

CELEBRITY CREDIBILITY AND BRAND AWARENESS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The opinion and perception of consumers often impact on brand awareness. This is a problem that makes the crisis of divided loyalty prominent among telecom subscribers. Celebrity endorsement is a strategic advertising strategy that can be deployed in a competitive environment. This study focused on the influence of celebrity credibility on brand awareness. Multiple celebrity endorsement serves as intervening variable to influence the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness among the telecom service subscribers in Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey research design was used. The population of the study consisted of 160,520,993 telecommunications subscribers in Nigeria as at August 2018. A sample of 1,200 was determined through Krejcie and Morgan formula. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data from selected respondents that cut across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. Reliability test yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients between 0.71 and 0.83. Data were analysed using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and Analysis of Variance. The study found that there was moderate significant relationship between customers' perception of celebrity credibility and brand awareness ($r = 0.645$, $p < 0.05$), while multiple celebrity endorsement had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness ($F_{(2, 1197)} = 539.811$, $Adj. R^2 = 0.473$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that celebrity credibility helped on consumer's perception of brand awareness. It is recommended that telecom service subscribers should base their adoption of telecom services being promoted by celebrity on credibility of the endorser.

Keywords: Brand awareness, Celebrity endorsement strategies, Multiple celebrity endorsement, Telecommunication sector.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer perception and opinion remain a basic bedrock upon which any product/brand that is customer-focused should be anchored. That is why every organization devotes more resources to enhance one of its most invaluable assets that is embedded in its brand equity in order to break even and stay afloat in a competitive market environment. In addition, marketing communication practitioners seem to have realized that the long-term success of all future brand promotion strategies for a brand is greatly affected by customers' overall perception of the brand assets. It is therefore crucial for brand managers to understand how their brand management strategies affect consumers' awareness and subsequent recall of brand related information.

The proliferation of telecommunication service providers such as Bharti Airtel Nigeria Limited, Globacom Limited, MTN Nigeria Communications Limited, 9Mobile Limited and a handful of fixed/fixed wireless telecommunication companies in Nigeria have certainly enhanced some degrees of competition in the telecommunications market in the country (Onigbinde, 2013). Unlike the hitherto monopolistic, highly regulated telecommunication market, the presence of new firms, according to Onigbinde (2013) has introduced service quality, appropriate and reasonable pricing and social responsibility. Therefore, the need to adopt effective advertising strategy like celebrity credibility to get the competitive advantage cannot be overemphasized.

The prevailing concern of every organization is contingent on its adaptive capacity to the dynamics of consumers' needs, tastes and preferences (Pappu & Quester, 2006). One of the cardinal objectives of every marketing communication is to improve customer attitude towards a brand so as to raise purchase intentions (Goldsmith, Lafferty & Newell, 2000; Fill, 2009). The choice of the celebrities as symbols of marketing communication is not only based on the popularity rate of the endorsers but also on how much their personalities fit into the brands they represent. These celebrities are physically and emotionally involved in creating an intended image by presenting an aspect of their personality thus enhancing the cognitive process of the consumer towards the brand.

Although the concept of celebrity endorsement seems to be as an innovative marketing communication strategy especially in this contemporary regime of fairer trade in goods and services and celebrities have endorsed various brands under various guises for over 100 years (Kaikati, 1987; Seno & Lukas, 2007; Walker, Langmeyer & Langmeyer, 1992; Wei & Lu, 2013). One of the many innovations witnessed in the competitive telecommunication market in Nigeria is the massive recruitment and deployment of celebrities in the promotion of telecom brands and services and this was not the case before the liberalization of telecommunication industry in Nigeria. Customer's attitudes regarding brands and products are influenced by celebrities, but whether those attitudes enhance brand awareness remains a subject of debate. It is to this fact that this study intends to empirically assess the influence of celebrity credibility on brand awareness in telecommunication services among the GSM subscribers in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Several factors have been found to enhance brand awareness in the service industry, as Beerli, Martin and Quintana (2002) stress that there has been a growing interest in recent years in analysing the factors influencing brand awareness. However, in customer setting, investigations of various dimensions of celebrity credibility as determinants of brand awareness have led to inconsistent results and remain a matter of debate (ZarBari-Nwitambu & Kalu, 2017).

The issue of product and brand awareness in the telecoms sector certainly requires innovative solutions. One of such solutions may involve an appraisal of celebrity credibility as antecedents of brand awareness. In a study of Indian consumers on the efficacy of celebrity endorsements vis-à-vis consumer advert perception, Ruchi, Nawal and Verma (2015) discovered that when a company get a celebrity to endorse its brands or sign licensing agreement, such a company benefit from customer awareness, which could include the perception of quality, brand value or a certain image.

