Developing strategies for international celebrity branding. A comparative analysis between Western and South Asian cultures

Abstract:
Purpose: This empirical research conceptualises the impact of celebrity effectiveness on consumer purchase intention, with customer perception and attitude as mediators. A cross-cultural approach is adopted to analyse consumer response to celebrity branding across Britain and Pakistan containing non-explicit and explicit sex appeals.

Design/methodology/approach: A within-subject experimental design (2 countries × 2 ad designs) is employed to test the research model across Western and South Asian cultures. Structural equation modelling (SEM) and multigroup analysis (MGA) are used to test proposed hypotheses.

Findings: SEM results confirm the theoretical model: perception and attitude towards the advert and brand mediate the impact of celebrity effectiveness on purchase intention. Celebrity-endorsed advertising without explicit sex appeals elicited an overall favourable response across markets. British consumers respond to both adverts similarly. Yet, Pakistani consumers filter advert themes through salient cultural values and respond negatively to explicit sex appeals whilst, interestingly, accepting sexuality in associations of a celebrity endorser.

Practical implications: International celebrities can have cross-cultural appeal, and commonalities exist between the markets. A global or domestic marketing strategy can be utilised across the cultures based upon the environmental conditions and the themes and appeals incorporated within advert design.

Originality: The conceptual model is developed by consolidating existing models within celebrity endorsement and considering the mediating influence of both the advert and brand. The model is validated across theoretically different cultures. The comparative approach and selection of an underrepresented market provide novel insight into international branding strategies and global consumer culture.

Keywords: Cross-cultural analysis; International marketing; Global celebrity branding; Consumer behaviour; Sex appeals; Cultural marketing

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Introduction

Celebrity endorsement is an established and popular marketing communications tactic across the globe (Carrillat *et al*., 2019; Schimmelpfenning and Hunt, 2020). When used successfully, it positively influences consumer attitudes and purchase intention towards the endorsement (Knoll and Matthes, 2017; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018, Procter and Kitchen, 2019). Globalisation, along with the widespread use of global media and entertainment, has given rise to international celebrities who can transcend geographical boundaries and possess universal appeal (Choi *et al*., 2005; Winterich *et al*., 2018; Fowler and Thomas, 2019). This makes celebrity endorsement a vital tool for companies seeking to appeal to a global audience and cultivate a successful brand across markets.

Positive consumer response to the meanings and attributes celebrities bring to the endorsement process forms the foundation of successful celebrity endorsements (Knoll and Matthes, 2017). In the current digital era, these meanings and attributes are increasingly cultivated using social media networks which enable celebrities to develop more personal relationships with consumers (Qin, 2020). Additionally, advertising is heavily reliant upon favourable perceptions of the context and design of an advert (Moazeni *et al*., 2020). A popular strategy employed across markets is using sexual stimuli and sex appeals in adverts (Wirtz *et al*., 2018). Sex appeals in advertising is referred to as stimulus that is arousing in nature and contains sexual cues which consumers may find sexually stimulating (Putrevu and Swimberghek, 2013). Sex appeals can be incorporated into advertising in diverse ways such as nudity, sexual behaviour, sexual innuendo and sexual embeds (Putrevu and Swimberghek, 2013; Wirtz *et al*., 2018). However, although globalisation and global communications are often thought to create a homogenous consumer culture (De Burgh-Woodman, 2014), socio-cultural and situational factors can stimulate diverse consumer responses toward international celebrity advertising (Steenkamp, 2019). To achieve the objectives of communication and avoid potential backlashes, it is thus paramount to understand the culture of the targeted market to select celebrities and design adverts with appealing stimulus and make inferences as to how firms can build a global brand across countries.

Pertinent research on celebrity endorsement, such as Spry *et al*. (2011) and Wang and Scheinbaum (2018), focuses on celebrity attributes and their impact on the endorsed brands, while the moderating and mediating roles of the advert design in developing successful endorsement campaigns – for both Western and South Asian cultures – are less commonly

considered. However, creating successful international marketing strategies using celebrities across different cultures is not solely dependent upon selecting suitable endorsers as the manner of portrayal of a celebrity in advertising is instrumental to its effectiveness (Schimmelpfenning and Hunt, 2020). Consideration of consumers' perceptual cognitive and affective response to the advert design, along with the manner of portrayal of the celebrity endorser, is therefore imperative to examine. Furthermore, current research on global branding and consumer culture retains focus from a Western perspective (Wang *et al*., 2017; Steenkamp, 2019), with a paucity of empirical research on celebrity endorsement across different cultural contexts (Derdenger *et al*., 2018; Winterich *et al*., 2018). This research thus aims to enrich the current knowledge on global celebrity branding by providing a holistic perspective to understand the impact of celebrity effectiveness on consumer purchase intention across different cultures. The purpose is to investigate the similarities and differences between consumer response to global celebrities and celebrity-endorsed advertising for fashion and beauty products across the culturally diverse markets of Britain and Pakistan. This is done with the purpose to identify whether themes and appeals in the advert design can have cross-cultural transferability and analyse the role they play in developing globally effective celebrity branding campaigns.

A theoretically based conceptual model, which involves the mediating role of both the advert and brand is developed and tested to predict the impact of celebrity effectiveness on consumer purchase intention. Then, multigroup analysis is used to identify the moderating effects of both culture and the advert design on consumer responses to celebrity branding by examining how paths within the model differ across the two countries when celebrity-endorsed advertising includes non-explicit and explicit sex appeals. This is achieved by using an experiment approach and controlling for the level of explicit sexuality incorporated into the advert design (Wirtz *et al*., 2018). The investigation of the moderating impacts of ad design and cultural environment, along with the consideration of both the advert and brand as mediators provide a novel multifaceted insight on the process of endorsement. Conducting research in Pakistan helps to extend the current literature on global consumer culture and international marketing by providing insight on an emerging market and a non-Western perspective which is lacking in the literature on global branding (Steenkamp, 2019; Dalir *et al*., 2020). Simultaneously, the research also develops practical implications through creating a matrix of strategies that guides global celebrity branding under contextually different cultural markets based upon the environmental conditions and advert design.

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Literature Review and Conceptual Model

Celebrity endorser effectiveness and impact on consumer behaviour – a brief overview

The widespread use of celebrity endorsement has resulted in extensive research on the effects of employing well-known individuals to promote a product or brand (Knoll and Matthes, 2017; Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020; Shukla and Dubey, 2021). Although the traditional endorsement approach remains popular, the rise of social media has led to the prevalence of 'ordinary' – at times referred to as micro or internet-celebrities – and influencers as endorsers (Al-Emadi and Ben Yahia, 2020; Chen *et al.,* 2021; Wang and Hu, 2021). Over the years research has expanded the endorsement literature from various perspectives, nevertheless, theory on the effectiveness of endorsers retains toots in traditional models (Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020; Lee and Eastin, 2021). Originating from the field of psychology, the source models are established within the literature of celebrity endorsement (Knoll and Matthes, 2017). The source models postulate that an individual's credibility and attractiveness directly impact their efficacy as an endorser as it leads to a higher level of absorption of the advertising message (Ohanian, 1990; Liu *et al.*, 2007; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). Attractiveness refers to physical characteristics of a source as well as their likability and appeal to an individual (Ohanian, 1990; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). An important antecedence of attractiveness can be the perceived level of personal and emotional connection individuals develop with the endorser (Qin, 2020; Chen *et al.,* 2021). The degree of congruence between a celebrity, the endorsed product and brand referred to as the level of "match-up", also directly influences celebrity effectiveness (Kamins, 1990; Till and Busler, 2000; Lee and Thorson, 2008; Wright, 2016). Stemming from this, advertising of beauty-related products should prioritise attractiveness of the source, as this leads to a high level of celebrity–product congruence owing to its relation to the product category (Till and Busler, 2000; Muda and Hamzah, 2021).

