CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AND CONSUMER CHOICE OF PRODUCT IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
Celebrity endorsement in recent times has become a veritable tool in achieving sustainable sales of products and services by business managers. It is based on this, that this study examined celebrity endorsement and consumer choice of product in Anambra State, Nigeria as the objective of the study. The study was narrowed down to Onitsha local government Area of the State. This is because of presence of various consumer markets the city is hosting. The study adopted a survey research design with a population of 250 consumers selected randomly, and 207 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used for the study. A Likert structured questionnaire format was deployed for data collection, which was tested for validity using face and content method while its reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha reliability test for internal consistency where an alpha level of .999 was obtained signaling a good consistency level. The data generated was analyzed using Mean, and Hypothesis was tested using simple regression on Statistical packages for Social Science at 5% level of significance. The findings reveal that, there is a positive effect of celebrity influence on customer conviction on patronage r= 0.728, n=207-1=206 and p=0.25. Thus, since p value is less than 0.05, hence, there is positive effect of celebrity influence on customer conviction on patronage of a product. Therefore, the study recommended that, product or service management should adopt criteria for adopting celebrity endorsement if they want to influence consumer choice of products.
Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Consumer Choice, Product, Anambra State.

Introduction

A strong, enthusiastic statement or display of praise, acceptance or support for a particular thing by a person or people we admire or look up to lives a print in establishing a deep feeling about that particular thing. Endorsement as a channel through which a famous person such as political, soccer, movie, and music icon endorses a particular brand of product or service by using his or her status as a famous figure in society to convince the masses to patronize the brand's claims is a strategic adoption by most marketers and product managers in recent times. Celebrity branding marketing or endorsement is now on the raise due to a heavy

competition that has engulfed the marketing ecosystem. Firms in recent times make millions of budgets to celebrity branding or endorsement to leverage brand association through collaborating with well- known celebrities (Aw and Labrecque, 2020, Yu and Hu, 2020). Celebrity endorsement industry is a million-dollar industry because of their impact in promotion of brands in recent years (Okpako & Michael, 2021).

The world of advertisement and promotion are undergoing a change from what it was before to a converted modern route. This contemporaneous route requires marketers to uncover strategies, plans, and tactics that incorporates the elements of emotions, humour and the psychological fittings of the consumer. The idea of these strategies is to get brand exposure, attention, interest, desire, market acceptance and expansion. So, to remain afloat in a highly competitive industry, marketers should think beyond their noses in order to make ends meet. Engagement of well-known celebrities because they have the "face" and exposure to make a greater impact on consumers buying behavior due to their charismatic personalities and followership is a strategy employed by marketers of goods and services in today's business (Ogagaoghene, 2019).

In a commercial State like Anambra with a heavy aggrandizement of all manner of brands, brand endorsement is needed to provide a distinct differentiation. Marketers need to reach out to highly respected celebrity to influence the sales of their goods and services in their locality. It is a strategy employed by most multinational and local brands as fans of these celebrities tend to follow the endorsement and recommendation of these known icons, especially when companies want to create awareness for new products or services or lunch repackaged or reviewed products or services.

Research on celebrity branding has been a fascinating area of study, especially in business and marketing strategy (Schimmelpfenning and Hunt, 2020). However, due to the fact that Celebrities are seen as famous and professionals who distinguished themselves in their chosen career or profession, and their fans look up to them with much expectations, adoption of a particular celebrity ought to be to be based on the reputation of the celebrity, integrity and fan base. There are a lots of endorsement terminations by company due to unhealthy attitude of celebrities. So, celebrity endorsement is a double-edged sword, if properly handled, it can kick the brand to a stellar height, and if not, it can mar the image of the brand (Yusuf & Uduagha, 2019).Consumer choice of products is often dependent on various factors such as price, taste and other factors in the environment. Behaviour of consumers can also be influenced by behavior of key individuals as price and taste are not the only determinant of consumer choice formation (Okpako & Michael, 2021). Consumer choice Aon products can also be influenced by role models and key personalities in the society. These role models or key personalities can be politicians with reputable

character, key business influencers and artistes and sports individuals. At a time, people look up to these key influencers as personalities that they would like to possess. In such case, they may look into the lifestyle of the person, the products they use as well as their preferences. The study was narrowed down to Onitsha, Anambra State. This is because the commercial city of Onitsha has the biggest concentration of consumer markets in the State.

Nevertheless, the fact that brand endorsement by celebrities is key to customer choice as it is an effective promotional tool in marketing products and services seem to be receiving less attention in Anambra State, Nigeria as some of these celebrities have fallen out of choice of the market due their repugnant actions in the face of their fans and the general public, coupled with unethical practices adopted by some marketers in the course of engaging celebrity endorsement. It is against this background that the study of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of product in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria was undertaken. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the effect of celebrity influence on customer conviction on the patronage of a particular product in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Conceptual and theoretical issue

Celebrity endorsement

Celebrity endorsement or celebrity branding is a marketing strategy which employs a celebrity because of his /her fame or social status to promote a company's product, service or brand. Marketers use celebrity endorsers thinking that the goodwill of the celebrity endorser will be passed on to the company's product or brand's image.A celebrity presence is calculated to extend the reach towards a wider audience and transfer their popularity into the brand. Celebrity endorsement is one of the modern strategies in today's marketing and advertising. Multinational companies make use of celebrity endorsement in advertisement their products or brand because of their public perceived acceptability (McCracken, 2022). As it has been observed that celebrity endorsement is a convincing communication tool because it has the power to attract attention, make the message associated with the advertising and the brand due to the personality of the brand endorser register into the memories of the customers.

