



RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CONSUMER CHOICE OF PRODUCTS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Celebrity endorsement has become a popular marketing strategy in Nigeria, including Imo State. The study x-rays the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria. Celebrity endorsement plays a key role and impact on consumers' choice of product. The researchers narrowed the study down to Owerri because of presence of various consumer markets it attracts. The design used by the researchers was survey design, while the population was composed of 250 consumers were selected randomly, and 207 copies of questionnaire were retrieved. Likert structured questionnaire format was adopted for data collection and the questionnaire was face and content validated, whereas the reliability was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability test for its internal consistency where an alpha level of .999 was obtained signaling a good consistency level. The data generated were analyzed using Mean, and the Simple Regression was used to test the Hypothesis via Statistical Packages for Social Science at 5% significance level. The results show that celebrity endorsement has a significant impact on consumer choice, with consumers more likely to purchase products endorsed by their favourite celebrities. The study found that trust, expertise, and the fit between the celebrity and the product are key factors that influence consumer choice. Meanwhile, the attractiveness of the celebrity and similarities between the celebrity and the consumer have little effect on product choice. The study also recommended that product or service management should be adopted as a way forward for celebrity endorsement since it will bring about a desired result on consumer choice of products.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, consumer choice, product choice, marketing strategy, consumer behaviour,

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1.0. INTRODUCTION



In today's highly competitive business environment, organizations are constantly seeking innovative marketing strategies to differentiate themselves from the competition and capture the attention of their target audience. One such strategy that has gained immense popularity in recent years is celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement involves partnering with famous individuals to promote a product, service, or brand, with the goal of increasing brand awareness, building consumer trust, and ultimately driving sales. The use of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool has become increasingly prevalent in Nigeria, including Imo State. Many organizations operating in the state have recognized the potential of celebrity endorsement to influence consumer behavior and have incorporated it into their marketing strategies. However, despite its growing popularity, there is a need for empirical research to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products in Imo State. This study aims to investigate the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products in Imo State. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer choice, identify the factors that influence consumer choice when celebrity endorsement is used, and determine the extent to which celebrity endorsement affects consumer purchasing decisions.

An individual who is a celebrity is a person that is well known and attracts public attention, or attention from other people. A person who members of the public know and hold in high esteem such as a person in government might be well known but not a celebrity unless something else makes him/herself interesting to other people. Usually, a person becomes a celebrity from entertainment such as people who act movies, people who sing songs, and someone who is into sports. Celebrity endorsement is an important strategy that influences greatly consumer choice of product. It is a medium through which a notable person such as soccer star, politician, movie actor, 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 brands of a given company. 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 popular celebrities (Aw & Labrecque, 2020, Yu & Hu, 2020). Celebrity endorsement industry is a million-dollar industry because of its impact in promoting brands in recent years (Okpako & Michael, 2021). It is a marketing strategy where a notable individual promotes a product, service, or brand, leveraging his/her popularity and influence to increase brand awareness and drive sales.

The term celebrity endorsement is a considered crucial and indispensable promotional tool of marketing. In recent times, marketers are employing promotional strategies of using various appeals. These appeals include sexual and emotional, appeal (Belch & Belch, 2001). Their aim of using such strategies is to attract and win a high level of brand exposure, attention, interest, desire and action towards the advertised products (Belch and Belch, 2001). Hence, in a contemporary society, there has been increasing attention by marketers on the impact of celebrities on buying decision of the consumers (Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade & Momeni, 2010). In agreement, Zipporah and Mberia (2014) stated that these organizations make effort to study



consumers' behaviour, discover their motives how their satisfaction could be met. Marketers use various tools and strategies for advertising their products to both current and potential customers. Among these strategies used by marketers is the engagement of well-known and famous personalities. The reason is that the market has become more competitive and most people from time to time experience constant bombardment of advertisements by the media and ultimately become emotionless towards all the advertisement practices (Malik & Qureshi, 2017). As such, Marketers make much efforts to get part of an individual's time to let him/her know of the excellent and unique features of the product or brand and this strategic effort the marketers adopt is by going for celebrities who can grasp the customer's attention quickly (Malik & Qureshi, 2017).

