International Journal of Education, Culture, and Society

e-ISSN : 3024-8973
p-ISSN : 3024-8981

Index: Harvard, Boston, Sydney University, Dimensions, Lens, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/IJECS.v3i2.5300

Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Brand Perception of Tecno Mobile

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Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Mar 6, 2025	Mar 22, 2025	Apr 2, 2025	Apr 7, 2025

Abstract

As celebrity endorsement is now a common factor among advertisers and brands, this study focuses on the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand perception of Tecno Mobile. The study anchored on the principles of the Source Credibility Theory, Social Influence Theory and the Elaboration. Likelihood model. Using the survey design, questionnaire was employed to collect data from 400 Tecno mobile's previous and current users residing in Abuja, Nigeria. Findings revealed that participants are exposed to celebrity endorsement very often in their daily life, its influence on their purchase decision depends on a number of factors, which includes the celebrity's credibility, the level of trust the consumer has in celebrities who endorse products or brands, and the type of product or brand being endorsed. The findings of this study revealed that majority of people preserve celebrity endorsements to be a good form of advertising because they believe celebrities are reliable. This study concludes that celebrity endorsement plays a major role in making purchase decisions, as well as the credibility of a celebrity. The study recommended that advertisers should define their target audience and the category of product while adopting celebrity endorsement.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, Brand perception, Tecno mobile

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Introduction

Advertising is a significant aspect of marketing in any society. It has a strong influence and can effectively change people's minds. It was originally introduced by firms for the purpose of creating awareness about goods and services, it also encourages the development of new and better products, thereby giving consumers wider varieties to choose from. It has been discovered that the use of product and service endorsements in advertising has the potential to increase the financial revenue of businesses that employ them. As a result, product and service endorsements have grown in importance and popularity in modern advertising. According to Nwaboli (2022) celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy that involves using a celebrity's fame and status to promote a product or brand. The use of a celebrity's reputation and influence to promote products and enhance brand perception is known as celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement has become a common strategy employed by companies to enhance brand visibility and influence consumer perceptions.

The obsession with digital gadgets, particularly smartphones, among the young generation worldwide has created a significant opportunity for telecommunication marketers to target Generation Y (Tariq Khizindar et al., 2015). Smartphone manufacturers should be able to explore new idea to attract customers. To increase consumers purchase intention, they can use an appropriate marketing strategy suitable for the targeted market. The use of celebrities in advertisements is expected to be effective in attracting consumer attention. To select celebrities that suit consumers' characteristics, companies must evaluate the requirements needed by the endorsers. One of the strategies is advertising. Advertising is one of the most popular instruments to promote a product like a smartphone. Hassan and Jamil (2014) stated that since the last ten years, the marketing environment changed significantly, witnessed by the involvement of celebrities as celebrity endorsers in the advertisement.

Today celebrity endorsement has become a popular form of advertising across different market and continents. Flipping through the various television channels, print media and radios or social media consumers find quite a number of endorsements.

Celebrity endorsement on brands is rooted in evolution of advertising and promotional strategies, where the use of celebrities to endorse products has become a prevalent and strategic tool. Historically, celebrity endorsement has been employed to capitalize on the fame, credibility, and aspirational qualities associated with well-known individuals. As

consumer culture has evolved, so too has the role and impact of celebrities in shaping brand perception.

Traditionally confined to television commercials and print advertisements, celebrity endorsements now encompass a diverse selection of digital platforms, including social media channels such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. This evolution has blurred the lines between traditional advertising and organic content, presenting different opportunities and challenges for brands seeking to leverage celebrity influence.

Brands now use celebrities to endorse certain products with an intention to draw consumer's attention, which further affects consumer's attitude and purchase intentions (Pradhan et al., 2016). According to the Association of National Advertisers (2022), influencer marketing focuses on leveraging individuals who have influence over potential buyers and orienting marketing activities around these individuals to drive a brand message to the larger market. This study explored consumers perception of brands associated with celebrities, considering factors such as credibility, likability, and relevance. It investigated the psychological and emotional connections formed between consumers and brands through celebrity endorsements, such as issue of authenticity, negative spillover effects, and celebrity spillover effects.

