IMPACT OF CONGRUENCE BETWEEN SPORTS CELEBRITY AND BRAND PERSONALITY ON PURCHASE INTENTION: THE CASE OF MINERAL WATER CATEGORY IN LITHUANIA

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In Lithuania as in other post-soviet and emerging countries, the practice of using celebrities in advertising is relatively new, but the trend has been growing over the past two decades. The study performed in Lithuanian mineral water category analyses relation between purchase intention of the advertised brand and such independent variables as sports celebrity, brand personality, celebrity similarity to the consumer and consumer attitude towards the celebrity. This paper proves that congruence between the celebrity and brand personality positively impacts purchase intention of the advertised brand. Brand personality turns to have the most impact on purchase intention. The study also revealed that the more consumers find themselves similar to the celebrity, the more they are willing to purchase the brand. However, consumer attitude towards the celebrity appears to be not as important as it was expected.

Key words: *celebrity, brand personality, purchase intention*

1. Introduction

e increasing competition for consumers has encouraged marketing specialists to use celebrity endorsement in advertising in order to increase sales. Celebrity endorsement is the most popular method used for brand reinforcement. Use of a celebrity does not necessary guarantee sales, but it can a ract a ention to advertisement's message and

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form a more favourable opinion of the brand (Erdogan et al., 2001; Sonwalkar et al., 2011). Celebrity may also have a positive e ect on acceptance of advertising message, because the information heard from celebrity's lips is perceived as reliable (Amos et al., 2008). Moreover, such endorsement creates equity for both the advertised product/ brand and the celebrity (Seno & Lukas, 2007).

Recently both concepts of celebrities and brand personalities have been analysed extensively in the scienti c literature. Brand personality has a positive e ect on brand loyalty, brand recommendation and satisfaction with brand (Kapferer, 2008; Lin, 2010). Distinctive brand personality creates in consumer's memory a set of unique and positive characteristics, which consequently form and enlarge brand equity (Keller, 2008). Celebrity endorsement is mainly analysed in the context of source credibility, a ractiveness, its e ectiveness, positive or negative impact on the image of the advertised brand (Erdogan et al., 2001; Pringle & Binet, 2004; Amos et al., 2008; Sonwalkar et al., 2011).

Recent studies prove that the celebrity should match the image and the personality of the advertised brand (Lee & orson, 2008; Roy & Moorthi, 2009). However, just few studies so far address the triangle of congruence/ similarity between celebrity, brand personality and consumer (Pringle, 2004). e literature review on the topic of congruence between brand personality and consumer personality/ self-image in general grounds the idea that in order for the brand to be successful and loved by customers, its personality should match the personality or self-image of the consumer (Fennin et al., 2005; Maehle & Shneor, 2010; Lin, 2010). Celebrity can be also perceived as a brand (Pringle, 2004; Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010); Hyman & Sierra, 2010); thus in a single advertisement two brands (celebrity and the advertised brand/ product) and their relation with the consumer are involved.

 erefore, the main objective of this paper is to understand and provide more knowledge whether the celebrity used in advertisement should be congruent to brand personality and how this impacts the purchase intention of the advertised brand.

Previous studies on celebrity endorsement topic were mostly done in developed countries such as UK, USA, Denmark, Switzerland, etc. is research has been done in the post-soviet and emerging economy of Lithuania. e practice of celebrity use in advertising is relatively new in Lithuania compared to developed countries, but over the past years the trend has been growing extensively. Two decades ago in Lithuania it was quite uncommon to use celebrity endorsements: the society evaluated such advertisements very critically (Petrauskait , 2004; Milašius, 2006). e situation has recently changed and more and more sports celebrities, famous pop artists can be seen advertising mobile phones, telecommunication services, TV channels, mineral water, etc. On the one hand, for a long time, in Lithuania as a post-soviet country, brands as such were not so important and people were not used to them. On the other hand, a er the collapse of the Soviet Union not all Lithuanian producers who had products that were positively evaluated and recognized by customers invested in brands creation

and branding campaigns (Mrazauskait , 2014).   erefore, some producers failed on creating competitive advantage and lost their consumers.

