorser should possess, following a modified paper-and-pencil version of Walker and Olson's (1991) original laddering technique. They then complete a self-administered laddering task for each of the four named attributes. The task requires participants to indicate why the particular attribute is important to them and to repeat this step with each subsequent answer until they can go no further and have reached the end of the means-end chain. Using the hierarchical value mapping method (Reynolds and Gutman, 1988) individual ladders are then summarised in implication matrices, expressing the number of times each element leads to another element in the chain.
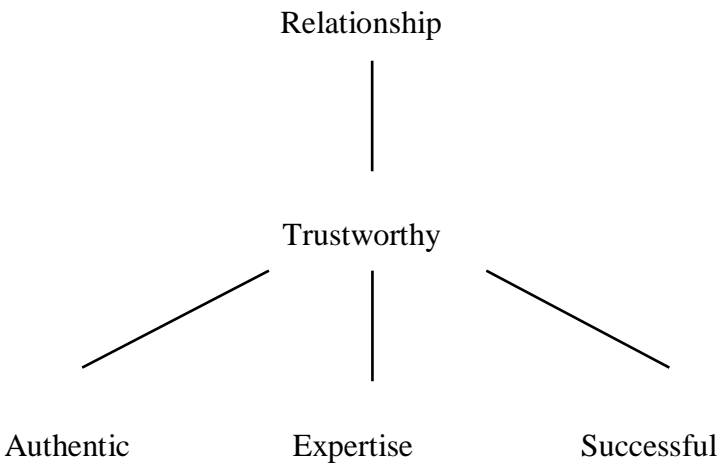
Study 2

The visual and verbal components embedded in the first five advertisements rolled out on Australian regional television within the first three months of the campaign are viewed and analysed. The purpose of this study is to identify the links made between the attribute, consequences and values for Jerry Seinfeld within the advertisements. The celebrity endorser is evaluated on his visual appearance, physical actions and verbal messages. The links between the desired celebrity attributes that link to personal meaning for consumers are evaluated, using the MECCAS Model (Olson and Reynolds, 1983).

Results

Study 1

Results in Figure 1 show that participants think celebrity endorsers should possess the attributes of *Authenticity*, *Expertise* and *Success*. Celebrities should be 'real', they should be 'genuine', 'not fake' and someone who is 'being their own person'. Celebrities also need to have a certain level of knowledge about the brand they are endorsing so that there is an appropriate 'fit' between the celebrity and product brands. Finally, celebrity endorsers need to be widely recognised as successful in their particular field, they should be 'well known' and highly 'familiar'. The next level of the HVM depicts the underlying benefits linked to desired celebrity brand attributes. At this level *Trustworthiness* is considered the most important consequence of *Success* and *Expertise*, being mentioned 16 times in total. Trustworthy celebrities are those who are perceived to be honest, sincere and reliable. It is the next level in the HVM, the value level, which helps to explain why celebrity endorsers are personally meaningful to consumers. Trustworthy celebrities raise feelings of connectedness. Participants value *Relationships* with celebrities, even if the relationship is only an impression, or perceived appearance of relatedness to the celebrity. Consumers value someone they can 'warm to' and someone they can 'relate to' and 'respect'.

Figure 1. HVM for Celebrity Brand Endorsers

Study 2

Table 1 illustrates the strategic framework used by the Greater Building Society in its first set of advertisements, focusing on relationship building with the celebrity endorser, Jerry Seinfeld using the chain; authentic, expertise and successful → trustworthiness → relationship. The laddering data upon which the strategy is based is seen on the left with the strategy using the MECCAS framework seen on the right. This strategy focuses on creating consumer trust for Jerry Seinfeld and creating a relationship between Seinfeld and the audience. The strategy links the Message Elements, "authenticity", "expertise" and "success" of Seinfeld, to the Consumer Benefit of being a "trustworthy" celebrity.

