


CELEBRITY EXPERTISE AND CONGRUENCE ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS: EVIDENCE BY NIGERIAN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 01 September 2023</p> <p>Accepted 01 December 2023</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Celebrity Expertise; Celebrity Congruence; Consumer Purchase Intention; Celebrity Endorsement.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Purpose: Celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy firms have embraced to survive and fortify their market competitiveness. This study examined how celebrity expertise and congruence affect consumer purchase intentions in Nigerian telecommunications companies.</p> <p>Theoretical framework: The theory of planned behaviour describes all behaviour of individuals who possess the power to exercise self-restraint. The predictors of purchase intentions as submitted by this theory comprised attitudes; behavioural intention; subjective norms; and perceived behavioural control.</p> <p>Method: It adopted a survey research design. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed in the research while a questionnaire was used to gather participant data. The instrument was validated while the reliability tests ranged between 0.654 and 0.795. A Partial Least Square (PLS) modelling was adopted to analyse data collected from the respondents.</p> <p>Findings: The findings showed that celebrity expertise and celebrity congruence all have a significant positive effect on consumers' intention to purchase in the Nigerian mobile telecommunication operators in Lagos State, Nigeria.</p> <p>Research Implication: The managerial implication is that it will enhance inter-enterprise collaborations among telecommunications companies by working together with their ideas and skills to accomplish a desired task that is innovative in nature for the benefit of the companies.</p> <p>Originality/Value: This study is the first of its kind to deal with celebrity expertise and celebrity congruence on consumers' intention to purchase in the Nigerian mobile telecommunication operators in Lagos State, Nigeria.</p> <p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i12.3780</p>

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EXPERIÊNCIA E CONGRUÊNCIA DE CELEBRIDADES EM INTENÇÕES DE COMPRA DE CONSUMIDORES: PROVAS POR EMPRESAS DE TELECOMUNICAÇÕES MÓVEIS NIGERIANAS

RESUMO

Objetivo: endosso de celebridades é uma estratégia de marketing que as empresas adotaram para sobreviver e fortalecer sua competitividade de mercado. Esse estudo examinou como a experiência e a congruência de celebridades afetam as intenções de compra dos consumidores em empresas de telecomunicações nigerianas.

Estrutura teórica: A teoria do comportamento planejado descreve todo o comportamento de indivíduos que possuem o poder de exercer autocontenção. Os preditores de intenções de compra, como apresentados por esta teoria, compreendiam atitudes; intenção comportamental; normas subjetivas; e controle comportamental percebido.

Método: Adotou um projeto de pesquisa de pesquisa. Uma técnica de amostragem aleatória estratificada proporcional foi empregada na pesquisa, enquanto um questionário foi usado para coletar dados dos participantes. O instrumento foi validado enquanto os testes de confiabilidade variaram entre 0,654 e 0,795. Foi adotada uma modelagem Parcial Least Square (PLS) para analisar os dados coletados dos respondentes.

Constatações: as constatações mostraram que a experiência de celebridades e a congruência de celebridades têm um efeito positivo significativo na intenção dos consumidores de comprar nas operadoras nigerianas de telecomunicações móveis em Lagos, na Nigéria.

Implicação da Pesquisa: A implicação gerencial é que ela irá melhorar as colaborações entre empresas de telecomunicações trabalhando em conjunto com suas ideias e habilidades para realizar uma tarefa desejada que é de natureza inovadora para o benefício das empresas

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo é o primeiro do gênero a lidar com a experiência de celebridades e a congruência de celebridades sobre a intenção dos consumidores de comprar nas operadoras nigerianas de telecomunicações móveis no estado de Lagos, Nigéria,

Palavras-chave: Experiência em Celebridades, Congruência de Celebridades, Intenção de Compras ao Consumidor, Endosso de Celebridades.

EXPERIENCIA DE CELEBRIDADES Y CONGRUENCIA EN INTENCIONES DE COMPRA DE LOS CONSUMIDORES: EVIDENCIA DE EMPRESAS DE TELECOMUNICACIONES MÓVILES NIGERIANAS

RESUMEN

Propósito: El respaldo de celebridades es una estrategia de marketing que las empresas han adoptado para sobrevivir y fortalecer su competitividad en el mercado. Este estudio examinó cómo la experiencia y la congruencia de las celebridades afectan las intenciones de compra de los consumidores en las empresas de telecomunicaciones nigerianas.

Marco teórico: La teoría de la conducta planificada describe toda conducta de individuos que poseen el poder de ejercer autocontrol. Los predictores de intenciones de compra presentados por esta teoría comprenden actitudes, intención conductual, normas subjetivas y control conductual percibido.

Método: Adoptó un diseño de investigación de encuestas. En la investigación se empleó una técnica de muestreo aleatorio estratificado proporcional, mientras que para la recolección de datos de los participantes se utilizó un cuestionario. El instrumento fue validado, mientras que las pruebas de confiabilidad oscilaron entre 0,654 y 0,795. Se adoptó un modelo de mínimos cuadrados parciales (PLS) para analizar los datos recogidos de los encuestados.

Hallazgos: Los hallazgos mostraron que la experiencia de las celebridades y la congruencia de las celebridades tienen un efecto positivo significativo en la intención de compra de los consumidores en los operadores de telecomunicaciones móviles nigerianos en el estado de Lagos, Nigeria.

Implicación de la investigación: La implicación gerencial es que mejorará la colaboración entre empresas de telecomunicaciones al trabajar junto con sus ideas y habilidades para realizar una tarea deseada que es innovadora por naturaleza en beneficio de las empresas.