    is study was conducted in Lithuanian mineral water category, which experienced a huge growth by 25% in sales volume in 2006 (AC Nielsen, 2006). Later this resulted in active application of traditional marketing methods such as advertising through TV, radio, newspapers, magazines; formation of local brands and branding campaigns for local brands. Today the market is highly penetrated: 73 producers of mineral water are operating in Lithuania; six main Lithuanian producers own 80% of the market (Rutkauskait , 2012). High penetration creates growth problems in local market and mineral water brands need "to steal" consumers one from another.

2. Literature review

2.1.   e concept of celebrity

McCracken (1989) argues that celebrity is any person who is well-known in society and uses this awareness purposefully appearing in advertising; moreover, celebrity has such distinctive a ributes as a ractiveness and trustworthiness. Pringle (2004) de nes celebrity as a person reasonably well-known to the general public, someone who can in uence society. Celebrities can be movie or television stars, musicians, athletes, representatives of the royal family, politicians and beau-monde. To sum up, the concept of celebrity relevant for this paper should be described as a well-known person (such as an actor, athlete, artist, etc.), who has achieved recognition in a particular area.

    Nowadays the use of celebrity in advertising is a very common practice. On average, celebrity endorsement is used in every one of   ve advertisements in the world (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010). From the time when it was revealed that use of celebrities has positive impact on purchase, more and more companies tend to use celebrities in their advertising (Hollensen & Schimmelpfennig, 2013).

    Brands are using celebrities to maximize the e ect of communication, enhance desirable associations through image and reputation of celebrity, moreover, celebrity should transfer its a ractiveness and charm to the advertised brand (Pringle, 2004). Overall, the use of celebrities in advertising has a positive impact on the advertised brand providing the following advantages: the personality of the celebrity facilitates brand recall and recognition; changes the negative a itude towards the brand, establishes the credibility, reinforces the brand; allocates the brand with needed brand image a ributes, positions the brand positively, renews the image of the brand; makes a brand well-known in the society, draws the a ention, enhances brand awareness; encourages consumers to buy; creates equity for both the advertised product-brand and the celebrity (Kaikati, 1987; Erdogan et al., 2001; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Amos et al., 2008; Sonwalkar et al., 2011).

    However, the use of celebrities in advertising has certain hazards. A celebrity caught up in a negative incident or publicity (scandal, accident or bad reputation) may have

an adverse e ect on the product or service (Louie & Obermiller, 2002). Negative publicity produces negative associations of the celebrity (Gupta, 2009).   e negative message about the celebrity is directly associated with the perception of the brand (Akturan, 2011).   e reliability and a ractiveness of the celebrity decreases when the celebrity presents more than one product, and this can lower a positive a itude towards the advertised product or service reliability (Tripp et al., 1994).

Celebrity endorsement is more common for nationally marketed products, for example, running shoes, so drinks than for local or niche ones (Sonwalkar et al., 2011). Recently celebrities have been used extensively in advertising sports goods and politics (Veer et al., 2010; Hyman & Sierra, 2010); moreover, sport celebrities are frequently used as celebrity endorsers even if the advertised product is not related to sports (Liu et al., 2007; Lear et al., 2009; Liu & Brock, 2011).

2.2. Relation between celebrity, brand personality and consumer

According to Till (1998), companies using celebrities in advertising should ensure compliance and congruence between brand and celebrity. Studies show that celebrity endorsement may have di erent degrees of e ectiveness, depending on factors, such as the match between the celebrity and the advertised product (Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Till, 1998).

  e recent study done by Hakimi et al. (2011) investigated the impact of celebrity on brand.   e results showed that credibility, a ractiveness and expertise of the celebrity have a positive relation with the brand image.   e message sent by the celebrity and the message sent by the product must be matching and consistent too.