Table 1. Strategic Advertising: Jerry Seinfeld as a Trustworthy Brand

Ladder/MECCAS Model	Strategy
Driving Force (Value) *Relationship*	A connection is formed with Jerry Seinfeld, who is someone that consumers can respect, relate to and warm to.
Leverage Point (Personification) *Respect*	Seinfeld acts as a personification of the Greater brand. He is someone that consumers are very familiar with. He is friendly and someone that consumers can warm to. His observational humour is what consumers can relate to and respect.
Executional Framework (Scenario and Tone) *Humour, Makeshift Stage*	The scenes feature a moderately busy suburban Australian street with a makeshift stage (microphone, wooden stool and glass of water) set up in front of a Greater branch. Seinfeld uses his observational humour to create a happy and relaxed environment through his cheerful, comical and friendly demeanour.
Consumer Benefit (Attribute Consequence) *Trust*	Seinfeld is honest, reliable and sincere. He admits he knows nothing about the Greater and instead advises the audience to "Ask an expert, ask a Greater customer." His favourable disposition is highlighted by his open and approachable direct interactions with the Greater members and audience within the advertisements.
Message Elements (Celebrity Attributes) *Authentic, Expertise, Success*	Jerry Seinfeld being himself- wearing a suit, using his own unique style of observational humour in a stand-up setting, for which he is an expert and is extremely successful. He does not claim to be an expert on the Greater brand.

The authenticity of Jerry Seinfeld is communicated both visually and verbally through Seinfeld being true to himself. Seinfeld wears his famous attire, the suit, whilst delivering his distinct style of humour (his one liners such as "When it comes to your money, you don't want great, you want greater) on a makeshift stage. Focusing on Seinfeld's unique comedic style also highlights his area of expertise which is attributed to his success. The trustworthiness of Seinfeld is emphasised through him being honest, sincere and through his favourable disposition. Seinfeld is honest about not being an expert on the Greater brand and advises the audience to "ask a Greater member" instead. His trustworthiness also is highlighted through his interaction with real Greater members in the advertisements; he directs his jokes to them and listens to their stories. The Driving Force of this strategy is the development of a relationship between the audience and Jerry Seinfeld. The leverage point is key to linking all of these elements together through creating respect for Jerry as someone that audiences can relate and warm to. The Executional Framework includes a humorous Jerry Seinfeld who, as a very well-known and highly successful and accepted celebrity, provides a sense of trust. Jerry Seinfeld is a reliable and sincere celebrity, which relates to his honesty and respect as a spokesperson, enabling the development of a relationship between the celebrity and the audience. The audiences' feelings of relatedness and respect for Jerry Seinfeld is the key to forming a

meaningful connection in the consumers mind between the other elements comprising the perceptual attribute, consequence and value direction.

Discussion

Study 1 has guided the evaluation of the Greater Building Society's strategic execution of their advertisements for their campaign featuring Jerry Seinfeld. By using a laddering method, we are able to identify that consumers value celebrity endorsers who are authentic, have a high level of expertise and are perceived to be successful because this enables them to trust the celebrity, which in turn encourages the development of a relationship with the celebrity. Although the desired celebrity attributes can be highlighted in the positioning of the celebrity brand in marketing communications, the links between the attributes, consequences and values also can be clearly connected in promotional campaigns to develop self-brand connections.

The results highlight the significance of consumer-celebrity brand relationships. These findings are highly relevant given the recent interest in consumer-brand and human (celebrity) brand relationships in the marketing literature (Thomson *et al.*, 2005; Thomson, 2006; Park, MacInnis and Priester, 2006, 2007; Escalas and Bettman, 2009; Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich and Iacobucci, 2010). The attributes that translate to a celebrity brand relationship are possible antecedents to consumers' relationships with celebrities. Future research should examine the relationship between the celebrity brand attributes (authenticity, expertise, success and trustworthiness) and consumer-celebrity brand relationships.

Another central finding in this study is the importance of celebrity brand authenticity, a concept that is not researched in the celebrity endorsement literature. Research in the philosophy literature argues that authenticity is being true to the essence of the self (Van Leeuwen, 2001). Being true to the self signifies being 'genuine', 'original', having a 'unique' and 'distinctive' style, and not being an imitation or copy (Van Leeuwen, 2001). Tolson (2001) attributes celebrity authenticity to 'being yourself' in terms of creating an image of individuality. The philosophical interpretation of authenticity is closely tied to the concepts drawn from this research in which participants describe the necessity of celebrities as 'real', 'not fake', 'genuine', and someone who is 'being their own person'. The research undertaken on authenticity to date provides a promising avenue for the exploration of celebrity brand authenticity in the future.

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Appendix C: Paper Presented at International Conference on
Research in Advertising 2012

THE CHANGING ROLE OF CELEBRITIES IN ADVERTISING: CELEBRITY ENDORSERS AS IRRELEVANT INFORMATION IN ADVERTISEMENTS

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THE CHANGING ROLE OF CELEBRITIES IN ADVERTISING: CELEBRITY ENDORSERS AS IRRELEVANT INFORMATION IN ADVERTISEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of irrelevant information presented by a celebrity endorser in advertisements on consumer judgments. Celebrity match-up and information relevancy are tested. Three experimental conditions manipulate information relevancy within advertisements: relevant information, irrelevant information, and relevant plus irrelevant information. Findings show a mismatched celebrity causes attitudes towards the advertisement and towards the brand to become less positive, or dilute, in all three advertisement conditions. When subjects perceive a match-up between the celebrity and the brand, the relevant plus irrelevant condition produces the strongest attitudes towards the advertisement. Attitudes towards the brand are not affected by advertisement condition.