Originalidad/Valor: Este estudio es el primero de su tipo en tratar la experiencia de las celebridades y la congruencia de las celebridades en la intención de los consumidores de comprar en los operadores de telecomunicaciones móviles nigerianos en el estado de Lagos, Nigeria.

Palabras clave: Experiencia en Celebridades, Congruencia de Celebridades, Intención de Compra del Consumidor, Respaldo de Celebridades.

INTRODUCTION

Celebrities' endorsements are widely agreed effective marketing campaigns for brand promotion and their popularity (Qian & Park, 2021) and consumer's intention to purchase (Mishra et al. 2017). Purchase Intention is the extent a buyer or customer desires to buy a product or service for a certain period (Iriani, 2021), and a brand authenticated by a celebrity will improve brand loyalty. For example, Celebrity endorsement is evident from a deal German Sports company Puma had with Usain Bolt (Jamaica Athlete) worth \$9 million a year for their product endorsement to persuade consumers to purchase its sports products (Badenhausen, 2012). As the marketing environment is dynamic and the competitive pressure is high, marketers have been conscientious to develop efficient and effective marketing strategies to promote and sell their products or services to their current and potential customers as they instigate their purchase intention in the specific products or services. Breen et al. (2016) opined that a brand advocate or promoter is regarded as a well-known person who is reputable in the society or environment and has a distinguishing trait (Osorio et al. 2022). When a brand ambassador in an advertising campaign declares his or her support for the benefits and quality of the brand, it will trigger the minds of consumers to purchase organisational products or services that will meet their expectations.

Celebrity endorsement faces many challenges in the telecommunications industry in Nigeria regarding product promotions and its sole objective of influencing consumers' purchase intentions in Lagos State. The exorbitant cost of obtaining an endorser with a captivating personality that will draw the attention of people, the dearth of celebrity trust occasioned by the credibility gap between the celebrity and the endorsed brand diminishes brand equity and the absence of endorser expertise with its effects on brand loyalty. Against this background, the study assesses the effect of celebrity expertise and congruence on purchaser intention to buy as evidenced by Nigerian mobile telecommunications companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing professionals continuously discover ways to attract customers by using various marketing strategies to promote their products or services. One of those strategies for promoting their products is through advertising using a celebrity branding strategy. The main focus of consumer purchase intention is the opinion an individual has towards the originator of the advertisement. Schoen (2004) supported this view by classifying different classes of consumers whose purchase intentions were not a result of the price of the products but their

loyalty by providing vital suggestions to make an investment in their loyal brands for organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

Theoretical Framework

This theory opined that perceived behavioural control, attitude, and subject norms, all together shape an individual's behavioural intention to buy (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). Several pieces of literature on consumer action have extensively focused on the attitudinal effect on buyer purchase decisions of a specific product or service (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). The theory of planned behaviour forecasts an individual decision to undertake a certain action during a particular period and location (Ajzen, 1991). Also, its purpose was to describe all behaviour of individuals who possess the power to exercise self-restraint. The predictors of purchase intentions as submitted by this theory comprised attitudes (favourable or unfavourable assessment); behavioural intention (motivational factors); subjective norms (individual approval or disapproval); and perceived behavioural control (perception of unchallenging or challenging for accomplishing a task of excitement). In essence, the intention is best anticipated with the above constraints with regard to celebrity expertise and congruence on buyers'/consumers' purchase decisions on acquiring products and services. It indicates that the celebrity's involvement in product campaigns may impact consumer attitudes which may result in purchase intention. However, this theory was criticized by Catherina (2023) because consumer considers personal factors, cultural factors, social factors and so on before making purchase decisions. Also, Aarts, Knippenberg & Verplanken (1998) based their criticism on the fact it deals with careful decision-making without considering psychological processes on behaviour.

Consumer Purchase Intention

Purchase decision is a thought process that leads to the probability or likelihood of making purchases to patronize or not to purchase either a product or service (Porto, 2022) The first step towards creating a marketing communication plan is identifying, analyzing, and comprehending the target market and their intentions to purchase (Smith & Taylor, 2004). Before initiating any marketing campaign, three crucial questions must be addressed: the buyer or target market? their choice of a specific product? and buyer's preferred place, location or means of distribution? (Smith, 2004). The decision to buy something is a form of resolution that involves exploring consumer psychology and their preference for a certain brand. This

spectrum of purchase intentions is impacted by factors such as pre-planned purchases and anticipatory purchases (Porter, 1974).

Purchase intentions pertain to the planned future acquisition of an item, preceding the cognitive processes influenced by many factors such as the buyer's perceptions of the product or service. As part of the methodology of purchase intention, the focus is primarily on the attitude towards the individual initiating the purchase. Porter (1974) further elucidated that a customer's inclination to buy is not solely driven by their desire for a specific product, but rather by their disposition linked to the different alternative products within a selected brand. Schoen (2004) highlighted a group of individuals who are loyal purchasers having intentions to purchase but are not influenced by the price of goods and services; they demonstrate commitment by advocating for the organization, providing positive recommendations, and investing in the brand they trust and believe.

Brands are regarded as valuable assets for any organization, and creating awareness about the firm is facilitated by the use of brand promoters to elevate the image of the brand and its value, thereby enhancing brand loyalty (Padamsee, 2009). Brands could add value to the products inform of goods and services. Therefore, marketers must know that an organization needs a strategy to be able to achieve brand equity (Sdarman & Laila, 2023) In addition to contributing to brand development, brand image helps to secure market shares and enable premium pricing, while at the same time serving as a safeguard against price competition. The use of popular celebrities as spokespersons for various products is increasingly vital, as it reduces the issue of excessive communication, offers instant recognition and imparts a positive image to the brand.