This study investigated the perception of telecom service subscribers in Nigeria on celebrity credibility and its effects on brand awareness while multiple celebrity endorsement serves as intervening variable. The issue of multiple celebrity endorsement with different personality traits was also examined.

Objective of the Study

In view of the identified problem, the objective of the study is to assess the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand awareness in the telecoms sector in Nigeria.

Specific objectives are to:

1. evaluate the relationship between perceived celebrity credibility and brand awareness in the telecoms sector in Nigeria;
2. assess the moderating effects of multiple celebrity endorsement on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness in the telecoms sector in Nigeria

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?
2. To what extent does multiple celebrity endorsement moderate the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated below have been developed based on the theoretical evaluation of the of research topic being investigated.

Hypotheses:

H₀₁: Celebrity credibility has a significant relationship with the brand awareness.

H₀₂: Multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

In this section, it becomes imperative to explain the main concepts that are related to the constructs of celebrity credibility and brand awareness. Therefore, conceptual emphases shall be on the concepts of celebrity endorsements, celebrity credibility and brand awareness.

Friedman and Friedman (1979) referred to the 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 products class endorsed. Explicit in this definition is the assumption that to acquire 'celebrity status' one must first achieve or attain excellence in a particular endeavour (Hunter, 2009). Unlike the celebrities of the past, such as Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Herbert Macaulay, Ango Abdullahi and Margarette Ekpo among other Nigerian eminent personalities, who earned their celebrity status through the positions they held or notable achievements, contemporary celebrities seem exempted from this requirement. Turner (2004) states that contemporary celebrities are often a product manufactured by celebrity intermediaries such as agents, publicists, marketing practitioners and promoters. Taking cognizance of this paradigm shift, Hunter (2009) remarks that achievement was no longer a necessary condition for acquiring celebrity status. In the words of Hunter, the test of celebrity is nothing more than 'well-knownness', and a celebrity was simply a person who is known for his 'well-knownness'. This distinction allows the consideration of individuals such as Richard Mofe-Damijo, Omotola Jolade-Ekehinde and Mercy Johnson as celebrities; while at the same time some politicians, business merchants, sport stars, members of royalty and religious icons are also considered to have acquired the celebrity status.

However, for the purpose of this study, emphasis shall be placed on the activities of celebrities as endorsers of companies and/or their products. According to McCracken (1989), a celebrity endorser is any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. This definition explicitly encompasses celebrities who appear to have expertise or a long-term association with the manufacturers, but it excludes typical customer endorsements featuring non-celebrities (Nyarko, Asimah, Agbemava & Tsetse, 2015). It is against this backdrop that Khatri (2006) refers to celebrity endorsement as the utilization of the celebrity's name in the product or service advertisement, where celebrities may or may not be the experts.

It is a basic assumption that celebrity endorsements are now common place in the advertisement of products and services. Spry, Pappu and Cornwell (2011) affirm that many companies now use celebrity endorsement as an effective advertising strategy. Therefore, one-quarter of the advertisements use celebrity endorsement to gain competitive advantage (Sheu, 2010; Pughazhendi & Ravindran, 2012). Furthermore, marketers nowadays use

celebrity endorsement as a strategic marketing communication tool. It is in line with this assertion that Nyarko *et al.* (2015) emphasizes the need for marketers to understand what happens to the buying decision of the customer when the cultural meanings of celebrities are disgraceful. This is because the customer purchasing and using the product endorsed by the celebrity can obtain some of those meanings and use them in constructing a satisfying self-control.

Celebrity endorsement is therefore a marketing campaign in which companies use popular and famous personalities to promote and create awareness for the product/service. Marketing communication experts have realized that another avenue of making the consuming public aware of the brands and sticking to them is the use of celebrity endorsements (Zor-Bari-Nwitambu & Kalu, 2017). These celebrities deploy their fame and popularity to influence members of the public to patronize the product and impact on consumers buying behaviour. Poghosyan (2015), states that companies need to choose celebrities carefully; making sure a particular choice of endorsement actually represents the overall features of the company/the brand.