Company's attachment of celebrities in a particular is a calculated effort exerted in order to gain a super popularity of their product or service over their rivals in the industry, and also for easy recognition and purchase enhancement. Celebrity's inclusion in advertisement or brand promotion attracts the people that follow that celebrity (McCuthceon, Lange & Houran, 2021). Celebrities are calculated to bring attention towards a particular brand due to their popularity and public status (Erdogan, 2021).Celebrity endorser is a known person who is recognized by the public for his or her accomplishment in a chosen profession other than that of the

brand they endorse (Friedman & Friedman, 2022). So, while choosing a celebrity to endorse a brand, let it not be based only on his/ herpopularity but also, efforts should be made in accessing other several dimensions of the celebrity for the best match with the product or service he /she is endorsing. Meanwhile, the celebrity's physical attractiveness and traits are also a big count for great social acceptance. So, brand attributes coupled with the celebrity traits and public acceptance are very important for success of the product or service the celerity is advertising. Erdogan (2019) affirms that, the persuasive technique of celebrity is based on attributes attached with celebrity, which make endorsement more effective.

Celebrity Influence

Celebrities, because of their public status can influence advertisements to become more popular and stand out among their contemporaries and increase persuasive ability. This helps in improving the brand's public image and also smooth the company's image. It has proved to be a powerful strategy in entering international markets. Celebrity influence is instrumental in setting trends and making changes that contribute to shaping consumer buying patterns in society. Influencing the consumer is one of the reasons why businesses employ celebrities to promote their products and services. They have a strong influence on how teens and their fans view themselves. They have positive impact on youths because most of the youths see celebrities as role models. However, some of the celebrities can also influence their fans and consumers negatively. So, whether celebrities are good or bad role models, they have influence on consumers' idiosyncrasies.

Featuring a known personality helps businesses in solving the problem of frequent persuasive communications (Kulkarni & Gaulkar, 2018). When a famous celebrity endorses a product or service, there is this belief of acceptability. Business managers believe that the highest reward they gain by endorsing celebrity is building up credibility, establishing the level of trust, drawing attention and most importantly positively impacting consumers buying behaviour. Celebrity endorsement is a success factor because when a normal person selling a product tells you to try that product as it has helped them, there is a possible chance that consumers may or may not believe them but when the same is said by a celebrity that the product has helped them, then the consumers tend to listen to the celebrity and believe it and it does impact on consumers buying behavior favourably (Humaar & Jumo, 2019).

Celebrity congruence or fit or link or match up effect (the general concept is the same).

According to Misra and Beatty (1990) as cited in Fleck, Korchia, & Le Roy (2009). They opined that, the esteemed characteristics of the celebrity ought to be consistent with the ultimate attributes of the brand he or she is endorsing. Celebrity matchup principle with product is as important as all other attributes pertains to celebrity for

high social acceptability and strengthening the credibility of celebrity (Kamins, 2020). Product and celebrity affiliation is most important factor for generating positive feedback because people take it as evidence that product is in reality, used or consumed by the celebrity. If audience does not see or perceive the matchup between celebrity and what they are endorsing, then, the whole is nothing but only unnecessary expenditure and waste time and energy (Jagre & Futrin, 2021).

The knowledge of brand celebrity matchup study supports congruence fundamental assumptions and its efficacy (Roy, 2016). Consumers desire to identify a product with source and so congruity of source with product is much important (Kamins & Gupta, 2022). Consumers are more attracted to the product once they have the conviction that what the celebrity is endorsing is actually being used by him/her and their effects are eminent by their personality.

Congruence could be seen from two dimensions: relevancy and expectancy. Relevancy shows the degree to which the information contained in the advertisement contributes to or stops a clear understanding of the main subject being communicated. Expectancy on the other hand refers to the extent to which a piece of information fits into a fore determined pattern elicited by the messages.

Consumer choice of Products or Services

This simply means the range of competing products and services from which a consumer can choose. Consumer choice is the deportment of persons in regards to acquiring, using, and disposing of products, services, ideas or experiences. This is an assumption that deals on consumer choices that has to do with having diverse alternatives like the degree of satisfaction or need for a particular thing. This allows the consumer to prioritize different products or services in the order of utility. So, it is an assumption that people maximize their level of satisfaction and are willing and able to pay a particular amount for product or service if calculated to be a better option. Consumer choice or preference is defined as the behaviour that consumer exhibits in hunting for products or services that they expect will satisfy their needs (Ruchi et al, 2020). It focuses on how persons make decisive decisions to spend their available resources on things that matters to them (Ogwo & Igwe, 2022). This includes the item purchased, reasons for buying it, the frequencies, and how they evaluate it after the purchase, the impact of such evaluation, and how they dispose of it (Ogwo & Igwe, 2022). Consumer choice examines why individuals make the economic choices they do when confronted with trade-offs, restrictions, and changes in their environment that affect their ability to consume.