Dodds, Grewal, and Monroe (1991) characterized purchase intentions as consumers' willingness to purchase goods and services. Also, Shamdasani (2001) described intentions to buy as the willingness of consumers to acquire a trade item or their inclination to offer product recommendations. Kanuk and Schiffman (2007) classified intentions to buy as the commitment process consumers exhibit in their journey involving advice-seeking, purchasing, evaluating, using, and disposing of products for the fulfilment of their needs and wants. Blackwell, Engel, and Miniard (2006) viewed intentions to purchase as purchasers engaging in acquiring and using goods and services, encompassing the various decision-making processes before purchase. Kotler (2003) believed that consumers' promotional behaviour reflects emotional judgments, psychological sentiments, and alignments that extend to their preferences for goods and services being advertised.

The amount of time and effort that a purchaser is desirous to give in a specific purchase is influenced by factors such as the expenditure level, purchasing intensity, and associated risks (Smith, 2004). Porter (1974) emphasized that the purchasing behaviour of consumers is influenced by the existing competitive landscape. For instance, Wang (2004) observed that Chinese nationals with the means to afford expensive foreign clothing brands were open to embracing contemporary clothing styles from abroad, requesting more internationally made products due to evolving behaviours and increased purchasing power compared to local alternatives.

The consumer buying power hinges on prudent patronage decisions that necessitate a careful evaluation of current and future expenditures (Redmond, 2000). To attain this, purchasers should align their past utilization patterns with a certain brand, such as brand affinity or consistent product affinity at the earliest stages of buyer loyalty (Terrell, 2002). Kendall and Sproles (1986) noted that purchase loyalty constitutes a cognitive procedure outlining the buyer's approach to decision-making. Promotional incentives like coupons or buy-one-get-one rewards are given by an organization to its current and potential customers for their loyalty to the organizational products. However, many buyers may lack a predefined category need and might not be present when exposed to advertisements, consequently eliminating the likelihood that constitutes intentions to purchase (Kotler, 2006). Assael (1992) also acknowledged that buyers often experience cognitive dissonance during complex product deliberations due to the uncertainty inherent in purchasing behaviour. Unforeseen risks can arise during product consideration; for example, high-risk decisions could lead to financial losses, highly emotional products might lead to psychological and social setbacks, and insufficient brand knowledge could exacerbate uncertainty.

Celebrity Expertise and Consumer Purchase Intentions

Expertise is regarded as the specialized skills, knowledge and attitude the celebrity possesses to support his or her product claims (Kotler & Keller, 2006). In many cases, when a professional endorses a product or service relating to their areas of specialization, such endorsement will be regarded as authentic in the minds of the consumers. Not all professional endorsers are celebrities, but the professional celebrity promoter comes from his or her ability to give the necessary information to the consumers because of his or her skills, knowledge, or attitude (Sajeed, 2019). The influence of expertise surpasses the impact of trustworthiness. The expert endorser must have experience, proficiency, and skills aimed at shaping the depth of

conviction aimed at encouraging consumers to adopt the endorsed product. When a consumer is exposed to a message delivered by a highly expert celebrity, they are more susceptible to being persuaded by the advertisement's content. The celebrity's expertise stands as a significant determinant affecting the recipient's perception of the message (Sufian et al., 2021).

Celebrity endorsements in advertising not only effectively capture consumers' attention, compelling them to buy a product being promoted and demonstrate enduring recollections in consumers' minds. This memorability factor significantly contributes to repeat purchases by influencing consumers' ongoing product choices (Omorodion & Osifo, 2019). The allure of a celebrity's attractiveness is universally recognized, transcending industry boundaries. Consequently, they contribute to brand recognition by their widespread adoration, distinctive lifestyle, magnetic charm, and renowned status (Onu et al., 2019). Also, celebrities who are regarded as experts in specific domains tend to elicit greater brand recognition compared to those perceived as lacking expertise. According to Nadube and Gowon (2023), the degree of a celebrity's proficiency is a key determinant of the advertising campaign's effectiveness. Notably, a celebrity's expertise provides consumers with tangible insights into the product, thereby fostering a good mindset in the brand. An endorser perceived to possess expertise consistently holds greater significance and credibility in the eyes of the audience than an endorser with limited expertise, thereby enhancing the perceived believability of the endorsed information (Nadube & Gowon, 2023).

In the current landscape of intense business competition, telecommunication firms can attain success by comprehending consumer purchasing behaviour through the lens of celebrity endorsement. Consumers can discern product attributes by acquiring essential information often disseminated through celebrity endorsements. Therefore, it becomes imperative to thoroughly examine and come up with perceptions of the part played by celebrity authentication in the modification of the behaviour of customers in their intention to patronage within the telecommunication sector (Omorodion & Osifo, 2019).

In Nigerian society, significant financial resources are annually allocated by companies and firms for advertising campaigns aimed at augmenting the market performance of their goods and services. The engagement of brand endorsers by mobile telecom providers for promotional endeavours has directly correlated with the expansion of the mobile telecommunications sector's portion of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Onu et al., 2019). The endorsement of various product brands through well-known celebrities has evolved into a requisite strategy that effectively addresses the challenges of information

saturation. This approach furnishes instantaneous recognition and transmits the promoter's positive brand affinity. Notably, when a promoter boasts substantial expertise within a marketing initiative, their credibility and acceptability are enhanced. The endorser establishes trust by their accomplishments within their respective field of expertise, and this trustworthiness crucially influences how the target audience perceives the motivations of the promoter/endorser (Onu et al., 2019).

