Celebrity Advertising, Brand Awareness and Brand Recognition: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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Abstract
This research aims at ascertaining the effect of celebrity advertising on brand awareness of the endorsed brand with the key dimensions used in measuring celebrity advertising been celebrity credibility and endorser-brand fit. Using a causal research design, the conceptual framework was tested. Data was collected using a self administered questionnaire on consumers in Enugu metropolis. The data were analysed using structural equation modelling in partial least square (PLS-SEM) software. Our results suggest that endorser credibility and endorser-brand fit has a direct impact on brand awareness. With celebrity attractiveness been the highest influence followed by expertise, endorser-brand fit and the weakest been celebrity trustworthiness. While supporting some past findings, this study shows that alongside celebrity credibility conceptualised as attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness, the endorser-brand fit is also a critical factor for consideration in using celebrity endorsers. This present study is one of the first attempts to empirically test and confirm the impact of celebrity advertising on brand awareness by simultaneously testing endorser credibility and endorser-brand fit influence on brand awareness.
Keywords: Celebrity Advertising, Endorser Credibility, Endorser-brand fit, Structural Equation Model (SEM), Brand Awareness, Brand Recognition

INTRODUCTION
The aim of any message is to achieve the purpose for which it was conceived. Companies, civil society organizations and government agencies spend billions of naira annually placing one form of advertisement or the other in the media. As a competitive strategy, companies in a bid to outsmart one another for customers' attention have resorted to deploy various advertisement strategies, one of which is the use of celebrities to advertise their products.

In recent times, three out of every five advertisement make use of celebrities. This they do in the hope that such an appearance will instantly produce a ripple effect by making the product become popular and ultimately influence audience to desire to purchase the product. The reality however is that several products in spite of the highly expensive celebrity advertisement have failed to attract customer's attention towards the products (Miciak and Shanklin, 1994) let alone brand recognition and recall. Contrarily, Spry et al. (2011) opines that celebrity endorsement bears a relationship with advertising effectiveness, brand recognition, brand recall, purchase intentions and actual purchase.

Celebrities are often seen as possessing expert power, referent power and legitimate power to influence the behavior of others (Tom et al., 1992). Till and Shrimp (1994), assert that companies have no control over celebrities' future behavior. Hence, the uncertainty with respect to returns that firm might be able to garner from a brand given that negative information about the celebrity is capable of lowering consumers' perception and evaluation of the advertised brand. Liu (2001) also is of the opinion that advertisers do experience dilemmas over the use of local celebrities for a global brand as the congruence between the brand and the local endorser sometimes is difficult to establish.

Marketers often choose celebrity endorsers who are attractive, credible, or who have expertise while at the same time matching up with the desired brand image (Hakimi, Abedniya and Zaeim, 2011). Physically attractive celebrity endorsers can improve a brand's image and encourage consumers to purchase that brand (Hakimi, et al, 2011). Knowledgeable and skilful celebrity endorsers whose attribute poses expertise in a particular area can make consumers more willing to purchase the advertised brand (Ohanian, 1991). The trustworthiness of the celebrity is a supportive element as said in source credibility, but researchers found that it is not a factor in increasing consumers' intention to try a brand (Ohanian, 1991 and Hakimi et al, 2011). Conclusively, it refers that effectiveness of celebrity appeals depends on his credibility which is a function of attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness of the celebrity, (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999) and congruence between image of brand and the celebrity.

Brand awareness is the first point of brand knowledge in consumers' minds reflecting their ability to identify a brand; the likelihood that the brand name will come to mind and the ease with which that happens (Keller, 1993). Awareness to a brand can be used to describe brand recognition when the consumer can confirm having been exposed to the brand when given a cue (Ovidiu, 2009). Brand awareness and recognition is important in the buying decision making and so a veritable tool for firms to achieve competitive advantage as it will help consumers recall the brand given a product category. It also increases the probability of the brand been part of the evoke set. Keller (1998) opines that brand awareness influences brand associations that form the brand image.

Till (1998) and McCracken (1989) have suggested that celebrity endorsers can build brand equity by creating secondary associations. Seno and Lukas (2007) have proposed that a celebrity endorser operates as a co-brand for the endorsed brand resulting in the creation of equity for both the endorsed brand and the endorsing celebrity. Other empirical findings have shown that use of celebrity endorsers in advertising have effect on recall of both the brand and the advertisement (Atkin and Block, 1983) and Dean (1999) in his research has shown that celebrity endorsement can influence perceived product quality and uniqueness.