There are various reasons behind the extensive use of celebrities in adverts. Firstly, because of their big names, celebrities may help the ads emerge from the big number of advertisements, thus enhancing their communicative ability. Secondly, celebrities create public relations-base for the brands. Celebrities' endorsements under the right circumstances, without doubt, legitimize the high expenses of this kind of marketing promotions (Alonso, 2006). However, it would be naïve to consider celebrity endorsement as an answer to all kinds of communication barriers. If celebrity endorsement is meticulously and strategically adopted, it will make the brand stand out and encourage moment remembrance. To achieve this, the advertiser must be careful when selecting the celebrity. Thus the right use of the celebrity can escalate the unique selling proposition of the brand being advertised to new extents; yet a careless adoption of a celebrity with a brand may have adverse consequences on the brand (Mitka, 2008; Audi *et al.*, 2015).

In recent times, celebrity endorsement has become an integral part of the advertisement industry. In fact, celebrity endorsement has become an omnipresent feature of modern day marketing due to its potential to enhance audience attentiveness, make the ads more memorable, credible and desirable as well as its tendency to add glamour to the endorsed products (Spielman, 1981; McCracken, 1989). Celebrities are increasingly being used by marketers to get attention and recall of the consumers. Furthermore, the marketers expect their brands to gain more acceptability by linking those brands to the celebrities (Nyarko *et al.*, 2015). Many studies on the subject matter of celebrity endorsement remark that when a celebrity endorses a product successfully, consumers will evaluate the endorsement positively, feeling it is credible, believable and appealing (Ohanian, 1990; 1991). Therefore, the consumers tend to like the advertisement and the brand name. This consequently can result to advertisement recall, increase product liking and while other positive effects may also occur as a result of celebrity endorsement (Brown & Stayman, 1992). However, studies conducted by Atkin and Block (1983); Kamins (1990); O' Mahony and Meenaghan (1998)

show that celebrities are known to induce more positive feelings toward the ads than non-celebrity endorsers.

Chaudhary and Asthana (2015), assert that for a celebrity endorser to be well accepted by members of the public, he/she must exhibit certain unique characteristics that are capable of projecting the image of the firm and its product high if employed. Scholars, such as Silvera and Beneditks (2003) and Hassan and Jamil (2014) have proposed some of the features of celebrity endorsement. These are: celebrity credibility, attractiveness, and perceived expertise amongst others.

There are several factors that responsible for the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. These factors can be divided into two categories: source-based factors and management-based factors. Seno and Lukas (2007), state that source-based factors are related to the celebrity's image which is controlled by the celebrity, while management-based factors are related to how marketing communication department manage the celebrity and this could be controlled through the management. Source-based factors for celebrity endorsement include celebrity credibility. It is against this backdrop Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell (2000) defines celebrity credibility as the degree of perception that consumers have about the celebrity endorser as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and the level to which the celebrity endorser can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject. Ohanian (1991), states that celebrity credibility contains two components which are trustworthiness and expertise. These components could be impact the consumers' perception toward the brand that is endorsed (Willemsen, Neije & Bronner, 2011).

Celebrity trustworthiness can be referred to as the degree of confidence that the consumers have in the source's intent to communicate the assertions considered to be most valid about the brand (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953 as cited by Hunter, 2009). In order to be effective, a celebrity endorser should have the credibility to attract attention (Miciak & Shanklin, 1994), increase awareness of the endorsed product and influence the purchase decision of the targeted audience (Ohanian, 1991). Therefore, it is easier for celebrities with higher level of trustworthiness to reach the customers than those with lower level of trustworthiness. It is in line with this assertion that Friedman and Friedman (1979) states that trustworthiness is a major determinant of source credibility; since the trust is in correlation with the credibility of endorser.

Furthermore, the character/profile of the celebrity can make or mar an advertising campaign. Celebrities therefore need to take specific actions in ensuring that they live a scandal-free life, worthy of trust and emulation since trustworthiness is the level of confidence and believability that consumers pose in a celebrity endorser to represent the product in a most valid way. Some attributes of trust therefore include favourable disposition and wide acceptance of the celebrity and the brand he/she represents (Pamar & Patel, 2015). Celebrity's trustworthiness has been proven to result in greater attitude change than perceived celebrity expertise, and this has strong effect on celebrity endorsement. Fans and followers of

celebrities will consciously or unconsciously patronize a celebrity endorsed product based on personal held trust in the celebrity (ZorBari-Nwitambu & Kalu, 2017).