Marketers firmly believe that celebrity endorsement yields numerous benefits, encompassing the establishment of credibility, cultivation of trust, and capture of consumers' attention, ultimately translating into heightened brand sales. The celebrity endorsement strategy serves as an effective means to boost sales and seize market share. This approach lends products allurements with the anticipation that a familiar presence will amplify their appeal and recognition (Emonena & Christopher, 2023). Much like other sectors, the utilization of celebrities for product promotion has become customary within the Nigerian telecommunications industry. It is noteworthy that the four prominent telecom service providers in Nigeria, namely Globacom, MTN, Airtel, and 9Mobile, have actively embraced celebrity endorsements. For instance, MTN has endorsed renowned musicians such as Davido, Don Jazzy, Tiwa Savage, and Iyanya (Emonena & Christopher, 2023).

Celebrities are frequently selected as endorsers due to their in-depth experience and knowledge regarding the product being endorsed. This signifies that the celebrity's endorsement isn't solely motivated by financial gain, but rather is rooted in their expertise within the relevant domain of the endorsed brand. When a celebrity is perceived as knowledgeable, their influence is more likely to alter consumers' perceptions and preferences (Omorodion & Osifo, 2019). When a celebrity possesses expertise and in-depth knowledge within their respective field, it amplifies the recall and retention of the message. Additionally, if these celebrities are specialists who have garnered the trust of multiple customers, their impact on the effectiveness of product advertisements is expected to be considerable (Kusa et al., 2020). Brands invest substantially in leveraging celebrities for endorsements. Celebrities, widely acknowledged figures, possess a potent and captivating influence over audiences, whether through their personal appeal, attractiveness, trustworthiness, or alignment with the product. This will contribute to the establishment of a robust brand image and value within the minds of viewers (Nadube & Gowon, 2023).

Conventionally, a specialist statement is strongly believed to be authentic (Osorio, et al. 2022), and at the same time having the right knowledge of the product is championing leading

to intention to purchase (Dey et al. 2021). The term expertise is an endorser who has the skill and knowledge of a specific product instead of general knowledge in the endorsing field (Dey et al. 2021). The expertise of an endorser pertains to the celebrity's credentials, which impact the degree of belief aimed at convincing consumers to buy a product. When individuals encounter renowned personalities or celebrities who excel in their specific domains within advertisements, they absorb the message. Consequently, this scenario fosters a favourable cognition of the brand and amplifies buyers' intent to make purchases (Adiba et al., 2020). Experts' campaigns are more successful because the messages ascribe a work to a particular expert (artist, dramatist, athlete, author, speaker, etc.) promoter that will yield better harmony with the product or service unlike a message remarked by an inexperienced endorser. After all, the purpose of advertisement is to convey a piece of information to the consumer to seek a product or service and possibly purchase it (Tedeschi, 1972). When a proficient communicator is being utilised in advertising a brand will make the information conveyed more acceptable to the consumers.

A study by Kumar (2010) on celebrity advertising or branding on consumer buying decisions stated that celebrity expertise is a distinctive factor that could enhance buying considerations. Ohanian (1991) argued that an endorser may not necessarily be an expert in his or her field, but possesses a certain attraction that conforms to the perception of the audience. On the contrary, Baxter, Ilicic and Kulczynski, (2014) cautioned that celebrity endorsement should be copiously and purposefully implemented as some people especially youths of the opinion that celebrities accept product endorsements for monetary returns but not necessarily because they are specialists with credibility. It is hypothesized that:

H₀₁: Celebrity expertise has no significant effect on consumers' intention to purchase in Nigerian mobile telecommunications companies.

Celebrity Congruence and Consumer Purchase Intentions

The principle of congruence simply means matching celebrities' characteristics with the attributes of the brand, service or product can effectively affect purchase intention (Baniya, 2017; Samarasinghe 2017). Congruence embodies a harmonious communication style that infuses product details with interest, visualization, and liveliness. According to Liang et al. (2022). Visual elements contribute to elevating the quality of perceived product messaging, while the vividness of product information heightens the persuasive impact of an endorsement. Additionally, akin to vividness, credibility plays a role in reinforcing potential buyers' appraisal

of the endorsed product. The alignment that exists between celebrity and brand augments the success of celebrity branding, as it occurs frequently in the observed models to promote fashionable attire and accessories (Liang et al., 2022).

Also, it could be regarded as when celebrities use their robust image to lower some unacceptable behaviour towards a product brand but might forfeit some privilege from the target market in the process (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Kamins and Gupta (1994) opined that a brand being promoted with a celebrity having positive brand affinity results in advertising effectiveness as against product promotion incongruence to celebrity appearance. Boyd and Mathew (2004) underscored the importance of product brand linkage and the endorser which makes the consumers accept the celebrity endorser as more trustworthy, irrespective of the product category that is being promoted in the advertisement. It has been observed that an excessive congruence amidst the celebrity and product brands the amount of difference between professional endorsers versus ordinary celebrity approvals for consumer products will be enhanced resulting from the decline in the risk perception of buyers (Biswas, Biswas & Das, 2006). Moreover, congruence serves to diminish cognitive biases consumers may hold towards products both before and after purchase, thereby enhancing product credibility. Often, consumers acquire products that contribute to enhancing their self-image, selecting specific brand names to either reflect their existing personality or the personality they aspire to possess. This process instils a sense of satisfaction in consumers regarding their product purchase (Liang et al., 2022).