Statement of the Problem

The influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer perceptions of a brand has been widely acknowledged in marketing and advertising. Researchers have demonstrated that celebrity endorsements can significantly alter consumer attitudes, increase brand recall, and influence purchasing decisions (Erdogan, 2020; Shimp & Andrews, 2021). There is still a limited understanding of the influence of celebrity endorsements specifically on brand perception within emerging markets where Tecno Mobile majorly operates. Tecno Mobile has adopted the use of several celebrities in its advertising campaigns, the direct relationship between these endorsements and brand perception has not been sufficiently explored.

Theoretical Framework

The Likelihood Model, supported by social influence theory, serves as the foundation for this investigation.

The Source Credibility Model

The source credibility theory as propounded by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1963) stated that people or receivers are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible. Hovland (1963) and Weiss (1974) later studied the influence of sources in persuasion. The study was done by comparing credible and non-credible sources using same persuasive message to test if the sources seen as credible could influence opinions change in the message receivers more than the non-credible source. The study confirmed the assumption that credible sources tend to create the desired impact on the audience. There are two most commonly visible elements which positively influence source credibility and they are: perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the source. The source credibility theory explains how people's perceptions of trustworthiness and expertise affect how they process information and form opinions. (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953) According to Hovland et al. (1953), source expertise is "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions", while source trustworthiness is "the degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate assertions he considers most valid". Therefore, individuals are more likely to be swayed if the source is alleged to be credible (Hovland et al., 1953). A communicator's expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and power represent the psychological construct associated with source credibility. In particular, the perception of a messenger will influence how a message is perceived and whether it will change attitudes and behavior (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Underwood, 2003).

Consumers rarely have comprehensive information about the products they make decisions about, thus they can employ a variety of tactics and inferences to fill in the gaps in their product knowledge before making decisions (Gunasti & Ross, 2009). Consumers, according to research, see celebrities and their many attributes as sources of inference from which to derive judgments about the brands that are promoted (Nafees et al., 2021). Consequently, consumers who adhere to a celebrities or influencers are more likely to adopt the influencer's norms, attitudes, motives, and actions. In this regard, consumers would frequently imitate the celebrity's conduct and attitude, and are subconsciously induced to act in ways that are compatible with the celebrity who can educate them about a product and how to utilize it.

Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory (SIT) was originally formulated by Herbert Kelman (1953) in the early 1950s as the framework explaining the conditions under which social influence induces attitude or behavior change. The theory was developed against the backdrop of significant social and political upheavals, exemplified by civil rights movements and anti-war protests. The socio-political climate change brought to the fore the contradictory phenomena in which people could conform to social norms and rules whether or not they believed in their legitimacy (Kelman, 1953). However, prior research on social influence was inadequate to explain the underlying processes of collective persuasion and the translation of social compliance into attitude and behaviour change. Although evidence existed about the predictors of conformity (Kelman, 1953; Sherif, 1935), the intricate nature of attitude changes stimulated by a particulate type of communication lacked a theoretical explanation. Dissatisfied with the ability of the preceding theories to explain contradictory responses to social pressures and social norms.

The relevance of SIT to this study is evident in the way it highlights the importance of selecting a celebrity endorser who is perceived as credible and trustworthy by the target audience. SIT also emphasizes the significance of social identification, where people are more likely to adopt a behavior or attitude if they identify with the person endorsing it. The theory highlights the importance of authenticity and passion in celebrity endorsements, where the influence of the endorsement can be enhanced if the celebrity is seen as being genuine and enthusiastic about the brand.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model, developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), focuses on the two routes to persuasion: the central route (high elaboration) and the peripheral route (low elaboration). In the context of celebrity endorsements on brand perception, the ELM is important in understanding the cognitive processes that consumers engage in when exposed to such endorsements. Some consumers may process information about a product more critically when presented by a celebrity they admire (central route) or may rely on peripheral cues, such as the celebrity's popularity, without deep consideration. Investigating the role of these routes in the influence of celebrity endorsements can provide insights into the effectiveness of such endorsements and help marketers craft persuasive strategies tailored to consumers' information processing styles (Petty & Cacioppo, 1980). The model