The meaning transfer model outlines that symbolic meanings, characteristics and associations transfer from the celebrity to the consumer through the process of endorsement (McCracken, 1989; Jain and Roy, 2016; Carrillat et al., 2019). The model iterates that positive consumer response to celebrity endorsement depends on two overarching factors: the meanings a celebrity brings to the endorsement process, which are cultivated through their professional and public personas, and the efficiency with which those meanings and associations transfer onto the endorsed brand and consumer (Jain and Roy, 2016). Both factors are theorised to be

influenced by cultural components (McCracken, 1989). The rapidly increasing use of social media and other digital platforms have significant impacts on global branding (Kim, 2021) and provide unique opportunities for endorsement by enabling and facilitating marketer-consumer interaction (Wang, 2021). Using social media platforms, endorsers can strategically interact with their audiences which serves to create richer associations (Lee and Eastin, 2021). Furthermore, by directly sharing contents of a more intimate nature, celebrities and influencers alike can create stronger personal and emotional bonds between themselves and followers (Leite and Buptista, 2021; Wang and Hu, 2021; Kim and Kim, 2022). This bond between celebrities and followers serves to enhance the cogency of endorsers (Knoll and Matthes, 2017), and consequently create richer celebrity associations which heighten the efficacy of the meaning transfer process from the celebrity to the brand (Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020). Nevertheless, despite the favourable implications of celebrity-consumer interactions for endorsement, it is essential for global brands to understand how diverse consumer markets will perceive and respond to the nature of the content shared by celebrities on social platforms.

This research posits that the core models, specifically the source attractiveness model, match-up hypothesis and meaning transfer model (Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020), within endorsement literature should be consolidated to conceptualise effectiveness of a celebrity endorser across cultures. This would enable a more comprehensive approach to the practice and help to capture the multifaceted nature of celebrity branding. This approach is supported by Schimmelpfennig and Hunt (2020), who conclude that no single theory can explain celebrity endorsement in its entirety. Within the current research, theory on the source attractiveness model and perceived celebrity–brand–product match-up guides the overall conceptualisation of the construct celebrity effectiveness as both theories have found to enhance overall efficacy of an endorser (Liu *et al*, 2007; Wright, 2016; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). These meanings are then theorised to transfer onto the endorsed brand (McCracken, 1989; Jain and Roy, 2016).

Although the progression of research on celebrity endorsement has enriched the understanding of the widely used global practice in Western countries, knowledge on the transferability of the models and theories to non-Western countries is comparatively scarce. Existing empirical studies have shown that cultural factors can have a significant impact on the effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer behaviour (Choi *et al*., 2005; Winterich *et al*., 2018). Therefore, research into diverse cultures is needed to further the literature on celebrity endorsement and address this under-researched area. Cross-cultural research would also help to establish how

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the practice should be employed effectively across markets and provide a more holistic understanding of the robustness and applicability of models within celebrity endorsement. Furthermore, although celebrities can have universal recognition, popularity and appeal, there is no conclusive research on whether they would prove to be effective endorsers across cultures (Choi *et al.*, 2005; Knoll and Matthes, 2017; Winterich *et al.*, 2018). This need for such research is also particularly important due to the cross-cultural and cross-country usage of social media platforms (GlobalStats, 2021) and the rise in user-generated content (Wang, 2021) which can make it difficult to manage information sharing and avoid consumer backlashes to content deemed as inappropriate.

Mediating role of perception and attitude towards advert and brand

Research shows that using celebrity endorsement can increase brand recall, brand loyalty, brand recognition, and enhance the believability of advertising claims (Liu *et al.*, 2007; Knoll and Matthes, 2017). This helps to cultivate overall positive attitudes towards the endorsed brand (Liu *et al*, 2007; Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020). In addition to enhancing overall brand equity (Spry *et al.*, 2011), celebrity endorsement is often utilised to elicit a purchase – or, more desirably, repeat purchases and as such, several studies have investigated the link between celebrity endorsement can on consumer purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren *et al.*, 2013). However, although, some studies have found that celebrity endorsements can increase consumer purchase intention particularly when an effective endorser is utilised (Liu *et al.*, 2007; Proctor and Kitchen, 2019), not all studies have been able to replicate these results and thus, the link between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchase intention remains inconclusive (Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020). This research postulates that while the celebrity models provide critical theoretical underpinning for celebrity selection and endorser efficacy, they can prove limited in encapsulating how the use of celebrity endorsers in adverts impacts consumers as celebrities only form part of the advertising appeal. For this reason, a comprehensive consideration of relevant mediating variables becomes paramount when examining the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intentions.

Several studies have investigated the role of the endorsed brand as a mediator and found that overall consumer attitudes towards the brand play an integral part in determining consumer response to endorsements (Liu *et al.*, 2007; Cobb-Walgren *et al.*, 2013; Knoll and Matthes, 2017). Comparatively, to date, limited studies on celebrity branding have considered the role that the advert design can have on the overall impact of endorsement. A study by Choi and Rifon (2012) found that celebrity endorsements impact on overall consumer attitude towards

the advert. Bergkvist *et al*. (2016) found that attitude towards the advert improves overall consumer response to celebrity endorsement. Although the mentioned studies examine diverse variables in relation to celebrity endorsement, when conjoined with marketing theory, they highlight the need for consideration of attitude towards advert design to enable suitable evaluations regarding the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumers to be made. Wider research within marketing emphasises the importance for consideration of stimulus within the advert design in developing effective and appealing advertising and branding strategies (Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019; Moazeni *et al*., 2020). Therefore, this research proposes that the impact of celebrity effectiveness on consumer purchase intentions would be better predicted by examining the mediating effects of both the endorsed brand and the advert design. This dual mediation is supported by the meaning transfer model which stresses the importance of the advert design and role of the brand in efficiently transferring meanings and associations from a celebrity to a consumer through the process of consumption.

Perceptions refer to observation and interpretation of stimuli while attitudes refer to the affective response to the stimuli (Lilien *et al.,* 2012). Current literature on endorsement retains focus on consumer attitudes and its subsequent role in determining consumer response (Bergkvist *et al*., 2016; Winterich *et al*., 2018; Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020). However, research within the field of cognitive social psychology stresses the importance of considering perceptions in predicting behavioural intentions (Pickens, 2005; Lilien *et al.,* 2012). Perception is an integral part of the information processing process which can impact on consumer attitudes and thus consideration of both cognitive and affective components is integral to understanding consumer behaviour and their decision making (Mitchell and Olson, 1981; Ajzen, 2011; Schaller and Malhotra, 2015). Therefore, this research hypotheses and tests serial mediation, which, to the best of our knowledge, has not been investigated before in endorsement research. It is thus hypothesised that celebrity effectiveness will impact purchase intention through two distinct paths: (a) perception and attitude towards the celebrity-endorsed advert, and (b) perception and attitude towards the celebrity-endorsed brand. For this research, the proposed mediation also serves two additional purposes. First, it enables a more comprehensive conceptualisation of the different stimuli within celebrity-endorsed advertising to be investigated and enables both cognitive and affective elements to be considered to model behavioural intention of consumers (Ajzen, 2011). Second, research illustrates that beliefs, thoughts and feelings towards stimuli are impacted by culture (Schwartz, 2012). As this research is being conducted under diverse cultural conditions, using serial mediation, and

taking perception and attitude as separate constructs, ensures that observations are not inherently deemed as eliciting a favourable or unfavourable response across the two markets. Formally, the hypothesis used to test the developed model and the proposed mediation are,

H1a: The impact of celebrity effectiveness on purchase intention is mediated by perception of advert and attitude towards the advert.