Jatto (2014) posits that the behaviour of the consumer towards celebrity advocates on the internet indicates that celebrity congruence influences the behaviour of consumers in their purchase decisions. It is believed that when a celebrity promotes a product online will have an impact on creating awareness of the brand being promoted by the promoter. Jain (2011) conducted an investigation in India on the effect of celebrities on sales. The investigator found out that celebrity congruence affects product sales or services because individuals have a positive inclination towards a brand if promoted by a celebrity they cherish. The participants strongly agreed that celebrities create brand awareness and brand equity (Liang et al., 2022). When the qualities of the promoter or endorser align with those products endorsed by the celebrities, consumers can leverage their pre-existing knowledge or assumptions about the celebrity to deepen their understanding of a brand, ultimately building the brand's credibility. This, in turn, will boost the persuasive impact of celebrity endorsements. In simpler terms, consumers acquainted with a brand but holding favourable attitudes towards a celebrity are

inclined to transfer these positive sentiments to the brand, effectively showcasing the potent influence of matching celebrities and products (Liang et al., 2022).

The alignment between the brand endorser and a product constitutes a process that can be described as a meaning transfer. This transfer constitutes the migration to the endorser's public recognition being authenticated to the product, ultimately conveying the importance of celebrity branding in obtaining goods and services desired by the customers in their purchase. It's evident that the greater the celebrity's popularity, the clearer consumers perceive the brand image and product value, thereby amplifying the potential marketing impact of this transfer of meaning (Liang et al., 2022). When celebrities lack a unique and distinct connection to the products they endorse, their inclusion in advertisements can yield unfavourable outcomes (Tian et al., 2021). Conversely, the interaction between the brand ambassador and the product is appropriately established, and the brand ambassador could foster a feeling of alignment between the buyer and advocate. The endorsement of a renowned figure has the potential to enhance purchase intent and cultivate brand preferences through both direct and indirect avenues. (Naghash et al., 2022)

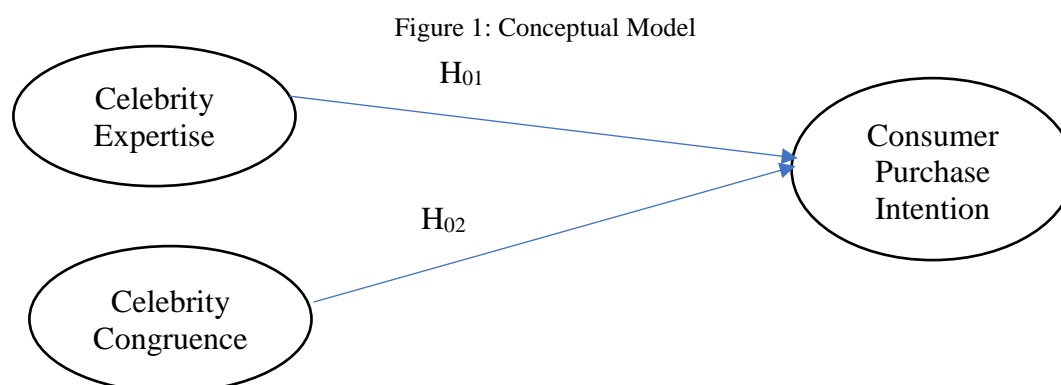
Studies conducted by Dey et al. (2021); Erdogan (1999); Kamins and Gupta (1994) argued that an authenticated product by a celebrity will have a favourable impression on the audience, and will be successful compared to product promotions which are at variance with celebrity image. In Sports, celebrity analysis proposed that during an advertising campaign, the message communicated through the portrayal of both the sports celebrity and the product will synchronize when their attractiveness levels are roughly comparable. When the appeal of a sports celebrity aligns with the allure of the product, this alignment results in increased revenue from consumer purchases and enhances the reliability of the sports brand promoter. Essentially, once the buyer feels a seamless connection linking the brand endorser with the product, its appeal initiates a sway over consumers, prompting them to acknowledge and respond positively (Rai et al., 2021).

Ohanian (1991) added that the relevance of having celebrities who possess a good image of organizational products or services in their discipline would significantly enhance the attractiveness of products. In contrast, Biswas, Biswas, and Das (2006) disclosed that in situations where there is incongruence between the promoter and the product, the hiring of a person with public recognition becomes risky and endangers the consumers' feelings about organisational products. This shows the effect of celebrity branding on consumers as it hinges on the ways consumers perceive the persona of the celebrity. Celebrities are regarded as

possessing attractive features like loveliness, prettiness, beauty, skills and experience which contribute to their trustworthiness. This sense of uniqueness ascribed to celebrities significantly shapes the way consumers evaluate and become aware of their self-worth (Liang et al., 2022). According to Lee (2022), the utilization of a celebrity endorser does not invariably assure a triumphant advertising result. The efficacy of brand endorsement by a celebrity is intricately linked to the extent of the congruence that exists between the promoter's persona and the promoted brand. When there is an interaction between the perceived persona of the brand endorser and the product, it fosters a heightened assessment of both the advertisement and the product. Conversely, unalignment between the promoter and the brand evokes unfavourable sentiments towards the advertisement and detrimentally affects the credibility of the endorser. Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

