



## Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Purchasing Behavior among Students of the University of Benin: A Case Study of the Nigerian Telecommunication Industry

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### Abstract

In this research, we examined the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behavior of four brands of telecom network operators in the Nigerian telecommunication industry among students of the University of Benin, Benin City. Specifically, we used celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity similarity as attributes of celebrity endorsement. The population of the study consists of all undergraduate students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted through the administration of structured questionnaire drawn with the aid of convenience sampling technique to three hundred and ninety-seven (397) students, which were arrived at by the use of number estimation formula as suggested by Yamane (1967). The reference group theory was adopted as the outcome of interactions between celebrity endorsement attributes and consumer purchasing behavior. The model parameters used in the framework were analyzed using multiple regression and Pearson matrix correlation techniques through Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 by running both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that all celebrity endorsement attributes have a positive and significant link with purchase decision of the consumers. Based on this, it is suggested that firms should use more celebrity endorsements to build consciousness and perceptions of their products in the minds of consumers. Also, 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.

**Keywords:** Celebrity Endorsement, Celebrity Expertise, Celebrity Respect, Celebrity Trustworthiness, Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

**JEL Classification:** C42, D12, L96 and M30

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### Introduction

In recent years, the telecommunication industry in Nigeria is growing tremendously. However, it has continued to experience high level competition as a result of more firms entering the industry. The players in this industry in Nigeria include MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9MOBILE. These companies compete in the area of Internet services, Short Messaging Services (SMS), phone calls and mobile money services. Advertisement through the use of celebrity endorsement

has been found as a useful means of creating products awareness and perception in the minds of target customers in the telecommunication industry (Martey & Frempong, 2014; Samar & Samreen, 2015). Youths of today see celebrities as role models and opinion leaders due to their social status and fame. They tend to emulate these celebrities' lifestyle; the way they dress, the way they talk and even to look like them physically (Okorie, Oyedepo & Akhidenor, 2012).

Owusu-Mensah, Nimssah and Mensah (2013) asserted that an advertisement from celebrities is not only effective as it captures the attention of the consumers to buy the product being promoted but also create a long lasting memory in the minds of consumers as this will influence the consumers to purchase the product repeatedly. In the views of Amaoteng and Poku (2013), the information in a celebrity endorsed advert is perceived to be true because of the belief held by most consumers that celebrities would not want to destroy their integrity by getting linked with 'fake products'.

Srivastava and Tiwari (2014) affirmed that firms are operating in a complex and competitive business environment where demands of consumers are continually changing. In today's era of strong business rivalry, firms in the telecommunication industry can achieve success through understanding consumer purchasing behaviour towards their products using celebrity endorsement. Consumers can distinguish the feature of products by collecting necessary information which they usually get through celebrity endorsements. It is essentially critical to evaluate and provide deep insights towards the role of celebrity endorsement in influencing the consumer purchasing behaviour in the Nigerian telecommunication industry.

A research conducted by Verma and Kishore (2015) found that youths are highly attracted towards celebrity endorsement. They affirmed that youths tend to purchase items of products that they see in advertisements. In the same vein, Biswas, Hussain and O'Donnell (2015) emphasised that people between the ages of 18-25 have the greatest ability to recall brands using celebrity endorsers compared with older age groups. It is against this background that understanding the influence of attributes of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin is deemed critical.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

In contemporary years, celebrity endorsement has become a very vital and strong competitive tool used by firms to publicize products and stimulates awareness in the minds of customers (Srivedi, 2012). Due to this development, many researchers have taken time to carry out numerous studies on the issue of celebrity endorsement (Isaac, 2014; Vincent & Ernest, 2015, Wilson & Chosniel, 2013) thereby leading to the availability of various articles on the subject matter. Though much empirical evidences exist on this subject, it has been observed that there are so many gaps that were not filled by most of these studies. Most of these studies centred on the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand image of firms (Lee, 2014; Martey & Frempong, 2014; Srivedi, 2012; Verma & Kishore, 2015). However, in a related study by Mahira (2012), the researcher observed that a major limitation of his study was that data were taken from amongst professionals. He therefore recommended that further research be carried out taking data from other groups like students. In another study by Isaac (2014), it was recommended that further studies be conducted using a firm in the service industry as his study focused on the manufacturing industry.

