

# **Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Brand Preference of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*There is no doubt that Nigerian advertisers like their counterparts across the globe have always prioritized innovation and creativity in order to gain competitive advantages. Over the years, celebrity endorsement of products and services has remained one of the most efficacious ways of winning the patronage of the Nigerian consumers/ customers. For over a decade now, people have associated the high patronage of Hero Larger Beer in South-East, Nigeria to fact that its advertisement is anchored on the struggle for self determination by the Igbos. Incidentally, late Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu symbolically represents this struggle; and for the Igbos, he remains a "Hero". The need to provide empirical backing to this claim that Ojukwu is a big celebrity endorsement to Hero Larger Beer has necessitated the study. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the level of influence of late Chief Ojukwu celebrity personality on consumer patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State and to determine the extent to which the desire to always associate with the symbolic values of Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement is sustaining patronage for Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State. The study was anchored on the cultivation theory. It adopted descriptive research method, as such, copies of questionnaire were administered on 390 respondents. The findings of the study suggest that the Chief Ojukwu celebrity personality has significant influence on consumers' patronage of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State and that the symbolic value of Chief Ojukwu is significantly sustaining brand loyalty for Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State. Consequently, the study recommended that SABMiller- the producer and advertiser of Hero Larger Beer should use radio and television dramas, quizzes and talk-shows to educate and sensitize the less educated consumers of Hero Larger Beer, particularly, in the rural communities about the Chief Ojukwu symbol, value and representation of the Hero Larger Beer branding.*

**Keywords:** *Celebrity Endorsement, Consumer Brand Preference*

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## **I. Background of the Study**

The need to gain and sustain competitive advantages has influenced and continues to influence the quest for celebrity endorsement of advertised products and services nationally and internationally. A celebrity is a personality of high popularity, integrity, attractiveness and has area(s) of high accomplishment and charisma. A celebrity could be of local, national or international popularity. According to Balakrishnan & Kumar (2016), celebrities are attention-gathering mechanism that can attract media attention and focus the spotlight on a particular issue. They have the ability to influence brand affinity and consumer purchase intent. It is certain that as competition to create consumer attention and interest in a product brand intensifies, it is critical that marketers develop better advertising appeal to get the consumers attention, arouse their interest, arouse their desire, and instigate the purchase action of the brand. In achieving this purpose, marketers often engage individuals who have achieved some form of celebrity status to serve as spokespersons for their brands. Using the celebrity endorsement strategy has become much more imperative in the contemporary time when capturing consumers' mind is extremely difficult and quite demanding, (Balakrishnan & Kumar, 2016; Zafar & Rafique, 2016).

Organisations must embrace better advertising strategies to get the consumers' attention, arouse desire, and instigate their purchase actions and consumption of a particular product or service (Zhang, 2014). Consumer products market appears saturated and it is increasingly becoming difficult to penetrate the market to secure and sustain customers' attention. The difficulty arose from the increasing number of new and competing products in the market with primetime television cluster becoming almost a quarter of promotional content. Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people. Whereas, attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary lifestyle or special skills are just examples and specific common

characteristics that are observed and celebrities generally differ from the social norm and enjoy a high degree of public awareness.

Advertising thrives in symbolic design which gives meaning to words and images. Through this process, advertising diffuses its meaning into the credence systems of the society. With the use of celebrities, advertisers give more realities to languages and designs. Celebrities like pictures speak louder than thousands of words. Expatriating on this, Olise, (2007) and Egwuonwu (2014) posit that celebrities affect people in many ways – On a broad level via the advertising media (movies, TV, newspapers, radio and magazines) and how the media feed off the cult of celebrities, and on a more personal level, celebrities influence how people, especially women, look, dress, and live. One key criticism of celebrity- advertising in billboards in recent times is its tendency to misrepresent the celebrities that offer themselves for these advertising packages. This misrepresentation may create wrong perception of the celebrities used in these adverts which may in effect, reduce patronage for the product. Using celebrities in marketing communication initiatives might be a way to stand out from the crowd. Indeed, matching the right celebrity with the right product/service and placing them in the right marketing communications campaign, can lead to huge profits and an immediate change in the public perception of a company.