H₀₂: Celebrity congruence has no significant effect on consumers' intention to purchase in Nigerian mobile telecommunications companies

Based on the literature reviewed above, the researchers developed the conceptual model below:



Source: Prepared by the authors

METHOD

A quantitative survey inquiry design approach was adopted to gather data for a period of over two months. Data were collected from selected telecommunication companies (Mtn, Globacom, Airtel and 9mobile) in Lagos State, Nigeria. They were selected because they are the biggest network in Nigeria with a customer base of 80 percent of all the mobile telecommunication service providers in Nigeria. According to Sivageahnam, Al-Mamun, Nasir and Ibrahim (2015), a quantitative research approach is described as a global positivist ontological approach in which human cognitive abilities can obtain and interpret reality. Data for the study were obtained from four hundred ninety-six (496) students as respondents from

CALEB University, Lagos State University as well as University of Lagos drawn from undergraduate students with an estimated population of 85,819. The population of the students were drawn from all level to reflect proper representation. The students' ages were between 18 years and 40 years to cover the postgraduate students and other mature students. Students were chosen for the study because they are early adopters of technology and are current with celebrity news. The paper adopted a proportionate stratified random sampling method to sample the student participants from the population because the selected universities were chosen as the best institutions located in the three senatorial zones in Lagos State, Nigeria.

A Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach was adopted to analyse data and test the hypothesis formulated. A partial Least Square (PLS) was adopted to predict the interaction of the effect of the independent variable and on the dependent variable along the path model as well as to confirm the underpinning of the theory. The rationale for utilising PLS-SEM is that it is more flexible in terms of interpretation and is not rigid on certain assumptions. It is also helpful to estimate the structural model; it is not affected by small sample sizes and analyses models with high complexity (Henseler, 2010; Jogiyanto & Abdillah, 2011). With this degree of flexibility and advantages, PLS-SEM is regarded as a soft modelling technique (Monecke & Leisch, 2012).

RESULTS

The use of Partial Least Square for data analysis involved the evaluation of measurement and structural models. The measurement model comprises two tests, that is, validity and reliability tests (Chin, 2010). These tests are essential in making sure the question items appropriately reflect the research variables. To establish the discriminant and convergence validity of the instrument as well as construct validity that were carried out. In doing this, the interaction between the research variable and the issues in question was determined. The issue in question is intended to measure the variables in the research appropriately provided its correlation value or factor loading on the variable gets to 0.5. Throughout the earlier analysis, it was established that the factor loading of all indicators was greater than 0.5. Subsequently, they are all used in the full model for further statistical analysis. Overall, there were 15 indicators in the model for all constructs. Figure 2 shows that all the indicators' factor loadings are above 0.5.

Furthermore, the discriminant validity of the data collection instrument was established using the cross-loadings approach. In this paper, an assessment of discriminant validity was

produced by diligently looking at the value of observing the value of the cross-loadings of the items and juxtaposing the scores with the main constructs (celebrity expertise and congruence) as indicated in Table 1. The threshold is that an indicator related to another construct should have greater loading when compared to other constructs. The results in Table 1 revealed that all questions load well on their respective construct and are exceedingly greater than any other one, suggesting a dearth of significant discriminant validity issues.

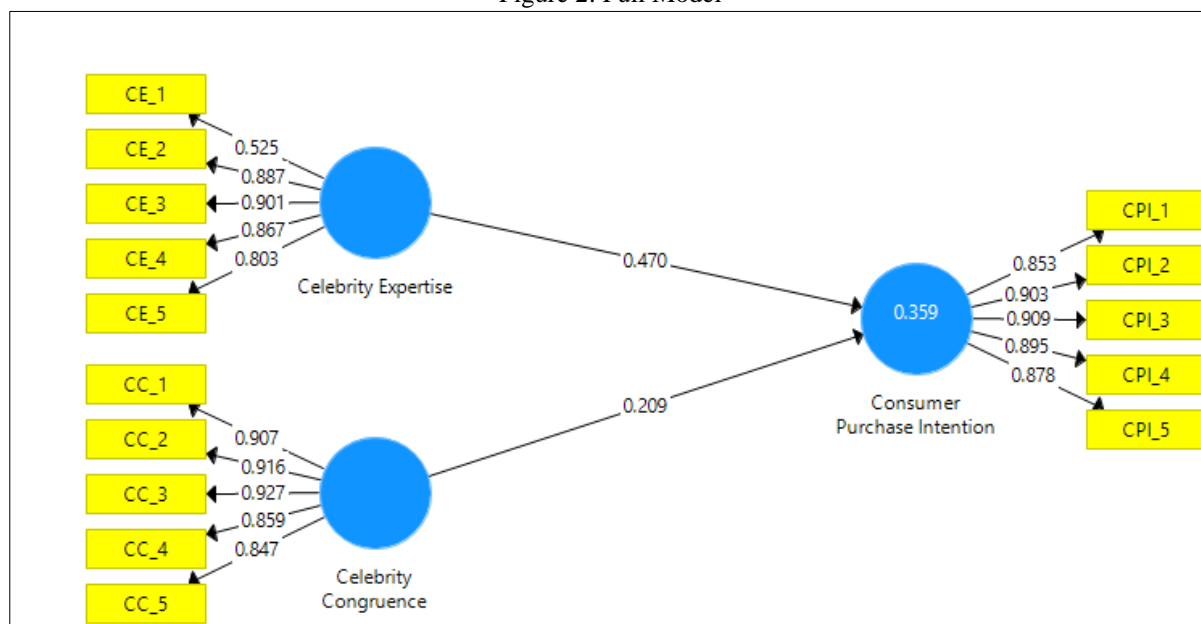
Table 1: Cross Loadings for Assessing Discriminant Validity