In fact, brand personi cation took place since the time when famous people were used in advertising. Marketers make use of celebrities and their personalities in order to create needed brand personality and a ract those customers who identify themselves with celebrity (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Brand personality creation is a ected by many things (brand name, colour, packaging, logo, distribution channels, place of purchase, advertising, promotion, etc.); however, the impact of celebrity on brand personality features is perceived as one of the strongest ones (Pringle, 2004).   erefore, selection of a celebrity for advertisement is considered one of the most important decisions (Hollensen & Schimmelpfennig, 2013).

According to Lee & orson (2008), even though there is li le doubt that a match between a product and a celebrity can enhance the e ectiveness of advertisement, it is still unclear whether a match is always more persuasive than a mismatch. Lee & orson showed that celebrity endorsement is evaluated more favourably in terms of purchase intention when there is a moderate mismatch between a product and a celebrity than when there is either a complete match or an extreme mismatch.   ese e ects are more visible among respondents with higher product involvement than those with lower product involvement.

Roy & Moorthi (2009) have found out that personality dimensions are the same for celebrity and brand.   erefore, brand personality scale developed by Aaker (1997) is

valid and reliable for celebrity, too. e study also showed that celebrity has an e ect on brand personality: the celebrity transfers the meaning to the brand.

Basically, celebrities are also brands, thus the use of celebrities in advertising can be seen as a "marriage" between equal partners, where compatibility is crucial (Pringle, 2004). Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta (2010) also argue that celebrity endorsement is like a brand alliance, where meanings and values are transferred both from celebrity to brand and vice versa. However, according to Pringle (2004), compatibility is needed not only between celebrity and brand personality, but also between celebrity, brand personality and consumer. ere must be a harmony between all three elements in order for the advertised brand to be successful.

According to Byrne et al. (2003), celebrity endorsement in advertising a empts to build a congruent image between brand and consumer. Celebrities are used as aspirational groups, transferring some symbolic meaning to the consumer; this is noticed especially in sports advertising (Byrne et al., 2003; Hyman & Sierra, 2010). Celebrity should be a ractive to the target audience in a certain aspect, such as physical appearance, intellectual capabilities, sports excellence or lifestyle, only in this way celebrity has more opportunities to strengthen the brand (Pringle, 2004; Pringle & Binet, 2005).

Previous studies resulted in the conclusion that in celebrity-endorsed advertising there should be a match between the celebrity and the advertised brand or brand personality. It is also believed that celebrity transfers the meaning it owns to the brand. However, so far the topic of congruence between celebrity and brand personality was not extensively researched in its relation to purchase intention of the advertised brand. Previous studies also revealed that the celebrity should be a ractive and aspirational to the consumer; however, the question remains whether or not the celebrity should be similar to the consumer and share the same values, a itudes or beliefs.

3. Conceptual model and hypotheses development

e conceptual model (See Figure 1) is based on the idea that congruence between celebrity and brand personality has impact on purchase intention of the advertised brand (Lee & orson, 2008). Purchase intention is a dependent variable explained by such independent variables as congruence between the celebrity and the brand personality (or separately a celebrity and a brand personality), the celebrity similarity to the consumer and the consumer a itude towards the celebrity.

e main hypotheses include:
- H1: *consumers attribute the same traits both to the celebrity endorsed in advertisement and to the advertised brand personality*. e rst hypothesis represents the idea presented in the literature that the celebrity transfers the meaning to the advertised brand, it also allocates the brand with needed brand image a ributes (Pringle, 2004; Amos et al., 2008; Roy & Moorthi, 2009; Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010).

erefore, it is assumed that celebrity personality transfers its characteristics to brand personality and consumers a ribute the same traits both to celebrity

between the celebrity and the product positively influences purchase intention, accordingly, the same could be stated about the match between the celebrity and the brand personality.

4. Research methodology

The main objective of the empirical study was to find out whether the same traits are attributed both to the sports celebrity and the brand personality, and how this match or mismatch impacts the purchase intention. Moreover, such variables as celebrity similarity to the consumer and the consumer attitude towards the celebrity were also included in the study in order to understand if similarity and consumer attitudes regarding the sports celebrity explain the purchase intention of the advertised brand.

