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## **How Gender of the Consumer Shapes the Purchase Intention of the Celebrity Endorsed Crisis Brand after Product Harm Crises: A Case Study in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna**

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### **Abstract**

Celebrity endorsement as one of the product harm crises management strategies is emerging in the business world today. Company spends Millions of Dollars for celebrity endorsers to enjoy the financial benefits from a particular product or a brand. In recent years, usage of celebrities is increasing at an accelerating rate in order to regain the financial sustainability particularly during a sudden and unexpected financial loss. Therefore, the main objectives of the current study are to explore how celebrity endorsement shapes the purchase intention of the crisis brand after a product harm crisis and to work out how gender shapes this link after a product harm crises. A self-administrated, pre-tested questionnaire survey was conducted for the sample of 51 final year undergraduate marketing and business management specializing students of the faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. Questionnaire explained about two situations; control and the experiment. First, fictitious product harm crisis scenario related to the fictitious yogurt brand was documented as a control, followed by consumer purchase intention questions. Then in the experimental situation, the same purchase intention questions were documented in conjunction with celebrity endorsement, where the celebrity was used to resell the crisis brand. Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 20.0). Results of the AVOVA revealed that celebrity endorsement is an effective strategy that a wounded company can use in order to enhance the purchase intention of the crisis brand especially with respect to female consumers. Female consumers exhibited higher purchase intention ( $M= 5.67$ ) than their male counterparts ( $M=3.36$ ) with high significant level ( $p=.000$ ). Therefore, the present study reveals the significance of using celebrity endorsers particularly in women specific brand crisis. This study is particularly of great significance to the crisis managers, marketers and policy makers.

**Key words:** *Celebrity endorsement, product harm crisis, fictitious scenario, gender, purchase intention*

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