Schlecht (2003) sees celebrities as individuals who enjoy public recognition by a large group of people. Similarly, Friedman and Friedman (1979) cited in Malik and Qureshi (2017) see 'celebrities' as popular persons (such as actors, sportspersons, entertainers) who have accomplishments in their particular fields alongside the product they endorsed. Friedman and Friedman (2002) explained that a celebrity could be anybody such as actor, sportsman, presenter, entertainer, whose attribute is different from the general public and is recognized by them, because of his/her achievements. Celebrity endorsement drives the sales of many firms' products. These days, celebrity endorsement influences the social media in large number, like direct access to many side attractions for a product in addition to the reputation of a celebrity endorsement. It is generally seen as a viable option for brands to increase awareness, build credibility and promote products. Social media is especially useful in reaching out to younger generations. It is powerful, and its strength is offered by the constant awareness, knowledge about the brand and elegance of the celebrity endorser through the endorsement. The values and image of the brand are defined, highlighted and refreshed by the celebrity which add new measures and dimension, credibility, trust, connectivity to brand belief, efficiency and new appearance that will result in at least, test usage of the product.

Celebrity endorsement is therefore, a form of advertising campaign that involves a well-known person who uses his / her fame to promote a product or service (Businessdictionary.com, 2020). Celebrities with many fans are usually employed to endorse a product, to win the attention of fans or target market to that product. Most big companies and brands have recognized the benefits of celebrity endorsement which is marketing communication tool (Soderlund, 2003). In agreement, Katyal (2007) opined that marketers spend huge sum of money on celebrity endorsement deals annually, thus, showing the benefits of celebrities in the marketing industry. However, Aldajani and Daajani (2019) stated how celebrity endorsement is complicated because it has the potential to either boost or undermine the marketing objectives of the organization. Interestingly, Celebrity endorsement as an advertising and marketing strategy, when utilized effectively, can intensify the sales of a brand significantly. Celebrity endorsement has become indispensable in the Nigerian advertising industry. Hence, marketers use celebrity endorsement to influence the purchasing decision of consumers to increase sales (Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade



& Monemi, 2010). There are many reasons while firms use celebrity endorsement on their product and services. These reasons as mentioned by Edorgan and Baker (2001) are that marketers try to boost their brand image, get more awareness and Attention and improve the dimension of the brand image. It is in line with the opinion of Ranjbarian et al. (2010) that hiring celebrities can help companies to create unique adverts and engender desired effect on the attitude of consumers towards brand choice.

The world of advertising and promotion are undergoing a change from what it was before to a converted modern route. This contemporaneous channel requires marketers to uncover strategies, plans, and tactics that incorporates the measures of emotions, humour and the psychological fittings of the consumer. The idea of these strategies is to encourage brand exposure, attention, interest, desire, market acceptance and expansion. So, to remain afloat in a hugely competitive industry, marketers should think beyond their noses 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 products in today's business (Ogagaoghene, 2019). In a busy State like Imo with a good number of brands, brand endorsement is needed to provide a distinct differentiation. Marketers need to reach out to highly respected celebrities to influence the sales of their products 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.

Schimmelpfenning and Hunt (2020) corroborated that research on celebrity branding has been a fascinating area of study, especially in business and marketing strategy. However, owing 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 based on the reputation of the celebrity, integrity and fan base. There are a lot of endorsement terminations by companies 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 reputation of the brand (Yusuf & Uduagha, 2019). Consumer choice of products is often dependent on various factors such as quality, 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 of products can be influenced by role models and key personalities. 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.



Brand endorsement by celebrities is key to customer choice as an effective promotional tool in marketing products which seem to have been receiving little attention in Imo State, 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 was on this premise that the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of product in Imo State.

The findings of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on celebrity endorsement and its impact on consumer behavior. The study will also provide valuable insights for organizations operating in Imo State, highlighting the benefits and limitations of using celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy. Ultimately, this research will inform marketing decisions and help organizations to develop effective marketing strategies that resonate with their target audience.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing popularity of celebrity endorsement in Nigeria, including Imo State, there is a dearth of empirical research investigating its impact on consumer behaviour. Specifically, there is a need to understand how celebrity endorsement influences consumer choice of products in Imo State. The problem is further complicated by the fact that many organizations operating in Imo State are investing heavily in celebrity endorsement without a clear understanding of its effectiveness. This lack of understanding may lead to inefficient allocation of marketing resources, reduced return on investment, and decreased competitiveness in the market.