Measured Variables	Items	Celebrity Congruence	Celebrity Expertise	Consumer Purchase Intention
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorser as an expert	CC_1	0.907	0.381	0.396
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as proficient	CC_2	0.916	0.413	0.424
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers to an adept	CC_3	0.927	0.449	0.429
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as an accomplishment.	CC_4	0.859	0.465	0.321
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as Skillful	CC_5	0.847	0.465	0.358
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as a Masterly	CE_1	0.293	0.525	0.272
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as a “Congruent”	CE_2	0.474	0.887	0.508
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as Believable”	CE_3	0.474	0.901	0.533
I find telecommunications products adverts authenticated by a brand endorser to be in “Agreement”	CE_4	0.363	0.867	0.477
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as an authority to be “Likeable”	CE_5	0.333	0.803	0.47
I acknowledged mobile telecommunications product adverts authenticated by brand endorser	CPI_1	0.382	0.449	0.853
I find mobile telecommunications products adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as valuable	CPI_2	0.383	0.505	0.903
I find telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as an authority	CPI_3	0.357	0.512	0.909
I was delighted with the mobile telecommunications products’ adverts authenticated by brand endorser	CPI_4	0.411	0.541	0.895
I regard mobile telecommunications adverts authenticated by brand endorsers as convenient	CPI_5	0.402	0.52	0.878

Note: CE = Celebrity Expertise; CC = Celebrity Congruence; CPI = Consumer Purchase Intention

Source: Prepared by the authors

Figure 2: Full Model



Source: Prepared by the authors

In this paper, the reliability of the research instrument was determined using a composite reliability test. The result in Table 2 indicated that the construct's composite reliability is above 0.7 recommended by Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, 2014). Specifically, the composite reliabilities are 0.936, 0.806, and 0.933 for Celebrity Congruence, Celebrity Expertise, and Consumer Purchase Intention respectively. It shows an internal consistency and that all constructs are within acceptable levels and reliability. Additionally, convergent validity is shown in Table 2. It is clear that the average variance extracted for each measure exceeded 0.50. This suggests that the construct, on average, elucidates greater than half of the variance of its indicators (Chin, 2010; Hair et al. 2014).

Table 2: Composite Reliability (Measurement Model Results)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Celebrity Congruence	0.936	0.944	0.951	0.795
Celebrity Expertise	0.86	0.894	0.902	0.654
Consumer Purchase Intention	0.933	0.935	0.949	0.789

Source: Prepared by the authors

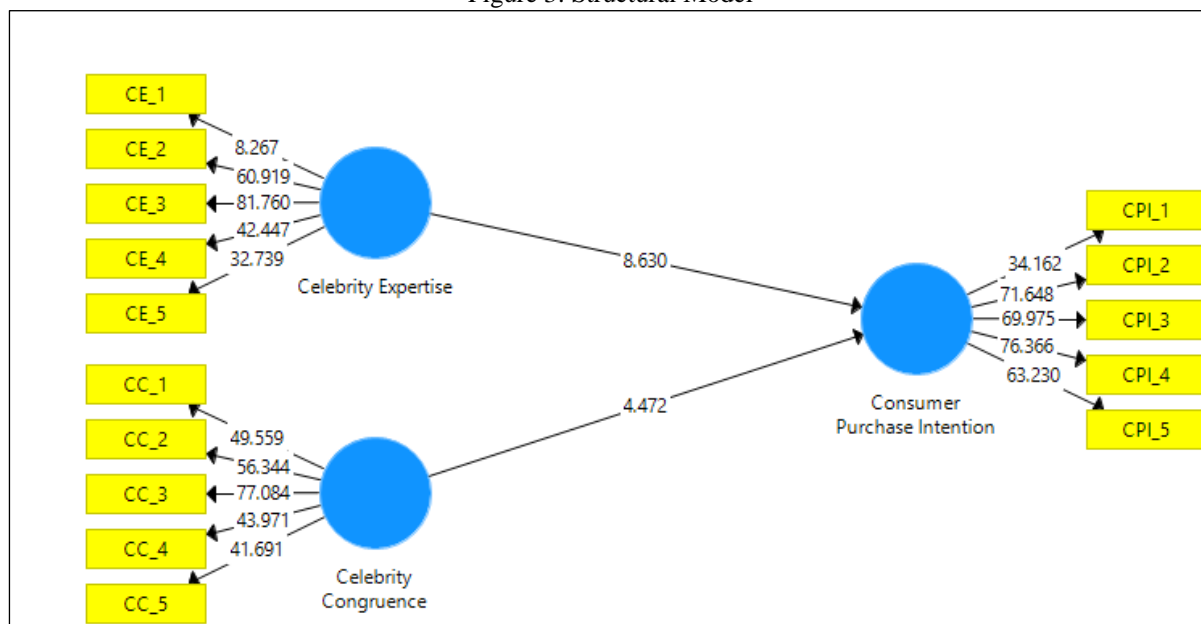
The outcomes of the first hypothesis test affirmed the positive and significant effect of celebrity expertise on consumer purchase intention (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 3: Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Celebrity Congruence -> Consumer Purchase Intention	0.209	0.208	0.047	4.472	0.000
Celebrity Expertise -> Consumer Purchase Intention	0.47	0.469	0.054	8.63	0.000

Source: Prepared by the authors

Figure 3: Structural Model



Source: Prepared by the authors

The outcomes of hypothesis two showed that celebrity congruence has a significant positive effect on consumer intention to purchase (Table 3 and Figure 3).