INTRODUCTION

Using celebrities as endorsers attracts consumer attention, helping brands stand out from the clutter and increasing brand awareness (Friedman and Friedman, 1979; O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1997/1998). Celebrities, however, are not always employed as direct spokespeople, where they provide relevant information about an endorsed brand or demonstrate the product endorsed. Celebrities are at times strategically featured providing unrelated brand information by not mentioning or providing any information about the endorsed brand. We see a shift in advertising executions with more and more advertisements today highlighting the celebrities, emphasizing information on the celebrity and providing little or no relevant endorsed brand information. In recent advertisements for American Express (AMEX), the celebrities dominate. The one minute television commercial featuring Kate Winslet takes 55 seconds going through her starring film roles and leaves the last five seconds to AMEX. The print advertisement is similar with a glossy image of Kate Winslet occupying half of the space with much of the remaining devoted to information about her memories, ambitions and achievements. Only at the end of the advertisement, on one line does she state that the card she uses is AMEX. These advertisements include a clear endorsement for the brand, but also contain personal information about the celebrity, information relevant to the celebrity, but arguably irrelevant and not useful to consumers in making their judgments about the brand.

Brand managers attempt to place a celebrity with a brand, whereby the image of the celebrity is seen to be consistent with that of the endorsed brand (Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000; Till, Stanley and Priluck, 2008) providing consumers with seemingly consistent information about the brand. For example, Katy Perry's fun, youthful and eccentric image matches that of the Proactiv brand, providing consumers with consistent endorsed brand information. Research in celebrity endorsement suggests that consistent celebrity information, referred to as a *match-up*, results in a positive effect on consumer attitudes towards the products and brands with which they appear and the advertisements in which they feature, with a mismatch weakening or diluting consumer brand judgments (Kamins, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000; Till et al., 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Match-up is said to occur when "highly relevant characteristics of the spokesperson are consistent with highly relevant attributes of the brand" (Misra and Beatty, 1990: 160). As such, the effectiveness of a spokesperson is determined by the perceived fit between the endorser's brand attribute associations and the endorsed brand's attribute associations (e.g. Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998; Till et al., 2008). Here the concept of match-up consists of two distinct concepts: congruence and relevance.

Judgments of relevance depend on whether a stimulus communicates issue-pertinent information and judgments of congruence involve perceptions of suitability (Miniard, Bhatla, Lord, Dickson and Unnava, 1991). The literature to date on match-up focuses primarily on the celebrity and brand possessing characteristics that complement each other, reinforcing relevant brand information and the suitability of the endorsement. However, a celebrity may also convey relevant information when they mention the endorsed brand and information about the brand within an advertisement. In other words, a celebrity not only provides consumers with relevant brand information when they convey characteristics pertinent to the brand but also when they provide information relevant to the endorsed brand by describing brand benefits, demonstrating product functionality and explicitly endorsing the brand. For example, the open, friendly and fun characteristics of comedian, Jerry Seinfeld, are relevant to the honest, family friendly positioning of the financial institution Greater Building Society. Plus, Seinfeld may also be perceived as providing consumers with relevant endorsed brand information when he features in an advertisement for the Greater and he clearly endorses the brand by mentioning details about the brand. Alternatively, Seinfeld may be seen as incongruent and irrelevant when he provides little or no information about the Greater brand in advertisements, by not mentioning the Greater or any information about the brand.

Despite extensive research on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers, little research specifically examines the executional aspects of advertisements that feature celebrities. Most of the advertising research focuses on the effectiveness of celebrities as direct spokespeople, who provide relevant brand information through their consistent brand image and by clearly endorsing the brand. We maintain that celebrities provide irrelevant brand information through their mismatched (incongruent and irrelevant) image attributes and also when they feature in advertisements emphasizing their talents and providing no clear endorsement of the brand. Our aim here is to further the research on celebrity endorsements by examining the effects of irrelevant information, provided by a celebrity endorser, on consumer evaluations of endorsed brands. We examine the role of celebrity and endorsed brand match-up on consumer attitudes towards the advertisement as well as attitudes towards the brand. As such, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H1: Consumers report a) the most positive attitude towards the advertisement when exposed to relevant information only, b) weaker ad attitude when exposed to relevant plus irrelevant information and c) the least positive ad attitude when exposed to irrelevant information only.
H2: Consumers report a) the most positive attitude towards the brand when exposed to relevant information only, b) weaker brand attitude when exposed to relevant plus irrelevant information and c) the least positive brand attitude when exposed to irrelevant information only.