There are, however, limited studies as to how endorser credibility might lead to brand awareness and recognition. In the face of the relevance of brand awareness in consumer buying process, this study becomes important to guide brand managers in the selection and management of celebrity endorsers for their brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT
Celebrity Advertising, Endorser Credibility and Brand Awareness
A celebrity is an individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer etc.). Consumers generally tend to be attracted to celebrities (Thompson, 2006) and other objects associated with them. Celebrities are a repository of meanings valued by customers (McCracken, 1989). Aaker (1991) classified brand dimensions into four from a consumer perspective as follows; brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Yoo at al. (2000) have referred to these dimensions as consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). However, this present study isolates the brand awareness element to seek the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand awareness given its importance in the decision process. Aaker in (1991) defined brand awareness as the strength of a brand's presence in a consumer's mind. It is a necessary condition for brand equity, without which other brand dimensions cannot be felt; consumers cannot have brand associations, perceptions of quality and brand loyalty (Pappu and Quester, 2006). Brand awareness comprises both brand recall and recognition whereas brand associations refer to the various meanings surrounding a brand (Keller, 1993).

The relationship between endorser credibility and brand awareness is explained using the associative network memory model. The model suggests that celebrity endorsement could support brand recall and recognition, as a celebrity endorser becomes an added node in the memory (Spry et al. 2011).

Celebrity attractiveness ⟶ brand awareness
Langmeyer and Shank (1994), define celebrity attractiveness as all embracing. It covers not only the physical or facial beauty, but other embodiments of beauty such as sportsmanship, charm, grace, intelligence, lifestyle and personality. There are evidences in extant literature to link endorser attractiveness and brand image (Kamins, 1990). Research has shown the relationships between physical attractions and evaluations, opinion, brand promises, recall and likeability of a brand (Joseph, 1982; Kahle and Homer, 1985). Other researchers like Till and Busler (1998) concluded that attractive celebrities haves positive effects on consumer attitudes towards a brand. The potency of source attractiveness is in its ability to covey meaning more effectively than less attractive sources. Patzer (1985) and Ohanian (1991), has this to say; "*Beauty is a greater judgment than any recommendation*". Endorsers' physical attractiveness generates high opinion and respectability. It is contributory to the amount of attention the advertisement will garner from the target audience both in electronic and print media; endorsers' physical attractiveness has specific effects on consumer's behavior towards the product and service than the unattractive endorsers (Ohanian, 1991). From the above discussion, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H1: There is a positive relationship between endorser attractiveness and brand awareness.

Celebrity Expertise ⟶ brand awareness
Expertise has been explained in the literature as authoritativeness, competence, qualification, skill and knowledge (Magnini, Honeycutt and Cross, 2008). Celebrity expertise is the consumers' perception of knowledge, experience or ability associated with an endorser about the product being endorsed (Erdogan, 1999). The celebrity's level of persuasiveness is enhanced by the expertise he is believed to possess. This will give the consumers' confidence of the validity of the advertising messages. This argument is extended by Aaker and Meyers (1987) who advocated that consumers are more persuaded to buy advertised brands that are endorsed by knowledgeable celebrity or by celebrity whose profession is closely linked to the brand functions.

H2: Celebrity expertise has a direct positive impact on brand awareness

Celebrity Trustworthiness ⟶ brand awareness

Trustworthiness refers to the "fairness, honesty and credibility of an endorser" (Erdogan et al 2001). Trustworthiness can be captured within the context of celebrity endorsement as honesty, integrity, and believability of the celebrity by the consumers. This elicits confidence in and acceptance of the celebrity and the inherent messages of the endorser by the consumers. This in the long run helps to influence consumer's beliefs, opinions, attitudes and purchase behavior (Erdogan, Baker, and Taggs, 2001; Ohanian, 1991). Consumers have a common perception that celebrities are a reliable source of advertising information (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Trustworthiness in encompassed in credibility source model which belief that level of acceptability of a message depends on the level of credibility of the source of the message. From the foregoing discussion, we advanced the following hypothesis:

H3: Celebrity trustworthiness has a significant positive effect on brand awareness.

