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The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Purchasing Behavior: A Business and Economic Perspective

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsement plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior, merging psychological appeal with economic influence. From a business perspective, celebrities act as powerful brand ambassadors, leveraging their popularity, credibility, and aspirational image to create strong emotional connections with consumers. This association can enhance brand recognition, differentiate products in competitive markets, and accelerate the decision-making process by reducing perceived risk for buyers. Economically, celebrity endorsements can generate substantial returns on investment by increasing sales, market share, and brand equity. The halo effect—a cognitive bias where positive impressions of a celebrity extend to the endorsed product—often

drives demand, allowing firms to command premium pricing. However, this strategy is not without risk. Negative publicity involving a celebrity can tarnish brand reputation and lead to financial losses. Additionally, in saturated markets, the authenticity of endorsements plays a critical role; consumers are becoming increasingly skeptical of purely transactional partnerships. As a result, companies now emphasize aligning celebrity values with brand identity to maintain trust. Ultimately, when strategically executed, celebrity endorsements can be a potent business tool, influencing consumer behavior through emotional engagement and perceived credibility, while delivering measurable economic benefits in competitive industries.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsements Consumers, Purchasing Behavior, Business, Economy

Introduction

Celebrity endorsement refers to a claim by a celebrity or someone of authority that a product is good thereby certifying such product as a must have. Celebrity endorsement as defined by Okafor is a technique of persuasion where customers relate to person used or featured in an advert. Celebrity endorsement is most effectively utilized by companies when the endorser's personality matches up to that of the brand or product ^[1]. The use of celebrities in commercials can have an affirmative effect on the trustworthiness, message recall, memory and likability of the commercials and on the buying motives of the target consumers ^[2]. Celebrity endorsement can be emphasized around celebrity credibility which comprises of trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness.

Celebrity credibility in endorsement is a crucial factor that influences consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. When a well-known and respected celebrity endorses a product or brand, they bring their established reputation and authenticity to the promotional campaign. This association can create a positive halo effect, enhancing the perceived quality and trustworthiness of the endorsed product [3]. Consumers often view celebrities as experts in their respective fields, and their endorsement can act as a powerful social proof, reinforcing the desirability and value of the endorsed item.

However, celebrity credibility is not guaranteed and can be fragile. Scandals, controversies, or mismatched brand associations can damage the credibility of both the celebrity and the endorsed brand. Brands must carefully consider the alignment between the celebrity's image, values, and the product being endorsed to ensure authenticity and relevance to the target audience [4]. Moreover, consumers' perceptions of a celebrity's credibility can vary across different demographic groups and cultural contexts.

To maximize the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, brands should conduct thorough research to understand the target audience, select the right celebrity fit, and maintain a transparent and consistent partnership. When executed thoughtfully, celebrity credibility can be a powerful tool in shaping consumer perceptions and driving brand loyalty.

Revolution of Celebrity Endorsement

The history of celebrity endorsement in advertising dates back to the late 19th century when testimonials from well-known figures were used to promote patent medicines [5]. In the early 20th century, celebrities from the entertainment industry, such as actors and athletes, occasionally featured in advertisements to enhance product credibility [6]. The 1920s marked a significant shift when advertisers began using famous personalities explicitly for product endorsements, with film stars like Mary Pickford and Clara Bow leading the way Sherry (2011). Post World War II, television commercials witnessed a surge in celebrity endorsements, cementing their popularity [7]. The trend further escalated in the 1980s and 1990s, with iconic figures like Michael Jordan and Cindy Crawford becoming highly sought-after brand endorsers [8]. With the advent of social media in the 21st century, celebrity endorsements have become even more prevalent and accessible to a global audience [9]. Celebrity endorsements continue to be a powerful marketing strategy, provided there is alignment with the brand and authenticity in the partnership [10].

In Nigeria, it was reported that 20% of television commercials and bill boards feature famous persons and spend about 10% of naira on advertisements. Thus, celebrity endorsement has become a prevalent form of advertising in Nigeria and elsewhere. In today's dynamic world, it is almost impossible for advertisers to deliver advertising message and information to buyers without use of celebrity in carrying out the action. The modern age mode of communication is indeed helping to pass this information readily to the target audience and market system. And because of the globalization, accessibility of hundreds of channels for the viewers of this modern era is now possible.