H1b: The impact of celebrity effectiveness on purchase intention is mediated by perception of brand and attitude towards the brand.

The moderating role of cultural environment and advert design

Culture can be defined as a learned system of knowledge, which encompasses behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, values and norms shared by a group of individuals (Schwartz, 2012). Culture can guide the way individuals orient their lives through consumption, and hence its examination can provide useful insight into designing suitable international marketing strategies and into global consumer culture (Steenkamp, 2019; Sharifonnasabi *et al*., 2020). The individualism versus collectivism dimension from the Hofstede and GLOBE models has been the focal point of an array of studies aiming to provide valuable insight into consumer behaviour, as it can dictate cognitive styles and visual preferences (Brewer and Venaik, 2011; Na *et al*., 2021). Thus, the contextual national cultures of Britain and Pakistan are reviewed using this dimension.

Britain is characterised by a highly individualistic culture where emphasis is placed on the personal self, and individuals demonstrate openness to change (Schwartz, 2012; De Mooij, 2019). British consumers are likely to value uniqueness and retain a belief in individual agency; hence, an emphasis is placed on individual ways of thinking (Brewer and Venaik, 2011). This implies that suitable celebrity endorsers should align with personal values of target consumers as opposed to societal ones. As values correlate with ensuing personal preferences, freedom and independence of thought (Brewer and Venaik, 2011), it is likely that an array of advertising messages, including controversial or explicit content, can be successful within the country. Furthermore, in most Western countries, shared religion is less important in comparison to Asian countries, and self-expression is valued, thus further indicating that social norms have a reduced impact on individuals (Melynk, 2021). Therefore, even if celebrity endorsers or stimuli in advertising are viewed as controversial by society in general, this will not automatically lead to a negative consumer response as individual-level beliefs will play a factor.

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Contrastingly, Pakistan has a collectivist culture which emphasises concepts of unity where individuals retain a group identity and view themselves as a part of a larger society (De Mooij, 2019). Values are dictated by conformity to group ideals and social and cultural norms (Brewer and Venaik, 2011). This indicates that individuals will respond favourably to celebrities who uphold salient cultural values and beliefs. Furthermore, Pakistan as a nation was formed with an Islamic identity and thus their culture is heavily influenced by religious values (Jalal, 2012). Research shows that religiosity leads to a reduced acceptance of advertising that may be deemed controversial and/or contain sex appeals (Putrevu and Swimberghek, 2013). This aspect is further emphasised by traditional Pakistani cultural values and Islamic religious values, which discourage sexuality (Jalal, 2012).

In Pakistan, a continuous upward trend can be observed in the number of foreign and international brands available (BusinessBook, 2021). There is also increased exposure to global mass media, including the entertainment industry, and increased usage of social media (Saddiq, 2013; Mumtaz and Mitha, 2016; Jahangir, 2020; GlobalStats, 2021). These are amongst factors which would indicate a shift towards acceptance of global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). However, even if individual-level beliefs and values within the country are shifting, from a theoretical viewpoint, the collectivist perspective would indicate that priority is placed on national culture (Hofstede, 2001). Additionally, Melnyk *et al.* (2021) find that in cultures where religion remains important, individuals are less likely to engage in socially disapproved behaviours and more likely to adhere to social norms. Therefore, it stands to reason that consumers might still retain an adverse response to controversial stimuli within advertising such as sex appeals. Pakistani individuals may also perceive celebrity endorsers who have a sexualised image, and/or who have previous endorsements which use explicit sex appeals, in a negative manner. Furthermore, although globalisation can lead to a convergence of consumption choices on a macro level, it is possible that absolute homogeneity may not exist, and consumers may respond more favourably to advertising that upholds and portrays elements of local cultural values (Balabanis and Siamagka, 2017; He and Wang, 2017; Steenkamp, 2019).

Social networks facilitate the travel of information across international borders (Kim, 2021; Wang, 2021). This can be advantageous in helping brands reach a global audience with ease (Gao et al., 2018), it also means advertising designed with themes and appeals for specific cultural markets can have cross-cultural exposure. The yearly augmenting usage of social media in Pakistan (GlobalStats, 2021) would suggest that any global brands employing social

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media as part of their communication mix need to understand consumer preferences of the market to avoid shadowing the image of the brand. Additionally, brands need to be aware as to whether the cultivated image and associations of an endorser on social media will appeal to their targeted consumers. User-generated content is perceived as being authentic and credible (Muda and Hamzah, 2021; Wang, 2021), and thus marketers need to be mindful that any adverse reaction by individuals could trigger an influx of spreading negative information (Wang, 2021).

To investigate the moderating effects of cultural environment and sexual appeals in advert design, this research conducts two studies in each of the markets of Britain and Pakistan: Study 1 contains an advert designed to not include explicit sex appeals from a theoretical standpoint; Study 2 contains an advert which incorporated theoretically explicit sex appeals. Multigroup comparisons are conducted across and between the samples for both Study 1 and Study 2 to realise the cross-cultural comparative aim of this research. The following hypotheses are developed to investigate the moderating role of both the advert design and cultural environment on the developed model.

> **H2:** The model for British consumers' behaviour varies across ads with different design (Study 1: ad with non-explicit sex appeals vs Study 2: ad with explicit sex appeals).

> **H3:** The model for British consumers' behaviour is different from Pakistani consumers in Study 1 (ad with non-explicit sex appeals).

> **H4:** The model for British consumers' behaviour is different from Pakistani consumers in Study 2 (ad with explicit sex appeals).

> **H5:** The model Pakistani consumers' behaviour varies across ads with different design (Study 1: ad with non-explicit sex appeals vs Study 2: ad with explicit sex appeals).

The proposed conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 1.

[Place Figure I here]

Methodology

A quantitative methodology was employed and a 2x2 within-subject experimental research design was utilised. Data was collected via questionnaires administered to British and Pakistani consumers. Utilising a within-subject design enabled for individual differences between participants to be controlled and for any change in response between Study 1 and Study 2 to be more accurately attributed to the manipulated variable. In line with recent studies of Ferraris *et*

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al. (2019) and Santorio *et al.* (2019), this research investigated cultural environments and how they can manifest on consumer response – in this case to advertising featuring celebrity endorsement – by carrying out the research in two different countries: Britain and Pakistan.

The use of an actual or designed advert is common practice in research and is widely used within the field of celebrity endorsement and consumer research (Spry *et al.*, 2011). This research used adverts designed by the researchers to expose participants to different stimuli in celebrity-endorsed advertising. Two studies were conducted with every participant within the sub-samples of British and Pakistani respondents. Each study featured a different advert. The process adopted to design the adverts was guided by the need to maintain consistency between the stimuli used across both Study 1 and Study 2 and isolate and alter the way sex appeal was incorporated in the advert design. The stimuli used in designing the adverts were: the image of the celebrity endorser, the brand name and logo of a fashion brand, and a beauty product. Both studies used the same items and measures. Conducting the two studies produced four groups, which are referred to in this paper as follows: B1 – British Study 1; P1 – Pakistani Study 1; B2 – British Study 2; P2 – Pakistani Study 2.

Pre-tests to select celebrity and brand

Two pre-tests were conducted to select the celebrity and the brand featured in the studies. A celebrity was selected via a multi-step process and used in the advert design to enhance the validity of the research (Lee and Thorson, 2008). The social media platform Instagram was used to produce a list of the 50 most-followed female celebrities. To ensure existence of a degree of congruence between the celebrity and the product category, celebrities who had not shared any advertising materials or user-generated content relating to fashion brands, via their Instagram account were removed from the list. Next, a poll survey was conducted in shopping malls with 250 female respondents aged 18 and above within each of the cities of London and Lahore, using a convenience sampling. Respondents were requested to select their most favoured three choices of celebrities to endorse beauty products. The celebrity [1] most frequently selected by respondents across both markets was featured in Study 1 and Study 2. This process ensured that the selected celebrity had international recognition across both countries.