H3: Consumers who perceive a mismatch between the brand and celebrity report less positive judgments relating to a) attitude towards the advertisement and b) brand attitude, than consumers who perceive a match.

METHOD

A research company was used to recruit subjects from regional areas within Australia to evaluate their attitude for the Greater Building Society, a financial institution. A total of 350 subjects were assigned to one of three experimental conditions: 1) irrelevant information only featuring the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld with no mention of the Greater Building Society brand nor any brand benefits, 2) relevant information only featuring a Greater customer, Jerry Seinfeld is not featured and 3) the combined relevant plus irrelevant information featuring a combination of the celebrity Jerry Seinfeld and the Greater brand customer. Of the 350 subjects recruited, 48.9% were male and 51.1% were female. Subjects were predominantly between 35-49 and 50-64 years of age (25.1% and 28.6%, respectively). One hundred and twenty-two subjects were assigned to the irrelevant condition, 114 to the relevant condition and 114 to the combined relevant plus irrelevant information condition. A median split was used to categorize subjects' perceptions of match-up between the celebrity and brand.

Measures
Subjects evaluated their attitude towards the advertisement, attitude towards the brand and the degree to which they believe the image of Jerry Seinfeld matches that of the Greater Building Society's image. *Attitude towards the Advertisement* was measured using Mitchell and Olson's (1981) 5-point semantic differential scales which included four items bad/good, dislike/like, not irritating/irritating and uninteresting/interesting (cronbach alpha= .945). *Attitude towards the Brand* was measured using Mitchell and Olson's (1981) 5-point semantic differential scales bad/good, dislike/like, not irritating/irritating and uninteresting/interesting (cronbach alpha= .932). A *match-up* (both congruence and relevance) between the image of the brand and the image of the celebrity was measured using Till and Busler's (2000) three item 5-point scale consisting of does not belong with/belongs with, does not go together/goes together, does not fit together/fits together (cronbach alpha= .984).

Procedure
Subjects were directed to view one of three advertisements. In the irrelevant information condition, subjects viewed Jerry Seinfeld in an advertisement for the Greater making no reference to the Greater brand. Instead, Jerry crawls along a desert. In the relevant information condition, subjects saw an advertisement that featured a Greater customer enthusiastically discussing her positive experience with the Greater brand highlighting her satisfaction and clearly stating a brand benefit of high interest on savings accounts. Jerry Seinfeld is not featured. In the combined relevant plus irrelevant information condition, subjects viewed the entire advertisement that combined the Greater customer discussing the brand and Jerry Seinfeld crawling along the desert. The advertisements for each condition featured the Greater Building Society's brand logo at the end, with subjects exposed to the advertisement for approximately 20 seconds each. Once subjects viewed their allocated advertisement, they were then asked to evaluate the advertisement they just viewed. Firstly, subjects were asked their attitude towards the advertisement, then their attitude towards the brand and finally, the degree to which they believe the image of Jerry Seinfeld matches that of the Greater Building Society's image.

RESULTS

The univariate statistics for attitude towards the advertisement and attitude towards the brand for the three conditions are shown in Table 1. The statistics are also broken down by perceptions of match-up. Interestingly, attitude towards the ad is slightly higher in the irrelevant and relevant combination condition than in the relevant only condition. Attitude towards the brand is highest in the relevant condition with the irrelevant condition receiving the lowest score. In each condition consistently higher scores occur when subjects see Jerry Seinfeld as a good match with the Greater Building Society.