Scope of Consumer Purchase Behavior

Agbonifoh observed that consumer behaviour is used in two different but related senses [11]. In one sense, it refers to

those acts of individual and organization directly involved in obtaining and using economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts. Uduji and Nnabuko believed that making it easy for the customer to continue to deal with your industry is the best way to ensure repeat business [12]. Buyers are humans that have all the human frailties.

A consumer is an individual or household who buys or acquires product for ultimate consumption. This definition, according to Kotler, excludes individuals that acquire products for another production or sale [13]. Consumer/buyer behavior is a fundamental force upon which marketing theories, policies and programs depend on. Marketers need to understand buyer behavior in order to formulate efficient and effective marketing policies and strategies [14]. Consumer behaviour is the study of how people buy, what they buy, when they buy and why they buy. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, sociopsychology, anthropology and economics.

According to Kotler and Armstrong, buyer decision process consist of five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior. Clearly, the buying process starts long before the actual purchase and continue long after [15]. Marketers need to also focus on the buying process rather on just the purchase decision.

It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics, psychographics, and behavioral variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general. The study and knowledge of consumer behavior helps firms and organizations to improve their marketing strategies and product offerings. The followings are the important issues that have significant influence on consumer's psyche and their ability to take decisions: The psychology of how consumers think, feel, reason, and select between different alternatives (e.g., brands, products).

- The psychology of how the consumer is influenced by his or her environment (e.g., culture, family, signs, media).
- The behavior of consumers while shopping or making other marketing decisions.
- Limitations in consumer knowledge or information processing abilities influence decisions and marketing outcome
- How consumer motivation and decision strategies differ between products that differ in their level of importance or interest that they entail for the consumer and how marketers can adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies to more effectively reach the consumer.
- Their Age, Religion, Culture, Income, informal group and Referent Group.

According to Kotler and Armstrong, consumers go through five stages in the process of adopting a new product [15]. The five stage include:

Product awareness is when consumers become aware of the new product's existence but lacks information. This awareness can happen through various channels, such as advertising, word-of-mouth, social media etc. Product interest is when they becomes curious and seek additional

information about the product. Product evaluation, in this stage, consumers evaluate the new product to determine if it aligns with their needs, preferences, and values. Product trial is when the consumers try the product for the first time, either through a sample, a free trial, or a small purchase. Product adoption this is the final stage where consumers decide to fully incorporate the new product into their regular usage or purchase behavior.

Understanding all this, helps us adapt our strategies by taking the consumer into consideration.

Types of celebrity endorsement

Traditional Endorsements: In this type of celebrity endorsement, the celebrity appears in advertisements, commercials, or print media, endorsing the product or service directly. They may speak about the benefits of the product, share personal experiences, or simply act as a brand ambassador.

Social Media Endorsements: With the rise of social media platforms, celebrities often endorse products through their personal accounts. They may post pictures, videos, or stories showcasing the product, with a caption expressing their support and recommendation.

Product Placement: Product placement involves featuring the product in movies, TV shows, or music videos with the celebrity using or interacting with the item as part of the storyline or scene. It's a more subtle form of endorsement but can have a significant impact on brand visibility. For example, in *Squid Game*, all the contestants wore white slip-on Vans. As a result, when Halloween rolled around white vans were flying off the shelves as everyone planned to dress up as a player from the series. Vans never anticipated that the shoes would become a hit from the series but due to this placement, they saw a 7,800% spike in sales after the show gained traction.

Event Appearances: Companies often invite celebrities to attend product launches, store openings, or promotional events. The presence of a well-known personality can attract media attention and generate buzz around the brand.

Brand Ambassadors: Instead of a one-time endorsement, some celebrities become long-term brand ambassadors. They commit to endorsing the brand over an extended period, fostering a stronger association between the celebrity and the product.