aims to explain the various ways stimuli are processed, the reasons behind their use, and their effects on attitude change. A framework for analyzing the cognitive processes consumers use when exposed to celebrity endorsements is provided by this theory. It helps distinguish between central and peripheral routes to persuasion, shedding light on the depth of consumer processing and its impact on brand perception.

When a celebrity endorses a product like Tecno Mobile, consumers who are tech-savvy or have a strong interest in mobile technology may carefully consider the celebrity's reliability, experience, and brand fit. This in-depth analysis is probably going to cause a longer-lasting shift in how people view the brand, affecting their opinions of Tecno Mobile.

In the case of Tecno Mobile, people who lack motivation or cognitive capacity may be influenced by the endorsing celebrity's likability, attractiveness, or familiarity rather than critically evaluating the product's features. This may result in a more transient change in brand perception.

By adopting the Elaboration Likelihood Model as a theoretical framework, it points to investigate how buyers handle celebrity endorsement of Tecno Mobile and the consequent effect on brand discernment. Understanding the fundamental forms through which celebrity endorsement impact demeanors will contribute profitable experiences to showcasing professionals and help within the improvement of more branding procedures for Tecno Mobile and comparable brands.

Conceptual Review

1. Celebrity Endorsement

Celebrity endorsement in this study is a channel of brand communication in which a celebrity acts as the brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claim and position by extending his/her personality, popularity, stature in the society or expertise in the field to the brand. In a market with a very high proliferation of local, regional and international brands, celebrity endorsement was thought to provide a distinct differentiation (Roll, 2006 in Mukherjee, 2019). According to McCracken's (1989) in Mukherjee (2019), a celebrity endorser is defined as any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. Therefore, to become celebrity endorser could be from any profession like actor,

sportsman, entrepreneurs, musician etc. According to Friedman and Friedman (1979) a celebrity is a person such as an actor, sportsman, entertainer, etc. who is different from the general public and is recognized by them, because of his or her achievements.

Rolls (2006) defined endorsement as a channel of brand communication in which a celebrity acts as the brands spokesperson and certifies the brands claim and position by extending his/her personality, popularity, stature in the society or expertise in the field to the brand.

The effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is influenced by factors such as credibility, attractiveness, and expertise (Ohanian, 2018). Advertising is a major driver of a nation's economy because it not only encourages consumption but also serves as a model for values and lifestyles (Polly & Mittal, 2023). Celebrity ads are becoming very common and prominent phenomena in advertising everywhere. A celebrity's relationship with the product, the product and the occasion of consumption, society or cultural norms, and the frequency of repeat celebrity ads can all have an impact on how effective a celebrity endorsement approach is. Although brand marketers who have had positive experiences with celebrity endorsements may hold differing opinions, it is undeniable that measuring the true impact of such endorsements is challenging, especially with access to sales data. As Ajzen and Fishbein (2020, p.5) put it, "Human beings are usually quite rational and make systematic use of the information available to them.... Before deciding whether or not to engage in a given behavior, people think about the consequences." According Spry et al., (2011) celebrity endorsements remains a popular marketing strategy, with brands leveraging the influence and fame of celebrities to promote their products or services. Some Research has shown that celebrity endorsements can significantly impact consumer attitudes and behaviors, particularly when the endorser is perceived as credible, trustworthy, and attractive (Eisend & Langner, 2010).

The effect of celebrity endorsements depends on various factors, including the chemistry between the celebrity and the brand, the quality of the endorsement, and the target audience's perception of the celebrity (Ding et al., 2017). A study by Lee & Thorson (2018) discovered that celebrity endorsements where more effective when the endorser was perceived as authentic and passionate about the brand.

