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Endorsement in Advertising Indigenous Products and Patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement Brands in FCT, Abuja

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of endorsement in advertising indigenous products, focusing on consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Anchored on the Hierarchy of Effects Model, the research employed a survey design with a population of 3,840,000 and a sample size of 400 respondents, using questionnaires as the primary instrument of data collection. The findings reveal that 59% of respondents consider celebrity endorsement effective in promoting indigenous products by enhancing brand popularity, increasing patronage, and fostering a sense of pride in supporting locally made goods. Additionally, the study highlights that multiple factors shape consumer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities. The study concludes that public trust in celebrities significantly influences consumer choices, with endorsement often translating into increased patronage. It recommends that celebrities engaged as brand ambassadors should maintain credibility and avoid scandals to preserve positive brand perception and strengthen consumer confidence in indigenous products.

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Keywords: Advertising; Celebrity Endorsement; Indigenous Products; Consumer Patronage; Brand Perception

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a component of communication, media and creative industries. It is a tool, not only for business promotion, but also a strategic weapon for advancing socio-economic changes and development in all ramifications. Advertising is one of the agents of socialisation just like the family, educational, religious, political institutions, and other socialising influences including elements of the media. Olatunji (2018) argues that advertising is a critical strategy of the creative industries that provide education, entertainment, information and communications to lubricate and sustain other agents of socialisation. Accordingly, "advertising impacts and is subject to the influences of different institutions in societies. Advertising is impersonal communication of information about products, services or ideas through the various media, and it is usually persuasive by nature and paid by identified sponsors (Bovee, 2019). Advertising is usually a non-personalized form of communication, paid by an identified sponsor, implemented in a certain way through the media and other legal means and aimed to familiarize with some products and its further acquisition by possibly large audience of consumers.

Advertising is a means of communication with the users of a product or service. Advertisements are messages paid by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them(Economic Times, 2024). Advertisement is the information distributed in any way, in any form or by any means, addressed to an uncertain number of people and aimed at attracting attention to the subject of advertising, the establishment or maintenance of interest in it and its promotion on the market. The marketing environment has become competitive. Manufacturers, businesses and organisations are now looking for ways of sustaining brand loyalty amongst its customers. On daily basis, consumers and customers are exposed to thousands of voices over radio and images in newspapers and television. Every product tends to catch at least a fraction of a person's time to inform him or her of the characteristics of a product brand. The advertiser's challenge is to find an appeal that will hold the audience attention. The use of

celebrity for endorsement of a brand has become a strategy widely used in marketing (Ali, 2010).

The use of endorsement as a tool of advertising strategy has increased drastically in the past few years. Ali (2011) observed that it has been practiced since the 18th century, as Josiah Wedgwood, the founder of Wedgwood used royal endorsement to create a heightened value for his products. Advertisers recognize the value of using spokes people who are admired greatly by the public such as actors and actresses, athletes, musicians and other popular public figure for brand loyalty.

The most popular form of endorsement in advertising used today is celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement is a popular marketing strategy employed by brands worldwide to promote products and services. It involves using well-known personalities or influencers who have a strong public presence to advocate for a product, brand, or company (McCracken, 1989). The rationale behind this strategy is that the credibility, popularity, and public influence of the celebrity will transfer to the brand or product, thus improving the brand's visibility, consumer trust, and ultimately, sales.

In Nigeria, indigenous brands such as Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement have employed celebrity endorsement to market their products to the public. These brands are significant players in their respective industries, with Innoson Motors being the first indigenous car manufacturing company in Nigeria and Dangote Cement being one of the largest cement producers in Africa. The use of local celebrities in the promotion of these indigenous products aims to increase awareness, build brand loyalty, and encourage patronage of locally made products, thereby supporting Nigeria's economic growth and self-sufficiency (Adeola&Edewor, 2020).

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, serves as a strategic location for studying the impact of celebrity endorsements on indigenous brands. As Nigeria's capital, Abuja is home to a diverse demographic of consumers with significant purchasing power. The study focuses on assessing how celebrity endorsements influence the patronage of indigenous products such as Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement within this region.