The outcome of studies between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behaviour were inconclusive due to the different sectors examined and methodological approaches employed (Creswell, 2008; Taylor, 2016; Tomkovik, Yelkur & Christians, 2001). Creswell

(2008) stated that “nothing sells like celebrity” through advertising. Taylor (2016) on the hand emphasized that celebrity endorser in advertising is “not necessarily a recipe for success” that ads with celebrities underperformed slightly. Also, the study of Tomkovik, Yelkur and Christians (2001) revealed that celebrities do not enhance ad likability. However, there remains a sustained interest in celebrity endorsement in the advertising industry (Whan & Parker, 2016). Based on these controversies, there is the need to validate the findings on the nexus between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behaviour in the Nigerian telecommunication industry.

Wilson and Chosniel (2013) stated that most of the studies on celebrity endorsement are mostly the capabilities of the celebrity endorser. They have provided little direction regarding the impact those endorsements have on consumer purchasing behaviour. More so, discernments of brands and purchasing actions usually vary from one individual to another due to the influence of some other persons. It is based on these gaps identified above that this study wants to establish the influence of celebrity endorsement on changes in consumer purchasing behaviour among Students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, taking into consideration the various attributes of celebrity endorsement and how each of these attributes affects consumer purchasing behaviour.

### Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behaviour in the Nigerian telecommunication industry among students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the influence of celebrity trustworthiness on consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City;
- ii. ascertain the effect of celebrity expertise on consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City;
- iii. investigate the impact of celebrity respect on consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City;
- iv. determine the influence of celebrity attractiveness on consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City; and
- v. examine the effect of celebrity similarity on consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City.

### Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are stated in the null form.

HO1: There is no significant link between celebrity trustworthiness and consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City.

HO2: There is no significant link between celebrity expertise and consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication

industry, Benin City.

HO3: There is no significant link between celebrity attractiveness and consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City.

HO4: There is no significant link between celebrity attractiveness and consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City.

HO5: There is no significant link between celebrity similarity and consumer purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, Benin City.

## Literature Review

### Celebrity Endorsement

A celebrity is a person who enjoys public recognition, fame and acceptance. He uses these attributes on behalf of consumer products to appear in advertisements and promotions (Mahira, 2012). The use of celebrities in commercials can have affirmative effect on the trustworthiness, message recall, memory and likability of the commercials and on the buying motives of the target consumers (Pornpitakpan, 2003; Pringle & Binet, 2005; Roy, 2006). Celebrity endorsement can be emphasised around celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity similarity.

### Celebrity Trustworthiness

Celebrity trustworthiness is the level of self-assurance in the product endorser by consumers. A celebrity is perceived by the consumers to be dependable when certifying a product or a service (Belch & Belch, 2001; Ohanian, 1990). This is logically based on how honest the celebrity is about what he\she says concerning the brand. This is because consumers believe virtually everything that comes from celebrities due to the fact that they assume that celebrities would not want to associate with fake products as that may affect their reputation (Belch & Belch, 2001).

### Celebrity Expertise

Belch and Belch (2001) stated that celebrities are often chosen due to the knowledge and experience they have about the product they are endorsing. This implies that the celebrity is not simply recommending the brand to get money but based on his knowledge within the subject area that the brand is good. If the celebrity is perceived as being proficient he or she is more likely to change the opinion of the consumers.

### Celebrity Respect

According to Shimp (2007), celebrity respect involves the extent to which consumers regard or respect the person certifying a product, based on the endorser's personal potentials and achievements. Celebrities earn respect from the general public due to their acting skills and their contributions to the society in music, sports, business, politics, and other issues in the society. All these are counted as personal qualities of the celebrity which earn him respect and credibility as a spokesperson and product endorser.