Table 2 shows the two-way ANOVA results for both of the dependent variables, attitude towards the ad and attitude towards the brand. Results for attitude towards the advertisement indicate significant main effects for advertisement condition and for match-up. A significant interaction effect also exists, as highlighted in Figure 1. Post hoc comparisons in Table 3 show subjects report significant differences between all three conditions. For those who perceive a match, their ad attitude is significantly weaker in the irrelevant condition compared to the other two ad conditions. For those who perceive a mismatch, their ad attitude is significantly more positive in the relevant ad condition compared to the irrelevant and combination relevant plus irrelevant conditions. Subjects who perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand report attitudes towards the advertisement as hypothesized. These subjects report the most positive attitudes for the relevant condition, followed by significantly lower attitudes in the combination condition and the least favorable attitudes reported for the irrelevant condition, where the celebrity does not mention the brand nor provide any brand-related information, providing support for H1a, H1b and H1c. However, when subjects perceive a match-up between both brands they report strong positive attitude towards the advertisement in both the relevant advertisement condition and the combination relevant plus irrelevant condition, when the brand and celebrity feature together, providing no support for H2a and H2b. Subjects who perceive a match, however, do report the weakest ad attitude in the irrelevant condition featuring the celebrity only, providing support for H2c.

Results for attitude towards the brand do show subjects report more positive attitudes after viewing the relevant advertisement condition and less positive attitudes for the combination with the least positive for the irrelevant condition, but the differences are not significant. There is a significant main effect for match-up, but no interaction effect between advertisement condition and match-up. Figure 2 graphically shows those subjects who perceive a match-up between the brand and celebrity report significantly higher brand attitude in all experimental conditions, than those subjects who perceive a mismatch. Subjects report the strongest brand attitude in the relevant condition, featuring no celebrity and weakest in the irrelevant condition, featuring the celebrity only, showing support for H3.

DISCUSSION

Results of this study identify that when celebrities act as indirect spokespeople in advertisements, where they do not provide information about the endorsed brand, consumer brand attitudes and advertisement attitudes are affected. While previous research in the celebrity endorsement literature centres on the concept of match-up of relevant characteristics between a celebrity and brand (Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998, 2000; Till et al., 2008), findings from this study suggest that the

irrelevancy of celebrity information presented in an advertisement is an important construct that can also influence consumer judgments.

Several findings from this study are consistent with the celebrity endorsement literature whereby consumer evaluations are less positive when they perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand (Kamins, 1990: Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 1998). The results of this study show that consumers who perceive a high degree of fit have the strongest attitude towards the advertisement and brand attitude than those who perceive a mismatch between the celebrity and brand.

Consumer attitude towards the advertisement is significantly affected by irrelevant brand information provided by a celebrity within an advertisement. Findings from this study show consumers who perceive a match-up between the celebrity and brand report enhanced advertisement attitudes when the celebrity and brand feature together in the combination irrelevant and relevant condition with ad attitude just as strong as when the brand features alone in the relevant information condition. On the other hand, consumers who perceive a mismatch report less positive attitudes towards the advertisement in the combined condition when the celebrity features. As such, this study provides additional insights into the concept of match-up as consumer beliefs in the celebrity providing consistent information is strengthened when they perceive a match-up and view an advertisement that features a combination of the celebrity and brand, both relevant and irrelevant information.

With the use of celebrities providing irrelevant brand information in advertisements becoming an increasingly popular advertising execution tactic, it is particularly important to investigate the reasons for this shift in marketing communications. Results of this study identify that placing both a celebrity and brand together in an advertisement can have a negative impact on the brand. Research is yet to explore the reciprocal effect of endorsement relationships on consumer judgments of the celebrity. With consumers becoming more skeptical of the motives of celebrities in endorsements (Bailey, 2007), celebrities are discovering ways in which to avoid perceptions of 'selling out' and maintain an image of authenticity. When celebrities feature in advertisements and provide only relevant information regarding their own celebrity brand, they are in fact, preserving consumer perceptions of the "real" them- their core identity. Future research should explore consumer perceptions of celebrity authenticity in an endorsement context. Future research should also explore celebrities that provide moderately relevant information, making an implicit endorsement for the brand. For example, Jerry Seinfeld in recent advertisements for the Greater cuts down branches in a jungle whilst stating that he is making room for new branches. Here, Seinfeld is making an implicit endorsement for the brand by referring to aspects of the brand's product.

Since we explore the irrelevancy of information presented by a celebrity endorser in television advertisements, future research should be extended to investigate whether these effects are transferable to other mediums, such as print. Print advertisements may feature celebrities who provide irrelevant brand information and only relevant celebrity information, such as many fragrance advertisements that feature the celebrity only, providing no verbal endorsement of the brand nor featured holding the branded product. For example, the Gucci by Gucci fragrance ads present James Franco's face only with the bottle presented at the bottom of the advertisement. Although James Franco may provide relevant brand information by conveying a sexy and modern image, congruent with the

Gucci brand, he provides irrelevant information by not explicitly advocating the brand or holding the brand in the advertisement.