The study was conducted in Lithuania in the mineral water category. The category of mineral water was chosen because at that moment it offered a unique opportunity to implement the study including two different brands advertised by two different well-known sports celebrities. The practice of celebrities' endorsement in advertisements is relatively new in Lithuania; therefore, the cases of two independent campaigns advertising different brands in the same category are quite rare. Moreover, since 2006 the mineral water category was the one where producers constantly invested in creation of brands, branding and advertising campaigns. At the moment the competition in this market is very intense: 73 producers are operating, every year new ones are trying to enter the market (Rutkauskaitė, 2012). Therefore, brands are willing to use all possible forms of brand reinforcement, for example, such as celebrity endorsement in advertisements.

For the study two campaigns with brands advertised by well-known Lithuanian sports celebrities were chosen: "Vytautas" (advertised by A. Sabonis: a retired professional basketball player and businessman) and "Rasa Active Life" (advertised by V. Alekna: a discus thrower, who won Olympic medals in 2000, 2004 and 2008, including two gold medals).

The research questionnaire was based on Aaker's (1997) five dimensions brand personality scale which, according to Roy & Moorthi (2009) and Farhat & Khan (2011), is also applicable to measuring features attributed to the celebrity personality. 15 features brand personality and celebrity personality scales were evaluated on a five-point Likert scale.

The celebrity similarity to the consumer was analysed with a scale (Feick & Robin, 1992; Martin et al., 2008) consisting of three statements (the celebrity and I have similar values and beliefs; we have similar tastes and preferences; the celebrity is a bit like me) and their evaluation on a five-point Likert scale. The study showed that Cronbach's Alpha for this scale in the case of A. Sabonis is 0.853; in the case of V. Alekna – 0.901. Consumer attitude towards the celebrity was measured with a construct developed by Zhou & Whitla (2013), which includes three aspects of the celebrity: favourability,

a ractiveness and credibility, on a ve-point Likert scale (Cronbach's Alpha in the case of A. Sabonis – 0.759; in the case of V. Alekna – 0.873).

To measure purchase intention Rodgers' (2004) three-item scale (evaluating the likeliness to make a purchase, the need for more information and the interest in the brand advertised by the celebrity endorser) was chosen. e statements were also evaluated on a ve-point Likert scale. Cronbach's Alpha for purchase intention in the case of "Vytautas" brand advertised by A. Sabonis was 0.852; in the case of "Rasa Active Life" advertised by V. Alekna – 0.810.

In order to answer the research question, quantitative study was chosen. e research was executed using an internet survey technique and non-representative sampling. In total 183 respondents were interviewed. e collected data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) so ware.

5. Analysis and results

5.1. Demographics

e age of the respondents in the survey varied from 17 up to 59 years. Half of the respondents (48%) were 25-35, one third of the respondents (33%) – 17-24 years old. 67% of the interviewed were females, 84% lived in the capital city Vilnius and 93% had a degree in higher education. 58% of the respondents had higher personal income, 31% – average income and 11 % – lower income. 58% were married or living together with a partner, 42% were single or divorced/ separated.

e demographics of recruited participants are similar to the demographics of representative internet surveys, where the sample mostly consists of females with higher education living in big cities and having higher personal income (Kompiuteri ir interneto naudotoj tyrimas, 2013).

Analysis of results according to the demographic pro le of the respondents did not show any di erences.

5.2. General results on evaluation of brand personalities and sports celebrities

e evaluation of brand personalities of two brands (See Table 1) revealed that "Vytautas" brand is perceived as more competent, less sophisticated and more rugged compared to "Rasa Active Life" brand. However, both "Vytautas" and "Rasa Active Life" are seen as sincere and exciting.

e comparison of sports celebrities (See Table 1) showed that A.Sabonis and V. Alekna are evaluated similarly on excitement, sophistication and ruggedness dimensions. is might be due to the reason that both celebrities are sportsmen, who achieved impressive results during their professional careers. However, V. Alekna is perceived as more sincere and competent compared to A. Sabonis.

e research revealed that in both cases the brand personality and the celebrity are evaluated statistically signi cantly as having di erent characteristics.