Although the focus of the research pertained to investigating the impact of themes and appeals in celebrity endorsed advertising, in line with similar research such as Spry *et al.* (2011), a brand name and product were featured in the created adverts to strengthen the research design. To select the brand, a two-step process was adopted. In the first step, a list of ten international

beauty and cosmetics brands which had a high revenue and/or were internationally available was prepared through utilising and cross-referencing a range of industry and market sources (L'Oréal, 2017; Jones and Gelbart, 2018; Matusow and Cosgrove, 2018; Statista, 2018). The second step was designed to select the specific brand featured in the study. In this step, the ten brands were listed on a poll survey administered to 250 respondents using a convenience sampling. Following a similar method to the celebrity selection process, the survey was conducted in a centrally located shopping mall in the cities of Lahore and London to confirm recognition and availability of the brand within the markets from the perspective of consumers. Respondents were presented with the list of brands and asked to circle their most favoured three choices of brands and rate the following: "I am familiar with this brand", "I like this brand" and "I have seen this brand being sold in different stores" measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1= 'strongly disagree', 7= 'strongly agree'). The brand [2] chosen most frequently by respondents and rated as the most favourable was a beauty brand which sells skincare and cosmetics. This brand was thus included in the advert created for Study 1 and Study 2. The featured brand operates in over 150 territories and is known for frequently using celebrity endorsers. The product category featured in the advert design was lipsticks due to the global widespread use of the product (BBC, 2016).

Advert design and manipulation

To conduct the experiment and incorporate explicit sex appeals into the advert design for Study 2, a two-step approach was utilised. First, the theoretical classification of sex appeals was examined. In consumer research, explicit or overt sex appeals is categorised by sexualised portrayal of sensory stimuli and, in the case of an endorser, is often determined by the level of nudity portrayed in the advert (Choi *et al*., 2016; Wirtz *et al*., 2018). Scanning available celebrity-endorsed adverts in the beauty industry revealed that partial nudity (or partially clad), rather than full nudity, is most frequently employed. Based on this, images of the celebrity endorser displaying partial nudity were selected. Next, to gain a consumer perspective, a short survey featuring the selected images was conducted with 200 respondents each from Britain and Pakistan. Participants were shown the partially clad images of the celebrity endorser and asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement "This image is very sexual", measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1= 'strongly disagree', 7= 'strongly agree'). Results revealed that the majority of the participants selected point 6 on the scale.

Thus, to design the advert featured in Study 1, which was used as the pre-test in the experimental design, the selected image of the celebrity was cropped to showcase solely the

face of the endorser. Therefore, the advert in Study 1 did not include any explicit sexual cues, stimuli, nudity, or body language in the design, and thus can be theoretically categorised as not including explicit sex appeals (Wirtz *et al.*, 2018). Study 2, which formed the post-test, featured the selected image of the celebrity in its entirety to incorporate explicit sex appeal in the content of the advert design through the inclusion of partial nudity. In this research, the advert in Study 2 is referred to as containing explicit sex appeal or explicit sexuality, while the advert in Study 1 is referred to as non-sexual or as not containing explicit sex appeals.

The main difference between the advert design in Study 1 and Study 2 lay in the portrayal of the celebrity endorser, which was used to manipulate the level of explicit sex appeal. All other stimuli within the advert design were kept consistent between Study 1 and Study 2 to enable increased robustness in attributing any changes in the cause-and-effect relationships between constructs within the model between Study 1 and Study 2 to the inclusion of perceived explicit sex appeals. The advert design for both studies is displayed in Appendix 1.

Measures

Both studies measured the same constructs, using the same items and measures in relation to the different adverts. The questionnaire measured seven latent constructs in total using multi-item scales adapted or extracted from validated scales used in previous research. Two latent constructs were used to conceptualise the construct celebrity effectiveness: attractiveness – measured using the items "beautiful", "classy", "likeable", "sexy" and "appealing" (Ohanian, 1990; Spry *et al.*, 2011); and match-up level – measured using the items "good/bad fit between the celebrity and the brand", "logical / not logical for the celebrity to endorse" and "appropriate / not appropriate for the celebrity to endorse" (Spry *et al.*, 2011). Perception towards the advert was measured using six items: "classy", tasteful", "captures my attention", "appropriate", "sexy" and "signifies beauty", while perception of brand was measured using seven items: "desirable", "high quality", "classy", "fashionable", "tasteful", "reliable" and "sexy" (Aaker, 1997; Faircloth *et al.*, 2001; Lee and Thorson, 2008). Attitude towards both the advert and the brand were measured using the same three items: "I feel positive about the advert/brand", "the advert/brand is appealing" and "I have a favourable attitude towards the advert/brand" (Choi and Rifon, 2012). Purchase intention was measured using five items: "the next time I buy this product, I intend to buy this brand" (Netemeyer *et al.*, 2004), "I would seek out this brand in a store to purchase it", "I am willing to buy the brands endorsed by this celebrity", "I am interested in purchasing this brand" (Baker and Churchill, 1977) and "in comparison to similar brands, this brand is distinctive" (Kamins, 1990). All items were measured on either a 7-point

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semantic differential scale or a 7-point Likert scale. In addition to demographic information, the questionnaire also included a question asking if the respondents could name or were familiar with the celebrity endorser.

Data collection procedures

All data, including the data for the pre-tests, was collected after obtaining Ethics Approval for the research. The main data collection took place in major cities of Pakistan (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad) and England (London, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield) via a questionnaire administered face to face to female British and Pakistani consumers aged above 18 and above. Two shopping malls which saw heavy footfall within each city formed the sampling. A systematic sampling design was utilised. After a random starting point, every fifth person was approached and asked if they were willing to participate in the research. Participation was voluntary and participants were not asked for any confidential or personal identifying information. Females were focused upon as advertising often specifically targets selected genders, and different genders can respond differently to both celebrities and sex appeals (Wirtz *et al*., 2018). The questionnaire was administered in English across both countries. This was most suitable as English was the previous official language of Pakistan and is most universally spoken within the country (Nordquist, 2018). A total of 1,400 surveys were administered and, after data cleaning, usable surveys totalled 1,302, representing a response rate of 93 percent. Table I presents respondents' profiles and their familiarity with the international celebrity. A majority of British and Pakistani respondents recognised the celebrity featured in the survey.

[Place Table I here]

Analytical approaches

Univariate non-graphical exploratory analysis was conducted on the categorical data to gauge the demographic diversity of respondents across the two samples. To prevent common method bias, primarily, ex ante approaches were employed in the research design. A message was included at the start of the questionnaire to assure respondents as to the confidentiality and anonymity of their participation (Chang *et al*., 2010; Cleveland *et al*., 2021). Post study, Harman's single factor test was utilised and no factor with large variance emerged which confirmed common method bias is not a serious through to the research measures (Podsakoff *et al*., 2003). A series of statistical tests were carried out to test the measurement model. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to test internal consistency of the

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measures. Construct validity including convergent and discriminant validity were checked using confirmatory factor analysis (Hair *et al*., 2010; Spry *et al*., 2011). After establishing measurement invariance, hypotheses were tested using statistical equation modelling, mediation analysis and multigroup analysis (Hair *et al*., 2010).