Available literature reveals that before Hero Larger Beer stormed the South-East, Nigeria larger beer market in 2012, Nigerian Breweries (NB) Plc had controlled 60% of the beer market share, Diageo Group' Guinness Nigeria had 25% while IntaFact Beverages Ltd owned by SABMiller- producer of Hero Larger Beer controlled 7.3% of the market, (Akingbolu, 2019). Writing further, the above author maintains that it is now obvious that Nigerian Breweries and Guinness Nig. Plc can no more sleep with their two eyes closed as a new entrant- IntaFact owned by SABMiller- a subsidiary of ABInBev is ever determined to conquer the market. For now SABMiller's Hero Larger Beer has quickly gained acceptability and become majority of beer drinkers' delight, (Unah, 2019).

It could be recalled that late Chief Ojukwu championed the Biafran secessionist agenda died and was buried in March 2012. And later in August same 2012, Hero Larger beer was launched and the manufacturing company- IntaFact is located in Onitsha. The beer has a label featuring a rising sun, a reference to Biafra's flag, a horizontal tricolour of red, black and green with a rising sun in the middle. Therefore, given the timing of the launching (a few months after the burial of Chief Ojukwu), the location of the manufacturing industry and the "Hero" brand symbolism, many of the Igbos came to the conclusion that the word "Hero" refers to Ojukwu and almost immediately nicknamed the beer "Oh Mpa" which means "Oh my father" in honour of the deceased hero and secessionist leader. With time, Hero Larger Beer increasingly gets associated with the Igbo culture, tradition and nationalist struggle. Besides, the Hero branding now represents the Igbo tradition of royalty, loyalty and struggle for freedom and self-determination. Consequently, Hero Larger Beer seems to give a sense of belonging to a typical Igbo man; and drinking it seems to making a typical Igbo man feel like being loyal to Chief Ojukwu and playing a role in the struggle, (Unah, 2019). Going by the foregoing, the researchers' interests were aroused to whether this unique branding has in any way influenced the massive consumption of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. This becomes necessary as issues of the major factors responsible for the massive patronage of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State, and South-East, Nigeria in general has remained product of mere speculations and intuitive/ deductive reasoning.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research evidence like Olalekan (2013) has shown that many other factors like quality of service/product, Taste, price, culture, among others combine in various degrees with celebrity endorsement to influence the consumer's patronage of the product or service. Given the location of the manufacturing plants, the timing of the launching and brand symbolism of the Hero Larger Beer, many Igbo drinkers of the beer seem to believe that it was launched in commemoration of late Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu and what he stands for in the region. To the Igbos Ojukwu is a hero, as such, "Hero Larger Beer" is their own, -" nka bu nke anyi".

For now the speculation about the success of the Hero Larger Beer through Ojukwu celebrity endorsement is high, yet, it is worrisome that there is paucity of empirical evidence backing the claim. The few available studies looked at the influences of such intervening factors as: quality, price, sociological, psychological and cultural factors on the growing popularity of the hero beer. This implies that the researchers at the time of this study were yet to find any literature that specifically focused on implied Late Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement of Hero Larger Beer. Moreover, the researchers may safely opine that no such a study had been previously undertaken in Ebonyi State.

## **II. Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to investigate influence of Celebrity Endorsement on consumer brand preference of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the level of influence of the personality of late Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu celebrity endorsement on consumers' patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State.
2. To determine the extent to which the desire to always associate with the symbolic values of Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement is sustaining patronage for Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State

## **Hypotheses**

The following Hero theses will tested at 0.05 level of significance

1.  $H_{01}$ : Late Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement value is not significantly influencing the patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State.
2.  $H_{02}$ : The desire to associate with the symbolic representations of late Chief Ojukwu is not significantly sustaining the patronage of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State.

