

The Contribution of Celebrity Endorsement to University student's buying behavior in developing countries: A case study of Zimbabwean university students.

Jokomo Rutendo Hong-Fe Lyu

School of International Business, Zhejiang University of Science and Technology, No. 318, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, 310023, China

Abstract

This study focused on evaluating the contribution of celebrity endorsement to University student's buying behaviour in developing countries and this was achieved through the phenomenological philosophy and a case study design. The sample was made up of 100 respondents. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were used to collect data from the respondents. The results obtained from the study show that celebrity endorsement has a positive influence on university student's buying behaviour. Results from the study also show that celebrities hold power to influence consumer perception and life style choices. Furthermore, it was established that celebrity endorsement positively contributes to sales, brand awareness of the brand. The study findings also show that domestic celebrities from Zimbabwe are not trusted by consumers due to their bad behaviour such as drug abuse. Hence, it was concluded that celebrity endorsement is a powerful advertising tool which positively contributes to consumer buying behaviour but however in implementing celebrity endorsement in developing countries careful evaluation of the endorser has to be taken before the strategy is fully implemented. Therefore, the study recommends that the match up hypothesis model approach and international celebrities should be used by companies in developing countries in order to enhance their marketing skills and sales

Keywords: celebrity, endorsement, consumer perception, brand awareness, consumer buying behavior, marketing, domestic celebrity

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1. Introduction

The world is now operating in a global village which has ultimately resulted in the adoption of one common culture across geographical boundaries. In support of this More (2018) noted that marketing as of the 21st century has shifted from traditional marketing to a new paradigm which uses the adoption of strategy and technology. In preparation of this, companies in developed countries have devised modern marketing strategies that enable them to accommodate the changes in the global market. Some of the modern strategies presented are social media marketing, digital marketing and celebrity endorsement. In the USA as suggested by Solomon (2009) an estimate of more than twenty percent of advertising campaigns in the USA featured celebrities and about fifteen percent was allocated towards paying those celebrities. Chung, et al (2013) also noted that celebrity endorsement has over the years graduated to become the most sought advertising technique of all time. In addition, Byberg (2015) noted that celebrity endorsement has a significant impact on sales of companies in Sweden, a case study of Volvo was presented which showed a positive impact on sales and brand image. Furthermore, Herbert Hainer the chief executive officer for Adidas noted that the sales of Adidas increased shortly after Kanye west an international musician was signed as the brand ambassador. Evidence presented shows that celebrity endorsement has been adopted in developed countries such as Sweden, USA and Germany. As a marketing strategy celebrity endorsement has positively contributed to the survival of the firms in those respective nations.

In addition to the above discussion, developing countries such as South America and Asia's cultures are now linked to that of modern countries and this is why the concept of celebrity endorsement is slowly been adopted in some developing countries (Mgbakoigba, 2017). Since globalization has turned the world into a global village, companies and countries from all corners of the world have found themselves competing and adopting strategies that are more or less the same. Globalization has persistently driven companies in developing countries to adhere to marketing and technological changes that are being implemented at international level. In support of this, Gomez (2017) propounded the cultural imperialism theory which suggests that developing countries are depended on the activities of developed nations for their survival, this explains why most of the countries and companies from developing nations are imitators of the strategies adopted in developed nations. Evidence has significantly shown that celebrity endorsement works and is working in developed countries but there is not enough information on celebrity endorsement in Africa including Zimbabwe. This is worrying especially at a time sales in Africa and beyond are deteriorating yet in developed countries the use of celebrity endorsement has

been found to be effective in terms of enhancing brand awareness and sales as noted by Byberg (2015). Therefore this study seeks to determine the contribution of celebrity endorsement to university student's buying behavior in developing countries.

The world is now operating in a global village which has ultimately resulted in the adoption of one common culture across geographical boundaries and thus, marketing as of the 21st century has shifted from traditional marketing to a new paradigm which uses the adoption of strategy and technology (More, 2018). As shown by empirical evidence, marketing strategies of companies in developed nations are now being influenced by strategies and technologies such as social media marketing and celebrity endorsement (Rantanen, 2017) and this has resulted in sales increases and positive profits for companies such as Microsoft, Adidas, Mercedes Benz, BMW, Max and Spencer just to name a few (Byberg, 2015). However, for developing countries such as Zimbabwe the strategy has not been implemented and tested, yet sales are going down on daily basis (Israel, 2015). Therefore, this study seeks to determine the contribution of celebrity endorsement to university student's buying behavior in developing countries. The research therefore sought to answer the following questions:

- Is celebrity endorsement existent to consumer buying behavior?
- Do celebrity endorsements have any contribution towards consumer buying behavior?
- What perception do consumers have towards celebrities?
- What strategies can be used to improve Celebrity endorsement effectiveness in developing countries?