Results

Reliability and validity

Preliminary tests were conducted across Study 1 and Study 2. Results of reliability and validity tests along with the weighted means per study for the British and Pakistani subsets are presented in Table II. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) for all items in both studies was higher (CR>.85) than the accepted threshold of CR>.6 (Hair *et al*., 2010), thus confirming the reliability of the utilised measures. A confirmatory factor analysis showed all standardised factor loadings were above the acceptable level (λ >.40) (Hair *et al*., 2010). For all constructs, average variance extracted values met the recommended cut-off of .5, which was less than the CR, demonstrating internal consistency and scale and item validity (Hair *et al*., 2010; Olya, 2020). Correlations for the measurement model were significant: $p<.001$ between all latent variables across the sub-samples and studies. Together, the different tests conducted illustrate support of CR and convergent validity across Study 1 and Study 2 (Hair *et al*., 2010; Olya *et al*., 2018).

Discriminant validity was established using a chi-square differences test for each pair of constructs (Spry *et al*., 2011). For all pairs, the unconstrained model, with one less parameter, showed a significant chi-square difference when compared to the constrained model. The chi-square difference was significant for all observed pair's ($p<.001$) across Study 1 and Study 2, indicating that the two-factor (constrained) model was a better fit.

[Place Table II here]

Measurement invariance

As a prerequisite for conducting multigroup analysis, measurement invariance was tested across all groups. Freely estimating the model without imposing any constraints showed fit indices of X^2=703.225, df=1772, X^2/df=4.460, GFI=.832, CFI=.948 and RMSEA=.036, supporting similarity of the overall factor structure across groups (Xu and Tracey, 2017). Invariance at the metric and scalar levels was evaluated through comparison of the root mean

square of error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) of the nested models (Chen, 2007). Fit indices for the metric invariance model provided support for full metric invariance. The difference between RMSEA of the configural and metric models is below 0.03 (ΔRMSEA=−0.003), and differences in both CFI and TLI between the models are below the cut-off range of 0.02 (ΔCFI=−0.01 and ΔTLI=−0.008). Comparison between the metric and scalar models demonstrated that a majority of the items were metrically invariant, establishing partial scalar invariance. These results are sufficient to conduct multigroup analysis (Chen, 2007).

As measurement invariance was established, multigroup structural equation modelling was performed using the maximum likelihood estimation method. Results indicated an acceptable model fit: X^2=9660.246, df=1704, X^2/df=5.669, GFI=.812, RMSEA=.042, NFI=.918, RFI=.910, IFI=.931, TLI=.951 and CFI=.931 (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Vandenberg 2006). Relationships between all constructs were significant across Study 1 and Study 2 for each sample (p<.001), supporting validity of the model.

Mediation analysis

Mediation was analysed using the Bayesian approach through the use of user-defined estimands (Zhao *et al*., 2010). Iterative bootstrapping was set at 2,000 times, with bias corrected confidence intervals at 90 percent (Fritz and MacKinnon, 2007). Results of serial mediation analyses for four groups (B1, B2, P1, and P2) are presented in Table III. The impact of celebrity effectiveness on purchase intention was found to be mediated through perception of advert and attitude towards advert across the groups, supporting hypothesis **H1a**. (B1 – serial indirect effect: .127, p<.001, CI [.077, .187], B2 – serial indirect effect: .070, p<.015, CI [.019, .130], P1 – serial indirect effect: .140, p<.001, CI [.074, .228], P2 – serial indirect effect: .146, p<.001, CI [.112, .188]).

Results of serial mediation showed that perception of brand and attitude towards brand mediated the impact of celebrity effectiveness on purchase intention across the groups (B1 – serial indirect effect: .268, p<.001, CI [.216, .329], B2 – serial indirect effect: .273, p<.001, CI [.221, .335], P1 – serial indirect effect: .399, p<.001, CI [.320, .485], P2 – serial indirect effect: .173, p<.001, CI [.137, .214]). Hypothesis **H1b** was thus also supported.

[Place Table III here]

Results of multigroup analysis

Multigroup comparisons were carried out by calculating differences between regression paths in the SEM model. Bootstrapping at 2,000 iterations was used, and bias was corrected at 90

percent confidence level. Difference in regression weights, associated error and confidence intervals were calculated using a user-defined estimand to calculate a *p* value, which was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between groups (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Kruse *et al.*, 2001). Results of the multigroup analysis are presented in Table IV.

Comparing groups B1 and B2 showed no statistically significant differences in the conceptualised relationships between any of the latent variables across constructs. **H2** was therefore not supported. Multigroup comparison of the British and Pakistani sub-samples in Study 1 showed differences amongst two paths within the model for relationships between celebrity effectiveness and perception of advert and the relationship between perception of advert and attitude towards advert. **H3** was thus partially supported. Results of multigroup analysis showed statistically significant differences in path relationships for Study 2 across the British and Pakistani groups. Paths between match-up and celebrity effectiveness ($\Delta\beta$: -.036, *p*<.05) and between attractiveness and celebrity effectiveness were significantly different ($\Delta\beta$: .252, *p*<.001). The relationship between celebrity effectiveness and perception of advert was also significantly different (*$\Delta\beta$: .155, p*<.05). This means, celebrity effectiveness showed a lower predictive value on perception of advert for the Pakistani group. Attitude towards advert had a stronger relationship with purchase intention for the Pakistani group (*$\Delta\beta$: -.223, p*<.005), while the relationship between attitude towards brand and purchase intention was higher for the British group (*$\Delta\beta$: .208, p*<.05). **H4** was thus partially supported.

Comparison between P1 and P2 revealed significant differences in multi-paths, which indicates partial support for **H5**. According to the MGA results, inclusion of explicit sex appeals in the advert led to match-up levels having a higher predictive value on celebrity effectiveness in Study 2 ($\Delta\beta$=.278, *p*<.001). The regression weight of attractiveness, which had a strong predictive value on celebrity effectiveness for Study 1 ($\Delta\beta$=.831, *p*<.001), decreased significantly from Study 1 to Study 2 ($\Delta\beta$=.37, *p*<.001). The predictive value of celebrity effectiveness on perception of advert decreased in Study 2 (*$\Delta\beta$: .098, p*<.001), while the predictive value of celebrity effectiveness on perception of brand increased (*$\Delta\beta$: -.018, p*<.005. The predictive value of perception of brand on attitude towards brand was also negatively impacted by the inclusion of sexuality in the advert, significant (*$\Delta\beta$: .078, p*<.05 level. Results also showed that sexuality in the advert led to a statistically significant decrease in the predictive value of attitude towards brand and purchase intention ($\Delta\beta$=.194, *p*<.05).

[Place Table IV here]

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Discussions and Conclusion

This research develops a model that conceptualises the impact of celebrity effectiveness on consumer purchase intention. Findings demonstrate that the attractiveness of a celebrity, along with the perceived level of match-up between the celebrity, product and brand, impact celebrity effectiveness. This is consistent with research on source attractiveness (Till and Busler, 2000; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018; Qin, 2020; Chen *et al.,* 2021) and match-up hypothesis (Lee and Thorson, 2008; Wright, 2016). Results also show that consumer attitudes towards the brand do impact on purchase intention (Liu *et al*., 2007; Knoll and Matthes, 2017). Importantly, findings reveal that the impact of celebrity effectiveness is better predicted by consideration of the serial mediating effects of perception and attitude towards both the advert and the brand. This is found to be the case for both Study 1 and Study 2 across the cultures of Britain and Pakistan. These results support findings by Choi and Rifon (2012), Bergkvist *et al*. (2016), Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) and Moazeni *et al*. (2020), which state that advert and campaign design play a critical role in influencing consumer response to advertising.