So, sometimes, consumers due to variety of goods and services in the market, the doubt associated in making choices by consumer, buyers at times find it difficult to make decisions, which can make them to forgo making purchase decisions at a point and choose to postpone it later (Li and Jiang, 2019). With the availability of

awareness on goods and services, decisions making on goods and services become more complicated, and individual's choice deferment behavior becomes more common (Sun and sun, 2019). Consumer choice of product or service does not only waste people's decision-making time, it also brings poor shopping experience and more negative emotions to consumers.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the social influence theory by Robert. B. Cialdini around 20th century. Though, there have been many influences throughout history who have contributed to this concept. But one of the most prominent influences in the development of this theory at that time is Robert. B. Cialdini. The theory simply states that, people are more likely to submit to the deeds of others that they admire. It is a part of human nature to believe in the people with high social influences and listen to what they have to say. So, the theory, posits that people's decisions and behaviour could be changed based on the people they admire or have respect for. This concept works by modifying the peoples' attitudes, beliefs or behaviour by the celebrity they admire. This establishes the link between the theory and the study.

Empirical Review

Syed and Raja (2022) made a comparative study on the influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Purchase intentions. The research adopted descriptive survey research design with a sample size of 300. The work assesses the contrast between Indian and Pakistani celebrity endorsement effects on purchase intention in Pakistan. Similar and competitive brands are chosen which are endorsed by Pakistani and Indian Celebrities separately. The findings of the study revealed that endorsement through local and Indian celebrities has same and not much significant influence on purchase intention in Pakistan, with no major difference by celebrity's nativity.

In the work carried out by Muhammad and Nazish (2022) on the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumers buying behavior in Kano, Kano State. The work employed a mixed research design with a sample size of 518 respondents selected using purposive random sampling technique. Data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, and hypotheses were tested using Chi Square (X^2). The result of the study revealed that the element of credibility which comprises expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity have positively effect on consumer's purchases.

Appiah (2022) madea comparative study of Ghana and Italy as regards to the impact of celebrity endorsement on sales of products. The study employed a descriptive survey design. Both interviews and questionnaires were adopted to gather the data for the studies. These data collection tools were administered to 110 individuals with

100 respondents used for the questionnaires and 10 individuals interviewed for information. The study also employed secondary data made up of commercials for both Ghana and Italy products to be analyzed so as to ascertain the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumers' choice for the product. Data analysis indicated that celebrity endorsement is effective in advertising products in both Ghana and Italy. Analysis of the data gathered from Ghana indicated that there are high levels of influence on consumers to patronize products due to their taste and affection for the celebrity endorsers of such products.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The study was carried out in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria. Onitsha was chosen for the study because it is the biggest commercial city in Anambra State and Southeast region of Nigeria. Data were collated through questionnaire which was tested for validity using face and content method while its reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha reliability test for internal consistency wherean alpha level of .999 was obtained signaling a good consistency level. A total population of 250 consumers were randomly selected from the commercial city. The entire population was studied because of their limited number. Out of 250 copies of questionnaire distributed, 207 were retrieved and were used for the study. 0The data generated was analyzed using Mean, and Hypothesis was tested using simple regression on Statistical packages for Social Science (version 27) at 5% level of significance.

Discussion of Result

Decision Rule:

Accept the Alternate hypothesis (H_a) if $_{cal}$P-value is less than 0.05 (P-value < 0.05); otherwise accept the Null hypothesis (H_o).

Test of Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant effect of celebrity influence on customer conviction on the patronage of a particular product in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Simple Regression on Celebrity influence on customer conviction on the Patronage of a product.

Table 4.1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.728[a]	.046	.207	8.22900

a. Predictors: (Constant), Celebrity influence

Table 4.2.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.584	1	10.584	.133	.025[b]
	Residual	637.816	206	79.727		
	Total	648.400	207			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer conviction on patronage
b. Predictors: (Constant), Celebrity influence

Table 4.3. Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	23.592	6.153		3.834	.005
	Celebrity_influence	-.085	.235	-.128	-.364	.025

a. Dependent Variable: Customer_conviction_on_patronage

There is positive effect of celebrity influence on customer conviction on patronage r= 0.728, n=207-1=206 and p=0.25. Thus, since p value is less than 0.05, hence, there is positive effect of celebrity influence on customer conviction on patronage of a product. This implies that celebrity influence assures customers of the product capacity or make up which is likely to assure market of the product features.

Conclusion

The study found out that the influence of the celebrity, determines the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement as an effective marketing tool. The study concluded that celebrities are widely known even to the extent that they serve as role models in the society. Thus, the decisions and actions of celebrities are likely to influence the choice of their followers who are likely to be consumers of the products.

Recommendation

Sequel to the findings of this study, the study makes the following recommendation: Product or service management should adopt criteria for adopting celebrity endorsement if they want to influence consumer choice of products. The criteria will help check factors that is needed to sell a product or services.

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