## **III. Review of Literature**

The concept of celebrities is associated with individuals' characteristics that have attained enviable positions in the public eye and typically have high profile in given career (s) – sports, entertainment, politics, leadership, drama among others (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Roll (2016) concurs by seeing celebrities as people who are widely known to a society for their accomplishments in their respective fields, movies, sport, music or politics. McCracken (2018) also echoes by defining a celebrity endorser as any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer goods by appearing with it in an advertisement, irrespective of the required promotional role(s). 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, (Johansson & Sparredal, 2002). In his own contribution, Erdogan (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, (Ahmed, *et al.*, 2015). The use of celebrities in advertising has been a popular practice for a number of years already and it remains. Researchers have noted that advertisements featuring a celebrity constitute a proportion of about 20-25 per cent of all ads, (Brown, 2016). According to Silvera & Austad (2017), the popularity of the use celebrity in advertisement is determined by the opinion that celebrity endorsement can result in more favourable advertisement ratings and product evaluations. Erdogan (2018), and Dean & Biswas (2017), noted that the use of celebrities in advertising can have a substantial positive impact on financial returns for the companies that use them. Also, Ericsson & Hakansson (2019), note that the most common reasons why companies use celebrities to endorse their products are for: increased attention, image polishing, brand introduction, brand repositioning, etc. They added that one more reason for using the celebrities in advertising is the possibility to eliminate or reduce the effects of cultural interferences for companies performing in international or global markets.

Celebrity endorsement is a way to get a brand noticed among its contemporaries in a market place, which might affect consumers' purchase intention and attitudes toward the product (Lutz, MacKenzie, and Belch, 2017). Ahmed, *et al.*, (2014), believed that celebrity endorsement is the best tool of advertisement to get most targeted audience and catch their attention, thereby having significant effect on financial returns and helps to get competitive advantage (Erdogan, 2018). According to Till and Shimp (1998), despite well publicized celebrity negative issues, the use of celebrity endorsement continues unaffected. Liu (2009) and Zipporah & Mberia, (2014) posit that the high cost of endorsing a celebrity suggests that organizations should plan the programme well in order to add value through clever execution devices, designed to attract consumers' interest and create awareness. Despite the popularity of celebrity endorsement, MacKenzie, & Belch, (2017) note that many commercials using celebrity endorsements do not live up to organizational expectations. However, Lutz, & Apejaye (2013) still believe that if properly used, celebrity endorsement can serve as an important role in developing product equity and enhancing a product's competitive position in market. In using this advertising tool, a company will in the short run generate a high awareness among a larger audience as well as an increased market share. Since this advertising tool has gained such attention from various companies, the price level is extremely high, (Daneshvary & Schwer, 2000; Kambitsis, Harahousou, Theodorakis, & Chatzibeis, 2002). As already noted, there are certain risks associated with the use of celebrity endorsement. One risk associated with the use of celebrity endorsers is the possibility of negative information or publicity regarding the celebrity. It is obvious that a negative publicity about the celebrity can spill over to a brand and organizations would be badly affected, (Dimed & Joulyana, 2019; Liu 2009; Hung, Flora, & Chi, 2007). Negative publicity from celebrity misdeeds, such as involvement in drug scandals, rape, and murder may decrease the trustworthiness and

credibility held by the consumer (Liu, 2009; Till & Shimp, 1998). Once a celebrity gets associated with negative information, organization has to consider various alternative relationship options to be able to maintain a good position in the market. Another prominent risk associated with the use of celebrity endorsement is the cost implication. Celebrities are sometimes very expensive, putting an organizations at cross-road of evaluation if the project actually worth the investment, (Dimed & Joulyana, 2019). In addition, multiple product endorsements weaken the effects of celebrity to a product, (Balakrishnan & Kumar, 2011).