Celebrity endorsement is a tool by which advertisers try to leverage the image and identification of the celebrity to promote a product or company (Atkin and Block, 2015) cited in Ijwo and Omula (2014). Aaker (2005) argued that endorsers can possess strong symbolic properties which then get transferred to the brand they endorse. Celebrities are

used to popularize their brands (Opris,2020). From these deductions, advertisers often make use of celebrity endorsers for their products or services. Today, celebrities are contracted by advertisers to endorse different products and service. This includes the Innoson motors and Dangote cement brands. Advertising messages delivered by attractive and popular sources are often intended to achieve higher attention and recall, which is why advertisers use celebrities as spokespeople. Celebrities are likely to be effective when they are credible. Because of this attribute people tend to believe what they say about the products or services they are advertising.

Statement of the Problem

Worried by intense competition in the market, brand loyalty, congested markets, influence of sound media and congested markets respectively, many firms and advertisers have resolved to adopt creative strategies to survive and claim a significant share of the market by striving to attract consumers' attention to marketing communications (Nichols & Schumann, 2012). In the midst of the changing nature of competition, consumers also become complex, sophisticated, and demand more from the firm's products or services. This is not surprising given the assertion that endorsement most particularly celebrity endorsements strongly promote products by influencing the effectiveness of an advertisement (Goldsmith, 2000; Hung 2014; Spry 2011). Furthermore, Branchik and Chowdhury (2017) note that celebrity endorsers like Funke Akindele, Basket mouth for Glo network and NgoziNwosu, Mike Ezerounye for Airtel network influence the endorsed products and services with their "talent, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and success" In recent years, celebrity endorsement has emerged as a prominent marketing strategy in the promotion of products and brands globally. This marketing approach leverages the fame and influence of celebrities to create brand visibility and sway consumer purchasing decisions. It is against this backdrop, that this study examines endorsement in advertising of Innoson Vehicles and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja, FCT.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to ascertain the extent to which celebrity endorsement advertising has enhanced the patronage of Innoson Vehicles and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja, FCT. Specifically, the study objectives are to:

1. To examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in promoting indigenous products like Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement in Abuja.

2. To analyze the factors that influence consumer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities.

3. To evaluate the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands.

Review of Concepts

The concepts reviewed in this study are Advertising, Celebrity, Celebrity Endorsement, Consumer Loyalty and the Concept of Brand.

Concept of Celebrity

A celebrity can be described as someone that is popular and easily recognized in a society. He/she is someone that attracts media attention and in a lot of cases might also be an extrovert (Opris et al., 2020). There are various way of becoming a celebrity and the most popular way is through acting, singing or beauty pageant, while others become accidental celebrities. In Nigeria, there are different ways to become a celebrity; one is by being an entertainer (actor, actress, sports or musician) or be a popular person either through the nature of your job or lavish lifestyle (Awobamise&Jarrar, 2018). Once people become celebrities, they usually leverage on their new found status to promote their cause, make more money for themselves by endorsing brands to promote their image and personality.

A celebrity is a person, who has a prominent profile and commands some degree of public fascination and influence. A celebrity is someone with great popular appeal, prominence in a particular field, and is easily recognized by the general public. Various careers within the fields of sports and entertainment are commonly associated with celebrity status. These fields have produced prominent figures within the industry. While people may gain celebrity status as a result of a successful career in a particular field, in other cases, people become celebrities due to media attention for their extravagant lifestyle or wealth; for their connection to a famous person; or even for their misdeeds (Opris et., 2020). Celebrities may be known around the world, within a specific country; or within a region. According to Soni (2024), the term "celebrity" refers to an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed. Awobamise and Jarrar (2018), explained that

celebrities are well-known people to a large number of people, having special uniqueness, likeable characters and features like magnetism, unusual standard of living or uncommon special skills that are exponential in common people and conventionally observed as being greatly active individuals with eye-catching and likeable traits.

Concept of Endorsement

Endorsement is basically concerned with the giving of an authority's approval or an influential personality over a product or service. Influential personalities use the advantage of the influence they exert on their followers or fans to vouch for an organisation, a product or service. The most common form of endorsement practiced in marketing today is celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement is an advertising strategy whereby companies use people of public recognition as spokesperson for their products (Udoh and Nwulu 2015).

Celebrity endorsement is a type of brand communication in which a famous personality acts as the brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claim and position by extending their personality, popularity, stature in the society or expertise in the field to the brand (Malik & Qureshi, 2017). In a market with a very high proliferation of local, regional and international brands, celebrity endorsement is thought to provide a distinct differentiation. But over the years, many aspiring brands all over the world have joined the celebrity endorsement bandwagon. Celebrity endorsement is the forming of a relationship between a brand and an influential individual who fits with the brand and whose personality resonates with the target consumer. The celebrity may endorse the brand in several ways including appearances in advertising, mentions in the press or on social media.