### **Celebrity Attractiveness**

As Langmeyer and Shank (1994) asserts, celebrity attractiveness is an all-embracing, covering not only the structural built of the celebrity, but other epitomes of attractiveness such as intellectual skills, elegance, intelligence, et cetera. McGuire (2013) and Singer (2007) corroborated this assertion that attractiveness is beyond physical attractiveness. It also includes any number of worthy features such as sportsmanship, charisma, dependability, et cetera that consumers might observe in a celebrity endorser. These qualities of celebrities can influence purchase intention from consumers. Consumers tend to form affirmative labels about celebrities and it may lead to them repurchasing the advertised products (Singer, 2007). Celebrities can be attractive because consumers have great respect for their achievement and therefore are attracted to them.

### **Celebrity Similarity**

Shimp (2007) asserted that celebrity similarity involves the degree to which celebrity endorser of a brand matches the target viewers of commercials in terms of some features such as age, gender, ethnicity, et cetera. It is perceived that consumers tend to prefer and rely on messages from celebrity endorser of a brand that shares these common characteristics. When celebrity endorser and consumers share similar qualities, such as needs, goals, interest, lifestyle, et cetera the celebrity endorser is better valued in the eyes of the consumers.

### **Consumer Purchasing Behaviour**

Consumer purchasing behaviour is the processes and interaction involving affect, cognition, behaviour, and environmental proceedings by which consumers perform their buying choices (Omogbe & Osayande, 2018). Every individual's consumer behaviour or purchase decision of the consumers can significantly be influenced by their buying habits which are affected by technological, political, demographic, cultural, economic, personal, psychological, social factors, et cetera. These factors are revealed or shown in the attitude, drive, perception, disposition, knowledge, and lifestyle of the consumers.

Celebrity endorsement plays a significant role in arousing these various factors, more especially the psychological motive of the consumer to buy a particular product and inspire consumers to repurchase these brand of goods. Consequently, consumers are fascinated towards the brand of products which are passionately attached with their behaviours and it builds into customer loyalty (Osifo & Agbonifoh, 2018). Samar and Samreen (2015) establish that emotional affections put a significant effect on the consumers and their purchasing behaviour as individuals tend to link themselves with the brand of products endorsed by celebrities. Celebrity endorsement influences the behaviours of consumers to buy a specific product through cognition. These perceptions are perceived by consumers through their senses, discernment, attention, recall, reasoning, language, et cetera (Samar & Samreen, 2015). To this end, celebrity endorsement is a significant approach in changing the buying plans of the individuals. Therefore, the best way firms can attract consumers to buy their products is to understand these aspects of consumers' psychological cognition.

### **Underpinning Theory for the Study**

The model framework for this study is anchored on the reference group theory. The theory appropriately linked celebrity endorsement attributes and consumer purchasing behaviour as the exogenous and dependent variables respectively in this study. The model postulates that a certain imaginary person or group is considered to have a substantial influence upon another

person's assessment, drives, and behaviour (Whan & Parker, 2016). It argues that consumers have a tendency to look out for brand of products confirmed to have affirmative credibility by a neutral professional. This helps to affirm consumers existing awareness of a brand (Whan & Parker, 2016). Therefore, the reference group theory is of the position that most consumers see celebrities as highly reliable sources of confirmation of their knowledge of a product.

Furthermore, the reference group theory maintains that consumers need certain celebrity similarity in a buying situation; otherwise, it is risky to purchase that brand of products. Looking for a match to what another person or reference group approves is relevant when making a repurchase decision (Whan & Parker, 2016). Celebrity endorsing a product can be a source of utilitarian influence to the consumers who desire conformity in a purchase situation (McGuire, 2013).

Lastly, according to the reference group theory, consumers look out for match between themselves and an individual or group of individuals considered to be proficient that share something in common. This may be in form of buying brand of products used or those prescribed by the group of individuals considered to be proficient. An optimistic self-image is relevant, since a consumer is more eager to be related with good folks instead of the bad folks (Whan & Parker, 2016). In other words, consumers see celebrities as positive referent and can therefore seek consistency with celebrities endorsing a product.