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Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations by Experimental Condition

Condition	Overall	Match	Mismatch
Irrelevant Only			
Ad Attitude	2.72 (1.11)	3.35 (.96)	2.22 (.97)
Brand Attitude	3.79 (1.00)	3.99 (.87)	3.63 (1.07)
Irrelevant and Relevant			
Ad Attitude	3.31 (1.07)	3.96 (.80)	2.65 (.90)
Brand Attitude	3.89 (.86)	4.02 (.79)	3.76 (.90)
Relevant Only			
Ad Attitude	3.77 (.88)	3.93 (.71)	3.60 (1.01)
Brand Attitude	3.99 (.76)	4.11 (.67)	3.86 (.84)

Table 2. Main Effects and Interaction Effects

Dependent Variable	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude towards the Advertisement	Condition	55.174	2	27.587	33.388	.000
	Match-up	79.713	1	79.713	96.473	.000
	Condition * Match-up	15.663	2	7.832	9.478	.000
Attitude towards the Brand	Condition	1.803	2	.902	1.176	.310
	Match-up	7.275	1	7.275	9.493	.002
Attitude towards	Condition * Match-up	.190	2	.095	.124	.884

Table 3. Post Hoc Comparisons

Dependent Variable	Conditions			Mean Diff.	Std. Error	Sig Sig.
Ad Attitude	Overall	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.56	.14	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.03	.14	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.48	.14	.002
	Mismatch	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.40	.17	.059
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-1.36	.17	.000
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.96	.18	.000
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.61	.16	.000
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.58	.15	.001
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.03	.15	.979
Brand Attitude	Overall	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.10	.11	.675
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.20	.11	.208
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.10	.12	.682
	Mismatch	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.13	.17	.741
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.22	.18	.394
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.10	.18	.850
	Match	Irrelevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	-.03	.15	.978
		Irrelevant	Relevant	-.13	.15	.672
		Relevant	Relevant + Irrelevant	.10	.15	.790

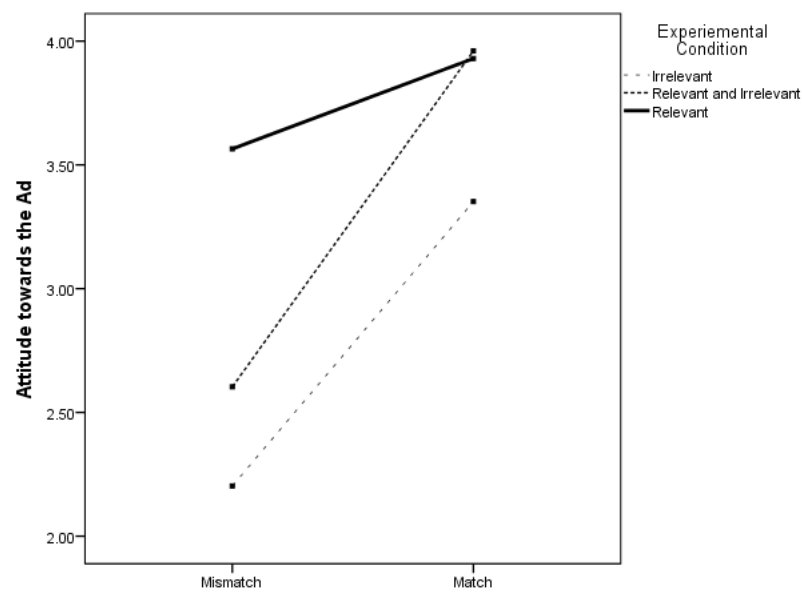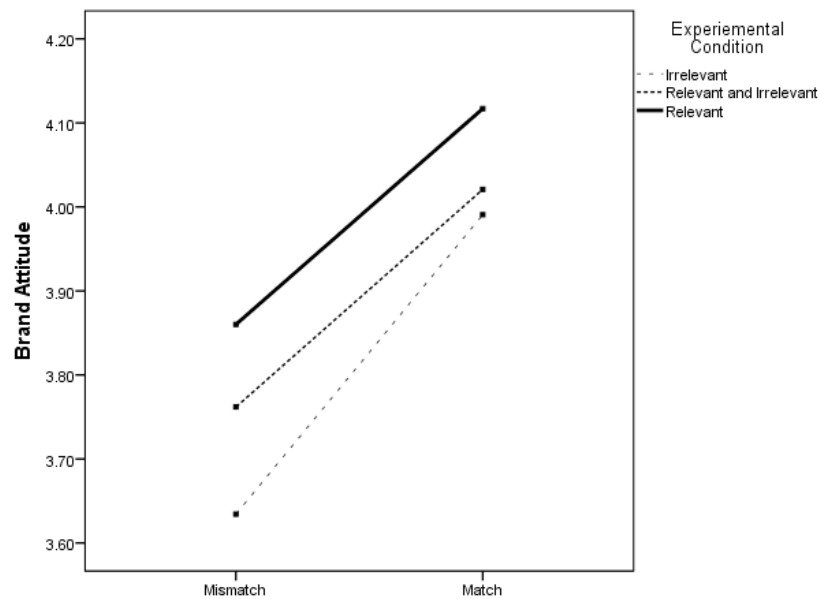**Figure 1. Advertisement Attitude by Match-Up**