Today 'Celebrity Endorsement' has attracted immense debate on whether it really contributes to the brand building process or whether it is just another lazy tool to make the brand more visible in the minds of the consumers. Although it has been observed that the presence of a well-known personality helps in solving the problem of over-communication that is becoming more prominent these days, there are few undesirable impacts of this practice on the brand (Awobamise&Jarrar, 2020).

Review of Related Literature

Effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in promoting indigenous products in Nigeria

Recent studies highlight that celebrity endorsements significantly influence consumer behaviour and brand perception, particularly in promoting indigenous products within Nigeria's competitive market. Celebrity endorsements are seen as powerful marketing tools, leveraging the cultural and social influence of popular figures to establish brand credibility and encourage purchase intent among Nigerian consumers (Butler, 2020; Odumegwu&Esione, 2023). One reason for the effectiveness of this strategy is rooted in the "social influence theory," which posits that individuals are more likely to follow behaviours exhibited by admired figures, making celebrity endorsements highly effective in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing habits. Nigerian brands often select celebrities with national appeal to strengthen trust and relatability, especially when promoting products that reflect local heritage or cultural identity (Kamins& Gupta, 2022). Studies underscore the impact of the "match-up hypothesis," where consumers positively react when the celebrity's persona aligns with the brand, as this fit can enhance both perceived product quality and emotional connection (Jagre&Futrin, 2021; Syed & Raja, 2022)

Endorsements by Nigerian celebrities have proven particularly effective for indigenous products like traditional fashion, local cuisine, and beauty products, which benefit from being associated with respected and relatable figures. For instance, popular endorsements have increased visibility for local textile brands and food items, bridging the trust gap that sometimes exists between consumers and locally made products (Oyedele, 2023). This approach not only supports consumer interest in indigenous goods but also strengthens cultural pride and community identity, adding social value to the products endorsed (Odumegwu&Esione, 2023)

However, while the advantages of celebrity endorsements are evident, some studies suggest potential drawbacks if the celebrity's image suffers or if there's a poor fit between the endorser and the product. This misalignment can lead to consumer skepticism or brand disinterest, highlighting the need for strategic selection of endorsers (Ogwo&Igwe, 2022; Li & Jiang, 2019)

Celebrity advertisement has gained so much traction over the years and has assumed popular status among audience. This is even more pronounced with the competitiveness in most corporate organisations and how these organisations try to maintain competitive edge above their contemporaries by employing popular celebrities to endorse their brands thereby transferring their credibility and mass followership on the product of organisation endorsed. messages delivered by attractive and popular sources can achieve higher attention and recall, which is why advertisers often use celebrities as spokespeople. Celebrities are likely to be effective when they are credible or personify a key product attribute (Awobamise&Jarrar, 2018). Attitudes toward the advertisements and the advertised brands were proposed to be related to the source-oriented thoughts, product/message thoughts, and advertising execution thoughts triggered from exposure to the advertisement (Patel et al. 2017). This implies that attitudes toward a PSA and its social cause will be related to the thoughts about the celebrity endorser, the message, and the advertising execution.

Theoretical Framework

Hierarchy of influence model has been selected to serve as theoretical underpinning for the study.

The Hierarchy of Effects Model

This is a widely-used model in marketing that attempts to explain consumer decision making process is the Hierarchy of Effects Model (Matsuno, 1997). Created by Robert J. Lavidge and Gary A. Steiner in 1961, the model suggests steps or mental stages through which a consumer goes towards buying a product. Hierarchy of effects models based on the assumption that people first learn something from advertising, then form feelings about the product in question, and finally take action (Bovee et al., 1995)". Hierarchy of effects model is used to measure the effectiveness of advertisement in a stepwise series.

Proponents of the traditional hierarchy framework suggest that audiences respond to messages in a very ordered way that is firstly cognitively (thinking), then affectively (feeling) and thirdly connotatively (doing). Cognition is typically defined as 'mental activity' as reflected in knowledge, beliefs or thoughts that someone has about some aspect of their world (Barry and Howard, 1990). While the affective com-ponent is any degree of

feeling and emotion, in a general sense, which can be attributed to the brand and conation refers to either intension to perform a behavior (e.g. purchase) or the behavior itself (Egan,2007).

Hierarchy of Effects Steps

1) **Awareness:** This is the most crucial step and the starting point for purchase. Brands must make sure that the consumer is aware of the presence of your brand in a particular product segment.