TABLE 1. **Evaluation of the dimensions of brand personalities and celebrities (mean, 5-point scale)**

		Dimensions				
		Sincerity	Excitement	Competence	Sophistication	Ruggedness
Brand persona-lity	**"Vytautas"**	3.50	3.38	**3.48**	**2.83**	**3.25**
	"Rasa Active Life"	3.30	3.44	**3.27**	**3.05**	2.63
Celebrity	**A. Sabonis**	3.74	3.68	**4.02**	3.82	3.56
	V. Alekna	**4.09**	3.84	**4.31**	3.98	3.58

Note: bold values indicate statistically significant differences between means (p<0.05).

 e study showed that respondents perceive V. Alekna statistically significantly more similar to them compared with A. Sabonis (means 3.03 and 2.62, respectively; p<0.05). Both celebrities (A. Sabonis and V. Alekna) are well-known and quite positively evaluated in Lithuania, but respondents' a itude towards V. Alekna is statistically significantly more positive than A. Sabonis (means 4.18 and 3.83, respectively; p<0.05).

Nevertheless, the research showed that V. Alekna is perceived as more similar to consumers and evaluated more positively compared to A. Sabonis, "Vytautas" at the moment is more preferred by Lithuanian consumers compared to "Rasa Active Life" (56% and 36%, respectively), this might be the reason for its stronger buying intentions (means 2.85 and 2.43, respectively; p<0.05).

5.3. Congruence between the sports celebrity and the brand personality

 e correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coe cient was chosen for testing the rst hypothesis. e research proves the ndings of other studies regarding the congruence between the celebrity and the brand personality and meaning transfer from celebrity to brand (Pringle, 2004; Amos et al., 2008; Roy & Moorthi, 2009; Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010). *Hypothesis H1 is supported in the case of "Rasa Active Life" and celebrity V. Alekna for sincerity and excitement dimensions*: respondents a ributed sincerity dimensions (r=0.410; p<0.05) and excitement dimensions (r=0.305; p<0.05) both to the sports celebrity and the brand. *H1 is supported for both brands and celebrities for the dimensions of competence, sophistication and ruggedness.* ese dimensions are a ributed both to "Vytautas" & A. Sabonis (competence r=0.318; p<0.05; sophistication r=0.371; p<0.05; ruggedness r=0.231; p<0.05), and to "Rasa Active Life" & V. Alekna (competence r=0.342; p<0.05; sophistication r=0.393; p<0.05; ruggedness r=0.277; p<0.05).

 e correlation was also found between both the celebrity similarity to the consumer and the consumer a itude towards the celebrity and purchase intention. e correlation between the celebrity similarity to the consumer and purchase intention is found in the case of both brands and sports celebrities ("Vytautas" & A. Sabonis: r=0.342; p<0.05;

"Rasa Active Life" & V. Alekna: r=0.432; p<0.05); the e ect is stronger in the case of "Rasa Active Life". e correlation between consumer a itude towards the celebrity and purchase intention was found only in the case of "Rasa Active Life" & V. Alekna (r=0.206; p<0.05).

Furthermore, the congruence between the sports celebrity and the brand personality correlated with purchase intention, too. In order to perform correlation analysis, special index showing a match or mismatch (IMM) on individual respondent level between features a ributed to the sports celebrity and the brand personality for both cases was calculated. e correlation was stronger in the case of "Vytautas" & A. Sabonis (r=-0.325; p<0.05) than is the case of "Rasa Active Life" & V. Alekna (r=-0.264; p<0.05).