Importantly, credibility refers to the integrity, honesty and dependability of the celebrity in relation to the subject matter he/she engaged thereof. Endorser's credibility is popularly used in marketing communication to influence consumer buying behavior. This suggests that the effectiveness of the communication will largely depend on the trustworthiness and expertise of the celebrity as viewed by customers (Malik & Quareshi, 2016). Meanwhile, celebrity is believed to be perceived and not an absolute phenomenon (Mishra, Dhar & Raotiwalla, 2001). Previous studies indicate that source credibility poses more effect on consumer judgement and choice (Willemsen *et al.*, 2011; Ibok, 2013). Moreover, credibility of the communicator influences the outcome of the communicated message; that is, it determines whether or not an advertising message will impact positively on the receiver (Serban, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this study is anchored on Schema Theory propounded by Fiske and Kinder (1981). The cognitive scheme for processing new information and retrieving stored information also plays an important role in the perception of celebrity endorsement activities. The basic concept of the schema theory is that it is used for processing new information while retrieving the old one. According to Graber (1988), "schema is a cognitive structure consisting of organised knowledge about situations and individuals that has been abstracted from prior experiences". The concept of schema has become widely used by psychologists, cognitive scientist, public relations and adverting researchers because of its apparent usefulness in understanding how individuals process information. Fiske and Kinder (1981) suggests that individuals are cognitive misers whose limited complexity for dealing with information forces them to practise cognitive economy by forming simplified mental models.

Graber (1988) indicates that individuals use schemas to process news stories from newspapers/ news broadcasts or advert. She discovered from her research effort that individuals processing news stories choose from a number of strategies, including straight matching of a news story to a schema, processing through inferences, and multiple integration of a story with several schemas or schema dimensions. Graber also discovered that, in processing news stories, individuals tend to score the conclusions drawn from the evidence, rather than the evidence itself. She concludes that processing news through schemas is an effective means of dealing with information overload, while the matching of news stories with schemas is influenced by cueing.

Severin and Tankard (2001) observed that the notion of schema can be of help in understanding how individuals may process many news stories from newspapers/news broadcasts or advert. It appears that every individual attempts to match the information in a news story or advert/promotion communication through celebrity endorsement to some existing schema through a number of different matching strategies. On celebrity endorsements, the matching strategies GSM subscribers who are daily bombarded with

different celebrities in advertising campaign, product/brand promotion engagements sometimes deploy include credibility. If a match can be found, then, some parts of the information are likely to be stored in the form of a modified schema. If a match cannot be found, the information is likely to pass by without being assimilated.

In the same vein, the notion of schema can also be of help in understanding how individual consumer processes the messages he/she receives from advert via celebrity endorsements. Every individual consumer attempts to match the messages that emanate from marketing communication to some existing schema through a number of different matching strategies. If a match can be found, then, some parts of the inferences from advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and celebrity endorsements are likely to be stored in the form of a modified schema. On the other hand, if a match cannot be found, the messages to marketing promotion prospects are likely to pass by without being assimilated.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have been carried out on the subject matters of celebrity endorsement and customer-based brand equity as separate research constructs. However, enough literature on the relationship among the constructs of celebrity credibility vis-a-vis the constructs of brand awareness is rarely available. In a study on third-party organization endorsement of products, Dean and Biswas (2001) found that advertisements featuring a credible celebrity deliver a higher degree of appeal, attention, recall rate and possibly purchase, compared to the ads without celebrities. Similarly, Chan, Ng and Luk (2013) assessed the impact of celebrity endorsement in advertising on brand image among Chinese adolescents. It was found that using a celebrity in an ad increases brand awareness (Chan *et al.*, 2013). In a study of Indian consumers on the efficacy of celebrity endorsements vis-à-vis consumer advert perception, Ruchi, Nawal and Verma (2015) discovered that when a company get a celebrity to endorse its brands or sign licensing agreement, such a company benefit from customer awareness, which could include the perception of quality, brand value or a certain image.

Furthermore, if a celebrity is endorsing the company or the company is selling the product of a well-known corporate entity, then people assume that such must be a good company to deal with (Nyarko *et al.*, 2015). It is against this backdrop that Bowman (2002) remarks that celebrity endorsements result to an increased level of product awareness and recall. Celebrity endorsements further serve as an element of the creative message strategy (David & Benedikte, 2004).

Spry, Pappu and Cornwell (2011) found that celebrity endorsement has an indirect impact on customer-based brand equity, while this relationship is intervened by brand credibility as a moderator. Accordingly, celebrity credibility is associated with a higher level of brand credibility (Spry *et al.*, 2004). However, according to Till (1998), celebrity endorsement positively enhances activation on brand awareness in line with the associative network learning model. All things being equal, celebrities are also looked upon as more expert and trustworthy than non-celebrities (Ohanian, 1990).