Communication Platform Used In Celebrity Endorsement

Social Media: Social media platforms have become a dominant force in celebrity endorsements. Celebrities have large followings on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok. They often collaborate with brands to create sponsored content, where they post images, videos, or stories featuring the endorsed products. Social media allows for direct interaction with fans and a more personal touch to endorsements.

Television Commercials: Traditional television commercials are still a powerful tool for celebrity endorsements. These commercials are broadcast on television networks during popular shows, sports events, or special occasions, ensuring a wide audience reach. TV commercials often involve high production values and can leave a lasting impact on viewers.

Print Media: Magazines, newspapers, and billboards are other channels where celebrities convey their endorsement messages. Appearing in print ads gives endorsements a

sense of credibility and permanence. Magazine ads are especially popular in the fashion and beauty industries, where celebrities showcase products through photoshoots and interviews.

Radio Advertisements: While not as common as other mediums, radio advertisements featuring celebrities' voices can still be effective. Radio ads allow celebrities to reach audiences during their daily commutes or while running errands.

Public Events and Red Carpet Appearances: Celebrities often make public appearances wearing or using products they endorse. This can be during award shows, charity events, movie premieres, or fashion shows. The media coverage of such events amplifies the endorsement message and generates interest in the endorsed products.

Celebrity endorsers of various alcoholic products

Popular music star Phyno was signed by Guinness Nigeria for the "Made of Black" advert campaign from 2014 to 2016. Also, in 2020 till date, Guinness Nigeria has signed Big Brother Naija stars Laycon, Nengi and Prince in their new television commercials "Black Shines Brightest."

Budweiser uses Big Brother Naija host and stars Ebuka Obi-Uchendu and Ozo in their television advertising. The brand also brought former football star John Terry and Roberto Carlos to Nigeria for a match to promote the brand. This is in addition to using PSG and former Barca star Lionel Messi, Nigerian singer Teni and former Big Brother Naija housemate Mike.

Beer giants Hero uses Phyno and Zoro in their adverts as celebrity endorsements and the duo even made a music for the beer brand. The brand also used popular music star Rude By (Paul of P-Square), music duo Umu Obiligbo and music star Ill Bliss and popular actor Nkem Owoh (Osuofia) and have recently added Big Brother Naija season six winner White Money.

Star brand have as well used Burna Boy as their brand ambassador as the Nigerian music star started gaining international recognition.

Life lager beer uses music stars Flavour and Phyno in their adverts and the beer brand made an appearance in Larry Gaga's song "Egedege". The "Life" brand also uses father and son Pete Edochie and Yul Edochi respectively, the first time a father and a son have appeared in the same commercial for a brand at the same time for celebrity endorsement.

Orijin beer have also used Big Brother Naija stars Laycon and Neo for their adverts. Tiger larger beer also uses DJ Cuppy, Noble Igwe, ShowDemCamp and Teddy A. Heineken lager beer uses Nigerian musician Jidenna for their television commercial. Trophy lager beer announced popular musicians 2baba, Falz and former Super Eagles captain Joseph Yobo as their brand ambassadors. Also, they used Big Brother Naija star Tacha and 2baba for their extra stout advert campaign.

Advantages of Celebrity Endorsement

The followings are the benefit of celebrity endorsement:

Establishment of Credibility: Approval of a brand by a star fosters a sense of trust for that brand among the target audience- this is especially true in case of new products. We had the Etisalat Nigeria campaign. At launch, Etisalat endorsed Banky W. (a famous Nigerian hip-hop star) and this ensured that brand awareness was created in the Nigeria

market.

Ensured Attention: Celebrities ensure attention of the target group by breaking the clutter of advertisements and making the ad and the brand more noticeable. PR coverage: Is another reason for using celebrities. Managers perceive celebrities as topical, which create high PR coverage. A good example of integrated celebrity campaigns is one of the Nigeria's leading Musician, the D'banj, who have not only appeared in advertisements for Koko mobile, but also in product launching, Official juggle for Jonathan campaign (Nigeria presidential election 2011) and Ambassador of Globacom.

commensurate the personalities of the celebrity with the brand thereby increasing the recall value. Golf champion Tiger Woods has endorsed American Express, Rolex, and Nike. Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones is used by T-Mobile and Elizabeth Arden. 007 Pierce Brosnan promotes Omega, BMW, and Noreico.

