

# The Rhetoric Of Celebrity Endorsement Strategy And Consumer Purchase Intention On Fast Moving Consumer Goods Among Al-Hikmah University Undergraduate Students

[https://doi.org/10.21272/sec.4\(3\).104-112.2020](https://doi.org/10.21272/sec.4(3).104-112.2020).

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## Abstract

The ultimate goal of any business organization is to be prosperous in today's increasingly competitive and dynamic markets where the cost of acquiring new customers has been found to be exponentially greater than that of maintaining existing ones, firms must continually explore ways of achieving higher customer retention rates. The building of a reputable brand image in the mind of the consumers is especially enhanced through the use of endorsers or spokespersons in the firm's marketing communications; and celebrities are among the persons commonly used as endorsers or spokespersons in this regard. The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase intention of consumer goods. Primary data through a structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from University undergraduate students. Hypothesis were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMCC) and Multiple Regression Analysis. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are factors that significantly influences consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products. Also, there is significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchase intention. Similarly, celebrity endorsements significantly impact consumer purchase intention. It was therefore recommended that the strategy and creative execution of all celebrity endorsement deals should be one that will reinforce strongly and consistently the celebrity brand association to ensure that celebrities do not only evoke positive retains, but helps focus attention on the brand in the advertising.

**Keywords:** celebrity endorsement, strategy, brand equity, consumer goods, purchase intention.

**JEL Classification:** D10, M31, M37.



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**Cite as:** Brimah, B. A., Olanipekun, W. D., Olorunlambe, G. A., Salawu, S. (2020). The Rhetoric Of Celebrity Endorsement Strategy And Consumer Purchase Intention On Fast Moving Consumer Goods Among Al-Hikmah University Undergraduate Students. *SocioEconomic Challenges*, 4(3), 104-112. [https://doi.org/10.21272/sec.4\(3\).104-112.2020](https://doi.org/10.21272/sec.4(3).104-112.2020).

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## 1.0 Introduction

The ultimate goal of any business organization is to be prosperous. All efforts are therefore geared toward inducing maximum patronage toward its products or services. Among the criteria for achieving this goal is through concerted effort towards aggressive promotional strategies (Keller, 2003). Promotional strategy is a very important marketing tool used by organization to create awareness of their product and services as the importance of promotional strategies in profit oriented organization cannot be over emphasized. The rationale behind this being that promotional activities help in grading organization, selling its products or services and at the same time draw the attention of prospective customers/customers to the product or services. In the opinion of Morden (1993), promotional mix is the combination of marketing and promotional communication methods used to achieve the promotional objectives of the marketing mix.

Celebrity endorsement which this paper anchors on emphasizes on advertisement. Advertisement is an imperative in modern business world, the strategy to keep the company profitable and to make maximum customers; the advertisement plays an important role (Jobber, 2002). It has been argued that for the fast moving consumer goods advertisement plays an important role; it helps to develop the brand and positive consumer perception. Companies expend large amount of investment on advertisement because they want to keep their product at the top of the customer's mind. One of such investments is the use of celebrities to endorse their brands. Companies invest large sums of money to have celebrity endorsers in their advertisements hoping to achieve returns on their investments (Erdogan, Baker & Taggs, 2000; Roozen, 2008). Consumers are over-exposed to the media nowadays. A person living in an over populated country will be exposed to one thousand advertisements on average per day. But the viewers tend to forget 80% of the information within 24 hours. In order to deal with this, marketers use celebrity endorsement to reinforce their marketing messages considering the massive amount of celebrity endorsement practices in advertising.

There are many other factors which influences consumers purchase intention to buy a product or a service endorsed by the celebrities. The reality however some products have failed to attract customers' attention and influenced their perception towards many products in spite of celebrity endorsement and expensive advert (Kotler, 2006). For example, when a celebrity is not accepted, his/her unacceptability may affect the product that he/she identifies with negatively. There are many other factors which influences consumers purchase intention to buy a product or a service endorsed by the celebrities. It is therefore the contention of this research study to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsement strategy on consumer purchase intention on fast moving Consumer Goods among Al-Hikmah University Undergraduate Students. Emphasis would be placed on the Pepsi Cola brand which has employed the services of several celebrities such as Tiwa Savage, Victor Moses, WizKid to endorse their brand as well as their purchase intention.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are directed to;

1. examine the factors which influence consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products.
2. investigate the relationship between celebrity endorsement strategy and consumers purchase intention.