2. Literature Review

Kotler et al (2010) defined a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, design or a combination of these that Creswell, Julie (2018) postulate that brand ambassador is not a new thing in advertising, it first appeared in the 1940s and was further developed in the 20th century due to the emergence of new advertising media :the radio (1930 s), television (1950s) and the internet (1990). Anderson and Ekman (2016) also highlighted that brand ambassador have graduated to become the most popular marketing practice of all time over the past decade .Every successful company have resorted to having a brand ambassador. Erdogan (2010) pointed out that celebrity branding is now one of the most effective ways to reach consumers ,(Solomon, 2009) also suggested that an estimate of more than twenty percent of advertising campaigns in the USA used celebrities, and about ten percent of advertising budgets were allocated to paying celebrities for their marketing participation. Forbes (2012) stated that for developed countries the concept of using brand ambassador to market brands has produced excellent results, some of the top brands such as Pepsi and Nike still remain dominant in their marketing areas due to successful collaborations with famous celebrities, for example the collaboration of famous basketball player Michael Jordan and the company Nike, significantly led to the creation of the Nike Jordan label which ultimately generates millions of dollars for the company as of today. Presented literature by Andersson & Ekman (2011); Boyd and Sutherland (2015); Tylee (2010) suggests that for developed countries such as USA, brand ambassador is significant to consumer buying behavior. This study, therefore aims to find out if the stated notion stands in the African context by carrying out a study on the contribution of brand ambassador to university students in developing countries, with a case study of Chinhoyi university students being put forward.

Goutam (2013) observed that brand ambassador is a mediator between internal and external brand management and can have a significant impact on customer perception of brands and organizations; and in general. Bonner and Marshall (2012) also defined brand ambassadors as cultural icons or identities acting as a tool in marketing to represent the achievements of individual humanity and commodity glory and the commercialization of a product. In these cases, brand ambassador are seen as an instrument used by companies to communicate and connect with the community about how they can increase sales (Lea-Greenwood, 2012). Marketers use brand to play a role in communicating corporate brands to outside audiences (Gpray, 2013). Greenwood (2012) noted that the use of brand ambassadors is done by companies to influence or invite consumers to make purchases. In addition, Khatri (2016) also noted that brand ambassador is a promotion strategy used for the sole purpose of attracting customers by making a distinctive remark through use of highly famous or powerful people in society such as Michael Jackson and Beyoncé just to name a few. Furthermore, marketers in an endeavor to instill brand recall, indulge in the hiring of a famous celebrity to act as the voice or the ambassador of the brand (McCracken, 2014) and amazingly most of these brand ambassador come from the entertainment world (Jain, 2011).

2.1 Marketing

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (2010) of United Kingdom suggest that marketing, being a management process, is concerned with the identification, anticipation and satisfaction of customer requirements in a profitable way. The American Marketing Association (2010) offered three views of marketing as identified by

Wilkie and Moore (2006). AMA (2010) submits that marketing is the performance of the activities of business. These activities are concerned with directing the movement of products from producers to consumers. AMA (2010) viewed marketing as a process involved with planning and implementing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, products in order to create exchanges that are designed to satisfy the objectives of individuals and organizations. AMA (2010) described marketing as the function of an organization that involves processes directed at the creation, communication and provision of value to customers. These processes also involve the management of customer relationships that are beneficial to the organization and its stakeholders.

Jack, Higgins, Ellis, Fitchett, Lim, Tadajewski and Saren (2015) noted the flaws associated with the AMA's (2010) view of marketing which was regarded as the ultimate improvement since the year 1935. The first weakness of this definition was that it focused on marketing as an organizational activity which did not extend beyond the organization. This excluded societal aspects of marketing. The other problem was that this view assumed that the individual organization's activities would not be problematic in the aggregate. More so, changes in the definition of marketing over time have become more managerial and failed to embrace the issue of the impact of marketing on the society (Jack et al., 2015; Wilkie & Moore, 2016). Consequently, in the year 2011 AMA suggested that marketing comprises activities, set of institutions as well as processes that are directed at the creation, communication, provision and exchange of products that offer value to customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Jack et al., 2010; Gundlach & Wilkie, 2012). Kotler and Keller (2010) provide a two-pronged alternative view of marketing.

In the first approach marketing takes a managerial perspective which describes marketing as the art or science responsible for selecting target markets, enticing customers and sustaining the customer base by the creation, provision and communication of superior customer value. The second approach takes a societal perspective and argues that individuals and organizations should obtain what they require through a societal process which enables these individuals and organizations to participate in the process of creation, provision and free exchange of products of value with others.

