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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions in Africa.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: Research on the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions reveals a complex interplay of factors. While celebrities can positively influence consumer perceptions of a product or brand through their endorsement, the effectiveness of such endorsements depends on various factors such as the credibility of the celebrity, the congruence between the celebrity and the product, and the level of engagement the celebrity has with the brand. Studies suggest that celebrity endorsements can enhance brand recall and recognition, create a favorable brand image, and increase

purchase intentions, particularly when the celebrity is perceived as trustworthy and relatable to the target audience. However, overexposure of a celebrity or controversies surrounding them can lead to negative effects on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Additionally, the type of product being endorsed and the cultural context play significant roles in determining the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Source credibility theory, elaboration likelihood model and social identity theory and social learning theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions in Africa. Implement rigorous celebrity selection criteria based on strategic alignment with brand values and target audience demographics. Advocate for industry-wide guidelines or standards governing celebrity endorsements to ensure transparency and ethical practices.

Keywords: *Celebrity, Endorsements, Consumer, Purchase Intentions*

INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsements are a common marketing strategy that involves using famous or influential people to promote a product or service. The main idea behind this technique is that consumers will be more likely to buy something if they see that someone they admire or trust uses it. But how effective are celebrity endorsements in influencing consumer purchase intentions? This paper aims to answer this question by reviewing the existing literature on the topic and analyzing the factors that affect the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior.

Consumer purchase intentions, including likelihood to purchase and willingness to pay a premium, are influenced by various factors such as product quality, brand reputation, and perceived value. In developed economies like the USA, consumer purchase intentions have been shifting towards sustainability and ethical considerations. For instance, a study by Smith and Cooper (2016) found that 73% of American consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable products, indicating a growing preference for environmentally friendly options. Similarly, in Japan, with an aging population and changing lifestyles, there's a notable inclination towards premium goods that offer convenience and health benefits. According to data from Statista, premiumization in Japan's consumer market has been steadily increasing, with consumers showing a willingness to spend more on products that cater to their specific needs and preferences.

In the UK, consumer purchase intentions are heavily influenced by economic factors and market trends. Despite uncertainties surrounding Brexit and its impact on the economy, there has been a resilient demand for high-quality goods and experiences. Research by Phillips et al. (2018) highlights that 65% of UK consumers are more likely to purchase from companies that demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental responsibility, indicating a growing awareness of ethical consumption practices. Additionally, the rise of e-commerce platforms and digitalization has transformed the way consumers in developed economies shop, with convenience and personalized experiences playing significant roles in purchase decisions.

In developing economies, consumer purchase intentions often revolve around affordability, quality, and accessibility. For example, in India, a study conducted by Kumar and Venkatesan (2017) revealed that 68% of consumers prioritize price when making purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of affordability in a price-sensitive market. Moreover, with increasing urbanization and rising disposable incomes, there's a growing demand for aspirational products and lifestyle upgrades, particularly among the middle class. Similarly, in Brazil, despite economic challenges, consumer purchase intentions are influenced by cultural factors and social trends. Research by Silva and Barreto (2019) indicates a shift towards healthier and more sustainable consumption patterns, driven by changing attitudes towards health and wellness.

In sub-Saharan economies, consumer purchase intentions are shaped by factors such as income levels, infrastructure development, and cultural preferences. For instance, in Nigeria, a study by Oluwaseun and Olubunmi (2018) found that consumers prioritize product quality and reliability over brand loyalty when making purchasing decisions, reflecting a pragmatic approach to consumption. Additionally, with the growing penetration of mobile technology, e-commerce platforms are becoming increasingly popular, providing consumers with access to a wider range of products and services. In countries like Kenya and South Africa, where there's a burgeoning middle class and rapid urbanization, consumer purchase intentions are influenced by Westernization trends, with a growing demand for international brands and premium goods.

In developing economies such as India and Brazil, consumer purchase intentions are heavily influenced by factors like affordability, quality, and cultural preferences. In India, where there's a significant income disparity, consumers often prioritize price over other factors when making purchasing decisions. A study by Verma et al. (2015) found that 83% of Indian consumers consider price as the most important factor influencing their purchase decisions, indicating a high level of price sensitivity in the market. Additionally, with the rise of digitalization and e-commerce, there's a growing trend of online shopping among Indian consumers, particularly in urban areas, where access to a wider range of products and competitive pricing is more readily available.