### **Concept of celebrity trustworthiness and the Ojukwu/ Biafra Endorsement of Hero Larger Beer**

Trustworthiness refers to the honesty, integrity and believability of an endorser (Erdogan, Baker, & Tagg 2017). Companies in an attempt to retain their customer and acquire new ones try to find endorsers who are widely seen as trustful and who are seen as honest, believable and dependable (Shimp, 1997). Trustworthiness is the most important factor with regard to the source credibility and the influence. Besides, likeability is also believed to be one of the most important attribute of trust (Friedman, 1978). Advertisers can create the highest effect by taking these two factors, liking and trustworthiness, into account. Because it is proved that when consumers like a celebrity, they will automatically give such a celebrity their trust, (Friedman, Santeramo & Traina, 1979). While expatiating on the discourse on celebrity trustworthiness, Olalekan (2013, p.12) cites some drinkers of Hero Larger Beer as saying, “when I look at this bottle, it reminds me of our heroes that fought for Biafra, especially Ojukwu; the struggle for self-determination has continued”. Another customer and drinker of Hero Larger Beer was quoted by the same author above as saying, “Hero refers to Ojukwu”...and Hero gave us a sense of belonging; drinking it, I feel like am playing a role in the Igbo stuggle”.



Source: Omokanye (2019)



Source: Omokanye (2019)

In his own study, Unah (2019) maintain that Hero Larger Beer drinkers have believable reasons to assume that the brand name Hero refers to Ojukwu. According to him, (as earlier cited in the background), Hero with a label featuring a rising sun, a reference to Biafra’s flag, a horizontal tricolour of red, black and green with a rising sun in the middle, all depict the fact that the beer is particularly brewed for the Igbos and stands for the Igbo identity, and remains an all time commemorator of the deceased Biafra leader, late chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. Nevertheless, Ohanian (1991) had argued that trustworthiness of a celebrity endorser had no relationship with the purchase intentions of the related brand by the consumer. But Dimed & Joulyana, (2019) quickly interjected by noting that the above conclusion had to do with the level of involvement. Closely associated with the concept of trustworthiness in celebrity endorsement is that of celebrity attractiveness. The concept of attractiveness does not only entail the physical attractiveness. Attractiveness also entails concepts such as intellectual skills, personality properties, way of living, athletic performances and skills of endorsers (Erdogan, 2018 & Hoekman, 2012). Celebrities can be attractive because they established for example great sport performances and people have great respect for their achievement and therefore are attracted to them. Physical attractiveness suggests that a celebrity determines the effectiveness of persuasion as a result of that consumers wanting to be like the endorser and wanting to identify themselves with that endorser (Cohen and Golden, 1972). On the other hand, there are examples of celebrities who are considered less attractive, but do represent the image the company wants to create and have. When the match-up between brand and celebrity is present, attractiveness becomes less important and therefore, the company might choose a less attractive celebrity.

There are huge numbers of physical attractive celebrities who endorse a product. An example is David Beckham for the Armani brand. The majority of people are attracted by David Beckham. Men wanted to be associated with the soccer player and fashion man David Beckham, while woman are physically attracted by his

appearance because David Beckham always looks fashionable and has great athletic performances. He is extremely credible and attractive and he has a high degree of admiralty; people want to be like him.