5.4. Measuring purchase intention

 e second, third and the fourth hypotheses were tested applying regression analysis.

 e existence of correlation between the analysed variables suggested performing linear regression analysis in which dependent variable purchase intention (PI) is predicted by independent variables such as celebrity (CE), brand personality (BP), celebrity similarity to consumer (CSCO) and consumer a itude towards celebrity (COAC).

A stepwise method was chosen to nd out which of the mentioned variables have the most impact on purchase intention of the advertised brand in both "Vytautas" and "Rasa Active Life" cases. e performed regression analysis indicated that there is signi cant relation between the advertised brand personality and the celebrity similarity to the consumer and purchase intention (p=0.000 in the case of both brands); these predictors have the most impact on purchase intention. In "Vytautas" case the equation explains 34.8% of its purchase intention (R^2=0.348), and in "Rasa Active Life" case: 26.5% (R^2=0.265).

 e regression equation for purchase intention of the "Vytautas" brand is:

$PI_1 = -0.485 + 0.828*BP + 0.215*CSCO$

For purchase intention of the "Rasa Active Life" brand:

$PI_1 = 0.179 + 0.537*BP + 0.175*CSCO$

 ere is no multi-collinearity problem for both brands for all variables (VIF<4) (See Table 2). Standardised coe cients Beta show that in both cases brand personality has the most impact on purchase intention of the advertised brand (See Table 2). Unlike expected, the celebrity itself and consumer a itude towards the celebrity are much less important compared to other variables, especially the brand personality. erefore, *Hypothesis H2 (celebrity similarity to consumer has a positive effect on purchase intention) is supported and Hypothesis H3 (consumer attitude towards celebrity has a positive effect on purchase intention) is rejected in for both brands.*

 e results of previous regression analysis for purchase intention suggested implementing further linear regression analysis for predicting brand personality by

TABLE 2. Coefficients of linear regression analysis

Dependent variable	Brand	Independent variable	Standardized Coefficient Beta	Sig.	Collinearity Statistic VIF
PI$_1$	"Vytautas"	BP	0.513	0.000	1.143
		CSCO	0.161	0.013	1.143
	"Rasa Active Life"	BP	0.410	0.000	1.230
		CSCO	0.181	0.011	1.230
BP	"Vytautas"	CSCO	0.263	0.001	1.230
		CE	0.210	0.006	1.230
	"Rasa Active Life"	CSCO	0.302	0.000	1.273
		CE	0.281	0.000	1.273
PI$_2$	"Vytautas"	CSCO	0.331	0.000	1.001
		IMM	-0.313	0.000	1.001
	"Rasa Active Life"	CSCO	0.255	0.001	1.295
		IMM	-0,295	0.000	1.162
		COAC	0.184	0.021	1.404

such variables as celebrity, celebrity similarity to the consumer and consumer a itude towards the celebrity. Regression analysis using a stepwise method showed that brand personality for both brands can be predicted by such variables as celebrity similarity to the consumer and celebrity (p=0.000). Predictors explain "Vytautas" brand personality by 16.1% (R^2=0. 161); "Rasa Active Life" brand personality by 24.9% (R^2=0.249).

e regression equation for "Vytautas" brand personality is:

BP = 0.352 + 0.063*CSCO + 0.103*CE

For "Rasa Active Life" brand personality:

BP = 0.347 + 0.054*CSCO + 0.097*CE

VIF is less than 4 for both brands (See Table 2), so there is no multi-collinearity. e results of regression analysis suggest the idea that despite the fact that celebrity does not have the direct relation with purchase intention, it might have indirect relation through the personality of the advertised brand. As the research showed, consumers perceive brand as sharing the same characteristics as the sports celebrity: they a ributed the same characteristics both to the celebrity and the brand personality. at is why brand personality turns to be a more important predictor compared to celebrity.