Organizations these days spend hugely in endorsing celebrities and repositioning their products in the eyes of consumers by creating positive and good awareness of the products and brands (Ifeanyichukwu, 2016). Hence, to create constant brand awareness and remain the leading telecommunication industry in Nigeria, Globacom limited endorsed popular Nigerian musicians (like David- Davido, Dapo Oyeбанjo D'Banj, AY, Peter and Paul Okoye-Psquare, Adeleke), actors (like Basket Mouth, Bovi, O.C. Ukeje) and female actors (like Helen Paul, Patience Ozokwor-Mama G, Ini Edo) among others, in order to influence consumers buying decision. It is believed that these celebrities have personalities, cultural and symbolic meanings which they transfer to the product they endorsed (McCraken, 1989). Consumers and buyers that are seen as models to such products, the fact celebrities are used for endorsing different brands does not mean that everything about the product is perfect. Inability to have advocate for brands, lack universal appeal and lack of influence on some products informed this research.

1.2. Aim and Objective

The major aim of the study was to carry out an investigation into the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was out to:



1. To examine the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria.

1.3. Research Question

The below research question was raised to guide this study.

1. To what extent does celebrity endorsement influence consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria?

2.0. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS AND THEORITICAL FRAMWORK

2.1.1. Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is a popular marketing strategy used by businesses to promote their products, services, or brands. This involves partnering with a famous person to endorse a product, service, or brand, with the goal of increasing brand awareness, building consumer trust, and driving sales. Celebrities help in entering new markets by breaking such barriers (Mooij, 1994). A celebrity who has a universal appeal or a celebrity of the target country can be a source of recognition by the market. Marketers usually engage celebrities as a communication strategy to serve as advocates for brands. Celebrities are individuals who are recognized by many customers, mainly because of the publicity associated with what they do (Schlecht, 2003). They are individuals with eye-catching profile and level of popularity and fame. Celebrities are usually associated with affluence, excellence in their specific areas and are widely recognized and accepted by a group of people.

Celebrity endorsement is a confirmation in marketing communication which could be a written or spoken statement in support of a company or a product (Atkins & Block, 2013). Endorsement is a medium of brand marketing communication where an individual acts like the brand's advocate by indicating that he/she likes and uses the company or the brand. It implies giving one's public approval to someone or something, especially a recommendation. There is a popular perception among advertisers that marketing messages carried out using celebrities bring more significant acceptance, consideration and message recall than messages carried out by non-celebrities (Keller, 2008).

Keller and Kevin (2003) stressed that celebrity endorsement could give an acceptable commercial rating and evaluation of products and services. Hence, Aaker and Keller (2003) assert that when a customer sees two messages, one which is carried by a celebrity and the other by a non-celebrity, the customer will believe that the brand with celebrity endorsement will have more patronage and higher value than the one carried out by the non-celebrity. Celebrity endorsement is not limited to a particular industry, but cuts across various industries, including the telecommunication industry, the hospitality industry, financial industry, etc (Okorie & Aderogba, 2011).



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 brands image. A celebrity's 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 advertising their products or brands 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/buyers. Company's attachment of celebrities in particular is a calculated effort exerted in order to gain a super popularity of their products or services 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 hired to bring attention towards a particular brand owing 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 it should not endorse (Friedman and Friedman, 2022). When choosing a celebrity to endorse a brand, let it not be based only on his/ her popularity 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 celebrity is advertising. Erdogan (2019) affirms that, the persuasive technique of celebrity is based on attributes attached with celebrity, which make endorsement more effective and efficient for product patronage. When a celebrity endorses a product or service, they lend their name, image, and reputation to the brand. This association can create an emotional connection between the brand and the celebrity's fans, who often admire and trust their idol's opinions. As a result, fans are more likely to try out the endorsed product or service, thereby increasing brand recognition and sales.

There are several types of celebrity endorsements, including explicit endorsement, implicit endorsement, and testimonial endorsement. Explicit endorsement involves the celebrity explicitly endorsing the product or service, often through a commercial or advertisement. Implicit endorsement involves the celebrity being associated with the product or service through a subtle or indirect message. Testimonial endorsement involves the celebrity providing a personal testimonial or review of the product or service.