The adoption of celebrity endorsements can be an effective strategy to fuel brand perception, particularly among young people who are easily influenced by celebrity culture

(Kim & Lee, 2017). A celebrity endorser who is compatible with the brand's values, objectives, target audience, and overall marketing strategy must be carefully chosen.

2. **Image and perception of the brand Brand perception**

Image and perception of the brand Brand perception is the way public actually perceives a particular brand i.e. the image a person has in his or her mind when a particular brand is mentioned. For the right image and perception to be established in the mind of prospective consumers, the marketer must convey brand identity through every available communication vehicle and brand (Kotler et al. 2019). According to Chernatony and McWillian (1989) in Huang et al. (2021 Brand perception refers to the process by which consumers form opinions and attitudes towards a brand (Kim and Lee, 2017).

Celebrity endorsements can significantly influence brand perception and image, particularly when the endorser is perceived as credible, trustworthy, and attractive Eisend & Langner, (2010). A study by Lee & Thorson (2018) found that celebrity endorsements were more effective when the endorser was perceived as authentic and passionate about the brand. Similarly, Kim and Lee (2017) found that celebrity endorsements can increase brand awareness and brand image, particularly among young adults.

Tecno Mobile's use of celebrity endorsements can be an effective strategy to enhance brand perception and image, particularly among young people who are highly influenced by celebrity culture Kim & Lee, (2017). However, it is essential to carefully select a celebrity endorser who aligns with the brand's values, target audience, and overall marketing strategy.

3. Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Perception

In today's very competitive and developing market, brands often resort to celebrity endorsement strategies to enhance their brand perception and gain a competitive edge (Kumar, 2018). Celebrity endorsement has been widely recognized as an effective marketing tool for building brand perception (Erdogan, 2015). According to Erdogan (2015), celebrities can transfer their positive attributes, like expertise, attractiveness, trustworthiness, etc to the endorsed brand, thereby influencing consumers' perceptions positively. The "source credibility" effect is the name given to this occurrence (Erdogan, 2015). According to the findings of the research, celebrity endorsements have the potential to raise awareness of a brand by attracting attention and fostering a lasting connection between the celebrity and the brand. Moreover, celebrity endorsements can enhance brand recall by making the brand more salient in consumers' memory (Erdogan, 2015). However,

it is essential to consider potential risks associated with celebrity endorsements, such as negative publicity or scandals involving the celebrity, which can harm the endorsed brand's reputation (Erdogan, 2015). Therefore, mindful selection and management of celebrity endorsers are crucial for ensuring the success of the endorsement (Till & Shimp, 2018).

4. Tecno Mobile and Celebrity Endorsement

Techno Mobile, a popular mobile phone company, has employed celebrity endorsements as part of its marketing strategy to enhance brand perception and market visibility. The smartphone company have worked with popular celebrities in various regions to promote its products and connect with consumers on a personal level. One of the current celebrity endorsed by Tecno Mobile is Tiwa Savage, a Nigerian music artist who has been recognized internationally. Celebrity endorsement plays a significant role in shaping brand perception, including brand awareness, recall, and attitude formation. For Tecno Mobile, leveraging celebrity endorsements can be an effective strategy for enhancing brand perception and gaining a competitive advantage in the mobile phone market. To ensure long-term success, Tecno Mobile must, however, carefully select the appropriate celebrities and manage the potential risks associated with endorsements. Celebrity endorsers are popular persons who take advantage of their recognition and popularity as public figures to recommend products as a form of advertising. According to Friedman and Friedman in Priyankara et al. (2017), celebrity endorsers are people known to the public for their achievement and promote something in advertising. Rachbini (2018) explains celebrity endorsers as "famous persons who use their public recognition to recommend or co-present with a product in advertising". Celebrities in recent years are being used by marketers to get consumers attention and recall. According to Gupta et al. (2015), marketers anticipate that brands will benefit more from linking them to celebrities.