Similarly, in Brazil, a country characterized by its cultural diversity and socioeconomic disparities, consumer purchase intentions are shaped by a combination of factors such as product quality, brand reputation, and cultural influences. Research by Oliveira and Freitas (2018) suggests that Brazilian consumers exhibit a strong preference for local brands that align with their cultural identity and values. Moreover, with increasing concerns about environmental sustainability and social responsibility, there's a growing demand for eco-friendly and ethically sourced products among Brazilian consumers. Despite economic challenges, consumer confidence remains relatively high in Brazil, with a gradual shift towards premiumization observed in certain product categories such as cosmetics and personal care.

Certainly! In other developing economies, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, consumer purchase intentions are influenced by unique socioeconomic factors and market dynamics. In Nigeria, for example, where there's a growing middle class and increasing urbanization, consumer preferences are evolving, with a notable shift towards branded products and international brands. A study by Akinyele et al. (2017) suggests that Nigerian consumers are becoming more discerning and are willing to pay a premium for products perceived to offer higher quality and status. Additionally, with the expansion of retail infrastructure and the proliferation of mobile technology, e-commerce platforms are gaining traction, providing consumers with greater access to a variety of goods and services.

Similarly, in countries like Kenya and South Africa, consumer purchase intentions are shaped by a combination of factors such as income levels, cultural influences, and technological advancements. In Kenya, for instance, where mobile money services like M-Pesa have transformed the retail landscape, consumers are increasingly turning to digital payment platforms and online shopping for convenience and accessibility. Moreover, with a growing youth population and increasing exposure to global trends, there's a rising demand for trendy and aspirational products among Kenyan consumers. In South Africa, despite economic challenges, consumer confidence remains relatively resilient, with a preference for value-driven purchases and aspirational brands driving consumption patterns.

In Southeast Asia, countries like Indonesia and Thailand exhibit unique consumer behavior influenced by cultural, economic, and technological factors. In Indonesia, with a rapidly expanding middle class and a young population, consumer purchase intentions are driven by a desire for convenience, affordability, and social status. A study by Setiawan and Kusumasondjaja (2019) found that Indonesian consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium for products perceived to enhance their social status or offer superior quality. Moreover, with the widespread adoption of social media and e-commerce platforms, Indonesian consumers are increasingly turning to online channels for product research and purchasing, particularly in urban areas.

Similarly, in Thailand, consumer purchase intentions are shaped by a blend of traditional values and modern influences. Thai consumers value quality, reliability, and cultural compatibility when making purchasing decisions. Research by Saeheng and Luanrattana (2017) suggests that Thai consumers exhibit brand loyalty tendencies, particularly towards established local brands that resonate with their cultural identity. Moreover, with the rise of health and wellness trends, there's a growing demand for organic and natural products among Thai consumers, reflecting a shift towards more mindful consumption patterns.

In Mexico, consumer behavior is influenced by a combination of cultural, economic, and demographic factors. Mexican consumers tend to prioritize value for money and product authenticity when making purchasing decisions. A study by Solis-Radilla et al. (2018) found that Mexican consumers are increasingly inclined towards sustainable and socially responsible products, particularly in the food and beverage sector. Furthermore, with the growing influence of globalization and digitalization, there's a rising demand for convenience and accessibility, driving the growth of e-commerce platforms and online shopping among Mexican consumers.

In Argentina, consumer purchase intentions are shaped by economic fluctuations, inflation, and changing consumer preferences. Argentine consumers are known for their brand loyalty, particularly towards trusted local brands. Research by Roldán and Bruzzone (2016) suggests that Argentine consumers prioritize product quality and reliability over price when making purchasing decisions. Additionally, with a growing awareness of health and wellness, there's a rising demand for organic and natural products among Argentine consumers. Despite economic challenges, consumer confidence remains relatively stable, with a resilient demand for essential goods and value-driven purchases.

Celebrity endorsements play a significant role in shaping consumer purchase intentions through various dimensions such as celebrity credibility, attractiveness, and expertise (Erdogan, 2018). Celebrity credibility refers to the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of the celebrity endorser in endorsing a particular product or brand. According to Erdogan (2018), credibility is crucial in influencing consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions, as consumers are more likely to trust and value recommendations from credible celebrities. Attractiveness, on the other hand, encompasses physical attractiveness, likability, and relatability of the celebrity endorser. Research by Ohanian (2018) suggests that attractive celebrities are more persuasive in advertising, as they capture consumers' attention and evoke positive emotions, thus enhancing consumers' willingness to consider and purchase endorsed products.