Langmeyer & Shank (1994) note that celebrity attractiveness is all embracing, covering not only the physical or facial beauty, but other embodiments of beauty such as sportsmanship, charm, grace, and intelligence. The empirical evidences in the works of Shimp (2003); Till & Busler (1998), and Kamins (2013), have established relationships between physical attractions, evaluations, opinion, brand promises recall, experience and likeability of a brand. Other studies, Joseph (1982); Kahle & Homer (1985), and Magnini, Honeycutt & Cross (2014), assert that attractive celebrity has positive influence on consumer attitudes towards a brand. The strength in attractive source is its ability to convey meaning effectively than less attractive source (Kamins, 2013). Consequently, Oyeyemi (2014) argued that brand image is positively affected by the attractiveness of the celebrity. Also, a number of research studies, Ohanian (2013) and Haghirian & Madlberger (2014), cited in Ahmed *et al*, (2015), revealed that the use of eye-catching celebrity creates a foundation to improve a mind-set towards an advertisement. This feeling to the commercials is known as psychological circumstances that be exercised by persons to systematize the manner, how to recognize the surroundings as well as organize the manner a person react towards it. Physically attractive people are normally used on television and in print media because research has proven consumers' usually will form a positive stereotype about these people (Ohanian, 1991). Physical attractiveness is a key consideration in many endorsement relationships (Ohanian, 2013). Physical attractiveness includes any number of virtuous characteristics that consumers may perceive in an endorser: intellectual skills, personality properties, lifestyle characteristics, athletic prowess, and so on (Shimp, 2003). Kahle & Homer, (1985) gave support to an intuitive expectation that physically attractive endorsers generally produce more favourable evaluations of advertisements, changing beliefs and the brands than do less attractive communicators, (Till & Busler, 1998; Ohanian, 1991). Ibok (2013) examined factors which are critical to celebrities' effectiveness within the context of the Nigerian telecommunication industry. A survey of 11,200 consumers was conducted and the results indicated that perceived expertise and credibility were the two most important factors determining celebrities' effectiveness. Dakung, Katura & Danladi (2014), believed that other factors were: trustworthiness and attractiveness. Based on these results, Oyeniyi (2014), found out that celebrity's public image should be taken very seriously when adopting celebrities in product advertisement. Also assessing the effects of celebrity advertising on the performance of Globacom Nigeria Limited's new product, Danladi (2014) brought out four fundamentals: celebrity endorsement that have reasonable impact on customers as per their attitude and purchase intention of new products. He concluded that celebrity endorsement has come out as not only an influential factor but rather a causal factor of new product of Globacom Nigeria Limited. Therefore, Erdogan (2018) provided that organizations desirous of making use of celebrity in promoting their products should evaluate the features of celebrities that will enhance product performance. Also, because credibility and attractiveness play an important role to improve the persuasiveness of a message, companies try to find sources that satisfy these two criteria (i.e., credibility and attractiveness) to present their messages to customers (Kahle and Kahle 2016). Studies by Kamins (2018), and Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe (2018), showed that brand attitudes and purchase intentions were affected positively by celebrity appeals. They also showed that the two-sided celebrity appeal performed best and the one-sided non-celebrity appeal performed worst in terms of attitudes toward the brand and purchase intentions. Ohanian (1991) provided evidence for the effect of perceived expertise of the celebrity on purchase intentions by using four different celebrities. Tripp, Jensen, and Carlson (1994), examined the effects of multiple product endorsements by celebrities and found that the number of products a celebrity endorses had a negative impact on consumers' perceptions of celebrity credibility, celebrity likeability, and attitude toward the ad. Bush, Martin, and Bush (2017), showed that celebrity sports athletes have a positive significant impact on adolescents' word-of-mouth intentions and brand loyalty. They also found that female teenagers' word-of-mouth intentions are more affected by female celebrities than male celebrities, and female teenagers agree more than male teenagers that they are affected by celebrities in buying certain brands.

#### **IV. Theoretical Framework**

##### **Reinforcement/ Reinforcement Theory**

The study is anchored on the phenomenistic theory. It was propounded by Joseph Klapper in 1960. According to Wogu (2008), the theory emerged from Klapper's 1949 manuscript on the effects of mass communication. Joseph Klapper contends that his series of earlier studies had revealed that the mass media rarely have any direct effects on the audience and are relatively less powerful in influencing the audience when compared to other social and psychological factors such as social status, group membership, strongly held belief and attitude, religion and educational status, among others. According to him, the above mentioned factors and others also influence the actual decision and action of the audience even more than the media. At best, mass media reinforce existing belief, behaviour and attitude instead of changing them. In fact, Wogu (2008) posits that the implication of Klapper's reinforcement theory is that media are more of agents of status quo; always at

best when it comes to encouraging/ inducing people to keep on doing what they doing or to keep on holding on to their belief, behaviour and attitude. In summary, Klapper among other postulations declares that mass communication ordinarily does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors to influence and that these mediating factors are such that they typically render mass communication a contributing agent, but not the sole cause, in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions. Media reinforcement theory provides anchorage for this study because of so many reasons. The use of the Chief Ojukwu/ Biafran ideology to endorse Hero Larger beer is simply a deliberate effort to existing love and belief in Ojukwu and his lingering Biafran struggle for self determination. The endorsement simply reactivates a sleeping love and passion/dream for the realisation of the sovereign state of Biafra. Therefore, the endorsement quickly reinforces the igbo man’s already inherent quest for freedom, the culture of hard work, royalty, industry, heroism and self assertiveness.