Celebrity-Brand Fit ⟶ brand recognition

Celebrities represent symbolic and aspirational reference groups for consumers (Escalas, 2004), a positive relationship is expected between the endorsers' personality and the brand. This is supported by the meaning transfer dynamics (McCraken, 1989). He asserts that celebrity endorsements are a mechanism by which meanings from the culturally constituted world transfers to brands. Till (1998) emphasises the importance of ensuring appropriate fit between the celebrity and the products' target audience. This associative link is achieved when there is a fit between the product and the celebrity endorser as the consumer will associate the celebrity with the product been endorsed.

H4: Celebrity-brand fit positively influences to brand recognition

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The conceptual model in figure 1 is developed to address the main thrust of the present study; how celebrity advertising affects brand awareness. A starting point in the model development is the understanding of how celebrity advertising/endorsement is conceptualised. The extant literature has used celebrity credibility as a prime endorser characteristic to drive other consumer effects. This present study aligns with this philosophy. Amos et al. (2008) opines that endorser credibility has received substantial research attention as a major driver of consumers' endorser-initiated behaviours. It is made up of constructs as perceived trustworthiness, endorser/source expertise (Hovland et al, 1953) and endorser attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). This study aims to study endorser credibility dimensions alongside endorser brand-fit.
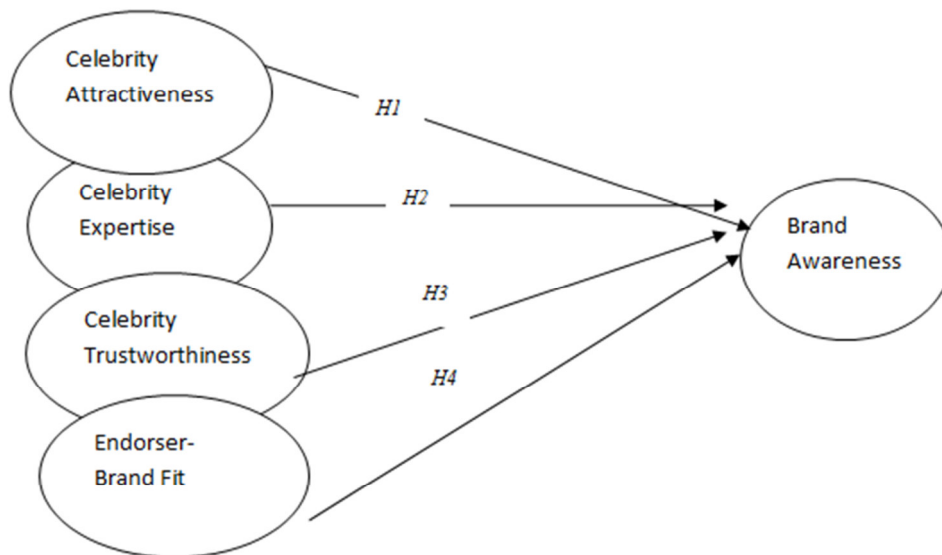

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for the Study

METHODS AND MEASURES

The hypothesised relationships in the research model in figure 1 were tested using a causal research design using a structured questionnaire as a survey method. The study was conducted in Enugu metropolis; a metropolitan city in South-Eastern Nigeria. The researchers purposively studied 200 university undergraduates in the city. This was chosen because of their given active celebrity knowledge. Data were collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire. The items used in measuring the latent constructs were adapted from previous researches (table 1); endorser credibility (La Ferle and Choi, 2005 and Ohanian, 1990), celebrity-brand fit (Keller and Aaker, 1992). Brand awareness was measured using the five item scale adapted from Yoo and

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Donthu (2001). The latent constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale anchored by '1 = Strongly Disagree' and 5 = 'Strongly Agree'.