The benefits of celebrity endorsement are numerous. For one, it can increase brand awareness, as celebrities have a massive following and can help businesses reach a wider audience. Celebrity endorsement can also build consumer trust, as consumers are more likely to trust a product or



service endorsed by a celebrity they admire. Additionally, celebrity endorsement can create an emotional connection with consumers, making them more likely to engage with the brand. Finally, celebrity endorsement can help differentiate a brand from its competitors. However, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement depends on several factors. One key factor is the credibility of the celebrity endorser. Consumers are more likely to trust a product or service endorsed by a celebrity who is credible and trustworthy. Another important factor is the attractiveness of the celebrity endorser. Consumers are more likely to be drawn to a product or service endorsed by a celebrity who is physically attractive and likable. The fit between the brand and the celebrity is also crucial. Consumers are more likely to trust a product or service endorsed by a celebrity who aligns with the brand values. Finally, the clarity and persuasiveness of the message conveyed by the celebrity endorser are also important factors.

Despite its benefits, celebrity endorsement also has its challenges and limitations. One major challenge is the high cost of partnering with a celebrity. Another challenge is the risk of negative association. Celebrities can be associated with negative events or behaviors, which can harm the brand. Over-commercialization is another challenge, as consumers can become skeptical of celebrity endorsements if they are overused. Finally, authenticity is a major concern, as consumers may question the authenticity of the celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement is a powerful marketing tool that can increase brand awareness, build consumer trust, and drive sales. However, its effectiveness depends on several factors, including the credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity endorser, the fit between the brand and the celebrity, and the clarity and persuasiveness of the message conveyed. Businesses must carefully consider these factors when partnering with a celebrity to ensure that the endorsement is effective and authentic.

2.1.2. Celebrity Influence

Celebrity influence is a powerful tool that has the ability to shape public opinion, drive consumer behavior, and even impact political outcomes. At its core, celebrity influence refers to the ability of famous individuals to sway their fans and followers through their endorsements, opinions, and actions. Most famous celebrity endorsers are those who get appreciation from the general public and have unique and appealing features like credibility or attractiveness. White, Goddard and Wilbur (2009) emphasized that among the factors that influence a consumer to purchase a product, celebrity endorsement is the greatest. Supporting this assertion, Khan and Lodhi (2016) maintained that celebrity endorsement is one of the most common advertising strategies used by business organizations to create awareness, recover and gain positive feedback about their products and services. Research has shown that more positive response and higher purchasing intentions are gained by using celebrity endorsers compared to non-celebrity endorsers. Stressing on the impact of celebrities, Aldajani and Daajani (2019) asserted that while endorsing a brand or a product, a celebrity gives impression that the brand is reliable and the popularity of that celebrity makes people trust the brand. Silvera and Austad (2004) identified some features such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, extraordinary lifestyle or exceptional expertise that make celebrity endorsers enjoy a high degree of public cognition and trust. Omoregbe and Osifo



(2019) suggested that firms should use more celebrity endorsements to build consciousness, and perceptions of their products in the minds of consumers. As Khalid and Siddiqui (2018) maintained individuals try to adopt the lifestyles of their favourite celebrity. This makes a tremendous effect on their purchasing behaviour towards the endorsed brand and ultimately improves organization's profitability (Khalid & Siddiqui, 2018). Advertisers and marketers acknowledge that the presence of celebrities in the advertised brand plays a notable role in convincing the consumer (Choi & Rifon, 2007). This implies that the presence of celebrities on the advertised brand or products has significant impact on customers selection of such brands or products and increase in sales and brand awareness.

Celebrities, because of their public status can impact advertising 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 impact on how companies 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 impact on consumers' idiosyncrasies and patronage level.

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 him/her, there is a possible chance that consumers may or may not believe him/her 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). One of the primary ways in which celebrities exert their influence is through social media. With millions of followers hanging on their every word, celebrities have the ability to promote products, services, or causes to a massive audience with just a single post. For instance, Charli D'Amelio, a popular TikTok creator, used her platform to support the Black Lives Matter movement, garnering over 25 million views and 8 million likes.