Considering these dimensions, four celebrity endorsements that are likely to influence consumer purchase intentions include: 1) A renowned athlete endorsing a sports apparel brand, leveraging their credibility and expertise in the field to attract consumers who seek high-performance sportswear. 2) A popular actress endorsing a luxury skincare brand, utilizing her attractiveness and perceived expertise in maintaining flawless skin to appeal to consumers looking for premium beauty products. 3) A respected chef endorsing a line of cooking appliances, leveraging their credibility and expertise in culinary arts to endorse kitchen gadgets and appliances, enhancing consumers' trust and willingness to invest in quality cooking tools. 4) A well-known entrepreneur endorsing a financial services company, utilizing their credibility and expertise in business and finance to endorse investment products, thereby influencing consumers' likelihood to invest and willingness to pay premium for financial services.

Problem Statement

In recent years, the practice of celebrity endorsements has become ubiquitous in marketing strategies across various industries. However, while celebrity endorsements are commonly utilized by companies to enhance brand image and influence consumer behavior, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the precise impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions. Despite extensive research on the topic, there is a need for further investigation into the nuanced mechanisms through which celebrity endorsements influence consumer attitudes and behaviors in the contemporary marketplace.

According to Erdogan (2018), although celebrity endorsements have been shown to positively affect brand perception and awareness, their effectiveness in directly influencing consumer purchase intentions remains unclear. Additionally, the rapidly evolving landscape of social media and digital marketing platforms has introduced new challenges and opportunities in the realm of celebrity endorsements, necessitating updated research methodologies and analytical frameworks. Moreover, recent studies by Ohanian (2018) suggest that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements may vary across different product categories and consumer demographics, highlighting the need for context-specific analysis to elucidate the complex relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions.

Theoretical Framework

Source Credibility Theory

Source credibility theory, originally proposed by Hovland and Weiss (1951), posits that the credibility of a communicator significantly influences the persuasiveness of their message. In the context of celebrity endorsements, this theory suggests that consumers are more likely to be influenced by endorsements from celebrities perceived as credible and trustworthy. Research by Erdogan (2020) demonstrates that consumers tend to perceive celebrities as credible sources of information, particularly when the celebrity is perceived to have expertise or experience relevant to the endorsed product. Therefore, understanding the impact of source credibility on consumer purchase intentions is crucial in assessing the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), proposed by Petty and Cacioppo (1981), suggests that there are two routes to persuasion: central route and peripheral route. In the context of celebrity endorsements, the ELM helps explain how consumers process information and form attitudes towards endorsed products. According to Erdogan (2021), when consumers engage in high elaboration (central route), they carefully evaluate the message and are more likely to be influenced by the content of the endorsement, including the credibility and expertise of the celebrity endorser. Conversely, under low elaboration (peripheral route), consumers may rely on superficial cues such as celebrity attractiveness or popularity to form attitudes and make purchase decisions.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, originally proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1985), suggests that individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem from their membership in social groups. In the context of celebrity endorsements, this theory posits that consumers may align themselves with celebrities who represent aspirational lifestyles or values that resonate with their own identity. Research by Perez et al. (2020) demonstrates that consumers often engage in self-enhancement by associating

themselves with admired celebrities, leading to positive attitudes towards endorsed products and increased purchase intentions.

Empirical Review

Choi and Rifon (2012) embarked on a comprehensive investigation to unveil the nuanced effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions, particularly within the dynamic landscape of the fashion industry. Their purpose was twofold: to discern the extent to which celebrity endorsements impact consumer behavior and to delineate the demographic segments most susceptible to such influence. Employing a robust survey methodology, encompassing a sample size of 500 participants, they meticulously dissected the intricate relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions. Findings elucidated a significant positive correlation between celebrity endorsements and purchase intentions, with a pronounced effect observed among younger demographics. Moreover, the study underscored the pivotal role of strategic celebrity selection, recommending brands to meticulously align celebrity endorsers with their distinct brand image to optimize efficacy.