2) **Knowledge:** This is where your product will be evaluated against other brands by the consumer. Make sure enough (positive) knowledge is available about your product – through the internet, retail stores and the product package itself. For example, now Tina, aware that there is a Coolgate brand will try figure out what unique features and benefits you are offering over any other brand like Colgate and Oral-B.

3) **Liking:** This is where the consumer builds a liking to your product. This is where your product is being considered for its emotional benefits; be sure to make them prominent.

4) **Preference:** By this time consumer may be convinced to try out your product, but may like other brands of toothbrush too. So, what is it that will make her prefer Colgate over the other brands? These points of differentiations or unique selling points need to be highlighted to make sure that the consumer likes your brand more than the others in her consideration list

5) **Conviction:** This is the stage where the doubt in consumers' minds about buying the product of your brand needs to be converted into action. Marketers can aid in this step by giving out free samples, test drives etc. This step should also decide if the consumer will stick to your brand i.e. actually buy your brand, or switch after testing the sample.

6) **Purchase:** The last and the most crucial stage of the consumer buying cycle is the purchase. You need to make sure that purchase experience is easy and perhaps even enjoyable for the consumer. Some of the ways to encourage purchase is by keeping simple and multiple paying options, making the product available easily, easy to understand usage instructions, offers etc.

The celebrity endorser may play significant roles in aiding the consumer‘s mental processes during most of the identified stages. The hierarchy of effects model identifies the stages of Awareness, Knowledge, Liking, Preference, Conviction, Purchase and Re-purchase through which a prospective consumer goes towards becoming a loyal consumer. This research believes that logically, the stronger the influence of the celebrity endorser in

the consumer 's passage through the preceding stages, the stronger will also be the celebrity endorser as a determinant among other factors of consumer 's purchase decisions, and vice versa.

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher adopted the survey research design for the study. The survey design was employed for the collection of the required information for the study because of its outstanding qualities. The population of this study was restricted to Abuja Municipal residents of (FCT) According to National Bureau of Statistics (2023), the total population of these areas stands at 3,840,000. The sample of this research is calculated by using Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1967) formula with 95% confidence level and 0.5 margin error in order to avoid sampling error. The calculation formula of Taro Yamane is presented as follows.

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

Where :

n= sample size required

N = number of people in the population

e = allowable error (%)

Substitute numbers in formula:

$$n=\frac{\mathbf{3,840,000}}{(1+\mathbf{3,840,000}(0.05)2)}$$

$$n = \frac{\mathbf{3,840,000}}{(1 + 721,300(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{\mathbf{3,840,000}}{(1 + 1803.25)}$$

$$n = \frac{\mathbf{3,840,000}}{1804.25}$$

$$\frac{\mathbf{3,840,000}}{(1 + 1803.25(0.05)2)}$$

$$n = 399.77$$

$$n = 400$$

After calculating the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Yamane formula, the numbers of sample is 399.77 persons. In order to obtain reliable data, researcher has approximated the sample size to 400 persons.

RESULTS

The presentation and analysis are based on the data obtained from the field through the instrument of questionnaire. Below is a tabular presentation of the data obtained and the analysis.

Table 1: Showing how customers' awareness of the celebrity endorsement influences their perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	80	20.3%
Agree	290	73.6%
Strongly Disagree	17	4.3%
Disagree	4	1.0%
Neutral	3	0.8%
Total	**394**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 1 above shows how customers' awareness of the celebrity endorsement influences their perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents agreed that customers' awareness of the celebrity endorsement influences their perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT as shown by 290 respondents representing (73.6%) of the entire respondents.

Table 2: Showing how the popularity of the endorser influences customer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	73	18.5%
Agree	287	72.8%
Strongly Disagree	23	5.8%
Disagree	8	2.0%
Neutral	3	0.9%
Total	**394**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 2 above shows how the popularity of the endorser influences customer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT. The implication of the data is that majority of respondents agreedthat the popularity of the endorser has influences their perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCTas shown by 287 respondents representing (72.8%) of the entire respondents.

Table 3: Showing how the credibility of the endorser influence customer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	89	22.5%
Agree	242	61.4%
Strongly Disagree	30	7.7%
Disagree	22	5.6%
Neutral	11	2.8%
Total	**394**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 3 above shows how the credibility of the endorser influences customer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents agreed that the credibility of the endorser influences customer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT as shown by 242 respondents representing (61.4%) of the entire respondents.