Regardless of the performed analysis, the question whether congruence between the sports celebrity and the brand personality has a positive impact on purchase intention is still not answered. erefore, one more linear regression analysis is performed for predicting purchase intention. In this case the index of match or mismatch (IMM, see also Subsection 5.3.) between the sports celebrity and the brand personality is analysed together with the similarity of a celebrity to the consumer (CSCO), and with the

consumer a itude towards the celebrity (COAC). Regression analysis using a stepwise method showed that for both brands a match or mismatch between the sports celebrity and the brand personality has an impact on purchase intention (p=0.000). Regression equation explains purchase intention of the "Vytautas" brand by 21.5% (R^2=0.215); of the "Rasa Active Life" brand by 20.7% (R^2=0.207).

e regression equation for purchase intention of the "Vytautas" brand is:

$PI_2 = 1.896 + 0.443*CSCO – 0.490*IMM$

For purchase intention of the "Rasa Active Life" brand:

$PI_2 = 1.003 + 0.246*CSCO – 0.400*IMM + 0.238*COAC$

It should be noticed that independent variables have quite similar impact on purchase intention (See Table 2), however, in the case of "Rasa Active Life" a match or mismatch between the sports celebrity and the brand personality is more important compared to consumer similarity to celebrity than in the case of "Vytautas". Moreover, in the case of "Rasa Active Life" consumer a itude towards celebrity also appeared to be important. e negative sign before standardized Beta coe cients (See Table 2) shows that the major the di erence between the sports celebrity and the brand personality, the lower the purchase intention is. erefore, *Hypothesis H4 is supported for both brands: congruence between celebrity and brand personality has a positive impact on purchase intention.*

6. Summary and discussion

Literature review on the topic of celebrity shows that without any doubts celebrity endorsement in advertisements has a positive impact on e ectiveness of advertisement and helps to form favourable brand image. e studies carried out on celebrity endorsement topic state that celebrity should match the image of the advertised brand, moreover, personalities of celebrity and brand should t (Pringle, 2004; Roy & Moorthi, 2009). is paper proves the results of previous studies about meaning transfer from celebrity to brand (Pringle, 2004; Amos et al., 2008; Roy & Moorthi, 2009; Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010) and points out that consumers a ribute the same characteristics both to the endorsed celebrity and brand personality. Moreover, the research revealed that congruence between sports celebrity and brand personality has a positive impact on purchase intention.

e results of this study can be applicable to other emerging and post-soviet countries where the history of celebrity endorsement in advertisements is similar to Lithuanian context. e research supports ideas presented by Pringle (2004) that while analysing celebrity endorsement in advertising it is important to take into account not only brand personality and celebrity, but also consumer. e study justi es the idea that the more consumers feel similar to the celebrity, the more they are willing to purchase the advertised brand. However, the celebrity itself turns out to play an indirect role

in predicting consumers' purchase intention: the assumption is made that celebrity influences purchase intention through brand personality. And this might be due to the fact that both celebrity and brand personality are attributed the same features.

Unlike earlier performed studies by Erdogan et al. (2001), Amos et al. (2008) and Sonwalkar et al. (2011), consumer attitude towards celebrity showed to be not as important as it was expected. This might be due to the reason that identification of consumers with the celebrity is more important compared to their liking or dislike of the endorser.

Both marketing managers and advertisement agencies while creating advertisements with celebrity endorsement should take into account such factor as similarity between the endorser and target audience of the advertised brand. The endorsed celebrity should be aspirational to consumers, but at the same time be "a little like us". Even though this study did not show the attitude of consumers towards celebrity to be an important factor, the attitude of target audience towards celebrity should still be considered. The celebrity should not be involved in negative publicity or some ambiguous situations, as celebrity personality transfers its characteristics to brand personality.

7. Limitations and directions for future research

Firstly, limitations of this paper are due to the fact that only one category (mineral water brands) and sports celebrities were analysed, and non-representative sample was used. Secondly, the performed research is the first phase of the study on this topic in a post-soviet country. This study already resulted in new insights regarding congruence of celebrity and brand personality and importance of celebrity similarity to the consumer. However, more precise evaluation of the triangle between brand personality, celebrity and consumer would provide deeper knowledge of the relation between these three concepts and impact on purchase intention.

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