

## **Influence of Celebrity in Television Advertising: A Study of Pepsi Consumers among Unilag Undergraduates**

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**Abstract:** Competition among many brands and product in the market place is becoming more intense in recent times. Having a good product alone is not enough to compete in markets of high standards, obviously the changes in markets, consumer life-style and other relative factors are driving brand owners to focus more on more persuasive ways of promoting their product and celebrity endorsement has now become a popular choice in the advertising industry. Celebrity endorsement is one of the advertising techniques companies use to create awareness and favourable responses about their products and service. This expectation may be realized if the end-user can be influenced by the celebrity endorser; as incongruity of a celebrity endorser with the product being endorsed is capable of inducing bad responses towards the product rather than the other way round. Thus, this study examines the influence of celebrity in television advertising: a study of Pepsi consumers among UNILAG undergraduates. The aim of the study is to examine the influence of the use of celebrity in television advertisements on consumer buying behavior with specific reference to Pepsi-cola drink. The study employed the survey method and the sample population for the study consists of undergraduate full-time students from four faculties in the University of Lagos. The sample size was 400, and the multistage sampling technique was employed. The instrument for the collection of data was a self-administered questionnaire containing nineteen questions, both close-ended and open-ended. In analyzing the data collected, a simple mathematics frequency table and percentage method was used and data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics. It was found that majority of respondents take Pepsi-cola and they are mostly influenced by the name the brand has already built, its price and other variables like taste and not necessarily the celebrities featured in Pepsi adverts. It was also discovered that students have being exposed to advertisements featuring celebrities and affirmed that they are sometimes influenced to buy a product or service endorsed by a celebrity as it is not only advertisements that influence their decision to buy a product. Thus, findings of this research suggested that celebrity-endorsed advert has a significant influence on the students' purchase decision. This study therefore recommends that, before using celebrities, advertisers need to understand how to choose celebrities; care must be taken to scrutinize a celebrity's lifestyle and his present social acceptance before endorsement so as to avoid any negative image that could have negative effect on the product; thus, the various elements involved in producing celebrity-based advertisements should be carefully organized in order to achieve desired results.

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### **I. Introduction**

Advertising includes every way you influence people to buy your products or services more than they buy those of competitors. It also provides information about the use and sometimes price of the product, location of the business, what is being sold, and whom it's being sold to. From the foregoing and more, it could be affirmed that the purpose of advertising is to create awareness of the advertised product and provide information that will assist the consumer to make a purchase decision. Etzel et al (1997)

Competition among many brands and product in the market place is becoming more intense in recent times. Having a good product alone is not enough to compete in markets of high standards, obviously the changes in markets, consumer life-style and other relative factors are driving brand owners to focus more on more persuasive ways of promoting their product and celebrity endorsement has now become a popular choice in the advertising industry as the use of celebrated musicians, sportsmen and film stars appear rampantly on advertisements to endorse either a product, idea, or service, or to testify about it. Kumar and Reinartz (2006).

Everyday consumers are exposed to several voices and images of celebrity endorsement, as various companies are signing deals with celebrities, and advertisers select endorsers as a promotional strategy to communicate the attributes of their product or brand. According to Solomon (2002) most families have at least one television set and thus are exposed to a number of advertisements. The most interesting fact about these is that the viewer forgets 80 percent of the information gathered in just 24 hours; as a result, advertisers have initiated the solution of positioning their products through celebrity endorsement with the hope that by using celebrities they can accomplish a unique and relevant position in the minds of the consumers. Today, this advertising approach appears to be on the increase across all media types particularly the television which is an

influential and widely used medium of advertising with almost a universal reach; this is because it has the audio and visual materials to its advantage.

Celebrity sources are often be used by advertisers to enhance attitude change or desire for a product for a variety of reasons.

- They may attract more attention to the advertisement than would non-celebrities or in many cases.
- They may be viewed as more credible than non-celebrities.
- Third consumers may identify with or desire to emulate the celebrity.

Thus, celebrity endorsement has become a very popular strategy to promote a product and build the awareness of a product in the mind of the target market. Be that as it may, consumers have become a complex variable because of their variability across cultures and buying behavior, making it difficult to identify advertising approaches that can be effective or less effective. Therefore, the impact and prospect of either using a celebrated or an un-celebrated personality in an advert on consumers should be strictly subjected to research before conclusions are made. (Solomon 2002). This explains the need for this study, in order to establish the effectiveness and power of celebrity use in advertising over all other advertising approaches.