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative type of research method was adopted and the design was cross-sectional survey research design to assess the influence of celebrity credibility on brand awareness using multiple-celebrity endorsement as moderator. Cross-sectional survey is used in social and behavioural sciences for investigating the nature, cause and effects of a phenomenon (Severin & Tankard 2001). The population of the study comprised all telephone users that cut across different federating units in Nigeria, totaling 160, 520,993 (NCC, 2018). The application of statistical formula becomes imperative in determining the sample size because the population is finite. The sample size for this study was determined using the formula for sample size determination as expressed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This is given by the formula below:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where:

S = Desired Sample Size

X = Z value (e.g. 1.96 or 95% confidence level)

N = Population Size

P = Population proportion (expressed as a decimal and assumed to be 0.5 or 50%)

d = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion is 0.035 as a margin of error

With a working population of 160,520,993 active GSM subscribers (as at August 31, 2018) and at 0.035 degree of accuracy (error limit) using Krejcie and Morgan guide:

$$S = \frac{1.96^2 \times 160,520,993 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.035^2 (160,520,993-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$S = \frac{3.84 \times 160,520,993 \times 0.5(0.5)}{0.0012(160,520,992) + 3.84 \times 0.5(0.5)}$$

$$S = \frac{3.84 \times 160,520,993 \times 0.25}{0.0012 \times 160,520,992 + 0.96}$$

$$S = \frac{154,100,152.32}{192,626.1504}$$

$$S = 799.99$$

$$S = 800$$

However, this sample size is small for factor analysis as far as Comrey and Lee's (1992) advice is concerned. Also, Simon and Burstein (1985), state that the sample size for research into human and institutional populations should be between 1,000 and 1,500 respondents. Therefore, 50% of the derived sample was added to achieve excellent result, in line with the suggestions of Comrey and Lee (1992) as cited in Howitt and Cramer (2008).

Therefore, the sample size = 800+400 = **1,200**

The instrument of data collection for this study is questionnaire with the consideration of Likert scale on a six-point interval scale in line with the research suggestions of Onigbinde and Odunlami (2014). The scores were coded 6 for Strongly Agree, 5 for Agree, 4 for Partially Agree, 3 for Partially Disagree, 2 for Disagree and 1 for Strongly Disagree. The instrument was designed to obtain major sets of data, with focus on the customers' perceptions of various dimensions of celebrity credibility vis-a-vis brand awareness. The research instrument was subjected to expert opinion validity (face validity) as used by Osuagwu (2004) and Onigbinde (2013). Senior academics specializing in marketing, mass communication and applied psychology validated the research instrument, in addition to expert opinion of some top-level executives in Advertising, Public Relations and Integrated Marketing Communication. On the other hand, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of reliability were calculated for all the major research constructs adopted in the study. The results at pilot stage indicate a high level of internal consistency among the constructs: celebrity credibility (0.81), multiple-celebrity endorsements (0.73), and brand awareness (0.73). Having all constructs exceeded the .70 benchmark for Cronbach's alpha reliability as recommended by Nunnally (1993), and having all the calculated Composite Coefficients of Reliability (CR) above the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1993), the overall reliability of the whole scale is therefore guaranteed; hence, the internal consistency of the entire constructs is assured. The data collection instrument was administered through one-on-one method with the aid of three trained Research Assistants. Subscribers that were selected as respondents to the questionnaire were those that have access and usage of GSM telecommunication services. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, Pearson's Product-Moment correlation (PPMC) and multiple regressions.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive data on the constructs of celebrity attractiveness vis-à-vis multiple-celebrity endorsement and brand association are given thus:

Table 1: Celebrity Credibility

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	PA F (%)	PD F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
I will like to emulate some ways of life of the celebrity endorsers engaged by my favourite telecom service provider	183 (15.3)	462 (38.5)	362 (30.2)	99 (8.3)	57 (4.8)	37 (3.1)	4.42	1.17
The celebrity endorser engaged by my favourite telecom service provider is considered reliable	144 (12)	452 (37.7)	415 (34.6)	112 (9.3)	47 (3.9)	30 (2.5)	4.37	1.09
The outward attitude of the celebrity endorser engaged by my favourite telecom service provider portrays excellence	132 (11)	411 (34.3)	437 (36.4)	140 (11.7)	48 (4.0)	32 (2.7)	4.29	1.10
The truthful way of life of the celebrity endorser engaged by my favourite telecom service provider motivates me	155 (12.9)	371 (30.9)	444 (37)	110 (9.2)	73 (6.1)	47 (3.9)	4.24	1.21
The celebrity endorser adopted by my favourite telecom service provider possesses a set of credible attributes which I may also identify with	83 (6.9)	425 (35.4)	440 (36.7)	148 (12.3)	70 (5.8)	34 (2.8)	4.17	1.10
The previous way of life of the celebrity endorser adopted by my favourite telecom service provider affects my opinion	106 (8.8)	275 (22.9)	476 (39.7)	186 (15.5)	98 (8.2)	59 (4.9)	3.94	1.23
Average Mean							4.24	1.15