### Research Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There are no factors that significantly influences consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumers purchase intention.

## 2.0 literature review

### a. Conceptual Framework

#### Celebrity

Friedman & Friedman (1979) referred to celebrities as individuals who are known to the public (including actors, sports figures, and entertainers) for their achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed. Explicit in this definition is the assumption that to acquire celebrity one must first achieve something. According to the Microsoft Student Encarta Dictionary (2009), celebrity is somebody who is famous during his or her own lifetime. Therefore Celebrity Advertisement is the use of celebrities in the display of products in adverts. A conduct of brand message in which a celebrity performs as the brand's

representative and verifies the brand's assertion and position the brand by prolonging his/her personality fame, standing in the society or skills in the area to the brand (Martin, 2006). According to Schlecht (2003) term celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large share of certain group of people, The term 'celebrity' denotes a person who is popular among people such as actors, sportsperson, entertainers and others who have accomplishments in their respective fields besides the product they endorsed (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). McCracken (1989) defined celebrity endorser as: "Any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. According to Silvera and Austad (2004), a celebrity is a person who enjoys public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people and has distinctive characteristics, such as attractiveness, and trustworthiness. He has the ability to transfer his image to specific product that is being advertised. Marketers have taken this opportunity into account and use celebrity as an advertising tool to gain high brand awareness, recognition and preference.

### **Celebrity Endorsement**

McCracken (1989) defined a celebrity endorsement as the process where individuals who enjoys public recognition uses them on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement, irrespective of the required promotional role. This is so since advertisers recognize the value of using celebrities, and think; they draw attention to advertising messages in a much cluttered media environment. Endorsement is a brand communication channel where the celebrity certifies a brand's position and claim by extending his or her popularity, personality, expertise in the field or stature in the society to the brand and overall acts as a spokesperson for the brand. It is also argued to be effective in a market with intense competition and a high variety of brands since it can provide differentiation. Endorsement as a communications tool also provides the endorser to transfer its already existing credibility to the brand promoted (Ogunsiji, 2012). Celebrities are further said to enjoy a high degree of public awareness and they generally differ from the social norm in a corresponding social group. Attributes like special skills, attractiveness and extraordinary lifestyle are examples and specific common characteristics that are recognised. (Friedman & Friedman, 1979).

### **Brand**

American Marketing Association (2015) defined the brand in general terms as a name, title, series of symbols, or associations of all of these, which confirm the provenance of a good and help it, stand out amongst the competitors from a given market. Kapferer (2012) defined a brand at its core positing that it means a longstanding devotion and engagement of the consumer to the distinctive set of benefits and values, rooted in the core of brand's offerings, that differentiate and denote a company, individual, product or service from the rest of the crowd. The brand is identified by logo, name, symbol, or design (Keller, 2003). Those tools are used to differentiate one seller from others and stand out from competitors (Keller, 2003; Kotler, 1997). In other words, brands help to distinguish the same products or services provided by separate companies. In addition, the existence of brands solves the complex decision making process (Keller, 2003; Kotler & Keller, 2008). On the side of consumers, brands lower search costs for products and act as a risk-handling device (Keller, 2003). Keller (2012) posits that brands add value to the goods due to the fact that they embody a specific connotation in the eyes of consumers.

Brand equity is defined as the added value attached to the brand name or other brand elements (Aaker, 2004) including both financial and customer-based perspective values. Brand image is defined as the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers attach to specific brands. Brand image involves the consumer's perceptions about a particular brand, as reflected by the brand associations held in a consumer's memory (Keller, 1993). Then, the brand association is the set of associations linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory (Keller, 1993). Ultimately, brand equity can be developed based on the positive associations customers make with a brand (Aaker, 1996). Aaker & McLoughlin, (2010) defines Brand Equity (BE) as a series of assets and liabilities which are connected to a specific brand, that further enhance (or detract) value to (or from) the customers. It consists of brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and other proprietary assets.