### **Empirical Review**

There are related studies done on the link between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behaviour (Nyakado, 2013; Osewe, 2013; Radha & Jija, 2013; Shiau, Szuchiang & Hui, 2015). Nyakado (2013) in a study of the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer behaviour using a representative sample size of 300 respondents established that physical attractiveness of celebrity affects consumers toward buying a particular brand of products. He suggested that companies should not only seek the services of a celebrity who is only popular but also who has credibility. The findings of the study revealed that celebrity endorsed brands have a propensity to attract more consumers. Osewe (2013) conducted a study on the effectiveness of Internet commercials on consumer purchasing behaviour using a stratified sampling technique to select 100 respondents. He established that Internet commercials have significant link with buying choice of the consumers. He concluded that Internet commercials are effective in reaching and creating consciousness in the minds of consumers.

Radha and Jija (2013) carried out a study on the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer's purchasing decision in Coimbatore, India. Convenience sampling was adopted using a sample of 200 respondents. The findings showed that 51 per cent of the consumers give support to quality of the brand while purchasing products. Whereas 53 per cent of the respondents are of the view that commercials with the help of celebrities assist them to be familiar with a product. In the study of Shiau, Szuchiang and Hui (2015) on the role of consumers' beverage purchasing behaviour in preference for different beverage groups in Tainan City, Taiwan using a survey of 150 customers, demonstrated a positive significant relationship between product attribute and consumer purchase decision.

Finally, Wang and Scheinbaum (2017) test a structural model to find a relationship between advertisement and brand outcomes of celebrity endorsement using global airline industry as case study. The sample of the international airports used was 637. The results of structural equations analyses revealed that consumers' perception of a celebrity endorser's attractiveness and trustworthiness increases brand attitude, brand credibility, and in turn purchase intention towards

endorsed brands. The authors recommended that advertisers in the global airline industry should use attractive celebrity endorsers with a global appeal who are trustworthy to enhance brand credibility.

### Research Methodology

The study made use of the survey research design. It made use of primary data that were gathered through field survey using self-administered questionnaire. The data were sourced between April, 2019 and July, 2019. The population for the study consisted of all registered undergraduate students of the University of Benin believed to be either customer of any of the four major Nigerian telecommunication firms in Benin City, namely: GLO, MTN, AIRTEL, and 9MOBILE. The choice of using students segment is due to the fact that sizeable numbers of consumers that have the greatest ability to recall brands and highly attracted towards celebrity endorsement are youths. The estimated number of students in the University of Benin is forty-five thousand, seven hundred (45,700) as at July, 2019 (Central Record Processing Unit, University of Benin). The sample size is arrived at by the use of number estimation formula as suggested by Yamane (1967) as calculated below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = the size of the sample; N = population size; e = percentage level of significance; and N = 45,700

$$n = \frac{45700}{1 + 45700(0.05)^2}$$

= 396.5; Approximately = 400.

The justification for the use of the formula is to scientifically use an appropriate and considerable sample of students that are currently admitted, registered with matriculation number in the different faculties of the institution. For the purpose of arriving at a more realistic, accurate and clear result, the sample size of the respondents was proportionately determined among the faculties of the institution, namely: Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Life Sciences, Faculty of Management Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Physical Sciences, and School of Dentistry (uniben.edu), using stratified random sampling procedure by distributing thirty-six (36) questionnaires to each of the faculties except Faculty of Education, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, and Faculty of Engineering that we gave thirty-seven (37) questionnaires each because the results of our pilot study showed that these four faculties have more students in University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. Convenience sampling was used to distribute the questionnaire because it gives room for easy access and interaction with the different respondents that filled the questionnaire. Out of the chosen sample size of 400 given questionnaire; 397 respondents' questionnaire were valid and the responses used for data analysis, interpretation and presentation, making the response rate of 99.25 per cent.

The questionnaire for this study consisted of three main sections, namely the profile of the respondents and specific questions designed to measure the students' purchasing behaviour constructs in line with celebrity endorsement by Nigerian telecommunication firms. The instrument used for the data collection was a closed ended questionnaire designed for the subjects.

It employed a five-point Likert type scales with 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = undecided (U), 4 = agree (A), 5 = strongly agree (SA) to measure all the items. Collected data were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. All data were coded and the test analyses were done at 5 per cent level of significance using the SPSS version 22.0.

**Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument**

The items on the questionnaire were face validated by senior colleagues in research area. Pilot study was conducted by testing and pre-testing the questionnaire with 20 selected respondents from undergraduate students of the different faculties in the University of Benin. Feedbacks were unified and questions were then reviewed. The final version of the questionnaire consisted of 30 closed ended questions. To test reliability of the research instrument, the researchers made use of the Cronbach’s alpha as a diagnostic measure. It measures the dependability or consistency of the whole scale (Majid & Koorosh, 2015). The result of the reliability analysis is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Cronbach Alpha**

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Celebrity Trustworthiness	5	0.753
Celebrity Expertise	5	0.711
Celebrity Respect	5	0.708
Celebrity Attractiveness	5	0.714
Celebrity Similarity	5	0.727
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	5	0.824

Source: Researchers’ computation based on the field survey 2019 using SPSS 22.0

**Model Specification**

The model for the study was formulated as consumer purchasing behaviour is a function of celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity similarity. It was therefore stated functionally as:

$$CPB = f (CT, CE, CR, CA, CS) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Therefore,

$$CPB = \beta_0 + \beta_1CT + \beta_2CE + \beta_3CR + \beta_4CA + \beta_5CS + \beta \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Where:

CPB = consumer purchasing behaviour; CT = celebrity trustworthiness; CE = celebrity expertise; CR = celebrity respect; CA = celebrity attractiveness; and CS = celebrity similarity.  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$  = coefficients of elasticity displaying degrees of explanation power about consumer purchasing behaviour;  $\beta_0$  = constant term; and  $\beta$  = error term.

And apriori expectations:  $\beta_1 > 0, \beta_2 > 0, \beta_3 > 0, \beta_4 > 0, \beta_5 > 0. \dots\dots\dots (3)$

## Presentation and Discussion of Findings

**Table 2: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for All Variables**

	Mean	CPB	CT	CE	CR	CA	CS
CPB	3.78	1.0000					
CT	3.82	0.5748	1.0000				
CE	3.77	0.5111	0.6323	1.0000			
CR	3.69	0.3145	0.3701	0.4959	1.0000		
CA	3.61	0.4658	0.7651	0.6050	0.3956	1.0000	
CS	3.52	0.4775	0.5058	0.5343	0.3790	0.6579	1.0000

*Source: Researchers' computation based on the field survey 2019 using SPSS 22.0*

Table 2 presents the results of the inter-correlation among the variables. In Table 2, all the correlation statistics values are positive, indicating that these variables move in the same direction as consumer purchasing behaviour. It was observed that CT, CE, CR, CA, and CS variables in relation to consumer purchasing behaviour did not exhibit multicollinearity since none of the variables has correlations in excess of 0.90 as suggested by Dwivedi (2008).

Table 2 also indicated the means of the five attributes of celebrity endorsement: celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity similarity. The Table revealed that students of the University of Benin using brands of Nigerian telecom operators emphasised more on celebrity trustworthiness (mean = 3.82) followed by celebrity expertise (mean = 3.77), and the lowest attributes of celebrity endorsement is celebrity similarity (mean = 3.52). The average score for the five attributes was equal to 3.68. Given that the scale used a 5-point scale, it can be established that students of the University of Benin are highly committed to the endorsement of celebrities in the advertisement of firms' products in the Nigerian telecommunication industry as the celebrity endorsement attributes is above the average mean. The Table also showed the mean of the consumer purchasing behaviour. This revealed that students of the University of Benin have high consumer purchasing behaviour with a mean of 3.78, which is above the average mean of 3.

The results of the estimated multiple regression model using OLS are displayed in Table 3 below. The coefficient of determination (R-square) of 79.3 per cent indicates that for the period under study based on the available data, celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity similarity are able to account for 79.3 per cent of the changes in consumer purchasing behaviour in the Nigerian telecommunication industry among students of the University of Benin with only 20.7 per cent being explained by other variables which were not included in the study. This indicates highly impressive goodness of fit for the model. Apparently, the model is a good method for the estimates.

The F- Statistics of 14.5251 with probability value of 0.0000 indicates that there was a simultaneous linear relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behaviour. We therefore reject the hypothesis of a non-linear simultaneous relationship between consumer purchasing behaviour and all the explanatory variables combined. This suggests that the joint effects of all the included variables in the model are significant in explaining the systematic variations in consumer purchasing behaviour of students of the University of Benin, Benin City towards the brands of the Nigerian telecommunication industry. The Durbin Watson (D-W) statistic values for the equation of 1.9711 is approximately 2. Thus, there is the absence of

a first order position autocorrelation in the model. This means that the results from this study are very comprehensive for policy implementation and recommendations.