This research examined the cross-cultural effectiveness of endorsement by international celebrities and how the practice can be employed across cultures to promote a global brand. A majority of British and Pakistani respondents had an overall favourable response to the endorsement in Study 1 viewing the celebrity as attractive, likeable and a good fit with the endorsed brand. The featured celebrity has cultivated an image which includes sexual appeals and often displays sexuality in an explicit manner in fashion, clothing, and style – in real life events and via shared content on social media (Cosmopolitan, 2021). Furthermore, fashion and beauty brands previously endorsed by the celebrity have incorporated explicit sex appeals into advert design (Cosmopolitan, 2021). Interestingly, this indicates that despite sexuality being discouraged within Pakistan, consumers within the country do not filter and evaluate a foreign celebrity's lifestyle and behaviour through their own cultural and religious values. This supports the suggestion that globalisation within a region can lead to the presence of a global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007) and demonstrates the influence of individual personal-level beliefs on consumer perceptions, an aspect which is surprising within the collectivist culture of Pakistan.

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Results of multigroup analysis show that there are minimal differences between British and Pakistani consumer responses to the celebrity-endorsed advert design in Study 1. This means that celebrity branding can indeed have cross-cultural appeal across diverse international markets when the advert design does not include explicit sex appeals. This is again supportive of literature finding that globalisation and westernisation can lead to a level of homogeneity across cultures, creating a global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007; De Burgh-Woodman, 2014). The findings demonstrate that a degree of shared similarities between consumers belonging to the two cultures is present. Critically, this provides an opportunity for the development of global brands using integrated strategies to ensure a harmonious message is communicated across cultures.

Results illustrated that British consumers are not stimulated by the inclusion of perceived explicit sex appeals in celebrity-endorsed adverts and have comparable reactions to both advert designs. While this does support literature stating that sexuality is accepted and utilised successfully in Western cultures (Wirtz *et al.*, 2018), it also demonstrates that explicit sex appeals do not necessarily lead to enhanced positive attitudes or purchase intentions in comparison to advertising that does not contain explicit sex appeals. In contrast, the inclusion of explicit sex appeals does lead to adverse consumer response within the Pakistani market. When explicit sex appeals are used, the impact of celebrity attractiveness on the advert and brand is lessened and the advert design has increased impact on purchase intention. This can be explained by the discouragement of sexuality within Pakistani culture in general and the reduced acceptance of sex appeals in religious societies (Putrevu and Swimberghek, 2013; Mumtaz and Mitha, 2016). These findings support studies which assert that in countries where religion remains important, adherence to social norms is increased (Melnyk *et al.*, 2021). Results also complement literature stating that consumers will respond negatively to communication messages which are contradictory to national cultural values and beliefs (Steenkamp, 2019). When taken in conjunction with the positive response to international celebrities, this finding illustrates that despite the favourable response to Western celebrities, salient overarching country-level cultural and religious beliefs within Pakistan inform cognitive and affective attitudes towards advert design. Therefore, it should not be assumed that all advertising appeals which can be successfully used in Western countries have cross-culture transference.

Theoretical contributions

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This empirical research extends the current knowledge on international celebrity marketing by developing a research model that predicts the impact of celebrity effectiveness on consumer purchase intention across cultures. The model helps address the need for adoption of a multifaceted approach to the field of celebrity branding. The cross-cultural validation of the model posits consideration of two overarching factors. First, employing a popular and well-liked international celebrity is not sufficient to enhance positive consumer response to the endorsement. Rather, the manner of portrayal of the celebrity through advert design is critical to successful international celebrity branding. Second, the models of celebrity effectiveness need to be collated and used in conjunction with consumer behaviour models to effectively predict the impact of the tactic on consumers.

The prediction of purchase intention for a celebrity-endorsed product is well explained through the utilising of principles from cognitive-affective theory. This research demonstrates the necessity of considering the serial mediating effects of perception and attitude of not just the brand but also the advert design in predicting the effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intentions. Although existing studies have previously analysed celebrity endorsement from various perspectives (Spry *et al*., 2011; Winterich *et al*., 2018; Fowler and Thomas, 2019; Chen *et al*., 2021), to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no studies have considered all of the aforementioned aspects to conceptualise the effects of celebrity endorsement on purchase intention.

Multigroup analysis of the experiment revealed that the themes and appeal in the advert design moderate consumer response to celebrity endorsement. The developed model was tested across cultures under two diverse conditions to further enhance its validity through replication of findings. The validation of the model also provides an explanation for inconsistencies and at times fragmented results within existing research regarding the effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer attitude and purchase intention.

This research also widens literature on global consumer culture and international marketing. Part of the research is carried out in Pakistan, which is an underrepresented market within academia and thus provides a novel perspective. It also examines the effects of exposure to global brands on consumers and aids in addressing the need for research into global consumer culture from non-Western perspectives (Wang *et al*., 2017; Steenkamp, 2019). Findings reveal that, rather than globalisation creating homogeneous consumer markets, global consumer culture is on a spectrum. Although there is evidence of convergence in preference of

international celebrities and in the consumption of brands across cultures, undertaking global branding from a strictly Western perspective is not suitable across divergent markets. This is found to be the case even if high levels of globalisation can be witnessed within the country. The comparative element of this research reveals that environmental and cultural factors, along with the appeals and themes used within advert design, should guide development of international marketing strategies. Additionally, the multigroup analysis also provides insight into instances when integrated and non-integrated global and domestic strategies can be utilised by global brands. This research also makes a contribution by developing a matrix that provides useful insights on levels of standardisation and adaptation in international marketing campaigns.

Practical implications

Celebrity endorsement is frequently employed across global markets to promote international brands and to increase product purchases (Winterich *et al*., 2018; Shukla and Dubey, 2021). This research stipulates practical implications for developing international marketing strategies using celebrity branding and provides suggestions on consumer culture positioning strategies. Syntheses of the conditions which guide marketers in developing marketing strategies when using international celebrity branding across countries are summarised in Figure II. Based on the results of the structural equation modelling and multigroup analysis, we recommend that practitioners need to consider the target market and environmental conditions within a country, alongside the themes and appeal in the advert design. Depending on the advert design and cultural environment, marketers can use a global and integrated strategy, domestic and integrated strategy or domestic and non-integrated strategy. Resultant from our findings, we advise practitioners to employ a global integrated strategy to maximise celebrity branding efforts across cultures.

[Place Figure II here]

Advertising themes and designs which use explicit sex appeals can be employed successfully within Britain. However, this strategy is not transferable across cultures and cannot be utilised for global branding efforts. Therefore, if explicit sex appeals are utilised in the advert design, a domestic and integrated strategy should be employed. British respondents display consistency between perceptual cognitive and affective attitudinal elements regardless of advert design and the celebrity endorser. Practitioners can adopt an integrated approach to marketing

communications and align the advert design with associations of the celebrity endorser to facilitate the meaning transfer process (Knoll and Matthes, 2017; Schimmelpfennig and Hunt, 2020). Different marketing channels can be used to build cohesive campaigns which align with the practitioner's visions for the brand. However, due to Pakistani respondents' aversion to explicit sex appeals in advert design, if this strategy is used, marketing communication efforts cannot be standardised across countries. Practitioners will thus need to employ a domestic and non-integrated strategy within the market and ensure advertising aligns with salient cultural and religious values.

To build global brands, practitioners should shift their focus from a Western perspective to a global one. Results show commonalities do exist even across divergent consumer cultures, and these should be capitalised upon to undertake strategic international marketing efforts. Findings demonstrate that internationally known celebrities can be effectively used across countries with different cultures. Practitioners can utilise Western celebrities within the Pakistani market regardless of whether the celebrity has cultivated an image which includes explicit and implicit sex appeals. Thus, brands can adopt a global approach to selecting celebrity endorsers. As such, emphasis can be placed on integrating marketing efforts across countries as this will enable brands to build a congruent image.