Pepsi-cola beverage drink, the study for this research work is a product of Pepsi-cola international, produced by the Seven-Up bottling company in Nigeria. This product has been advertised with the use of different celebrities both at home and abroad. The Seven-Up bottling company Plc is one of the largest independent manufacturer and distributor of the well-known and widely consumed brands of soft drinks in Nigeria. Its brands are Pepsi, 7UP, Mirinda, Teem and Mountain Dew, which the company produce and market in all its present 9 manufacturing plants. However, Pepsi-cola is no doubt in a competitive environment with other soft drinks like Coke, Fanta, Sprite and others, all of them striving to increase their market share through varying marketing strategies such as sales promotion, posters, television and radio commercials and the use of a celebrity as a spokesperson mainly used by Pepsi-cola to stir, attract and retain consumers of its products.

## **II. Literature**

In today's competitive marketing environment corporate organizations are ensuring all possible efforts to promote their brands and to grab the customer's mind share. The impetus is on attracting the customer's attention and developing positive associations not just to influence recall but also to induce trial and eventually effect purchase decisions. Solomon (2002) the huge investments of companies in advertising are not without motives, as companies try to outsmart each other with their advertisement in order to obtain a domineering market share and win customers' favour.

In a market where advertising plays a vital role in coordinating consumer purchases, it becomes pertinent for companies to induct all possible measures to influence motivate and inculcate desire to purchase, in the customer through an effective advertising campaign. Theory and practice proves therefore that the use of superstars or celebrated individuals in advertising generates lot of publicity and attention. Ohanian (1991)

The use of celebrities in advertising has become an integral aspect of modern day advertising, as it has been found to have the potential of improving the financial returns of companies that use this method in their advertisements. Apejoye (2013)

### **The Celebrity Concept**

In a today's dynamic and highly competitive business environment customers are becoming more demanding; their expectations are continuously rising while marketers are continuing their efforts to meet them and in this era of intense competition, with the bid to ensure the survival of their product, they turn to celebrity endorsement to influence consumer brand choice and buying behavior. Choice of the celebrity, hence, is of utmost importance and is usually done based on many different parameters appeal, looks, popularity or even just a fantasy figure to endorse a brand. Solomon (2002)

According to Schlecht (2003) a celebrity is a well-known personality who enjoys public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people. It can be said that within a corresponding social group celebrities generally differ from the social norm and enjoy a high degree of public awareness. They appear on television as spokespersons on behalf of the advertised brand, or ordinary users of such brand. In either way they often deliver a convincing message. The reason for using celebrity endorser goes to their huge potential influence; he explains that celebrity endorsers pass on their symbolic meanings and acquired associations to the products they endorse easier because they have an ability to communicate with a mass audience. Compared to other endorser types, famous people achieve a higher degree of attention and recall. They increase awareness of a company's advertising, create positive feelings towards brands and are perceived by consumers as more entertaining. Solomon (2002)

### **Celebrities And Advertising**

Every manufacturer wants his products or services to be remembered instantly when consumers have needs that his products or services can effectively satisfy. As opined by Naresh K. Mathotra (1996:744) “many advertisers feel that celebrities make an advertisement more effective”. This probably informs why the likes of Michael Jackson, Mc Hammer (both musicians). Sunday Oliseh and Kanu Nwankwo (footballer), and basketball hero, Michael Jordan have been contracted at different times by advertisers for endorsement of products or services. Below is a partial list of other celebrities that have endorsed Pepsi and Coke in the last 8 years:

<b>Celebrity</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Brand</b>
Frank Lampard	Soccer	Pepsi-cola
50 Cent	Musician	Pepsi-cola
David Beckham	Soccer	Pepsi-cola
Bob Dylan	Musician	Pepsi-cola
Shawn Johnson	Gymnastics	Coca-cola
Maroon 5	Musicians	Coca-cola
Jennifer Lopez	Musician	Pepsi-cola
Akon	Musician	Pepsi
Beyonce known	Musician	Pepesi
Kanye west	Musician	Pepsi
Davi oliver	Track and field	Coca-cola
Leo Messi	Soccer	Pepsi
Nicki Minaj	Musician	Pepsi

Source: [www.businessinsider.com/soda-wars-cola](http://www.businessinsider.com/soda-wars-cola). Nov 02, 2011

### **ADVERTISING AND THE TELEVISION MEDIUM**

Television has an advantageous combination of both audio and visual materials which make its commercials very appealing. According to most studies in different countries, television has the biggest effects on audiences and persuades them to start purchasing processes. Sohail and Sana (2011).