The results of the OLS analysis from Table 3 show support for all the alternate hypotheses. Consequently, these results provide backing for the affirmation that celebrity endorsement attributes lead to improved consumer purchasing behaviour. Table 3 also reveals that celebrity trustworthiness has the most significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour of students of the University of Benin ( $\beta_1 = 0.8234$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by celebrity expertise ( $\beta_2 = 0.7128$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and the lowest significant influence on consumer purchasing behaviour of students of the University of Benin being celebrity similarity ( $\beta_5 = 0.5491$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that students believe that trustworthy celebrity can provide information in an unbiased, honest, and dependable manner about products/services to consumers. This is in contrast with the findings of Kleck, Richardson and Ronald (1974) and Ohanian (1990). Kleck et al. (1974) posited that physical attractiveness of a celebrity is the most stressed in commercials, as it stimulates greater social acceptance and produces an affirmative impression at the early contact. Ohanian (1990) stated that the seeming expertise or proficiency of a celebrity is more significant in elucidating buying motives rather than their attractiveness and trustworthiness. However, celebrity similarity may not be a strong indicator of celebrity endorsement attributes in this study compared to the other four attributes. According to Shimp (2007), the endorsement of celebrities based on similarity is dependent on the extent to which the firm matches the target viewers of commercials in terms of features such as age, gender, ethnicity, et cetera. This is against firm's market characteristics, segmentation, and the type of products offered to the market. Therefore, endorsement of celebrities based on similarity may not be applicable in all situations in influencing consumers in buying a particular brand of a product.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis Using Ordinary Least Squares Estimation Technique**

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t- Statistics	Probability Value	Hypotheses
CPB	5.9081	1.3887	4.2541	0.0000	Significant
CT	0.8234	0.4092	2.0118	0.0000	Significant
CE	0.7128	0.2085	3.4186	0.0000	Significant
CR	0.6938	0.2964	2.3411	0.0000	Significant
CA	0.6192	0.2429	2.5485	0.0000	Significant
CS	0.5491	0.1545	3.5549	0.0000	Significant
R <sup>2</sup> = 0.7932, Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = 0.7803, F- Stat (Prob.) = 14.525 [0.000], Durbin Watson = 1.971					

Source: Researchers' computation based on the field survey 2019 using SPSS 22.0

The findings in this study find support in the research of prior studies (Belch & Belch, 2001; Mellisa, 2014; Shimp, 2007; Wan & Scheinbaum, 2017). Shimp (2007) established associations between physical attractions and evaluations, brand recall, experience, and likeability of a brand. He asserted that an attractive celebrity has a positive influence on consumers' attitudes towards a brand. According to Belch and Belch (2001), consumers are easily persuaded by messages from individuals who they feel has a sense of similarity with. Wang and Scheinbaum (2017) stated that consumers' perception of a celebrity endorser's attractiveness and trustworthiness increases brand attitude, brand credibility, and in turn purchase intention towards endorsed brands.

**Table 4: One-Sample Test**

Variables	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CPB	13.974	396	0.000	0.311	0.2011	0.4291
CT	26.319	396	0.000	0.297	0.1396	0.3416
CE	13.582	396	0.000	0.643	0.5032	0.6953
CR	7.547	396	0.000	0.487	0.3545	0.5276
CA	8.452	396	0.000	0.409	0.3072	0.5354
CS	6.583	396	0.000	0.131	0.0608	0.2182

Source: Researchers' computation based on the field survey 2019 using SPSS 22.0

Table 4 shows the level at which consumer purchasing behaviour towards celebrity endorsement among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry is influenced by the different independent variables. All of these independent variables were tested at the value of 3 in one-sample t-test. The result of the t-value of consumer purchasing behaviour is 13.974 with significance of 0.000. It shows that students of the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria agree with the fact that the independent variables that influence their purchasing behaviour towards celebrity endorsement have a very significant effect in their process of decision making. The t-value of celebrity trustworthiness turned out to be the highest among the independent variables with 26.319 with significance 0.000. It emphasises that celebrities that can provide information in an unbiased, honest, and dependable manner about products/services to consumers is a substantial and visible significant determinant asset affecting purchasing behaviour among students of the University of Benin.