Table 1: Battery of measurement items and sources

Latent construct	Number of items	Source(s) of scale
Celebrity Trustworthiness	4	Ohanian (1990) and La Ferle and Choi (2005)
Celebrity attractiveness	4	Ohanian (1990) and La Ferle and Choi (2005)
Celebrity Expertise	4	Ohanian (1990) and La Ferle and Choi (2005)
Endorser-brand fit	3	Till and Busler (2000), Keller and Aaker (1992)
Brand Awareness/Recognition	5	Yoo and Donthu (2001)

The researchers selected brands in the telecommunication service sector. The sector was chosen given the high growth rate of mobile telephone usage among the target population of the study and the industry high adoption of celebrities in their advertisements. Celebrities used to measure extent of brand awareness and recognition were Afeez Ayetoro, a Nigerian comic actor popularly known as Saka used in the MTN '*I don port*' adverts in 2013 and Bright Okpocha, a Nigerian comedian popularly known as 'Basket Mouth, who played a key role alongside Okey Bakassi in Globacom adverts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
Preliminary analysis
Data were subjected to series of analysis. SPSS version 22 aided the data entry and editing. The validity and reliability of data were thereafter conducted and hypotheses tested using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) procedure in SmartPLS software.

Description of the Respondents Demography
In total, 148 copies of the 200 distributed questionnaires were returned representing 74% usable response rate. The participants showed evidence of good knowledge on the subject matter; 77% of the respondents have used mobile telephone for 2 years and above. The gender distribution shows that 38% are males while 62% are females; 78% of the respondents are single while 22% are married. Specifically, 37% of the respondents are below 20 years, 60% are from 21 to 35 years while only 3% are above 35 years. The demographic variables are as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Variables of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	56	38
Female	92	62
Marital Status		
Single	115	78
Married	33	22
Age		
<20	55	37
21-35	89	60
36-50	4	3
Income per month(₦)		
≤50,000	43	29
50,000-100,000	66	45
>100,000	39	26
Length of usage of mobile telephone		
< 1 year	19	13
2-5 years	57	39
Above 5 years	72	49
Total	**148**	**100**

Field Survey, 2018

Scale Reliability and Validity
The research instrument was subjected to reliability and validity checks. To assess the reliability of the instrument, the researchers adopted two methods of measure; Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. Composite reliability was included given the conservative nature of Cronbach alpha test. Both measures show reliability indices greater than the 0.7 minimum acceptable limit (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), showing that the instrument is reliable and internally consistent. The 20 items were simultaneously factor-analysed using

SEM-PLS. the result from the initial factor loadings shows that all the indicators loaded above 0.5 acceptable limits (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2010).

The validity of the research instrument was subsequently conducted through two ways; content and construct validity. For content validation, face validity was used through the careful adaptation of items from past studies. Construct validity is attained when both convergent and discriminant validity are met. An instrument has convergent validity if the average variance extracted (AVE) is 0.5 and above (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) and the items measuring the latent constructs loads with significant t-values (Gefen and Straub, 2005). As shown in table 3, the AVE ranged from 0.57 to 0.77 with all the measurement items loading with significant t-values at $p<0.005$ level, an evidence of convergent validity.

Table 3: Items' Factor Loadings, t-statistics, Reliability and Validity (AVE)

Constructs	Indicator	Factor Loading	*t*-value	Cronbach alpha (α)	Composite reliability	AVE
Celebrity Attractiveness	CA1	0.751	13.04*	0.8	0.88	0.72
	CA2	0.891	21.98*			
	CA3	0.906	16.45*			
	CA4	0.899	14.47*			
Celebrity Expertise	CE1	0.771	12.43*	0.82	0.87	0.66
	CE2	0.810	15.16*			
	CE3	0.762	13.26*			
	CE4	0.772	12.43*			
Celebrity Trustworthiness	CT1	0.834	17.12*	0.77	0.79	0.57
	CT2	0.789	14.00*			
	CT3	0.784	15.60*			
	CT4	0.752	17.12*			
Endorser-brand fit	EBf1	0.877	27.55*	0.84	0.91	0.77
	EBf2	0.878	26.99*			
	EBf3	0.873	30.15*			
Brand Awareness	BRAW1	0.893	27.16*	0.81	0.89	0.72
	BRAW2	0.869	23.09*			
	BRAW3	0.888	24.24*			
	BRAW4	0.783	19.21*			
	BRAW5	0.812	21.09*			

Note: Significant levels are denoted as *$p < 0.05$

On the other hand, discriminant validity is established if the square root of the AVE of each latent construct is greater than the highest correlation pair of the latent constructs (Hair et al, 2014). As shown in table 4, the square roots of the AVEs were also well above the highest correlation pair of the latent constructs. A further look shows that the correlation matrix as reported in table 4 reveals that most of the coefficients are above 0.3 and are significantly correlated at $p<0.005$. This clearly indicates that the rule of convergence and discrimination were met.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation, Construct Correlations and Discriminant Validity