### V. Methodology

Survey research method was adopted for the study. Consequently, a sample size of 400 respondents was drawn through the use of online Australian calculator from the projected 2,917,479 population of Ebonyi State. The area of study which is Ebonyi State was first clustered into three senatorial zones, comprising Ebonyi North with 4 LGAs, Ebonyi Central with 4 LGAs and Ebonyi South with 5 LGAs. From each zone, a total of two LGAs were sampled through the use of the simple random technique of lucky deep. Through the process, Ebonyi and Ohaukwu LGAs were selected from Ebonyi North, Ezza South and Ishielu LGAs from Ebonyi Central and Afikpo North and Ohaozara LGAs from Ebonyi Central. The second step involved the clustering of each selected LGAs into zone A, B and C. Each of these zones were further clustered into communities, areas and streets were respondents met in beer parlours, relaxation centres and eateries administered with copies of the questionnaire. Those who had low level of education to independently respond to the questionnaire were personally assisted by the researchers in their respective areas of assignment. The instrument was validated by two mass communication experts from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was also checked through a test retest process which yielded a correlation co-efficient value of 0.87.

### VI. Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

This section reviewed how data were presented and analyses. The researcher used questionnaire for the presentation of data. A total of 400copies of the structured questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. 385 copies were completed properly and retrieved. Therefore the analysis of this research work was based on the retrieved 385 copies of the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Research objective/question 1: Determination of the extent to which the use of the personality of late Chief Ojukwu for endorsement is influencing consumers’ patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State.**

S/N	Questionnaire item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
1	You believe that Late Chief Ojukwu personifies the Biafra struggle	180 (46.75%)	160 (41.56%)	10 (2.6%)	25 (6.49%)	10 (2.6%)	385 100%
2	Your likeness for Hero Larger Beer in the first instance was because it is connected to late Chief Ojukwu and the Biafran struggle	190 (49.35%)	155 (40.26%)	10 (2.6%)	15 (3.89%)	15 (3.89%)	385 100%
3	The trustworthiness of the personality of Chief Ojukwu is influencing and making you believe that Hero Larger Beer is a good and quality beer	195 (50.65%)	155 (40.26%)	5 1.3%	24 (6.23%)	6 (1.6%)	385 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The consistency of the responses in the table above is worthy of note. Those who believe in the connection between their patronage of the beer and the late Chief Ojukwu endorsement value on it constitute over 90% of the total respondents.

Research Objective /question 2

**Table 2: Determination of the extent to which the desire to always associate with the symbolic values of Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement is sustaining the patronage for Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State**

S/N	Questionnaire item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
1	The Biafran agitation for self-determination should continue till it is realised	194 (50.65%)	156 (40.26%)	5 (1.3%)	23 (6.23%)	7 (1.6%)	385 100%
2	The late Chief Ojukwu endorsement value on the Hero Larger Beer reminds you of the worthiness of the Biafran struggle	190 (49.35%)	154 (40.26%)	11 (2.6%)	14 (3.89%)	16 (3.89%)	385 100%
3	Drinking Hero Larger Beer makes you feel like playing a part in the struggle to get Biafra	180 (46.75%)	160 (41.56%)	10 (2.6%)	25 (6.49%)	10 (2.6%)	385 100%
4	Assuming that Hero Lager Beer is re-branded and given another name and logo away from Ojukwu and his Biafran struggle, you will still be patronising it	5 (1.3%)	5 (1.3%)	30 (7.8%)	155 (40.26%)	190 (49.35%)	385 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The data generated by questionnaire item number 4 in the table clearly shows that the late Chief Ojukwu endorsement value is a strong factor firing and sustaining the massive patronage/consumption of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State, and perhaps, South-East, Nigeria at large. As is seen from the table over 90% of the respondents admitted that if the beer is re-branded away from late Chief Ojukwu and the Biafra struggle which he personifies, they will likely reconsider their patronage of the beer.