2.2 The Brand awareness concept

Brand awareness can be referred to as the degree of consumers' familiarity with a brand. Aaker (2016) and Keller (2012) stated that brand awareness is a vital element of brand equity. According to Rossiter and Percy (2010), brand awareness is the ability of consumers to distinguish a brand amongst other brand. Keller (2012) conceptualized brand awareness as comprising of brand recall and brand recognition. Keller (2012) went further to say that brand recall is the ability of consumers to remember a brand from their mind when the product class is made know. Keller (2012) argued that brand recognition may be more important to the extent that product decisions are made in the store. Rossiter et al (2010) noted that brand attitude and intention to purchase a product can only be developed through brand awareness. According to Aaker (2016), there are three levels of brand awareness namely brand recognition, brand recall and top of mind. Figure 2.1 below shows the brand awareness concept.



Figure 2.1: The brand awareness concept
Source: Kotler and Keller (2016)

Rossiter et al (2010) noted that brand recognition is the ability of consumers to identify a certain brand amongst other that is aided recall. Aided recall is a situation whereby a person is asked to identify a recognized brand name from a list of brands from the same product class. Rossiter et al (2010) defined brand recall as a situation whereby a consumer is expected to name a brand in a product class. It is also referred to as unaided recall as they are not given any clue from the product class. According to Rossiter et al (2010) top of mind is referred to as the first brand that a consumer can recall amongst a given class of product. Many researchers have seen brand awareness as an element that plays a vital role in consumer's choice of brand. In Lin and Chang (2013), the result of their study established that brand awareness had the most powerful influence on consumers purchase decision. Hoye and brown as cited by Lin and Chang (2013) their study examined the importance of brand awareness in consumers decision making process and they found out that brand awareness was a primary factor. Also Jiang (2014) found out in his study that brand recognition influences consumer's choice.

Kotler and Keller (2016) defined brand awareness as fostering people's ability to recall or recognize the brand in sufficient detail to make a purchase. As highlighted on the figure above, advertising has a significant role in the creation of brand awareness. In support of this, Maven (2018) established that in this current era consumers have many product options available to them, having a differentiated message and an audience that can easily pick out a company's brand from that of rivals is detrimental for success. Furthermore, when shoppers are aware of the product that a company offers, they are more likely to go straight to that company if they need that product, instead of researching other places that are offering that particular product (Maven, 2018). As shown by evidence presented, brand awareness is detrimental for company success so companies should generally direct their marketing efforts towards creating brand awareness, Anderson Ekman (2009) observed that brand ambassador have become a winning formulae towards awareness creation and the building of brand equity.

2.3 Self-concept theory

The self-concept theory is defined by Rosenberg (2017) as the entirety of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to themselves as objective beings, and is associated with behavior and feelings. Other authors argue, however, that the self-concept theory is based on the perception and responses of other people, because the appraisals that individuals obtain from others greatly influence their behavior (Solomon 2013). In addition, Pride and Ferrell (2010) state that the self-concept theory defines the consumer within individuals, which can be a person with many images of themselves. This plays a significant role in identifying how consumers behave, since the way in which they perceive themselves influences the brands they prefer, since they wish their choices to be reflected in the products they purchase. According to McCracken (1986) in Khare and Handa (2010), there is a relationship between consumer brands and the self-concept of individuals. Consumers usually prefer brands that match their self-concepts in order to express themselves to those around them, and show that they conform to the concept being emphasized by the brand's usage. Moreover, consumers prefer certain brands to maintain or create self-images for either themselves or their group members. Consumers prefer brands matching their own self-images, thus the greater the relationship between self-images and brands, the stronger will be specific brand preferences (Escalas and Bettman 2015). Self-concept is the way in which individuals see themselves, and includes the entirety of their thoughts and feelings when looking at themselves.

Consumers define their own self-concepts, which change based on interactions between their psychological and social dimensions. Furthermore, consumers choose brands or products that match their own self-concepts, which therefore influences them in preferring certain brands, and can also affect the place where products are bought (Pride and Ferrell 2010). According to Hoyer, MacInnis and Pieters (2013), the self-concept theory assists in defining who consumers are, which directly influences their behavior, and also takes into account how consumers view themselves and how they consider others to view them. In a similar context, Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) highlight that consumers are guided by different self-images, which the products that they buy depend on. Consumers choose different self-concepts to guide their buying behavior. For example, with everyday household products, individuals might be guided by their actual self-images, whereas for societally appealing products, they might be directed by their social self-images. Individuals use different aspects of self-concept, depending on the product with which they are dealing, and the brand or product bought makes a statement about who individuals are.