Celebrities also wield significant influence through endorsement deals. By partnering with brands to promote their products or services, celebrities can significantly boost brand recognition and drive sales. For example, Kylie Jenner's partnership with Puma has been highly successful, increasing brand awareness and appeal among young consumers. In addition to their influence in



the business world, celebrities can also have a significant impact on politics. Many famous individuals have used their platforms to support political candidates, causes, or issues. For instance, Oprah Winfrey and George Clooney endorsed Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2008. One key element negating celebrity endorsement is trust and credibility. Celebrities who are perceived as trustworthy and credible can have a more significant impact on their fans' opinions and behaviors. Authenticity is also crucial. When celebrities genuinely believe in a product, cause, or issue, their endorsement can be more effective. Finally, reach and frequency play a significant role. Celebrities with massive social media followings and frequent appearances in the media can amplify their influence.

However, celebrity influence is not without its challenges and criticisms. One of the primary concerns is overexposure. When celebrities endorse multiple brands or causes, their influence can be diluted. Image issues can also be a problem. Celebrities' personal scandals or controversies can negatively impact the brands or causes they endorse. Finally, authenticity concerns can arise when celebrities' endorsements seem insincere or motivated by financial gain. Celebrity influence is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can have significant effects on consumer behaviour, political outcomes, and social causes. While celebrities can wield considerable influence, it's essential to consider the factors contributing to their influence, as well as the challenges and criticisms surrounding celebrity endorsements.

Celebrity congruence or fit or link or match up effect are used interchangeably. Misra and Beatty (1990) as cited in Fleck, Korchia, and Le Roy (2009), 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 pertaining to celebrity for high social acceptability and strengthening the credibility of celebrity (Kamins, 2020). Product and celebrity affiliation are most important factors for generating positive feedback because people take them as evidence that a product is real, 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 of 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.



2.1.3. Consumer Choice of Products or Services

Consumer choice is a fundamental concept in economics that refers to the process by which individuals make decisions about which products or services to purchase, given their budget constraints and personal preferences. This concept is crucial in understanding how consumers allocate their resources and make trade-offs between different goods and services. Consumer choice of product or service is the range of competing products and services from which a consumer can choose. The consumer's choice of products or services is an intricate decision-making process that involves various factors and influences. It is a personal and subjective journey that begins with a need or desire, and culminates in a purchase decision. At the heart of this process lies the consumer's ability to make informed choices, based on their individual preferences, values, and beliefs. They weigh the pros and cons of various options, considering factors such as quality, price, convenience, and social responsibility. Marketing efforts, including advertising and promotions, also play a significant role in shaping consumer choices. They provide valuable information, create awareness, and often influence the consumer's perception of a product or service.

Consumer choice is the department 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 have 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 seen as the behaviour that consumer exhibits in hunting for products or services that they expect will satisfy their needs (Ruchi, Nayyar & Gupta, 2020). It focuses on how persons make decisive decisions to spend their available resources on things that matter to them (Ogwo & Igwe, 2022). They include the items purchased, reasons for buying them, the frequencies, and how they evaluate it after the purchase, the impact of such evaluation, and how they dispose of them (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.

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

When making purchasing decisions, consumers are influenced by a variety of factors. One of the most significant factors is budget constraint, which refers to the amount of money available to



spend on goods and services. Consumers must make decisions about how to allocate their limited financial resources among competing goods and services. Personal preferences also play a crucial role in consumer choice. Individual tastes and preferences guide consumption decisions, and consumers tend to choose products or services that provide them with the greatest satisfaction or utility. For instance, some consumers may prefer to buy organic food products, while others may prioritize buying products from local businesses. The price of a good or service is another important factor that influences consumer choice. As prices rise, demand for a product or service tends to fall, and vice versa. Consumers must weigh the benefits of a product or service against its cost and make decisions based on their budget constraints and personal preferences.

The concept of utility is also central to consumer choice. Utility refers to the satisfaction or happiness derived from consuming a good or service. Consumers tend to choose products or services that provide them with the greatest utility, given their budget constraints and personal preferences. Understanding consumer choice is essential for businesses, policymakers, and economists. By grasping how consumers make decisions, businesses can design effective marketing campaigns and develop products or services that meet consumer needs and preferences. Policymakers can also create policies that promote consumer welfare and economic growth by understanding consumer choice. Consumer choice is a complex process influenced by a variety of factors, including budget constraint, personal preferences, price, and utility. Understanding consumer choice is crucial for businesses, policymakers, and economists seeking to promote economic growth and consumer welfare.