**Test of Hypotheses**

The hypotheses below were tested using chi-square test of independence. The decision rule was if the calculated chi-square value is more than the value of chi-square in the table at 5% or (0.05) level of significance, that the null hypothesis would be rejected.

Formula for calculating chi-square  $X^2$

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where  $X^2$ : Chi-square value

$O_i$ =Observed frequency

$E_i$ =Expected frequency

$\Sigma$ =Summation sign

Level of significance 5% or (0.05)

Degree of freedom  $R \times C$

Row (R-1)

Column (C-i)

**Hypothesis 1**

$H_0$ : Late Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement value is not significantly influencing the patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State.

**Table Computed Chi-Square ( $x^2$ )**

Options	fo(observed frequency)	fe(expected frequency)	fo-fe	(fo-fe) <sup>2</sup>	(fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> / fe
Strongly Agreed	180	77	103	10609	137.78
Agreed	160	77	83	6889	89.47
Strongly Disagreed	25	77	-52	2704	35.12
Disagreed	2	77	-75	5625	73.05
Undecided	0	77	-77	5929	77
Total	385				412.42

Source: Field Survey, 2022

**Critical value:**

The test was conducted using 4 degree of freedom at a significant level of 0.05 which gives a table value of 9.488.

Hence:  $X^2$  cal= 412.42

$X^2$  tab=9.488

**Decision rule:**

Since the computed chi-square value (412.42) is greater than the critical (table) chi-square value (9.488), the null high hypothesis as stated above was rejected and the alternate hypothesis  $H_1$ : Late Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement value is significantly influencing the patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

$H_0$ : The desire to associate with the symbolic representations of late Chief Ojukwu is not significantly sustaining the patronage of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State.

**Table Computed Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )**

Options	fo(observed frequency)	fe(expected frequency)	fo-fe	(fo-fe) <sup>2</sup>	(fo-fe) <sup>2</sup> fe
Strongly Agreed	198	77	121	14641	190.14
Agreed	142	77	65	4225	54.87
Strongly Disagreed	35	77	-42	1764	22.91
Disagreed	10	77	-67	4489	58.29
Undecided	0	77	-77	5929	77
Total	385				403.21

**Source:** Field Survey, 2022

**Critical value**

The test was conducted using 4 degree of freedom at a significant level of 0.05 which gives a table value of 9.488

Hence  $\chi^2_{\text{call}} = 403.21$

$\chi^2_{\text{tab}} = 9.488$

**Decision Rule:**

Since the computed chi-square value (403.21) is greater than the critical (table) chi-square value (9.488), the null hypothesis as stated above was rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): the desire to associate with the symbolic representations of late Chief Ojukwu is significantly sustaining the patronage of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State is accepted.

**VII. Discussion of Findings**

The study aimed at determining the level of influence of the personality of late Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu celebrity endorsement on consumers' patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State and ascertaining the extent to which the desire to always associate with the symbolic values of Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement is sustaining patronage for Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State. The findings of the study suggest that Late Chief Ojukwu celebrity endorsement value is significantly influencing the patronage of Hero Large Beer in Ebonyi State and that the desire to associate with the symbolic representations of late Chief Ojukwu is significantly sustaining the patronage of Hero Larger Beer in Ebonyi State. The data in table one above show that a total of 87% of the 385 respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that using Chief Ojukwu and his Biafran Ideology/ struggle is influencing their patronage of Hero Larger beer in Ebonyi state. This finding is in agreement with that of Kahle 2016), Kamins (2018) and Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe (2018) which had respectively showed that brand likeness and purchase intentions were affected positively by celebrity appeals. Meanwhile, one needs to at this juncture underscore the uniqueness of the Hero larger beer celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement in most advertising enterprise involves the use of the demonstrative pictures of the celebrities in question, but, the study at hand is evaluating an endorsement which is based on popular ideology personified by a deceased hero in the person of late Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. Though, one may not physically observe the pictorial demonstration of Ojukwu on containers/bottles/ billboard of Hero larger beer, his symbolic personification within the framework of the Hero Beer branding strategy still sufficiently serves the much desired endorsement for the beer. Moreover, one may still argue that the Biafran ideology should be separated from the celebrity endorsement value of late Chief Ojukwu. For those in this school of thought, separating the two intervening phenomena will give room for precision in determining whether it is the Biafran struggle that is influencing and attracting patronage for Hero Larger beer or the celebrity trustworthiness cum likeness for late Chief Ojukwu that is positively behind the patronage of the beer. The fact is that the Biafran struggle and Ojukwu are two inextricable phenomena. Moreover, events leading to the emergence of Hero larger beer in Igbo land are evidentially giving credence to the Biafran-Ojukwu celebrity endorsement of the beer. For instance, as mentioned earlier in chapter two, the producers of the beer relocated the factory from Lagos to Onitsha barely four months after the death and burial of late Chief Ojukwu. And many in Igbo land during the burial appeared to have had a common resolution: that though Ojukwu their Hero has