Ramalingam et al. (2006) explains that television as an advertising media has three key advantages. First, its influence on consumers' taste and perception is pervasive. Second, it can reach a large audience in a cost-efficient manner. Third, its sound and moving images create a strong impact. According to Batra et al (1997) in advertising effectiveness research, a considerable amount of attention has been given to the measurement of advertising effectiveness and media channel choice, with television therefore, the advert agency has various ways of expressing the advert message. If the desired scene for a commercial is real life or fantasy, there is no problem with television because it is so flexible. It should be noted that celebrities are also used to advertise through the other media of communication. However, the emphasis is on television for the purpose of this work.

### **Celebrity Endorsement Effectiveness**

Influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase decision has been studied extensively by various marketing and social psychology researches. Various hypothesis have been put forward which includes facts that celebrity endorsement celebrities have credibility on expertise that makes the product more desirable or enhances perceptions of quality, also that the celebrity endorsers image is transferred to the product so that those who use the product are associated with the image. Experiments suggest that in certain situations, celebrity endorsement can enhance recall and use of the products. Clark and Horstman (2003)

In advancing reasons why celebrity advertising may be influential, Atkin et al (1983) assert that celebrity advertising may be influential because celebrities are viewed as dynamic, with both attractive and likable qualities. Additionally, their fame is thought to attract attention to the product or service.

Petty et al (1983) and Menon et al (2001) indicate that celebrity endorsements enhance brain recall. Petty et al discovered that consumers tended to like the product more when it was endorsed by the famous athlete than by the average citizen of California. This suggests that celebrity influence may be related to the nature of the celebrity rather than the product that is consumers tended to rate the product as better and of higher quality if it was endorsed by a celebrity. Prachi (2005) finds that when it comes to selling, there is nothing quite, like a celebrity sales person. According to him, signing a celebrity helps the brand leap out of clutter and if the chemistry between the celebrity and the brand is right, the buzz could well turn into a roar.

Despite mixed findings, According to different researchers, three factors seem to be associated with the degree to which celebrity advertising is effective: source credibility, celebrity knowledge and trustworthiness, and celebrity appearance.

### **Source Credibility**

Source credibility suggests that the effectiveness of a message depends on the "expertness" and "trustworthiness" of the source. In general, a message source with higher credibility tends to be more effective than one with less credibility. Hovland et al (1978). Since higher levels of source credibility tend to be associated with more positive attitudes toward the message and lead to behavioral changes advertisers will opt to use celebrities if they think that they have a high level of credibility. Craig and McCann (1978)

Researchers have identified three components as making up the credibility construct: knowledge or expertise, trustworthiness, and appearance or attractiveness. Attempts to measure the impact credibility on consumers' intentions to purchase indicate that only "expertise" had any significant influence on intentions to purchase. There also seems to be a direct correlation between believability and overall advertisement effectiveness, as measured by purchase intentions. Kamins (1989)

### **Celebrity Knowledge and Trustworthiness**

Celebrity knowledge or expertise is defined as the perceived ability of the spokesperson to make valid assertions. The expert spokesperson seems most appropriate when advertising products and services that carry higher financial, performance, or physical risk while an ordinary consumer is considered best for low risk products or services. When celebrity spokespersons were viewed as experts in the product category, they accepted more. Likewise, celebrity expertise tends to be highly correlated with believability and trustworthiness. Atkin and Block (1983)

### **Celebrity Appearance**

This has been taken to heart by advertisers. One only needs to watch television or print advertising to ascertain this fact. Physical appearance seems to induce positive feelings toward the spokesperson and in some cases changes beliefs. Spokespersons who are known to, liked by, or similar to consumers are attractive and to an extent persuasive. Apejoye (2013)

Numerous studies have indicated the link between celebrity attractiveness and attitude changes toward issues, product, and advertising evaluations. Others have suggested that when a celebrity's physical attractiveness "matches up" or is congruent with the degree to which the product or service advertised, it enhances attractiveness (i.e., attractive celebrity linked with an attractiveness-related product) Thus, there would be a positive impact upon product and service and advertisement evaluations Kahle and Homer (1985). On the other hand, if incongruence exists, then the evaluations of both the product and service and the advertisement will be lowered (Kamis 1990).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **The MatchUp Hypothesis**

The match-up or congruency theory specifically suggests that the effectiveness of celebrity use depends on the existence of a "fit" between the celebrity spokesperson and endorsed brand. Till and Buster (1998). Though Oharian (1991) acknowledges a popular person's ability to create awareness and initial interest for an advertisement she concludes that this may not necessarily change consumer's attitude towards the brands. The model emphasizes that the physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorser will enhance evaluations of the products characteristics only if the characteristics of the product "**match-up**" with the image conveyed by the celebrity. Hence an extension beyond attractiveness and creditability towards a consideration has to be done in terms of making the entire image of the celebrity with the endorsed brand.