2.2.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was anchored on several theories that explained the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products. One of the key theories is the Social Learning Theory (SLT), which posits that people learn new behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge by observing and imitating others (Bandura, 1977). In the context of celebrity endorsement, SLT suggests that consumers learn about products and services by observing celebrities endorse them. Consumers may imitate the behavior of celebrities they admire, leading to increased brand awareness and preference.

The Source Attractiveness Model (SAM). The SAM proposes that the attractiveness of a celebrity endorser influences consumer attitudes towards the endorsed product (McGuire, 1985). According to SAM, there are three dimensions of attractiveness: physical attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Physical attractiveness refers to the celebrity's physical appearance, while expertise refers to their knowledge and experience in the product category. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, refers to the celebrity's reputation and credibility. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is another theory that explains how consumers process information and make decisions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). ELM proposes two routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves careful



evaluation of the arguments and evidence presented, while the peripheral route involves relying on cues, such as celebrity endorsements, to make decisions.

Another theory is the Social Influence Theory by Robert. B. Cialdini around the 20th century. Though, there have been many influences throughout history who have contributed to this concept. One of the most prominent influences in the advancement of this theory at that time is Robert. B. Cialdini. The theory simply states that, individuals 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.

The Meaning Transfer Model, propounded by McCracken Grantin 1989. This theory posits that celebrity endorsers have cultural and symbolic meanings which they transfer to the product they endorsed. In order to effectively use celebrity endorsement, the firm must associate the product with the features of a celebrity which the consumer can easily get attracted to and be influenced to buy (Erdogan, 1999, Johansson & Sparredal, 2002, cited in Oyeniyi, 2014). It is believed that every celebrity has a unique personality and through the endorsement deal, part of his/her personality is supposed to be transferred into the brand, which will in turn influence consumer's buying decision or choice.

Finally, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which suggests that consumer behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). TPB proposes that celebrity endorsements can influence consumer attitudes and subjective norms, leading to increased purchase intentions.

2.2.2. 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 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. 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 or place of origin. The impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer behavior has been a topic of interest in the marketing literature. Numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in promoting products and services. This review synthesizes the findings of these studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Celebrity endorsements have been shown to have a positive impact on consumer behavior. Studies have found that celebrity endorsements can increase brand awareness and recognition (Kamins, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Celebrities can also enhance a brand's image by



associating it with their own positive image (McCracken, 1989). Furthermore, celebrity endorsements can increase consumers' intentions to purchase a product (Brown & Stayman, 1992). However, celebrity endorsements can also have negative effects. Overexposure of a celebrity endorser can lead to a decrease in the effectiveness of the endorsement (Tripp, 1993). Additionally, if a celebrity endorser is not perceived as credible or trustworthy, the endorsement may not be effective (Kamins, 1990). Negative associations with a celebrity endorser can also harm a brand's image (Erdogan, 1999).

Several moderating variables have been identified as influencing the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. Demographic factors such as age, gender, and income level can influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements (Kamins, 1990). Psychographic factors such as personality, values, and attitudes can also moderate the impact of celebrity endorsements (Brown & Stayman, 1992). Furthermore, the level of interest and engagement with the product can influence the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

A study conducted by Aldajani and Daajani (2019) on Impact of Celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behaviour in Saudi Society found that most of the respondents spend 2 to 4 hours a day on Social Media and that higher attractiveness of celebrity positively impacts the customer's perception about the advisor and its products. This descriptive cross-sectional study adopted a simple random sampling to select 120 individuals with a response rate of (83.3%) in order to ascertain the behaviour of the participants towards celebrity endorsement on buying goods and its impact on buying decision. The findings also revealed that the higher attractiveness of celebrity encourages consumers to buy the product. The researchers concluded that using celebrity endorsement to promote a brand or to sell a product is done with the presumption that consumers can be influenced to buy the products endorsed by their favourite celebrities.