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, PA=Partially Agree, PD=Partially Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, ***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Strongly Disagree; 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Partially Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Partially Agree; 4.5 to 5.49= Agree; 5.5 to 6 = Strongly Agree

Table 1 shows that participants partially agreed with the celebrity credibility scale ($\bar{x} = 4.24$). Participants partially agreed that: they would like to emulate some ways of life of the celebrity endorsers engaged by their favourite telecom service provider ($\bar{x} = 4.42$), the celebrity endorser engaged by their favourite telecom service provider was considered reliable ($\bar{x} = 4.37$), the outward attitude of the celebrity endorser engaged by their favourite telecom service provider portrayed excellence ($\bar{x} = 4.29$), the truthful way of life of the celebrity endorser engaged by their favourite telecom service provider motivates them ($\bar{x} = 4.24$); they also partially agreed with the last item that the previous way of life of the celebrity endorser adopted by their favourite telecom service provider affected my opinion ($\bar{x} = 3.94$). These implied that there was partial celebrity credibility in the Nigerian telecommunication sector.

Table 2: Multiple Celebrity Endorsements

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	PA F (%)	PD F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
Generally, I appreciate the use of many celebrity endorsements for the brand of telecom service being offered by my favourite service provider	226 (18.8)	385 (32.1)	361 (30.1)	130 (10.8)	53 (4.4)	45 (3.8)	4.39	1.24
Adoption of many celebrity endorsers by my favourite service telecom provider motivates me to use its brand telecom service more	182 (15.2)	432 (36)	399 (33.3)	84 (7.0)	59 (4.9)	44 (3.7)	4.39	1.19
Multiple celebrity endorsements enhance the liking for the brand of telecom service being offered by my favourite service provider	148 (12.3)	396 (33)	425 (35.4)	126 (10.5)	57 (4.8)	48 (4.0)	4.26	1.19
Involving multiple celebrity endorsers by my favourite telecom service provider makes me to be more passionate about its brand of service	116 (9.7)	436 (36.3)	402 (33.5)	150 (12.5)	60 (5.0)	36 (3.0)	4.24	1.14
Average Mean							4.32	1.19

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, PA=Partially Agree, PD=Partially Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, *Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Strongly Disagree; 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Partially Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Partially Agree; 4.5 to 5.49= Agree; 5.5 to 6 = Strongly Agree**

Table 2 depicts that participants partially agreed with the multiple celebrity endorsement scale ($\bar{x} = 4.32$). Participants partially agreed that: generally, they appreciated the use of many celebrity endorsements for the brand of telecom service being offered by their favourite service provider ($\bar{x} = 4.39$), adoption of many celebrity endorsers by their favourite service telecom provider motivated them to use its brand telecom service more ($\bar{x} = 4.39$), multiple celebrity endorsements enhanced the liking for the brand of telecom service being offered by their favourite service provider ($\bar{x} = 4.26$), and that involvement of multiple celebrity endorsers by their favourite telecom service provider made them to be more passionate about its brand of service ($\bar{x} = 4.24$). This implies that there was partial multiple celebrity endorsement in the Nigerian telecommunication sector.

Table 3: Brand Awareness

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	PA F (%)	PD F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
The services being offered by my favourite telecom service provider make telecommunication transaction easy	350 (29.2)	472 (39.3)	250 (20.8)	71 (5.9)	29 (2.4)	28 (2.3)	4.80	1.14
The telecom services being rendered by my favourite service provider make me feel secured in reaching out to others	188 (15.7)	547 (45.6)	296 (24.7)	92 (7.7)	56 (4.7)	21 (1.8)	4.55	1.10
Generally, the brand of telecom services from my favourite service provider does enjoy public goodwill	178 (14.8)	422 (35.2)	401 (33.4)	112 (9.3)	51 (4.3)	36 (3.0)	4.38	1.16
The brand of telecom services from my favourite service provider guarantee efficient service delivery	122 (10.2)	495 (41.3)	412 (34.3)	84 (7.0)	55 (4.6)	32 (2.7)	4.37	1.08
The brand of telecom services being offered by my favourite service provider does give me social approval	124 (10.3)	439 (36.6)	423 (35.3)	121 (10.1)	54 (4.5)	39 (3.3)	4.28	1.13
Average Mean							4.48	1.12