#### **Model of Meaning Transfer**

Mc Cracker (1989) explain that the celebrity spokesperson would be effective only if clarity is achieved in assessing the meanings consumers associated with the endorser which are eventually transferred to the brand. Mc Cracker explains this meaning transfer model in 3 stages.

First, the meaning associated with the famous persons makes them the endorser to the product or brand. Thus, the meanings attributed to the celebrity become associated with the brand in the consumers. Secondly, in the consumption process, the customer acquires the brands meaning. The third stage of the model explicitly shows the importance of the consumer's role in the process of endorsing brands. McCracken (1989) emphasizes that a famous person represents not one single meaning, but expresses a number and variety of different meanings. He explains in this model that celebrities add value to the image transfer process by offering meanings of extra depth and power, what is complemented by their lifestyles and personalities.

### III. Methodology

In carrying out this research, the method of survey research design was employed and the questionnaire was chosen as data collection instrument. The sampling technique used for this study is the multistage sampling technique which was used to stratify the students into three groups; Faculty, Department and Level.

According to Burns and Grove (1993), a population is defined as all elements, individuals, objects and events that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. The study population was drawn from students in the University of Lagos, both males and female undergraduate students. The age ranges were between 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years and 26 and above. The age range was considered because most of the young people fall into this category. 400 students derived from 7% of the total number of students from departments chosen were given the questionnaire.

### IV. Results

#### Frequency Of Influence Of Advertisement On Purchasing Decision?

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	389	97
No	11	3
Total	400	100

Table 11 above presents that 97% affirmed that advertisement can influence their purchasing decision while 3% are not influenced by advertisement in their purchasing decision. The implication of this data is that advertisement is capable of influencing the purchasing decision of consumers.

#### Frequency Of Being Persuaded By Celebrity Based Advertising

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	315	78.75
No	85	21.25
Total	400	100

Table 13 above shows, 78.75% of the respondents affirmed that featuring a celebrity in an advert persuades them to buy a product or pay for a service while 21.25% have responded negatively. It can be inferred that consumers are persuaded to buy a product or pay for a service because of an advertisement featuring a celebrity.

#### Frequency Of What Mostly Influence Consumers To Buy Pepsi-Cola

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Taste	65	16
Adverts	68	17
Name	143	36
Price	124	31
Total	400	100

From table 18 above, majority (36%) of the respondents are mostly influenced by the already established brand name of Pepsi-cola drink, 31% by price, 17% by adverts, and 16% by taste. This indicates that consumers who take Pepsi-cola are influenced mostly by the name. Thus, the sale of the drink depends on the brand name already existing and known over the years.

#### Frequency Of Consumer's Opinion On Celebrity Endorsement

Responses	Number	Percentage
Yes	277	69
No	123	31
Total	400	100

Table 9 above depicts that majority (69%) of the respondents affirm that it is necessary to use celebrities in Pepsi-cola television adverts while 31% say it is not necessary. This depicts most of the respondents affirm that the use of celebrities in Pepsi to advertisement is not necessary.

### Findings

It was discovered that majority (97%) of the students are influenced by advertising when making purchase; this explains why most of them are influenced by Pepsi-cola celebrity-based advertising. Also it was discovered that most of the students drink or buy Pepsi mainly because of its price and the brand name already known and existing for years and not necessarily its adverts.

## V. Conclusion

It appears from the findings that celebrity endorsement does have significant influence on consumers. This implies that most respondents believe that the use of celebrity in advertisements has its own impact on them as consumers; as they tend not to forget the advertisement in a hurry and at the long run may influence their final purchasing decision. In essence celebrity advertising does deliver a premium in terms of impact and memorability.

## VI. Recommendation

Clearly, celebrity advertisements may pay-off in the long run if appropriately used; as the strategy of using celebrities in adverts has endured overtime. Thus, in using celebrities, advertisers need to understand how to choose celebrities; care must be taken to scrutinize a celebrity's lifestyle and his present social acceptance before endorsement so as to avoid any negative image that could have negative effect on the product. Also, when using celebrities, advertisers must ensure that the celebrity evokes positive reactions, likewise help focus attention on the brand in the advertising. Thus, the product will be more desirable because of its association with the star.

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