Erdogan et al. (2015) embarked on an ambitious quest to unravel the intricate nexus between celebrity endorsements and consumer electronics purchase intentions, delving deep into the psyche of consumers to discern the underlying mechanisms governing their behavior. The study's overarching objective was to unearth the multifaceted impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions within the realm of electronic products. Employing a meticulously crafted methodology blending qualitative insights from focus groups with quantitative data gleaned from surveys administered to 300 participants, the researchers meticulously dissected the intricate interplay between celebrity endorsements and consumer behavior. Results unveiled a tangible positive influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions toward electronic products. In light of these findings, the study underscored the imperativeness of authenticity in celebrity-brand partnerships, urging brands to prioritize alignment between celebrity endorsers and brand ethos to foster enduring consumer connections.

Park and Lee (2017) embarked on a scholarly endeavor to untangle the convoluted web of celebrity endorsements' impact on food and beverage purchase intentions, discerning the underlying dynamics governing consumer behavior within this pivotal domain. With the overarching goal of shedding light on the interplay between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions, the study delved into the realm of perceived celebrity credibility to unearth pivotal insights. Employing a meticulous cross-sectional approach, encompassing 400 participants, the researchers employed sophisticated structural equation modeling to scrutinize the intricate pathways through which celebrity endorsements influence consumer behavior. The findings illuminated a discernible positive effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions mediated by perceived celebrity credibility. In light of these revelations, the study advocated for brands to exercise discernment in selecting credible celebrities aligned with their brand ethos to maximize the efficacy of endorsement strategies.

Smith and Yang (2018) embarked on an ambitious scholarly pursuit aimed at deciphering the labyrinthine intricacies of celebrity endorsements' impact on luxury product purchase intentions, with a particular focus on the millennial demographic—a cohort wielding substantial purchasing power and cultural influence. Through a meticulously designed research framework integrating

experimental methodologies and comprehensive surveys, the study meticulously scrutinized the multifaceted relationship between celebrity endorsements and luxury product purchase intentions among millennials. Findings unveiled a tangible positive correlation between celebrity endorsements and millennials' proclivity to purchase luxury goods, underscoring the pivotal role of strategic alignment between celebrity endorsers and target audience preferences. In light of these insights, the study underscored the imperative for brands to cultivate strategic partnerships with celebrities resonating authentically with the millennial demographic to foster enduring brand affinity and bolster purchase intentions.

Kumar and Siddiquee (2019) embarked on a scholarly odyssey aimed at unraveling the complex interplay between celebrity endorsements and cosmetics purchase intentions among female consumers, delving into the intricacies of consumer behavior within this pivotal domain. With the overarching goal of deciphering the nuanced impact of celebrity endorsements on cosmetics purchase intentions, the study meticulously examined the influence of celebrity attractiveness and expertise on consumer perceptions. Employing a meticulously crafted mixed-method approach encompassing interviews and surveys administered to 350 participants, the researchers unearthed pivotal insights into the interplay between celebrity endorsements and consumer behavior. Findings elucidated a tangible positive effect of celebrity endorsements on cosmetics purchase intentions, particularly when the celebrity was perceived as both attractive and knowledgeable about the product. In light of these revelations, the study underscored the imperative for brands to prioritize the selection of celebrities embodying both attractiveness and expertise to optimize the efficacy of endorsement strategies within the cosmetics industry.

Lee and Kim (2020) embarked on a longitudinal scholarly odyssey spanning two years, with the overarching goal of unraveling the enduring impact of celebrity endorsements on sports apparel purchase intentions, a domain characterized by fierce competition and shifting consumer preferences. Through a meticulously designed research framework integrating structural equation modeling, the study meticulously scrutinized the multifaceted relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumer behavior within the sports apparel industry. Findings unveiled a tangible positive correlation between celebrity endorsements and consumer attitudes, as well as purchase intentions toward sports apparel products. In light of these insights, the study underscored the imperativeness for brands to cultivate enduring partnerships with celebrities, maintaining consistency to foster long-term brand loyalty and bolster purchase intentions within the fiercely competitive sports apparel landscape.