DISCUSSION

The outcomes of the first hypothesis test affirmed the positive and significant interactions of celebrity expertise on consumer intention to buy. This finding resonates with those of Priyankara, et al. (2017) which support the fact that consumers expect products and service endorsers to be beautiful or handsome in order to boost their intentions to buy goods and services.

The outcome of the research also supports Ibok (2013) arguments that those celebrities who are experts in their profession will achieve great things in their lifetime. The author stated further that the likelihood of accomplishment is good if the level of knowledge and skill of the expertise demonstrated by the celebrity is good.

The impact of source expertise was found to be crucial in determining the level of placement between a celebrity endorser and the endorsed product. An endorser perceived as an expert is anticipated to be more effective, thus increasing the likelihood of generating purchase intent for the endorsed brand (Ohanian, 1991). The study demonstrated a significant distinction in the expertise dimension of source credibility, where Vuyo showed a higher mean score.

The outcomes of hypothesis two revealed a positive and significant result between celebrity congruence and consumer purchase intention. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by researchers such as Pornpitakpan (2004). Constructive purchase intent is a favourable outcome if its translation into actual purchases pivots on meticulous planning of other contributing factors. Therefore, leveraging celebrity endorsements as a marketing tactic or strategy has the potential to yield positive financial outcomes for companies (Erdogan et al., 2001).

Additionally, this study's outcomes align with the research conducted by researchers Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) on the financial impact of celebrity endorsers. Their event analysis demonstrated mixed market reactions to celebrity endorsement contract announcements, resulting in both positive and negative abnormal returns on the day of the event. On average, however, the use of celebrities in advertisements was perceived favourably by investors. Notably, the study unveiled a substantial proportion of positive abnormal returns for sponsoring firms on the event day, leading to an average excess gain of 44% in market value due to celebrity endorsement announcements. The results collectively indicate a positive influence of celebrity endorsements on anticipated future profits, providing empirical market-level validation for the adoption of celebrity endorsers in advertising campaigns. The study found that the positive average abnormal returns showed the market generally believed that the expected additional gains from celebrity endorsements exceed the additional cost of advertising due to such contracts.

Furthermore, the study's findings are consistent with the research of Clark and Horstmann (2009), on the topic of a theory of advertising developmental competitiveness concerning celebrity endorsements. Their investigation examined the scenarios favouring celebrity promotion strategies and unveiled that celebrity congruence significantly affects consumer recall and product evaluation. The analysis suggested that celebrity endorsements are favored due to their cost-effective nature in communication, or when a celebrity's message competes effectively against a non-celebrity message. The study further disclosed that endorsements impacting recall tend to yield greater profits for firms compared to those

enhancing product valuation. Moreover, celebrity endorsements can play a vital role in situations where coordination across diverse consumer segments holds value, serving as a cost-effective method for firms to extend advertising reach across various markets while maintaining a unified or single advertising campaign approach.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated how celebrity expertise and congruence affect consumer intentions to purchase in the Nigerian mobile telecoms' companies. The result of the research indicates good celebrity expertise and congruence have a positive interaction with consumer purchase intentions. The results confirmed that celebrity expertise and congruence had a significant positive interaction with consumer purchase intentions in Nigerian mobile telecommunications companies. This indicates the more telecommunications companies in the sector embrace and adopt ideal celebrity endorsement practices, the better the chances of an increase in consumer purchase intention in that sector. It is vital for telecommunication companies to fine-tune their marketing strategy by engaging expert endorsers in their brand promotion. This is very necessary following the observation that most celebrities endorse products for monetary gains and not necessarily because they like the product nor are they experts in the endorsing field. Consequent to the high cost of acquiring celebrity endorsers, telecommunications companies should put in place a fair marketing budget to accommodate expert endorsers on an annual basis. Also, advertisers must seek expert celebrities across professions and ensure that their opinions count by allowing them to make a significant input in ensuring the success of the advertising campaign. Finally, concerted efforts among telecommunications companies must be made to align the celebrity's image to their corporate image by way of congruence.

The results also revealed that good celebrity branding significantly correlates with consumer purchase intentions in telecommunications. This indicates that the more telecommunications companies in the sector embrace and adopt ideal celebrity endorsement practices, the better the chances of an increase in consumer purchase intention in that sector.

The managerial implication is that it will enhance inter-enterprise collaborations among telecommunications companies by working together with their ideas and skills to accomplish a desired task that is innovative in nature for the benefit of the companies. When this is done, it will be capable of contributing to the existing knowledge on the proficiency of celebrities being in agreement with consumer's intention to purchase in the Nigerian mobile telecommunication

companies and beyond. Also, the findings from this study would enable Nigerian mobile telecommunication operators to be aware and focus on adopting the main business practices that will lead to long-term business performance. When this is accomplished, it would decrease a high telecommunication operator failure rate and increase customers' purchase intentions

This inquiry deals with celebrity expertise and congruence on consumer's desire to purchase in Nigerian mobile telecommunications companies and consequently, findings may be different from non-mobile telecoms companies in other industries. Further studies should investigate celebrity expertise in other sectors so as to reinforce the outcomes of this study. Additionally, studies could be executed to discover some of the challenges confronting celebrity in the Nigerian mobile network providers. It would enhance efficient and effective executions of the celebrity endorsement plan of action in the telecom industry.

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