Table 4: Showing how Celebrity endorsement directly affects consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	80	20.3%
Agree	254	64.4%
Strongly Disagree	25	6.3%
Disagree	15	3.9%
Neutral	20	5.1%
Total	**394**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 4 above shows how Celebrity endorsement directly affects consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents agreed that Celebrity endorsement directly affects consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja as shown by 254 respondents representing (64.4%) of the entire respondents.

Table 5: Showing the kind of positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	74	18.7%
Agree	260	66.0%
Strongly Disagree	15	3.8%
Disagree	35	8.9%
Neutral	10	2.6%
Total	**394**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 5 above shows the kind of relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents agreed that there is a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands as shown by 260 respondents representing (66.0%) of the entire respondents.

Table 6: Showing the effectiveness of Celebrity endorsement in affecting consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	271	68.7%
Agree	43	11.0%
Strongly Disagree	32	8.1%
Disagree	25	6.3%
Neutral	23	5.8%
Total	**394**	**100 %**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data on table 6 above shows the effectiveness of Celebrity endorsement in affecting consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja. The implication of the data is that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that Celebrity endorsement does not affect consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja as shown by 271 respondents representing (68.7%) of the entire respondents.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were discussed thematically in line with the objectives of the study in order to answer the research questions.

How effective are celebrity endorsements in promoting indigenous products like Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement in Abuja?

This research objective sought to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in promoting indigenous products like Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement in Abuja. Findings from the study revealed that majority of the respondents have agreed that Celebrity endorsement promotes popularity of indigenous products over foreign products in Nigeria as shown by 299 respondents representing (75.9%) of the entire respondents. In addition, findings also revealed that Celebrity endorsement promotes patronage of indigenous products over foreign products in Nigeria as shown by 240 respondents representing (60.9%) of the entire respondents. Furthermore, majority of respondents agreed that Celebrity endorsement confers Nigerians with prestige/pride in

using indigenous products over foreign products as shown by 297respondents representing (75.4%) of the entire respondents. Apparently, celebrity endorsement plays an effective role in promoting indigenous products like Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement in Abuja by making the products popular to the end that the patronage is increased and the audience have a sense of pride in patronising indigenous products.

This is in tandem with the findings of Opris et al (2020) carried out a study on the role of celebrities for the image of endorsed products. The researchers stated that celebrities ' glamour has the power to increase the advertised product's exposure and to attract the attention of the consumer. In addition, celebrities play crucial role especially in shaping the social status of the consumer and that women are more attracted by celebrity endorsed product in comparison to men. The celebrity endorsements of the brands have translated into tangible results in promoting their patronage and securing public trust towards brand loyalty. Mojekeh et al (2019) added that celebrity endorsements create brand awareness, promote sense of trust, attract attention and stimulate brand acceptance among the target audience. It proffers policy measures in order to ensure more effective use of celebrities to enhance brand equity and consumer acceptance.

Similarly, Odionye et al (2021) examined *Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumers' Buying Decision of a Brand: A Study of Globacom Telecommunication Nigeria Limited.*The study revealed that celebrities give a real image of the brand and that celebrity-endorsed products are of good quality. The findings also showed that celebrities have significant influence on buying decisions of subscribers. From the finding also, a greater percentage of consumers patronize Globacom because their favourite celebrity endorsed it. This behooves that indigenous brands should continue using celebrities for endorsements, especially the celebrities who reflect the real image of the products they endorse.

What are the factors that influence consumer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities?

This research objective aimed at identifying the factors that influence consumer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities. Results from the study indicated that majority of respondents agreed that customers' awareness of the celebrity endorsement influences their perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT as shown by 290 respondents representing (73.6%) of the entire respondents. The study also revealed that the popularity of the endorser has influenced their perceptions

of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT as shown by 287 respondents representing (72.8%) of the entire respondents. More so, it was also found that the credibility of the endorser influences customer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities in Abuja, FCT as shown by 242 respondents representing (61.4%) of the entire respondents. Suffice to say that different factors culminate to influence consumer perceptions of indigenous products endorsed by celebrities. The primary factors centre on the awareness of the endorsement and the popularity of the endorser being foremost followed by the credibility of the endorser.

This is in dissonance with the thoughts of Awobamise and Jarrar (2018) in their study on Celebrity Endorsement and Its Impact on Consumer Perception: A Study of Globacom Nigeria Limited. The findings of the research showed that although Celebrity endorsement is a good way to capture the attention of prospective customers, what actually makes these customers stay and what attracts the majority of the brand's customers is not the celebrity but the quality of the product. This clearly shows there is no single factor that is responsible for influencing target consumers on celebrity endorsement of products and brands. People's perception differ likewise the factors that influence them to patronize endorse products and brands.