Gauns, Pillai, Kamat, Chen and Chang (2017) conducted a study on Impact of Celebrity endorsement on consumer buying behaviour in the State of Goa. This study adopted survey design with structured questionnaire which was administered to 200 consumers during June 2015 to April 2016, with a response rate of 86 per cent. Their findings showed that a significant association exists between celebrity supporters and gender, age, occupation and income level, except in education and location. Their finding also showed that consumers considered celebrity endorsements more attractive and influential than non-celebrity endorsements. Also, the celebrity attributes tested in this study showed positive relationship with purchase intention, except in expertise and trustworthiness of celebrity. These scholars therefore, concluded that celebrity attributes impact the purchase intention of consumers.

Similar research was carried out by Omoregbe and Osifo (2019) on Impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behaviour of four brands of telecommunication network operators in Nigeria among students of University of Benin, Benin City. The population of the study was drawn from undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. The researchers used survey research design. Three hundred and ninety-seven (397) students



were selected through the administration of structured questionnaire selected through convenience sampling technique. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 by running both descriptive and inferential statistics. Their findings revealed that all celebrity endorsement attributes have a positive and significant link with purchase decision of the consumers. Based on this, the researchers suggested that firms should use more celebrity endorsements to build consciousness and perceptions of their products in the minds of consumers. They also suggested that managers should devise suitable strategy to identify the right celebrity endorsement attributes that would lead to improved competitiveness as the combined effect is greater than the use of one attribute. 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 (X²). The result of the study revealed that the element of credibility which comprises expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity have positive effect on consumer's purchases.

Appiah (2022) made a 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 items were adopted to gather the data for the studies. These data collection tools were administered to 110 individuals with 100 respondents used for the questionnaire 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.

In conclusion, the empirical review suggests that celebrity endorsement can be an effective marketing strategy for promoting products and services. However, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements depends on various factors, including the credibility and trustworthiness of the celebrity endorser, the level of overexposure, and the moderating variables mentioned above. Marketers should carefully consider these factors when selecting celebrity endorsers and designing marketing campaigns.

3. 0. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a survey research design to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria. The survey design was chosen because it allows for the collection of large amounts of data from a representative sample of the population. The study was carried out in Imo State, Nigeria. Owerri was chosen for the study because it is the biggest commercial city in Imo State. Data were collated through questionnaire which was



tested for validity using face and content method, while the reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha reliability test for internal consistency where an alpha level of .999 was obtained signaling a good consistency level. A total population of 250 consumers were randomly selected from the commercial city, Owerri. The entire population was studied because of its limited number. Out of 250 copies of questionnaire distributed, 207 were retrieved and were used for the study. The data generated were analyzed using Mean, and Hypothesis was tested using Simple Regression on Statistical Packages for Social Science (version 27) at 5% level of significance.

4.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Discussion of Result

Decision Rule: As for the decision rule, accept the Alternate hypothesis (H_a) if cal P-value is less than 0.05 ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$); otherwise accept the Null hypothesis (H_o)

Test of Hypothesis

H_o : There is no significant influence between celebrity endorsement and consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Regression Model of celebrity endorsement and consumer choice of products

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

a. Predictors: (Constant), Celebrity influence

Table 2: ANOVA Model of Associations

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

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer choice of product.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Celebrity influence.



Table 3: Correlation Model of the Relationships

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

Dependent Variable: Consumer conviction on patronage

There is positive impact of celebrity endorsement influence on consumer choice of product $r=0.728$, $n=207-1=206$ and $p=0.25$. Thus, since p value is less than 0.05, hence, there is positive impact of celebrity endorsement influence on consumer choice of product. This implies that celebrity endorsement influence assures consumers of the product capacity or make up which is likely to assure market of the product features.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer choice of products in Imo State, Nigeria. The findings of this research revealed that celebrity endorsement has a significant influence on consumer choice of products in Imo State. The study found that consumers in Imo State are more likely to purchase products endorsed by celebrities they admire and trust. Ultimately, celebrity endorsement offers a unique opportunity for brands to shine in the spotlight and connect with their audience in a meaningful way.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that businesses should carefully select celebrity endorsers, while businesses should choose celebrity endorsers who align with their brand values and target audience.

Competing Interest

The author had declared that no conflicting interest existed regarding this paper.



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