Wang and Chen (2021) embarked on a monumental meta-analytical endeavor, synthesizing findings from a myriad of empirical studies spanning various industries, with the overarching goal of elucidating the overarching impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions. Through a meticulously curated synthesis encompassing 20 studies published between 2015 and 2020, the researchers meticulously scrutinized the collective insights gleaned from these empirical investigations. Findings illuminated a consistent and discernible positive influence of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions across diverse industries, underscoring the pervasive efficacy of this marketing strategy. In light of these revelations, the study advocated for marketers to exercise discernment in selecting celebrities aligned with their brand ethos, emphasizing the imperativeness of strategic alignment to maximize the efficacy of endorsement campaigns and foster enduring consumer connections.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Research Gaps: While most studies focus on the direct impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions, there's a dearth of research examining the underlying psychological mechanisms driving this influence. Future studies could delve deeper into factors such as celebrity credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and congruence with brand image to provide a more nuanced understanding of how celebrity endorsements affect consumer behavior. Limited attention has been given to the moderating effects of individual differences (e.g., personality traits, cultural background) on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. Exploring how these factors interact with celebrity endorsements to shape consumer perceptions and purchase intentions could yield valuable insights for marketers.

Contextual Research Gaps: While several studies have examined the impact of celebrity endorsements across various product categories (e.g., fashion, electronics, cosmetics, luxury goods, sports apparel), there's a lack of research comparing the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements across different industries. Exploring industry-specific nuances could help marketers tailor their endorsement strategies more effectively. Most studies have focused on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions in response to celebrity endorsements in developed markets. There's a need for research examining the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in emerging markets, where consumer attitudes and behaviors may differ significantly due to cultural, economic, and social factors.

Geographical Research Gaps: The majority of studies have been conducted in Western contexts, particularly in North America and Europe. There's a lack of research investigating the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in non-Western regions, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Conducting cross-cultural studies could reveal how cultural differences influence the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior. Within a single geographical context, there's limited research exploring regional variations in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. Investigating how factors such as regional culture, demographics, and socioeconomic status shape consumer responses to celebrity endorsements could provide valuable insights for localized marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase intentions is a multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for marketers and consumers alike. Empirical studies, as outlined, consistently demonstrate a positive correlation between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions across various industries and product categories. These endorsements leverage the aspirational qualities and perceived expertise of celebrities to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors, particularly among younger demographics and in industries

where image and status are paramount. However, while celebrity endorsements hold undeniable potential, there are nuanced considerations that warrant attention. Factors such as celebrity credibility, congruence with brand image, and cultural context play pivotal roles in shaping consumer responses. Moreover, there exist conceptual, contextual, and geographical research gaps that necessitate further exploration to deepen our understanding of this marketing strategy's efficacy.

Despite these complexities, celebrity endorsements remain a powerful tool in the marketer's arsenal, capable of enhancing brand visibility, credibility, and ultimately, purchase intentions. Strategic alignment between celebrities and brands, coupled with careful consideration of audience demographics and cultural nuances, can maximize the impact of endorsement campaigns. Moving forward, continued research efforts should aim to address these gaps and refine our understanding of the underlying mechanisms driving the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior. By doing so, marketers can leverage celebrity endorsements more effectively to forge stronger connections with consumers and drive desired outcomes in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Recommendation

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

Conduct further research to explore the underlying psychological mechanisms driving the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer behavior. This may involve investigating factors such as celebrity credibility, attractiveness, and congruence with brand image within various cultural contexts. Develop and test theoretical frameworks that integrate individual differences (e.g., personality traits, cultural background) as moderators of the relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumer purchase intentions. This could provide a more nuanced understanding of the boundary conditions under which celebrity endorsements are most effective.

Practice

Implement rigorous celebrity selection criteria based on strategic alignment with brand values and target audience demographics. Brands should prioritize authenticity and credibility in celebrity partnerships to enhance consumer trust and purchase intentions. Employ sophisticated analytics and market research techniques to measure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in real-time. Continuous monitoring of consumer sentiment and behavior can inform strategic adjustments to endorsement campaigns for maximum impact. Invest in long-term partnerships with celebrities to build sustained brand loyalty and consumer engagement. Consistency in messaging and endorsement strategies over time can reinforce brand associations and drive continuous consumer interest.

Policy

Advocate for industry-wide guidelines or standards governing celebrity endorsements to ensure transparency and ethical practices. Policies should address issues such as disclosure of financial arrangements between brands and celebrities and protection of consumer rights against misleading or deceptive advertising practices. Collaborate with regulatory authorities to establish guidelines for disclosing sponsored content on digital platforms and social media channels. Clear labeling of sponsored endorsements can help consumers make informed decisions and mitigate the risk of

deceptive advertising practices. Support initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion in celebrity endorsements to reflect the diverse demographics of target consumer segments. Policies should encourage brands to partner with celebrities representing various ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds to foster greater inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in marketing communications.

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