### **Purchase Intention**

Purchase intentions are personal action tendencies relating to the brand. Intentions are distinct from attitudes. Thus, a concise definition of purchase intentions may be as follows Purchase intentions are an individual's

conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand. Similarly, purchase intention refers to plan to buy something in future for use but prior to this a cognitive process works behind where several factors consumer perception about product or source person really matters. Message of advertisement is easily recalled and likeability of ad increases due to involvement of celebrity which results in purchase intention (Pringle, 2004). Indirect association with intention to purchase and source endorser is also found positive toward product by using advertisement as medium (Goldsmith, 2000). A buyer's attitude and evaluation of external components construct buyer's purchase intention. In purchase intention process, the attitude towards the source person who is the celebrity endorser is very important. The attributes of celebrity develop the attitude towards buying. Ohanian (1991) Purchase intention is the only result of single celebrity attribute that is his expertise rather than any other. Message of advertisement is easily recalled and likeability of ad increases due to involvement of celebrity which results in purchase intention (Pringle, 2004).

### **b. Theoretical Framework - The Source Attractiveness Model**

The attractiveness model is McGuire's theory about gaining efficiency from celebrity status and physical attractiveness. This model is not all about physical attractiveness though; a message's effectiveness also depends on the similarity, likeability and familiarity the receiver feels towards the source. Similarity is about the resemblance between the source and the receiver, likeability is about the devotion for a source depending on his/her behaviour and physical attractiveness, and familiarity is about the knowledge a receiver has of the source through previous exposure. Other attributes that receivers 'feels about a source are for example personality properties, athletic prowess, lifestyles or intellectual skills (Erdogan, 1999). These factors are demonstrated to change beliefs among consumers, form positive stereotypes and generate stronger purchase intentions (Friedman, & Friedman, 1976). It is for no coincidence that most advertisements use attractive people (Erdogan 1992), once consumers tend to form positive stereotypes about such people. In addition, research has proven that physically attractive communicators are more successful at changing beliefs and generating purchase intentions (Friedman *et al.* 1976) than their unattractive counterparts. Source attractiveness and its effectiveness are more related to physical attributes, such as similarity, familiarity and likeability, which are important factors in an initial judgment of another person (Ohanian, 1990). This study is anchored on source attractiveness model theory because it explains how consumers are attracted to fans and how such attraction influences their perception and purchase intention.

### **Empirical Framework**

#### **Empirical Analysis**

Esangbedo (2011) did a study on the impact of celebrity endorsements on the buying behavior of rowan university students age 18-24. The purpose of this study was to determine the persuasiveness of celebrity endorsements on the purchase decisions of Rowan University students age 18-24, with specific regard to digital media players. The hypothesis of the study is that majority of Rowan students age 18-24 are persuaded to buy digital media players that are endorsed by celebrities they view favorably. The information gathered in the secondary research was used to develop questions for focus groups. The author of the study conducted two pre-test focus groups, after which the questions were modified. Once the questions were refined and finalized, the author conducted eight eight-person focus groups. Upon reviewing the results from the focus groups, the author found that most Rowan University students are not persuaded to purchase digital media players that are endorsed by celebrities they view favorably.

Ogunsji (2012) did a research on the impact of celebrity endorsement on strategic brand management. The research investigated the impact of celebrity endorsement on strategic brand management. It established a correlate between the success of celebrity endorsement of brands and the power of the brand in the market place. The paper found out that the power of a brand in the market place springs forth a cumulative function of the effectiveness of the whole endorsement process reflecting high profile brand market acceptability convergent on identifiable brand scope characterized by both the cognitive, affective and behavioral attitudes of the endorser. This convergence reflects not only consistency in repeat preference but also centrality and high intensity, in the promotion on brand value, nearing brand addiction. This paper however recommends a global brand management team for marketing organizations adopting multiple endorsements.

Adeyanju (2013) investigated the influence of celebrity endorsement of advertisement on students' purchase intention. This study therefore examined the influence of celebrity endorsed advertisement on students'

purchase intention employing quasi-experiment as the method of study. Two Pepsi Cola commercials were used with one featuring Osaze Odenwingie as the endorser while the second commercial did not feature any celebrity. Findings of the research suggested that celebrity endorsed advert has a significant influence on students' purchase intention. The study therefore recommends that the various elements involved in producing both celebrity endorsed and non- celebrity endorsed adverts should be carefully mixed together in order to achieve desired results. Likewise, the image of a celebrity before the public should be scrutinized before such a celebrity endorses an advert in order not to cast the product in negative light.