Mass Appeal: Some stars have a universal appeal and therefore prove to be a good bet to generate interest among the masses such as Oladapo Oyebanji (D'banj).

Boost In Sales: A well-executed celebrity endorsement campaign can lead to increased sale and revenue, especially if the celebrity's image aligns with the brands target audience.

Disadvantages of Celebrity Endorsement

However celebrity endorsement has countless benefits but there are also certain risk factors that are associated with celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy. Negative publicity regarding the celebrity is a major risk with endorsing a celebrity and there are other factors that can lead to serious consequences like:

- Popularity starts decreasing
- Moral issues
- Over endorsing can lead to losing of credibility
- Overshadowing of endorsed products.

Negative publicity about a celebrity endorsing a brand can change the perception of the consumer about that celebrity and it may also damage the brand reputation resulting marketers to pay a big price over the celebrity's misdeeds and face serious humiliation and embarrassment.

Kumar mentions that there are times when consumers actually only notices the celebrity appearing rather than the product, hence this idea to promote that brand fails miserably ^[16]. Cooper says that "the product not the celebrity must be the star" ^[17].

This overshadowing is also called "vampire effect" because there is lack of clarity for the consumers because they are found to take more notice and interest in the celebrity rather than the interest. Another issue that arises is of overexposure when marketers employ well recognized celebrities to endorse their brands and it ultimately confuses the consumers and they are unable to correctly recall about that brand which celebrity stands for.

Finally another negative effect is financial risk, the decision for hiring an expensive endorser may not always be feasible, if there is a poor brand fit.

Therefore, for celebrity endorsement to work effectively there must be some fundamental ground rules, these include, Clear brand promise and brand personality. The communication objectives for the campaign should be frozen and focus must be on the synergy between the brand

and the celebrity image, to establish explicitly what the celebrity is going to communicate.

Celebrity endorsement and the effects it has on consumers

A best and effective endorsement is done when a balance is maintained between the product and the celebrity. When marketers assign a product or brand a celebrity, they are actually giving their brand a face. Therefore choosing a celebrity is a very crucial decision and several parameters should be considered like looks, appeal and popularity.

A general belief that prevails among advertisers is that brand message which is delivered by a celebrity brings them better results because such recognized personality generates greater appeals than those endorsed by non-celebrities. This quick reach of message to the audience and creating an impact far too quickly is very essential. Celebrity endorsement does not guarantee any success nor any impact on consumers buying behavior unless this strategy is well integrated with the target market characteristics and other marketing mix elements like product design, packing, pricing and branding itself.

Celebrity endorsement has continuously increased because it is considered essential for brand communication as it is a key to marketing success. The primary factor that celebrity endorsement creates a positive impact on consumers buying behavior is actually the public recognition of that celebrity as an admirable and desired cultural force. Celebrity endorsement brings about a positive advertisement result, increase in the rating of the products and also increase in the purchasing of those products.

Theoretical Frame Work

This study focused on four theoretical frameworks that explain the underlying influence of celebrity endorsement.

The Meaning Transfer Model:

Transferring the Meaning After watching an advertisement, the consumers try to find the meaning of the advertisement and associate the same with the endorser and eventually transfer to the brand. To understand this phenomenon Mc Cracken, suggested a comprehensive model known as Meaning Transfer Model ^[18]. This three-stage model suggests how the meaning associated with the famous person moves from the endorser to the product or the brand. Thus, meanings attributed to the celebrity become associated with the brand in the consumer's mind, and in the consumption process, the customer acquires the brand's meaning. This model provides a "conventional path for the movement of cultural meaning in consumer societies" ^[19].