5. Purchase Intention and Brand Image

Purchase intention is a plan to buy something for use in the future. Understanding how people feel about a product or the person promoting it is essential because emotions play a crucial role in shaping consumer opinions (Rachbini, 2018). Purchase intention occurs when consumers are stimulated by external factors and ultimately led to purchasing based on personal characteristics and retrieval processes decision(Kotler & Amstrong, 2012). Celebrity endorsers are popular persons who take advantage of their recognition and popularity as public figures to recommend products as a form of advertising. The concept

of purchase intention is a combination of an ideally holistic perspective and a specific perspective to understand the possibility that a person will purchase a product(Priyankara et al., 2017). The marketing dictionary states that the consumer's purchase intention is influenced by a trigger, outcome, recommendation, and personal association(Shahid etal., 2017). The decision evaluation stage leads to form preferences among the brands by the consumer (Totoatmojo, 2015). According to Lin et al. (2013), customer purchase intention consists of several indicators. They are the desire to buy the product, the consideration of buying the product, intention to try the product, and intention to buy the product in the future.

Review of Empirical Studies

Awobamise (2018) conducted a study on celebrity endorsement and its impact on consumer perception; a study of globacom Nigeria limited. The main objective of the study was to cover the gaps by trying to understand the role and impact of Celebrity endorsement on brand patronage and consumer perception. The study adopted the credibility model and source attractiveness model. This study was carried out using indepth interviews and questionnaires to gather and collect data for the research, the researcher used multistage sampling method. A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed in Lagos, Nigeria and an interview was carried out with the Marketing head of Globacom Nigeria. This research results explains that even if celebrity endorsement a good way to gain the attention of prospective customers, what exactly makes customers stay and what draws the attention of majority of the customers is not the celebrity but the quality of the product. The researcher concluded the study by stating that regardless of the findings, celebrities are always the easiest way to introduce or publicize a new product launch and will remain so in the years to come on account of their mass appeal and a world full of celebrity's loyal fans mostly in the Western part of the world. This was one of the major reasons for Glo when they decided to use the option of celebrity endorsement, according to the Director of advertising who revealed that celebrity endorsement was a strategy to enter the market to attract instant mass appeal. But this study has proven is that the quality of a product is more important than which celebrity is endorsing it, at least as far as Nigeria is concerned. This means for marketers and brand owners is that focus should be concentrated more on ensuring quality service delivery rather than relying on deep pockets. The researcher stated

that although celebrity endorsement is a good and loud way to get immediate attention for your product/service/brand, it is however more important that quality and customer satisfaction is top on the priority list at every time if we are to maintain a positive viewpoint in the eyes of the consumers. It was important to review this study because has similar objectives to this work and it gathered datat from another state in Nigeria. The reviewed study focused on Globacom Nigeria limited also known as glo, a carrier of GSM network in Nigeria while this study researched on celebrity endorsement on brand perception of tecno mobile, tecno mobile is a mobile phone company, this study fills the gap between the influence of celebrity endorsement in 2024 and within the mobile phone sector.

Similarly Onua, et al. (2019) conducted a study on the effect of celebrity physical attractiveness and trustworthiness on consumer purchase intentions; a study on Nigerian consumers. The objective of the study was to determine the effect of celebrity physical attractiveness on consumer purchase intention in Nigeria. The researcher adopted the source attractiveness model and source credibility model as its theoretical framework. Survey design was used to carry out the research and a target population of 519 students was used to collect data. Random sampling technique was adopted to pick the sample size, a structured questionnaire was adopted for the study. Findings from the study reveal that celebrity physical attractiveness had positive effect on consumer purchase intention of selected telecommunications companies in Nigeria. Celebrity trustworthiness had positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. The study concludes that celebrity endorsement components were jointly important in explaining the changes in the consumer purchase intentions of selected telecommunications companies in Nigeria. This is relevant to this study to know the trustworthiness of celebrity endorsements in Nigeria. This study filled the gap between physical attractiveness and reliable branding.