Practitioners are advised that Pakistani consumers demonstrate divergent responses to sexuality associated with a celebrity endorser in comparison to their response to sexual appeals in advertising. Thus, regardless of acceptance of sexuality in a celebrity's lifestyle, Pakistani consumers perceive stimuli within advertising through a cultural lens and are not accepting of advertising messages or content which are contradictory to their national culture. Consequently, if explicit sex appeals are used in the advert design, despite the favourable response to the celebrity endorser, Pakistani consumers will not intend to purchase the product. Additionally, it will also lead to unfavourable attitudes towards the endorsed brand. Therefore, when designing advertising themes for a global brand to have cross-cultural appeal, practitioners should place priority on maintaining unison between the advertising messages and the environmental conditions. This is particularly important for countries such as Pakistan, where findings show that despite evidence of globalisation, cultural and religious beliefs are retained but manifest on consumer behaviour in unpredictable ways. Employing a global integrated strategy can thus induce harmony, consistency, and synergy in the communications message across countries. The spread of global media in Pakistan, along with increased usage

of social media channels, posits that communication efforts can be coordinated using universal global platforms across Britain and Pakistan. A range of marketing communication tactics such as television, print and digital and social media can thus be employed. Use of this strategy also entails the advantage of benefiting from economies of scale. Marketers can thus take a holistic approach in targeting their consumer markets across countries and maximise the persuasive impact of advertising.

Simultaneously, practitioners need to be cautious of the fact that integration of global media across countries means marketing efforts undertaken on global platforms intended for the British market, or other Western markets, are still likely to be visible across cultures. Thus, if global brands do adopt regional or non-integrated strategies, Pakistani consumers could still be susceptible to advertising efforts intended for divergent markets. This would lead to inconsistency between the communications message and negatively impact brand salience within the country. Furthermore, as the increase in user-generated content leads to enhanced sharing of brand experience by consumers (Wang, 2021), any unfavourable responses to advertising can be exacerbated by going viral. Due to user-generated content being viewed as authentic and credible (Lee and Eastin, 2021; Wang, 2021), this could significantly devalue brand image equity. In Pakistan, explicit sex appeals within advertising are found to outweigh the benefits of using celebrity endorsement. Therefore, exposure to such advert themes and appeals could ultimately alienate the consumer market. Adopting a domestic or local approach to celebrity branding is thus not risk-free. Furthermore, findings revealed that using explicit sexual appeals within advertising did not lead to enhanced favourable responses from British consumers. Thus, consequently, adopting a global integrated approach to international celebrity branding emerges as the most suitable strategy. This will allow for marketing communication messages to be delivered strategically to a global audience, which effectively targets diverse consumer groups while simultaneously building a global brand with a harmonious cohesive image.

Limitations and future research

This research provides a focused investigation of celebrity branding for a fashion brand and adverts featuring cosmetics and beauty products. The developed model could be contextually dependent, and therefore future research is encouraged to test its validity across other fashion sub-categories or other globally significant industries. This research focused on two cultural contexts of Britain and Pakistan. While this provides novel insights into the field of celebrity

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endorsement and international marketing from a cross-country perspective, findings may be limited for other countries, for example, in Africa and South America. Further research on divergent cultural and religious markets would help enhance knowledge on how cultural and environmental factors at national level influence consumer responses to advertising. Lastly, this research focused on female consumers to allow for more precise insight into a valuable consumer group, but this also means the findings of this research are not necessarily applicable across genders, which is an area that further research could address.

Note: [1] Celebrity name is not reported in this paper.
             [2] Brand name is not reported in this paper.

[Place Appendix here]

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Table I: Respondent's profile and their familiarity with the celebrity

Variable	British		Pakistani	
	N	%	N	%
Sample size	626	48.1	676	51.9
Age				
18–25	194	31.0	212	31.4
26–33	295	47.1	356	52.7
34–41	106	16.9	88	13.0
42–49	31	5.0	20	3.0
Education level				
Less than High School	2	.3	1	.1
High School	238	38.0	131	19.4
University: Bachelors	316	50.5	440	65.1
University: PG/Masters	65	10.4	93	13.8
Doctorate	5	0.8	11	1.6
Religion				
Islam	35	5.6	676	100%
Christianity	299	47.8	0	0
Other	163	26.0	0	0
N/A	129	21.0	0	0
Celebrity familiarity				
Yes, the celebrity is (correctly identified celeb)	492	78.6	496	73.4
The celebrity is familiar	109	17.4	143	21.2
No	25	4.0	37	5.5

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Table II: Results of validity testing and descriptive means of variables

Scale Items	Study 1				Study 2			
	Factor Loadings	α	CR	AVE	Factor Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Celebrity Effectiveness								
Attractiveness (Means-Study1: B1: 4.45, P1: 5.34- Study 2: B2: 4.58, P2: 4.60)		.96	.97	.85		.96	.96	.85
1. Beautiful	.91				.91			
2. Classy	.93				.96			
3. Likeable	.96				.96			
4. Sexy	.87				.82			
5. Appealing	.93				.93			
Match-up (Means-Study1: B1: 4.60, P1: 5.22- Study 2: B2: 4.32, P2: 3.96)		.94	.94	.84		.94	.94	.84
1. Good fit between celebrity & brand	.90				.91			
2. Logical to endorse	.93				.93			
3. Appropriate to endorse	.92				.91			
Perception of advert (Means-Study1: B1: 5.31, P1: 5.76- Study 2: B2: 5.21, P2: 3.83)		.92	.91	.63		.94	.94	.70
1. Classy	.93				.95			
2. Tasteful	.75				.90			
3. Captures my attention	.89				.87			
4. Appropriate	.52				.73			
5. Sexy	.79				.77			
6. Signifies beauty	.93				.95			
Perception of brand (Means-Study1: B1: 5.07, P1: 5.31- Study 2: B2: 4.81, P2: 4.29)		.96	.96	.78		.97	.97	.83
1. Desirable	.93				.95			
2. High quality	.93				.96			
3. Classy	.93				.96			
4. Fashionable	.94				.90			
5. Tasteful	.55				.79			
6. Reliable/dependable	.93				.93			
7. Sexy	.91				.89			
Attitude towards advert (Means-Study1: B1: 4.79, P1: 5.30- Study 2: B2: 4.93, P2: 3.48)		.96	.96	.89		.97	.97	.90
1. Feel positive about advert	.95				.95			
2. The advert is appealing	.94				.96			
3. Favourable attitude towards advert	.94				.95			
Attitude towards brand (Means-Study1: B1: 4.96, P1: 5.68- Study 2: B2: 4.98, P2: 4.54)		.94	.94	.85		.95	.95	.87
1. Feel positive about brand	.91				.92			
2. The brand is appealing	.93				.95			
3. Favourable attitude towards brand	.92				.93			
Purchase Intention (Means-Study1: B1: 4.81, P1: 5.45- Study 2: B2: 4.80, P2: 3.75)		.97	.97	.85		.97	.97	.87
1. Intend to buy next time	.94				.96			
2. Seek out to buy	.94				.96			
3. Willing to buy endorsed by celeb	.89				.87			
4. Interested in buying	.91				.92			
5. Compare to other brands	.93				.95			

Note: α: Cronbach's alpha, CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted.