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, PA=Partially Agree, PD=Partially Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, ***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Strongly Disagree; 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Partially Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Partially Agree; 4.5 to 5.49= Agree; 5.5 to 6 = Strongly Agree

Table 3 indicates that participants partially agreed with the brand awareness scale ($\bar{x} = 4.48$). Participants agreed that: the services offered by their favourite telecom service provider made telecommunication transaction easy ($\bar{x} = 4.80$) and that the telecom services rendered by their favourite service provider made them feel secured in reaching out to others ($\bar{x} = 4.55$). However, participants partially agreed that: generally, the brand of telecom services from their favourite service provider enjoyed public goodwill ($\bar{x} = 4.38$), the brand of telecom services from their favourite service provider guaranteed efficient service delivery ($\bar{x} = 4.37$) and that the brand of telecom services offered by their favourite service provider gave them social approval ($\bar{x} = 4.28$). This shows that generally, there was partial brand awareness in the Nigerian telecommunication sector.

Test of Hypotheses

The pre-test level of significance for this study was 0.05. The hypotheses presumed that there was a significant influence between the variables under consideration. If the P-value which indicated the significance or the probability value was greater than the pre-test level of significance ($P > 0.05$), the hypothesis stated in alternate form was rejected. However, if the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 ($P \leq 0.05$), the hypothesis was accepted.

H₁1: Celebrity Credibility has a significant relationship with Brand Awareness

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?

Table 4 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between Celebrity Credibility and Brand Awareness

Constructs		Brand Awareness
Celebrity	Pearson Correlation	1
Credibility	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.645**
	N	1200

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 indicates that celebrity credibility had a positive moderate significant relationship with brand awareness ($r = 0.645$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that improved celebrity credibility was associated with improved brand awareness. Therefore better celebrity credibility resulted in improved brand awareness and vice versa in the Nigerian telecommunications sector. Consequently, the hypothesis that celebrity credibility has a significant relationship with brand awareness was accepted.

H₁2: Multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness.

Research Question Two: To what extent does multiple celebrity endorsement moderate the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?

Table 5a ANOVA & Model Summary Testing Significant Effect of Multiple Celebrity Endorsement on the Relationship between Celebrity Credibility and Brand Awareness

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6143.046	1	6143.046	852.128	0.000
	Residual	8636.462	1198	7.209		
	Total	14779.508	1199			
2	Regression	7008.755	2	3504.378	539.811	0.000
	Residual	7770.753	1197	6.492		
	Total	14779.508	1199			

Model 1:

R= 0.645

R Square = 0.416

Adjusted R Square = 0.415

Model 2:

R= 0.689

R Square = 0.474

Adjusted R Square = 0.473

Table 5a shows the ANOVA and model summary computations in relation to the test of significant effect of multiple celebrity endorsement on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness.

Table 5b Stepwise Regression Testing the Significant Effect of Multiple Celebrity Endorsement on the Relationship between Celebrity Credibility and Brand Awareness

Model	Construct	β	R	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	7.436		19.146	0.000
	Celebrity Credibility	0.511	0.645	29.191	0.000
	(Constant)	6.226		16.249	0.000
2	Celebrity Credibility	0.311	0.393	12.980	0.000
	Multiple Celebrity Endorsement	0.397	0.349	11.548	0.000

Dependent Variable: **Brand Awareness**

Table 5a and Table 5b indicate that multiple celebrity endorsement had a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness ($p < 0.05$). The first model shows that celebrity credibility significantly influenced brand awareness ($\beta = 0.511$, $T = 29.191$, $p < 0.05$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.415$). The introduction of multiple celebrity endorsement in the second model showed that the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness improved with 5.8 percent Adj. R square change ($F_{(2, 1197)} = 539.811$, $p < 0.05$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.473$). This suggests that multiple celebrity endorsement had improved the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness. The implication of this is that multiple celebrity endorsement should be considered when Nigerian Telecommunication service providers are adopting celebrity credibility to bring about improved brand awareness; this is because it has