Figure 2. Brand Attitude by Match-Up

Appendix D: Paper Presented at Asia Pacific Association for
Consumer Research Conference 2012

Exploring Dimensions of Brand Authenticity

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Abstract

This research adapts the Authenticity Inventory from the psychology literature to develop a framework to measure brand authenticity. The results show brand authenticity as consisting of four distinct dimensions: Relationships (interactions with consumers), Negativity (acknowledging negative brand aspects), Accomplishment (achievement of goals) and Identity (understanding core brand characteristics).

Extended Abstract

Brand authenticity raises modest discussion in the marketing literature, despite being coined one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing (Holt 1997; Belk and Costa 1998; Kozinets 2001). Although consumer researchers frequently use the term, only few define it and no generally acceptable definition is available. This lack of definition allows for the term *authenticity* to be used in different ways and with varying meanings (Grayson and Martinec 2004).

Within the marketing literature, Grayson and Martinec (2004) categorise authenticity as indexical or iconic authenticity. A brand has indexical authenticity if it is thought to be original, not a copy or an imitation (Bruner 1994, 400; Huntington 1988, 157). Alternatively, iconic authenticity refers to an object that is an "authentic reproduction" or an "authentic recreation" of the original (Bruner 1994, 399; Peterson 1997, 208). Authenticity research to date focuses on the indexical authenticity approach which emphasises a production perspective, assessing whether or not a product or brand's origins are authentic and whether their origins are rooted in tradition and heritage (Beverland 2005; Beverland, Lindgreen, and Vink 2008). Alternatively, Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003, 21) argue that authenticity is "composed of the brand elements that consumers perceive as unique". In other words, authenticity is the brand's essence, which is the core or the heart of the brand's identity (Aaker 1996; Beverland 2005; Kapferer 2001; Keller 1998).

Authenticity is argued to be an element of a brand's identity or DNA. Authenticity comprises the unique characteristics of a brand's values, people, product, services, and place that are shown through an organisation's vision and actions (Morin 2010). Furthermore, Gilmore and Pine (2007) suggest authenticity communicates what a brand stands for through conveying its core value and tradition. This identity that is created and conveyed by brands is assessed by consumers who either validate or reject the communicated brand promises (Molleda 2009). In other words, brand authenticity is an assessment of a brand made by consumers based on their perceptions.

There is general agreement that authenticity is not an attribute inherent in an object. Rather authenticity is a socially constructed interpretation or an assessment made by an evaluator of the essence of what is observed (Beverland 2006; Beverland et al. 2008; Grayson and Martinec 2004; Peterson 2005; Rose and Wood 2005; Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel 2006). Beverland et al. (2008) suggest that understanding authenticity from a strategic communication approach requires an assessment of the organisational crafting of authenticity claims and the consumers' or publics' perceptions of these claims. This perspective is closely tied to Gilmore and Pine's (2007) conceptualisation of authenticity which is based on two principles: 1) Being true to your own self and 2) Being who you say you are to others. In other words, being authentic and conveying your authenticity comes about through marketing communications and interactions with the public. Research on celebrity authenticity also follows a similar perspective. Tolson (2001) attributes celebrity authenticity to "being yourself" in terms of creating an image of individuality uniqueness and differentiation. Fairchild (2007) argues that the creation of a persona and the consistency of this persona are what make a celebrity authentic. Although much of the research on brand authenticity focuses on the crafting of authenticity and understanding the attributes that make a brand authentic (Beverland 2005), our interest here is in examining whether or not consumers perceive a brand to be authentic, whether consumers perceive a brand to be true to itself.