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Table III: Results of mediation test

Mediation sequence	Serial indirect effect	S.E.	Confidence interval		P value
			Lower	Upper	
H1a: Celebrity effectiveness → perception advert → attitude advert → purchase intention					
British Study 1	.127	.033	.077	.187	.001***
British Study 2	.070	.033	.019	.130	.015*
Pakistani Study 1	.140	.046	.074	.228	.001***
Pakistani Study 2	.146	.023	.112	.188	.001***
H1b: Celebrity effectiveness → perception brand → attitude brand → purchase intention					
British Study 1	.268	.034	.216	.329	.001***
British Study 2	.273	.034	.221	.335	.001***
Pakistani Study 1	.399	.050	.320	.485	.001***
Pakistani Study 2	.173	.023	.137	.214	.001***

Note: S.E.=Standard Error, ***P is significant at.001 level, *p is significant at.05 level
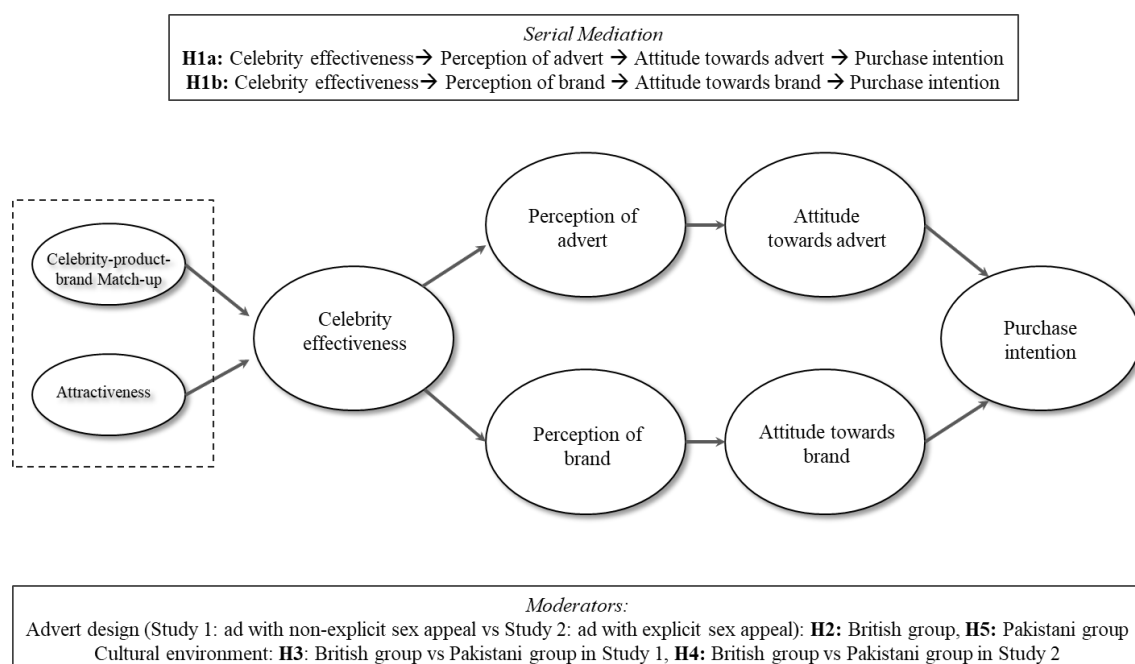

Figure I. Proposed research model

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HORIZONTAL FACTORS ACROSS TWO CULTURES
(target market & environmental conditions)

Figure II: Global celebrity branding strategies (standardization vs adaptation)

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Advert designs for Study 1 and Study 2

Advert Design for Study 1

Advert Design for Study 2

Table IV: Results of multigroup analysis

Groups/path	β of group 1	β of group 2	Δβ	Estimate	Lower	Upper	P value	Result
British S1 – British S2	**B1**	**B2**						**H2: Not supported**
Match-up →celebrity effectiveness	.396***	.388***	.008	-.025	-.310	.245	.861	B1 = B2
Attractiveness →celebrity effectiveness	.685***	.713***	-.028	.074	-.725	.902	.859	B1 = B2
Celebrity effectiveness → perception advert	.968***	.990***	-.022	-.003	-.106	.108	.979	B1 = B2
Celebrity effectiveness → perception brand	.760***	.792***	-.032	.029	-.058	.111	.583	B1 = B2
Perception advert → attitude advert	.951***	.909***	.042	.060	-.008	.119	.150	B1 = B2
Perception brand → attitude brand	.924***	.856***	.068	.011	-.042	.063	.734	B1 = B2
Attitude advert → purchase intention	.225***	.128***	.097	.097	-.033	.239	.208	B1 = B2
Attitude brand → purchase intention	.620***	.672***	-.052	-.062	-.204	.062	.403	B1 = B2
H3: British S1 – Pakistani S1	**B1**	**P1**						**H3: Partially supported**
Match-up →celebrity effectiveness	.396***	.416***	-.02	.093	-.150	.353	.555	B1 = P1
Attractiveness →celebrity effectiveness	.685***	.831***	-.146	-.336	-1.243	.568	.560	B1 = P1
Celebrity effectiveness → perception advert	.968***	.933***	.035	-.171	-.281	-.065	.014*	B1 > P1
Celebrity effectiveness → perception brand	.760***	.830***	-.07	-.105	-.200	-.005	.081	B1 = P1
Perception advert → attitude advert	.951***	.948***	.003	.080	.020	.138	.028*	B1 > P1
Perception brand → attitude brand	.924***	.904***	.02	-.029	-.096	.031	.423	B1 = P1
Attitude advert → purchase intention	.225***	.195***	.03	.020	-.129	.153	.848	B1 = P1
Attitude brand → purchase intention	.620***	.658***	-.038	-.107	-.247	.042	.246	B1 = P1
British S2 – Pakistani S2	**B2**	**P2**						**H4: Partially supported**
Match-up →celebrity effectiveness	.388***	.694***	-.306	.889	.396	1.630	.001***	B2 < P2
Attractiveness →celebrity effectiveness	.713***	.461***	.252	-.686	-1.075	-.350	.001***	B2 > P2
Celebrity effectiveness → perception advert	.990***	.835***	.155	.127	.030	.231	.028*	B2 > P2
Celebrity effectiveness → perception brand	.792***	.848***	-.056	.058	-.024	.144	.249	B2 = P2
Perception advert → attitude advert	.909***	.937***	-.028	.019	-.038	.086	.517	B2 = P2
Perception brand → attitude brand	.856***	.826***	.03	.045	-.014	.104	.197	B2 = P2
Attitude advert → purchase intention	.128***	.351***	-.223	-.234	-.355	-.101	.003**	B2 < P2
Attitude brand → purchase intention	.672***	.464***	.208	.157	.030	.276	.049*	B2 > P2
Pakistani S1 – Pakistani S2	**P1**	**P2**						**H5: Partially supported**
Match-up →celebrity effectiveness	.416***	.694***	-.278	-.804	-1.161	-.494	.001***	P1 < P2
Attractiveness →celebrity effectiveness	.831***	.461***	.37	1.299	.726	2.144	.001***	P1 > P2
Celebrity effectiveness → perception advert	.933***	.835***	.098	.295	.190	.399	.001***	P1 > P2
Celebrity effectiveness → perception brand	.830***	.848***	-.018	.192	.101	.289	.002**	P1 < P2
Perception advert → attitude advert	.948***	.937***	.011	-.001	-.065	.054	.925	P1 = P2
Perception brand → attitude brand	.904***	.826***	.078	.084	.014	.153	.048*	P1 > P2
Attitude advert → purchase intention	.195***	.351***	-.156	-.158	-.291	-.022	.062	P1 = P2
Attitude brand → purchase intention	.658***	.464***	.194	.202	.068	.324	.015*	P1 > P2

Note: β= Standardised regression weight, *p significant at.05, **p significant at.005, ***p significant at.001.