According to McCracken, the first stage is a step for a formation that an endorser's credibility transfers to celebrity images; the second stage is for transferring the celebrity images to the endorsed brand or product; the final stage is for passing the images formed on the second stage to consumers ^[18]. This model explains a process of translation and extension based on association of meanings from celebrity image to brand and products to consumers ^[20]. For instance, when consumers identify celebrity endorser images, the endorser's images transfer to the endorsed brand ^[3, 21]. Specifically, when a product is not associated with celebrities, consumers perceive them as only product category images. However, consumers recognize the

products as meaningful when they are endorsed by celebrities ^[22].

Mc Cracken's meaning model is based on concept of meaning. Celebrities contain ranges of meanings, including, demographic, (e.g., age, gender, status); personality, and life style, (e.g., tough, elegance, flexibility). Pete Edochie is a highly recognized titled man in igbo land as well as Yul Edochie, Phyno, Flavor are perceived elegant and dynamic. He emphasizes that a famous person represent not only single meaning, but varieties of different meanings.

Source Credibility and Attractiveness

This theory was proposed by Hovland, Janis and Kelley in 1953, emphasizes the importance of the perceived credibility of the communicator in persuasive communication ^[23]. According to this theory, the effectiveness of a persuasive message depends on the communicator's expertise, trustworthiness, and perceived goodwill. In the context of celebrity endorsement, the source credibility of the celebrity plays a critical role in influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors towards the endorsed product or brand.

Solomon narrated that, the central goal of advertising is the persuasion of customers, i.e. the active attempt to change or modify customers' attitudes towards brands ^[24]. When consumers view a celebrity endorser as knowledgeable and trustworthy, they are more likely to believe the messages conveyed in the endorsement. As a result, the celebrity's positive attributes and reputation can transfer to the endorsed product, leading to increased brand trust and purchase intention among consumers ^[4]. Celebrity endorsement strategy enables advertisers to project a credible image in terms of expertise, persuasiveness, trustworthiness, and objectiveness ^[25]. To create effective message, celebrity advertisers have to consider the attractiveness of the spokes persons.

Source attractiveness refers to the endorsers' physical appearance, personality, likeability and similarity to the receiver, thus, to the perceived social value of the source ^[24]. The use of attractive people is commonly practiced in television and print advertising. In a study by Kamins, it was found that consumers' attitudes towards the endorsed product were more positive when the celebrity endorser was perceived as highly attractive ^[26].

In conclusion, both Source Credibility and Attractiveness Theory play significant roles in celebrity endorsement effectiveness. The credibility of the celebrity endorser enhances the persuasiveness of the message, while the attractiveness of the celebrity captures consumers' attention and creates positive associations with the endorsed product.

The Match-up-Hypothesis

The match up hypothesis specifically suggests that the effectiveness depends on the evidence of a 'fit' between celebrities and endorsed brands Khatri ^[27]. The theory emphasises that the physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorser enhances the evaluation of the product's characteristic, only if the characteristic of the product matches up with the image conveyed by the celebrity ^[28]. Companies must match product or companies' image to the features of the target market and the personality of the celebrity, in order to establish effective messages, and the determinants of the match between celebrities and the brands depends on the degree of perceived association

between the brands (Brand name, attributes and celebrity image ^[27].

Ok sweet decide to use Chinedu Ihedieze (Aki) and Osita Iheme (Paw paw) in promoting their confectionery. In that advert, there is effective congruency and fit between the endorsers and the brands. Literature reveals that spokesperson interact with the type of brands being advertised. According to Friedman, a famous person relative to a 'normal' person is more effective for products high in physiological or social risk, involving such elements as good taste, self-image, and opinion of others ^[29]. Several research studies have examined a congruency between the celebrity endorsers and brands to explain the effectiveness of using famous persons to promote brands ^[30]. A number of celebrity endorsement have been proved to be successful, while some failed completely, resulting in the termination of the respective celebrity communicator ^[31].

To think a famous person will be successful as a spokesperson is totally wrong, considering the number of failures ^[24]. Very well accepted and attractive super stars like Bruce Willis and Whitney Houston failed in turning their endorsement into success. According to Thilini; and Daneshvary, some of the reasons behind celebrity failure include, over exposure and identification ^[32, 33]. The match-up-hypothesis specifically suggest that effectiveness depends on the existence of 'fit' between the celebrity spokesperson and the endorsed brand ^[25].