It is in the philosophy and psychology literatures that discussions of authenticity are most extensive and where most perspectives on authenticity highlight the extent to which an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours reflect their true self. The philosophical interpretation argues that authenticity is being true to the essence of the self (Van Leeuwen 2001). Remaining true to the presentation of self one claims (Goffman 1959) signifies being genuine, original, having a unique and distinctive style, and not being an imitation or copy (Van Leeuwen 2001). This conceptualisation is analogous with Grayson and Martinec's (2004) indexical authenticity. Authenticity has been defined in the psychology literature as "the unobstructed operation of one's true- or core-self in one's daily enterprise" (Goldman and Kernis 2002; Kernis 2003; Kernis and Goldman 2004; Kernis and Goldman 2005, Kernis and Goldman 2006). According to Kernis and Goldman (2006), authenticity contains four separate, yet interrelated, components: awareness, unbiased processing, behaviour and relational orientation. Awareness refers to having knowledge of your motives, feelings and desires. This component of authenticity involves being motivated to learn about your strengths, weaknesses, goals and aspirations. Unbiased processing refers to objectively discerning both positive and negative self-aspects. This component involves not denying, distorting, or exaggerating self-relevant information. The behavioural component of authenticity entails behaving in accordance with one's values, preferences, and needs and not acting in a false way to obtain rewards or evade punishment. Finally, relational orientation involves valuing and striving for openness, sincerity, and truthfulness in close relationships with others.

Despite growing interest on brand authenticity in marketing, no research to date has been conducted to develop a reliable and valid scale to measure brand authenticity. In fact, no general quantitative measure of brand authenticity has been developed, with research in the area mostly exploratory in its approach, focusing on what makes a specific brand or experience authentic to consumers (e.g. Beverland 2005; Chronis and Hampton 2008). The purpose of this research is to address the limitations within the current research on authenticity by drawing on and adapting Kernis and Goldman's Authenticity Inventory (2006) from the psychology literature to determine whether its four dimensions can be used as a framework for brand authenticity.

A research company recruited respondents from regional areas within Australia to evaluate the authenticity of a corporate financial brand, the Greater Building Society. In total 343 respondents were approached and 147 provided complete and valid responses. From Kernis and Goldman's (2006) 45 item Authenticity Inventory, 41 items were adapted to the brand context. Awareness consisted of 11 items, unbiased processing 9 items, behaviour 10 items and relational orientation had 11 items. Respondents were provided with statements about the brand (e.g. the Greater Building Society places a good deal of importance on customers understanding who they truly are) and asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree on a 5 point likert scale.

Initial Cronbach α reliability analyses show unacceptable results for three of the four authenticity dimensions: awareness α= .514, unbiased processing α= .302, behaviour α= .530. Cronbach α reliability for relational orientation shows acceptable results (α= .853). Once items are eliminated, internal consistency becomes acceptable (Nunnally 1978). Awareness consists of 9 items (α= .789), unbiased processing with 7 items (α= .735) and behavioral with 5 items (α= .725). Next, an exploratory factor analysis using principal components with varimax rotation reveals four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 accounting for 60.58 percent of the variance explained. Factor 1 explaining 37.5% of the variance consists of mainly five of the items that measure relational orientation, two

behavioural items and one each of awareness and unbiased processing. This clearly is a relationship factor that identifies the interactions the brand has with its customers, its behaviour towards its customers and customers' perceptions of them. Although three of the unbiased processing items load highly on Factor 2, all items on this factor relate to negative aspects of the brand such as their ability to "pretend" to be something they are not and ignore issues rather than work them out. This factor with 11.9% of the explained variance apparently is detecting negative brand aspects. Factors 3 and 4 explain much less adding 6% and 5% respectively and are less distinct. Factor 3 perhaps concerns the vision or goals the brand would like to achieve. Factor 4 seems to be an identity dimension relating to the brand understanding and prioritising its core identity features and customers' ability to identify those features.

Although inconsistencies are found, adapting the Kernis and Goldman's (2006) Authenticity Inventory from psychology to the marketing context does have potential. Results within the current study indicate that authenticity may have four dimensions. Key factors in consumer perceptions of brand authenticity include: 1) consumer-brand relationships, 2) negative brand aspects, 3) brand goal achievement and 4) understanding brand identity. The significance of consumer-brand relationships is highly relevant given its recent interest in the marketing literature (Fournier 1998; Thomson, MacInnis, and Park 2005). As this study is the first to examine the dimensionality of authenticity within a branding context, further research is needed to investigate the importance of each of the components in predicting consumer behaviour. Future research should explore the effect that perceptions of authenticity have on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Additional research also should be conducted using a number of different brands.

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