died; his Biafran legacy cum struggle lives on. Therefore, the advent of a special beer brewed in Ojukwu's backyard bearing "Hero" as a brand name and the Biafran flag, was nothing, but, a continuous commemoration of the endlessness of the people's hero and a quick reminder that Biafran state is yet to be a reality. The data in the same table one above shows that a very few respondents totalling about 12% were either neutral or disagreed with the questionnaire item respectively. This is so because not all Igbos believe in Ojukwu and his Biafran struggle. Hence, the Hero branding messages are assonating and should be rebuffed. Consequently, such group of persons may not be patronising Hero Larger Beer as a result of endorsement messages, but, may have other personal reasons for drinking the beer. The test of the two guiding hypotheses also confirmed that the continuous patronage of Hero larger beer is being powered by the Ojukwu- Biafran endorsement value. For instance, the data in the table two above indicate that a total of 91% of the 385 respondents had strongly agreed and agreed respectively that as long as Hero branding is reflecting Ojukwu and the Biafran struggle, that they would continue to patronize the beer. Earlier on, Ohanian (1991) had found that loved and trusted celebrities help to retain brand loyalty. Advertisers and brand managers of Hero larger beer appear to be leaving nothing to chance in terms of services and strategic reinforcement of the brand messages. Available evidence shows that Hero brand messages is gradually being refocused on the uniqueness of the Igbo culture of royalty, industry, independence and sagacity. Concurring on this new angling by Hero advertisers, Akingbolu (2019, p. 4) writes:

In May 2018, Hero Larger Beer was knighted with a new cap "red cap" crown cork to mimic the red cap worn by respected Chiefs and elders in Igbo land, which serves as a symbol of respect, achievement and social recognition. It was during this event that the Obi of Onitsha, the city's traditional leader bestowed the beer with the title of "Mmanya Ejiri Mara Igbo", the beer that identifies the Igbos.

It is therefore not surprising that the findings of this study are suggesting that the use of the popular leader of the Igbos, Chief Ojukwu, (though, now dead but his Biafran dream lives) to endorse Hero Larger Beer is hugely paying off. Interestingly, the brand manager(s) on daily basis is strategically consolidating by carving out the Igbos as the owner and drinkers of the Hero Beer brand as shown above. To the few respondents who do not believe in the message of the Hero Larger Beer as earlier observed, there is no need linking their continued patronage of the beer to Ojukwu/Biafra. Perhaps, their sustained loyalty to the beer brand will be based on persistence in quality, cost, or any other idiosyncratic values and considerations.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

The use of Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu and his Biafran struggle to endorse Hero Larger Beer is an innovation and a rewarding creativity. It has significantly repositioned the beer for long time success in the market. As long as the beer retains its unique quality and has advantage on cost over its competitors, it would continue to retain its pride of place within the expanding Igbo market.

### **IX. Recommendations**

1. The brand manager should consider using the picture of late Chief Ojukwu on one side of the Hero Larger Beer bottle while the Biafran insignia will be on the other side.
2. Hero Larger Beer manufacturers should consider introducing Hero Larger quiz and debate competitions among selected secondary schools in each state of the Igbo. Such debates and quizzes will be based on Igbo history, culture, values, philosophy, among others.

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