The t-value of celebrity expertise is 13.582 with significance of 0.000. It illustrates the fact that purchasing behaviour among students is considerably affected by how much confidence they repose in the expertise of celebrity. The students feel that a celebrity is often chosen due to his knowledge and experience in endorsing a product.

Also, the t-value of celebrity similarity is 6.583 with significance of 0.000. This demonstrates that though consumer purchasing behaviour is significantly affected by the perception of celebrity similarity, this variable has the lowest effect on consumer purchasing behaviour in this study compared to other celebrity endorsement attributes. This shows that celebrity similarity has a moderate effect on consumer purchasing behaviour towards the awareness and perception of firms' products in the minds of consumers. This is a pointer to the fact that students do not give much preference to celebrities who share common features and traits. The t-value of celebrity respect is 7.547 with significance of 0.000. This demonstrates that students admire the endorser of a product based on his personal qualities and accomplishments in the society.

Lastly, the t-value of celebrity attractiveness is 8.452 with significance of 0.000. This depicts the fact that celebrity attractiveness has a significant and distinct influence on the consumer purchasing behaviour towards the buying behaviour of a brand of telecom operators in Nigeria. The students tend to form positive stereotypes about the intellectual skills and physical charm of such celebrities and this may lead to the repurchasing of the advertised products. The attractiveness of celebrities is one of the major factors that influence purchase intention of brands of products in the Nigerian telecommunication industry among students and youths in Nigeria.

## Conclusions

This research was performed to examine the effect of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behavior among students of the University of Benin in the Nigerian telecommunication industry. It made use of celebrity endorsement attributes as exogenous variables: celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity expertise, celebrity respect, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity similarity. In the Nigerian telecommunication sector, consumers usually purchase brand of products if they have enough information about the products or the products are suggested by someone that is highly respected and considered to be a role model in the society. However, consumers do not only rely on the trial of a product by listening to their peers, family members, and friends to buy a particular product but also build awareness and perceptions of the products in their mind through celebrity endorsement. From the result of the study, there exists positive and significant link between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behavior in the Nigerian telecommunication sector among students of the University of Benin, Benin City. To remain successful and competitive, telecommunication firms should aggressively implement the use of celebrity endorsement attributes in the advertisement of their products as a business strategy.

In the end, we conclude that it will be easy for any firm in the telecommunication sector of any economy to influence the purchasing behavior of consumers. This can be done through building of consciousness and sustainable insight in the minds of their consumers using celebrity endorsement, more especially the celebrities that are trustworthy, attractive, and with requisite expertise.

## Policy Recommendations

- i). Firms should use more of celebrity endorsements to build consciousness and perceptions of their products in the minds of consumers. Celebrities should be provided with more information regarding the company's brand and the product in order to build buyers' awareness and perception of their products.
- ii). Managers should devise suitable strategies 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.
- iii). Managers in the telecommunication industry should watch out for celebrities that are trustworthy as majority of customers make purchases because of the high level of honesty and trust reposed in celebrities.
- iv). Firms should take into consideration the expertise garnered by the celebrity before endorsing him for a product advert. If the endorser is perceived as being an expert by consumers due to his knowledge and experience about a product, he or she is more likely to change the opinion of the consumers.
- v). The attractiveness of celebrities is also of great virtue in the endorsement of a product as more consumers tend to be influenced by their virtuous features such as intellectual skills, sportsmanship, charm, before purchasing a product or service.
- vi). The similarities between the celebrity and its target market should be considered such as putting into consideration the age, gender and culture of the celebrity to its target market. In some cases, individuals have a tendency to favour and appreciate celebrities who share common features and traits with them.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

Future researchers intending to work on this subject matter should take into consideration other attributes of celebrity endorsement as this study only considered a few of such attributes. Future studies should also relate celebrity endorsement to other variables other than consumer purchasing behavior, like organizational profitability and brand image.

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