Methodology

This research employed a quantitative method and questionnaire was used as a tool to collect the data and opinion among the respondents towards the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand perception of Tecno mobile. The survey method was used for this study. The survey method was used for the collection of quantitative data. This study focused on only residents of Abuja, who own a Tecno Mobile phone or has ever owned a

tecno mobile phone. The total number of Tecno users residing in Abuja is approximately 25% of the total population of Abuja residents according to Tecno Mobile Nigeria United Nations as at July 2024 estimated the population of Abuja to be 4,026,000. Consequently, there are approximately 1,006,500 Tecno Mobile users in Abuja. Therefore the purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample based on people who use or have used tecno mobile. According to Yamane formula the sample size calculated is approximately 400 participant for a population size of 1,006,500 with a margin of 5%.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that celebrity endorsements significantly influence brand perception of Tecno Mobile, particularly among younger consumers aged 21-30 who are highly engaged with social media. While a majority of respondents trust celebrity endorsements, they also emphasize the importance of product quality and brand reputation in their purchase decisions. Notably, 68.5% of respondents acknowledged that celebrity endorsements moderately influence their choices, yet a substantial 47.3% expressed regret after purchases influenced by these endorsements. This suggests a disconnect between the initial attraction of celebrity promotion and actual product satisfaction.

The study also highlights that a significant portion of respondents (59.5%) believes that the credibility of the celebrity is crucial for effective endorsements, reinforcing the idea that trustworthiness and expertise are vital for consumer acceptance. Despite the high trust in celebrity endorsements (86.3%), there remains a small percentage (3.7%) of skeptics who question their effectiveness, indicating that brands must carefully select endorsers who resonate with their target audience.

Also, technology products were identified as the most suitable for celebrity endorsements, aligning with consumer expectations. The findings suggest that while celebrity endorsements can enhance brand desirability, they are not the sole determinants of consumer behavior. Factors such as product quality and brand reputation play a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes, underscoring the need for brands to ensure that their endorsements align with these critical factors. The long-term effects of celebrity endorsements on brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction may be the subject of future research. The source credibility model emphasizes that the trustworthiness and expertise of the celebrity endorser significantly affect consumer attitudes; findings show that a majority

of respondents (59.5%) believe the credibility of the celebrity is crucial for effective endorsements. This aligns with the theory, as consumers are more likely to accept and act upon messages from credible sources.

The social influence theory further supports the findings, indicating that celebrities can shape consumer behavior and attitudes through their social capital. The study reveals that 68.5% of respondents acknowledge a moderate influence of celebrity endorsements on their purchasing decisions, suggesting that celebrities serve as social proof, enhancing the desirability of Tecno Mobile products.

Additionally, the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) asserts that consumer involvement influences the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. While 86.3% of respondents trust celebrity endorsements, a significant 47.3% expressed regret for making purchases influenced by these endorsements, according to the data. This discrepancy highlights the importance of consumer involvement in the decision-making process; when consumers are less involved, they may rely on peripheral cues, such as celebrity attractiveness, rather than evaluating the product's quality.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that celebrity endorsement is a prominent and effective marketing strategy among current users and previous users of Tecno Mobile who reside in Abuja, Nigeria. The majority of respondents are exposed to celebrity endorsement through new media and encounter such advert content frequently in their daily lives, paying moderate level of attention to it. The effectiveness of these advert content is influenced by how credible the celebrity is. Celebrity endorsement can influence the purchase decision of the respondents to some extent, highlighting its significance as a marketing tool.

Recommendations

1. More brands and marketers should consider using celebrity endorsement as a part of their marketing strategy to target audience. However, it is crucial to carefully select the celebrity endorser based on their credibility and relevance to the target audience to maximize the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements.

2. Agencies Marketers should carefully select the celebrity endorsers that align with the brand's values and resonate with the target audience. This can help build credibility and increase the likelihood of the audience paying attention to the advert.

3. It is important for marketers to ensure that the celebrity endorsers have a good reputation and are seen as credible sources of information by the target audience. This can be done by conducting background checks and monitoring their behavior and public perception.

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