No	Constructs	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5
1	Celebrity Attractiveness	3.71	0.89	*0.849*				
2	Celebrity Expertise	4.14	1.37	0.491	*0.812*			
3	Celebrity Trustworthiness	3.62	1.29	0.592	0.784	*0.755*		
4	Endorser-brand fit	3.79	1.51	0.587	0.528	0.794	*0.877*	
5	Brand Awareness	4.04	1.24	0.473	0.681	0.577	0.638	*0.849*

Note: Square roots AVE are in italic bold prints in the diagonal; all correlations are significant at 0.05 levels.

Structural Model and Test of Hypotheses

The proposed research model was tested using SEM-PLS. The path significances were tested using bootstrapping resampling procedure with 5,000 sub-samples, recommended by Hair et al (2011). The initial structural output supports all the hypothesised relationships as shown in table 5. A positive linear effect was found to exist between celebrity attractiveness and brand awareness ($\beta=0.481$; $t=5.248$; $p<0.005$). A positive and significant relationship was also found to exist between celebrity trustworthiness and brand awareness ($\beta=0.214$; $t=9.825$; $p<0.005$). Celebrity expertise is a significant predictor of brand awareness ($\beta=0.405$; $t=4.822$; $p<0.005$). Finally, the direct effect of endorser-brand fit was also positive and significant ($\beta=0.386$;

$t=4.770$; $p<0.005$).

Table 5: Estimated results of the structural model and hypotheses test outputs

Direct effects		Path coefficient	Standard error	*t*-value	Result
H_1	Celebrity Attractiveness → Brand Awareness	0.481	0.047	5.248*	Supported
H_2	Celebrity Expertise → Brand Awareness	0.405	0.06	4.822*	Supported
H_3	Celebrity trustworthiness → Brand Awareness	0.214	0.051	9.825*	Supported
H_4	Endorser-brand fit → Brand Recognition	0.386	0.054	4.770*	Supported

Notes: Significant level is denoted as *$p < 0.05$

In all, the strength of the relationship between the latent constructs indicated that the strongest predictive power within the model falls on celebrity attractiveness (β=0.481; t=5.248), followed by the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand awareness (β=0.405; t=4.822); endorser-brand fit and brand recognition (β=0.386; t=4.770) and the weakest being the relationship between celebrity trustworthiness and brand awareness (β=0.214; t=9.825).

Additionally, the variance explained (R^2) in the circle within the model represents the amount of variance explained which s contributed by the latent constructs. As shown in the SEM-PLS output (figure 2), 63 percent of the total variance in brand awareness is attributed to the combined effect of celebrity attractiveness, celebrity expertise, trustworthiness and endorser-brand fit.
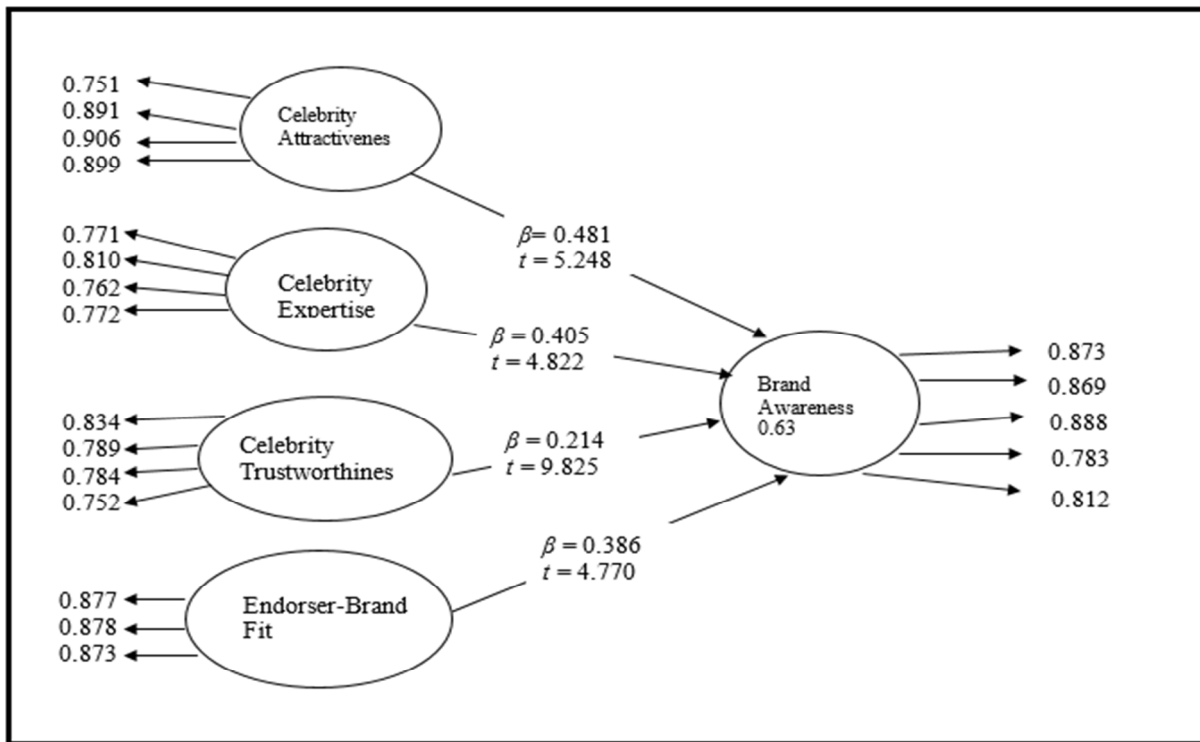