Rizwan, Sumeet, Manoj, Sagar (2014) did a research on Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Consumer Buying Behavior. Their research study focuses on the celebrity endorsement and its impact on the customer's buying behavior and their perception regarding the product or brand of the company. A quantitative method was used in this research in order to investigate the impact of celebrity endorsement on buying behavior. The data of 200 respondents was collected through questionnaire and results were analyzed through the SPSS. The students of different universities as respondents have been taken to know their perception regarding the celebrity and its attributes and the impact of celebrity endorsement on their buying behavior. It is concluded that celebrities endorsed advertisements are more attractive than the non-endorsed advertisements. Moreover the tested attributes of celebrity show positive relationship with the buying behavior and brand perception as well. It also proved that there is a significant impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying behavior. Finally, the results of the study further proved that there is a significant impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying behavior of customers.

Nur (2015) conducted a study on the influence of celebrity endorsement on actual purchase behaviour with mediating role of brand Equity: A study on local food brands. The purpose of this research is to figure out the dimensions of celebrity endorsement that highly influence consumer's actual purchase behavior and whether the presence of brand equity will mediate the relationship between celebrity endorsement and actual purchase behavior of local food brands. To achieve the objectives, questionnaire was constructed and distributed to 300 respondents in Penang. Findings shown that celebrity endorsement has significant relationship with actual purchase behavior and attractiveness of celebrity becomes the major factor in influencing consumers to buy local food brands. Results also revealed that brand equity mediates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and actual purchase behavior and brand awareness is the most influential factor towards this relationship.

Gupta, Nawal, and Verma (2015) did a research on Impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchase intention: A Study of Indian Consumers. The use of celebrity endorsements in advertising has become a trend and a perceived winning formula of corporate image building and product marketing. Through a survey of 336 Indian respondents who are exposed to celebrity endorsements for various products/brands, the present study attempts to find out the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchase intention. The three-dimensional scale proposed by Roobina Ohanian(1990) has been used for the purpose. Thus, the present study considers three attributes of celebrity endorsements as suggested by Ohanian - attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. The study also attempts to find out the individual impact of these dimensions on consumers' purchase intention. Exploratory factor analysis was used to reconfirm the factor structure. The model used was empirically tested for unidimensionality, reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity, using confirmatory factor analysis. Structural equation modeling was used to find out the impact of celebrity endorsements on purchase intention. Results reveal that celebrity endorsements have a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention. However, the beta coefficients reveal a low degree of correlation between celebrity endorsements and purchase intention. Further, attractiveness and trustworthiness are found to have a significant impact on the purchase intention, while expertise did not have a significant impact on purchase intention.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This research made use of survey research design was adopted in carrying out this study which enabled it gain an in-depth and a better understanding of the variables under study. The populations for the study consist of 675 students in the faculty of management sciences as at 2018 Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin while the sample size of 251 was arrived at using Yaro Yamane (1973) formulae. For the purpose of this research work, primary source of data collection was utilized, in analyzing the data obtained in this study, descriptive statistics of simple percentages, mean would be used while inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Co-efficient (PPMCC) and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test the formulated hypotheses at 5% level of significance.

## 4.0 Results and discussion of findings

### Test of Hypothesis

#### Hypothesis I

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There are no factors that significantly influences consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products

Table 1. Multiple Regression Analysis showing the factors influencing the consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products

Model	R Square		Adjusted R Square		Root MSE
1	0.9506		0.9495		.28878
Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Model	438.344727	6	73.0574544	876.07	0.0000*
Residual	22.7659878	200	.083391897		
Total	461.110714	206	1.65272657		
Variable	Coef.	Std. Error	T	p> t	[95%Conf. Interval]
Celebrity presence	.4835103	.079261	6.10	0.000	.3274697 .6395508
Celebrity adverts	.2857987	.0606994	4.71	0.000	.1663004 .405297
Celebrity familiarity	.1927986	.0620645	3.11	0.002	3149844 -.0706128
Similiarity/Fan base	.5989081	.0347212	17.25	0.000	.5305528 .6672634
Physical attractiveness	.1466482	.0843444	1.74	0.083	.3126962 .0193998
(Constant)	.3371051	.1333511	2.53	0.012	.5996323 .074578

Source: Researchers' Analysis (2019) using STATA version 11. (Statistically significant at 5%).