The Self-Concept Congruity Theory

The Self-Concept Congruity Theory is a key theoretical framework in the field of celebrity endorsement. It posits that consumers are more likely to respond positively to celebrity endorsements when there is a congruence between the consumer's self-concept and the image projected by the celebrity endorser ^[34]. In other words, consumers tend to be more receptive to endorsements by celebrities who embody traits, values, and attributes that resonate with their own self-identity.

When individuals evaluate brands, they are inclined to select brands that are similar to their self-image Koo Prior studies reveal consumers follow brands that have similar attributions and characteristics as their self-image ^[35]. As previously stated, consumer's self-concept includes diverse aspects, such as actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image, and ideal-social image ^[36]. Thus, self-image/product image congruity deals with multidimensional aspects due to the multidimensional ideas of the self-concept ^[34].

Self-congruity is an important construct in understanding consumer reactions to celebrity endorsers. A consumer can relate his or her self-image to a celebrity, and congruency is an important antecedent of consumer reactions ^[37]. In addition, celebrity endorsers may serve as a source of inspiration ^[38]. Specifically, using endorsed brands or products can build an individual's ideal-self ^[18]. The ideal-self is an individual's image of who he or she would ideally like to be ^[39]. This idea can support a relationship between ideal self-congruity a consumer's purchasing behaviors Heath and Scott ^[18]. Thus, it is possible that ideal self-congruity, the congruity between perceptions of consumers' ideal self-image and the brands or products that they use can influence celebrity endorsements effectiveness.

In conclusion, the Self-Concept Congruity Theory suggests that consumers are more receptive to celebrity endorsements

when there is a fit between the consumer's self-concept, the image projected by the celebrity endorser, and the endorsed product. Brands can leverage this theory to create impactful celebrity endorsement campaigns that resonate with their target audience's self-identity and values. By carefully selecting celebrity endorsers who align with the target consumers' self-concept, brands can enhance the persuasive power of their endorsement efforts and strengthen their brand-customer relationships.

Empirical Review

The researchers reviewed some existing works already done in the area. These literatures were found on the Internet and were empirically reviewed. Pramjeeth and Majaye-Khupe studied the Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour of Alcohol in the South African Market, and found out that effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is based on who is portrayed to advertise which product or service ^[40]. The responses from the interviews indicated that the company had selected celebrity endorsements for advertising their power brands based on the gender and characteristics of the selected brand and the notion that brand ambassadors are successful in increasing purchase behaviour and brand awareness but they had conducted no research to support their advertising strategy. The major findings have revealed that celebrity endorsements are not always a successful method of advertising especially for alcohol products even if the brand ambassador is famous, local or liked.

In a similar study, Ogunsiji investigated the impact of celebrity endorsement on strategic brand management as it establishes a link between a successful celebrity brand ambassador and the power of the brand in the market ^[41]. In other words, the power of a brand does not depend or lie in the total power of a celebrity endorser; it is dependent in the mind of its customers; their views, thoughts and reactions of the brand.

Prasad examined the impact of celebrities as brand ambassadors towards customer satisfaction, reflect the views stating that companies willingly match both the values of the celebrity with that of the brand or product. He opined that consumers perceive brands endorsed by credible celebrities or sources as having a high quality compared to other brands ^[42].

In a similar study, Nyakado, explored celebrity endorsement and consumers tendency to be attracted to adverts that make use of their favourite celebrities ^[43]. Individuals may feel more attached and compelled to products when they are related to their popular celebrities.

In another study, Kiran and Kumar reasoned that celebrities who appear in adverts endorsing a brand or product can only improve the product to an extent, this means that before a brand is endorsed by a powerful celebrity, such brand or product must possess its own distinctive attribute or identity; companies make use of celebrities, whose personalities can impact their brand or product but for this to be successful, there has to exist a relationship or similarity between the celebrity and the brand or product to be endorsed ^[44].

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