Figure 2: SEM-PLS OUTPUT

Discussions

Celebrity advertising has been seen to have the ability to draw consumers' attention towards the advertised brand. The findings of this study confirm the earlier hypothesized relationships. The results indicate a direct and positive relationship between endorser credibility measured by attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness and celebrity-brand fit, and brand awareness. These findings are in line with the argument by Hakimi et al (2011) that marketers often choose celebrity endorsers who are attractive, credible, who have expertise while at the same time matching up with the desired brand image. Hakimi et al (2011) also assert that attractive celebrity endorser can improve a brand image and encourage consumers to purchase that brand. This correspond with what Ohanian (1991) stated that celebrity expertise can make consumers more willing to purchase an advertised brand. However, our research findings differ slightly from theirs as our findings establishes that trustworthiness is a factor in increasing consumers' intention to try a brand against that of Ohanian (1991) and Hakimi et al (2011) that trustworthiness is not a factor in increasing consumers' intention to try a brand.

Our findings agree with several other studies (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999; Magnini et al, 2010; Till and Busler, 1998 & Chang et al, 2005), that trustworthy celebrity endorsers leads to positive attitudes towards a

brand. However, our study findings differ slightly with that of Kim et al (2018) as they found that celebrity trustworthiness does not influence brand equity.

Similarly, consistent with our findings that celebrity expertise strongly influences brand awareness are findings of others studies (Kim et al, 2018; Lord and Putrevu, 2009; Marshall et al, 2008; Kim et al 2014 & Wang et al, 2007). Also Spry et al, (2011) supports an indirect impact of endorser credibility on brand equity with the mediating effect of brand credibility

Therefore, it is safe and convenient to assert that the effectiveness of celebrity advertising is dependent on the celebrity's attractiveness, expertise, celebrity-brand fit and trustworthiness.

Conclusions and Policy Implication

In this age of increased competition in the market place, organizations should therefore prioritize and refocus their efforts on the most value adding marketing strategies. One of these strategies could be to engage on celebrity advertising. This research adds to the body of knowledge by supporting already established factors that determine the effectiveness of celebrity advertising and the inclusion of celebrity-brand fit as a veritable driver of brand awareness. This concept of celebrity advertising could impact positively on the efforts of organisations launching new products to create awareness and ensure brand recall and recognition. This will help make the brand a part of the consumers' evoked set. In particular, firms already employing the services of celebrity endorsers would be better off if more attention is placed on the celebrity-brand fit. Also brands that are in their decline stage of the product lifecycle could be rejuvenated by the use of an attractive celebrity endorser whose character fits with the brand and from whom a meaning transfer could positively influence the brand.

The managerial implication of this is that organisations intending to use or maximize the returns from their celebrity endorsers used in their advertisements should stress the expertise of the endorser in promoting the values of the brand. This will contribute not only to improved market acceptance and sales volume but the enhancement of the brand value.

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