The regression analysis results obtained in the examination of the impact of factors which influences purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products shows that the R<sup>2</sup> coefficient (0.9506) which is the coefficient of determination indicates that the explanatory variables account for 95% of the variation of factors that influences purchase intention. Given the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is 95% with 0.0000\* at 5% of significant. This is an indication that the independent variables in the model jointly and significantly explain the factors that influences purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted which states that indeed there are factors such as celebrity presence, celebrity adverts, celebrity familiarity, fan base and physical attractiveness that significantly influences consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products.

#### Hypothesis II

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumers purchase intention.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix showing relationship between celebrity endorsement purchase intention

	Purchase intention	Celebrity presence	Celebrity adverts	Celebrity familiarity	Similiarity/Fan base	Physical attractiveness
Purchase intention	1.0000					
Interest	0.8929	1.0000				
Attention	0.9072	0.8648	1.0000			
Brand popularity	0.8431	0.8437	0.8992	1.0000		
Brand recall	0.9344	0.9204	0.9130	0.8297	1.0000	
Brand confidence	0.9468	0.9042	0.8257	0.7550	0.9259	1.0000

Source: Researchers' Analysis, 2019 Using STATA 11.0.

The table shows the correlation matrix which is an indication of how the individual variables are related. It shows that celebrity endorsement provides has a relationship with purchase intention since it creates and influences interest in the product (89%), grabs their attention (91%), makes the brand more popular (84%), facilitates brand recall (93%), and builds brand confidence (88%). This implies that adoption of

celebrity endorsements is contributing positively to the purchase intention. The association between them is positive and significant. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumers purchase intention.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Advertising is an interesting field that seeks to bring buyers and sellers together with the main objective of satisfying their mutual needs. In other words, advertising business is such that promotes goods, services and ideas using the instrumentality of the mass media i.e. television, radio, newspaper and magazine, to reach a large number of heterogeneous audience. In today's world, the use of celebrity advertising for companies has become a trend and a perceived winning formula of corporate image building and product marketing. This phenomenon is reflected by the recent market research findings that 8 out of 10 TV commercials scoring the highest recall are those with celebrities' appearances. Celebrities have always been the easiest way for a new product launch (consumer goods) and will remain to do so in the near future on account of their mass appeal and a world full of star stuck loyal fans. But the impact on the brand is much greater than just an advertisement showing a celebrity. With the use of the celebrity, the effect is magnified so as to allow the consumer to equate the personality and the brand together. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are factors that significantly influences consumer purchase intention of celebrity endorsed products. Also, there is significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumers purchase intention. Similarly, celebrity endorsements significantly impact consumer purchase intention

## 6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the recommendations are as follows. Marketing managers should perform a well-thought screening and choose wisely their celebrities because the selection of an individual which does not align correctly with the image and values of the company, as well as one which has a bad reputation with the crowd can damage a brand and cause negative attitude, decreasing the loyalty of the consumers. Thus, emphasis must be placed on those factors that consumers look forward to see in celebrities. The careful selection of celebrity, matching the target segment and brand values, should be inherently stressed upon. Marketing managers must continually identify the marketing targets to ensure efficacy of celebrity endorsement. If the target is about increasing brand likability, well-liked celebrity should come foremost before considering perceived expertise and trustworthiness aspects. If the marketing objective is about increasing purchase intention, a celebrity demonstrating physical attractiveness with perceived expertise would likely win all.

**Funding:** self-funded.

**Author Contributions:** conceptualization, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Salawu Safiya; data curation, Olanipekun Wahid Damilola and Salawu Safiya; formal analysis, Olanipekun Wahid Damilola and Olorunlambe Gasali Alabi; funding acquisition, Olanipekun Wahid Damilola and Olorunlambe Gasali Alabi; investigation, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Salawu Safiya; methodology, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Olanipekun Wahid Damilola; project administration, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Salawu Safiya; resources, Salawu Safiya and Olanipekun Wahid Damilola; software, Olanipekun Wahid Damilola and Olorunlambe Gasali Alabi; supervision, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Olanipekun Wahid Damilola; validation, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Olorunlambe Gasali Alabi; visualisation, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Salawu Safiya; writing-original draft, Brimah Bolatito Amudat and Salawu Safiya; writing-review and editing, Salawu Safiya and Olanipekun Wahid Damilola.

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