the potential to make the impact of the use of celebrity credibility and telecommunication service providers' brand awareness to be better. Therefore, the hypothesis that multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the influence of celebrity credibility on brand association in telecommunication services among GSM subscribers in Nigeria, using multiple-celebrity endorsement as moderator. Table 4 indicates that celebrity credibility had a positive moderate significant relationship with brand awareness ($r = 0.645$, $p < 0.05$). The findings in table 4 also correspond with table 1 which shows that participants partially agreed with the celebrity credibility scale ($\bar{x} = 4.24$). This suggests that improved celebrity credibility was associated with improved brand awareness. The finding indicates the simultaneous effect of celebrity goodwill, celebrity trustworthiness, social approval and mass appeal on brand awareness is significantly positive and telecom service providers that have strong commitment to engage celebrity with high credibility would enjoy enhanced brand awareness.

The positive and statistically significant relationships at ($r = 0.645$, $p < 0.05$) between celebrity credibility and brand awareness for all telecom service providers operating on GSM technology in Nigeria indicate that the telecom subscribers will react positively when the respective brands of telecommunication services being offered are promoted by celebrity with high credibility. The positive relationship at ($r = 0.645$, $p < 0.05$) between celebrity credibility and brand awareness in Nigerian telecommunications industry shows that GSM operators have the capabilities to enhance subscriber awareness of their brand and products. This implies that telecom service providers can increase their subscribers' brand awareness level via improved deployment of celebrity credibility on various advertising and promotion platforms.

The information in table 5a and 5b showed that multiple celebrity endorsement had a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness ($p < 0.05$). The first model shows that celebrity credibility significantly influenced brand awareness ($\beta = 0.511$, $T = 29.191$, $p < 0.05$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.415$). The introduction of multiple celebrity endorsement in the second model showed that the relationship between celebrity credibility and brand awareness improved with 5.8 percent Adj. R square change ($F_{(2, 1197)} = 539.811$, $p < 0.05$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.473$). The mean value in the descriptive table 4.4 showed that participants partially agreed with the multiple celebrity endorsement ($\bar{x} = 4.32$). The implication of this is that multiple celebrity endorsement should be considered when Nigerian Telecommunication service providers are adopting celebrity credibility to bring about improved brand awareness; this is because it has the potential to make the impact of the use of celebrity credibility and telecommunication service providers' brand awareness to be better.

The results of the current study are in consistent with the findings of: Bowman, (2002); Chan, Ng and Luk (2013); David and Benedikte (2004); Dean and Biswa, (2001); Nyarko et al., (2015) and Ruchi, Nawal and Verma (2013) which confirm that celebrity credibility is a veritable promotion strategy that enhances brand awareness on sustainable basis.

However, the result of this study is contrary to some empirical findings (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Wei & Lu, 2013) which maintain that celebrity endorsement has an indirect impact on customer-based brand equity, while the relationship is intervened by brand credibility as moderating variable. Also, the result of this study corroborates the theoretical position of schema theory by Fiske and Kinder (1981) which affirms that cognitive schema is used for processing new information while retrieving the old one. Every individual consumer attempts to match the messages that emanate from marketing communication deploying celebrity credibility strategy to some existing schema via a number of different matching strategies. If a match can be found, such as prior perception that the celebrity is credible, then, some parts of the inferences from advertising, sales promotion and public relations from such celebrity are likely to be stored in the form of a modified schema. At this stage, celebrity credibility contributes to favourable characteristics of the brand, and becomes a major enhancer of brand awareness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that celebrity credibility assisted on consumers' perception of brand awareness. Therefore, telecoms service providers in Nigeria and other developing nations of the world should engage credible and trustworthy celebrity for endorsement to engender improved market share, customer retention and profitability in the telecom sector which has been characterized with high degree of churning on the part of telecom subscribers.

Based on the outcome of the study, the followings are therefore recommended for telecom subscribers, telecom service providers and telecom service regulators who are critical stakeholders in the Nigerian telecommunications sector:

1. It is recommended to the telecom service subscribers to base their adoption of telecom services being promoted by celebrity on credibility and favourable trustworthy records of the endorser.
2. There is need for telecom subscribers to evaluate the brand credibility and make informed decision on the telecom service provider that best satisfy their desired expectation.
3. In view of the outcome of this study which showed celebrity credibility to have the capacity to engender enhanced brand awareness, telecom service providers are advised to ensure that credibility of the endorser forms the fundamental requirement in recruiting celebrity for product and brand endorsement.
4. Also, telecom service providers must be fully committed to quality service delivery in order to ensure optimal success in their usage of celebrity endorsement strategies for advertising campaign and promotion.

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