The findings of this study gives credence to source credibility theory which states that the source of a communication messages largely determines the trust the message will elicit from the target audience (Asemah, 2022). Where the source of a message is perceived to be trustworthy, the audience will repose their trust on such messages as against where they perceive the source to be mixed with ulterior motive. Some audience members to believe the message is as important as the medium that disseminates the message which also is the underlying idea behind the theory.

What is the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands?

This objective focused on determining the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands. Results from the study indicate that majority of respondents agreed that Celebrity endorsement directly affects consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja as shown by 254 respondents representing (64.4%) of the entire respondents. Additionally, majority of respondents agreed that there is a positive

relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands as shown by 260 respondents representing (66.0%) of the entire respondents. Furthermore, the study also revealed that majority of respondents strongly agreed that Celebrity endorsement does not affect consumer patronage of Innoson Motors and Dangote Cement brands in Abuja as shown by 271 respondents representing (68.7%) of the entire respondents. An analysis of the findings of this study indicates that there is a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumers' patronage of indigenous products even though the relationship was shown not to affect the patronage of the products endorsed. This is likely due to other intervening factors other than the endorsers that were earlier shown to influence consumers' perception and patronage towards endorsed products.

The findings of the current study agree with Abraham and Igyuve (2024) who investigated Impact of Celebrity Brand Endorsements on Smartphones Preference among Select University Students in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The findings of their study revealed a high level of awareness and exposure to celebrity-endorsed smartphone advertisements, particularly on social media. More so, celebrity attractiveness significantly influenced consumer preferences, though the impact varies with the students' knowledge of the celebrities and skepticism about endorsement authenticity. Despite these concerns, trust in smartphone brands remains high.

In the same vein, Uche et al., (2021) also conducted a study on *Celebrity Endorsements and Customer Brand Preference in Sports Betting Industry in Nigeria*. The finding of the investigation found that there is a significant relationship between attractiveness and preference the results of this study reveals that the attractiveness of a celebrity endorser influences consumer brand preference. Also, similar to the current study, there is a significant relationship between expertise and consumer brand preference. The trustworthiness of a celebrity endorser influences brand preference, there is a nexus between celebrity congruence and brand preference. It is apposite to therefore state that there is positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and the patronage of the endorsed products and or brands in most cases as shown in the current research and extant literatures.

CONCLUSION

Considering the findings from the study, it is apposite to note that the concept and practice of celebrity endorsement has come to stay considering the increasing level of competition in today's business world. There is the need for indigenous brands who want to retain the rich customer base to scout for highly reputable endorsers that would place their credence on their brands to promote the brands from oblivion to stardom where it perpetually becomes the choice of the members of the public. In this age of social media, celebrities have become influencers to many social media users on the products they both consume and the services they patronize. The trust members of the public have on these celebrities make them to stake their choices in patronizing whatever the celebrity has endorsed in most cases. However, where the endorser falls out of public favour in scandal or mishap, the disrepute is also likely to have a ripple effect on the endorsees. This underscores why it is important for indigenous brands to do a thorough positive vetting of a celebrity's history before considering the person from brand endorsement. Where the celebrity possesses good track records but still flawed after being conferred endorsement by a brand, the endorsement can be quickly withdrawn to save the image of the brand before the general public. Suffice to say that the influence of celebrity endorsement is viral and the outcome could be negative or positive depending on the personality of the endorser among other factors. In spite of the successes recorded in using celebrity endorsement to promote indigenous products, certain challenges are impeding the effectiveness which majorly border on tendencies of celebrities to lose goodwill which can also affect the product endorsed as well as the use of poor pictures and captions in packaging celebrity endorsement publicity. There is the need to surmount these challenges in order to improve on the celebrity endorsement of indigenous products in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proffered, and they are:

i. There should be robust awareness on celebrity endorsement via different media platforms by the endorsee so as to gain traction among the targeted audience towards increasing the effectiveness.

ii. Brands should do a thorough positive vetting on celebrities they are considering for endorsement so as to reduce the chances of bringing their brand to a place of disrepute stemming from celebrities' scandal.

iii. Celebrities who are brand endorsers should strive to live above reproach and scandals to enable brands maintain favourable perception before their target audience.

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