Consumers usually prefer brands viewed as relevant to their self-concepts, and this influences their brand loyalties and preferences (Hoyer et al. 2013). Consumers have a number of self-images about themselves. These are closely related with personality, in that consumers are more likely to purchase brands or products whose images relate to their own self-images or self-concepts. In essence, customers seek to represent themselves by their brand preferences. Customers have a tendency to purchase brands with images that develop their own self-concepts, and avoid those that do not (Schiffman and Kanuk 2010). Likewise, Solomon (2013) agrees that

consumers choose brands with attributes similar to their personal self-concepts.

2.4 Source attractiveness model

This model is based on a social psychology study by Hovland and Weiss (1951) who defines two elements which are trustworthiness and expertise. The third aspect which is attractiveness was postulated by McGuire (2015). The model as advocated by Karasiewicz & Martyna (2014) is based on the three assumptions which are that, the recipients will believe and accept an advertising message if the celebrity involved is trustworthy, an expert and is attractive. Hovland, et al., (2016) highlighted that credibility refers to a person's perception of the truth of a piece of information. Celebrity trustworthiness was defined as the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions. Celebrity expertise was defined as the perceived ability of the source to make valid assertions and lastly attractiveness was defined as a celebrity's popularity and physical attractiveness. Umeougu & Bonachristus (2012) proposed that celebrity reputation, expertise and trustworthiness are the essential factors that can influence consumer's perceived credibility of a message. The source model assumes that using a celebrity with certain characteristics that is trustworthiness, expertness and or attractiveness in advertising activities relating to any product category will bring positive effects (Weiner & Mowen, 2016). Figure 2.2 below shows the sources attractiveness model.

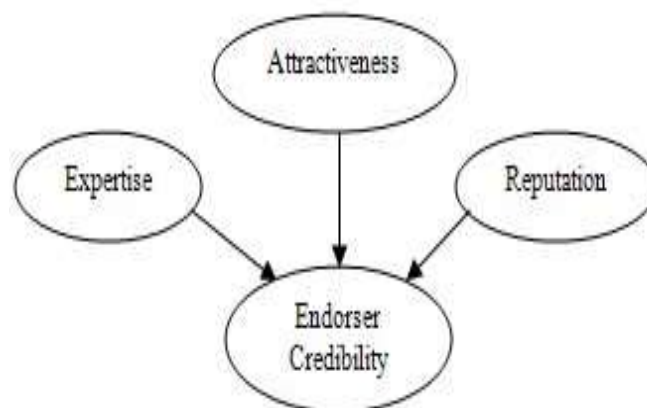


Figure 2.2: Antecedents of Endorser Credibility

Source: Ohanian (2011)

2.5 Match up-Hypothesis model.

The match-up model the Product Match-up Hypothesis-celebrity-brand congruence model is based on the hypothesis, that the effects of using a celebrity in marketing communications depends on the degree of perceived fit between the brand that is product name, symbol, image, benefits and attributes and image of the celebrity (Kamins and Gupta, 2014). The model argues that not every celebrity will effectively advertise every brand in any product category. Celebrities being human, are prone to too many risks which may ultimately misrepresent the brand for example (i) risk of bad behaviour (ii) risk of associating with too many brand names. A study by Liu (2005) to investigate the influence of celebrities in relation to the match-up with product confirms that only a high match between a product and a celebrity has a positive influence of generating more purchase intentions compared with low celebrity product match, and that the attractiveness level of celebrities is not statistically significant to influence subjects' purchase intention. The model's limitation is its inability to define and measure celebrity characteristics that are important for individual product categories and brands. Several studies by Choi & Nora (2015), Braustein & Zhang (2015), Ohanian (2011), Kahle & Homer (2015) show that match-up between endorser and product is positively related to consumer's attitudes and purchase intentions.

2.6 The meaning transfer model.

The model comes as an improvement to the Sources model and the match up hypothesis. The sources models have been tested and confirmed by Fink et al (2014); Hunter, Burger and Davidson (2018); Hovland and Weiss (2011); Kahle and Homer (2015), but McCracken (2018), criticized them for not portraying all the elements that determine communication effectiveness. McCracken (2014) argues that it is therefore impossible to know why a celebrity only works out for certain products, and not for others. In addition, the source models do not provide

a method to discriminate celebrities in a useful way. In remedy of this McCracken (2011), postulated the meaning transfer model, which consists of three stages showing the transfer of characteristics or meanings. Figure 2.3 below shows the meaning transfer model

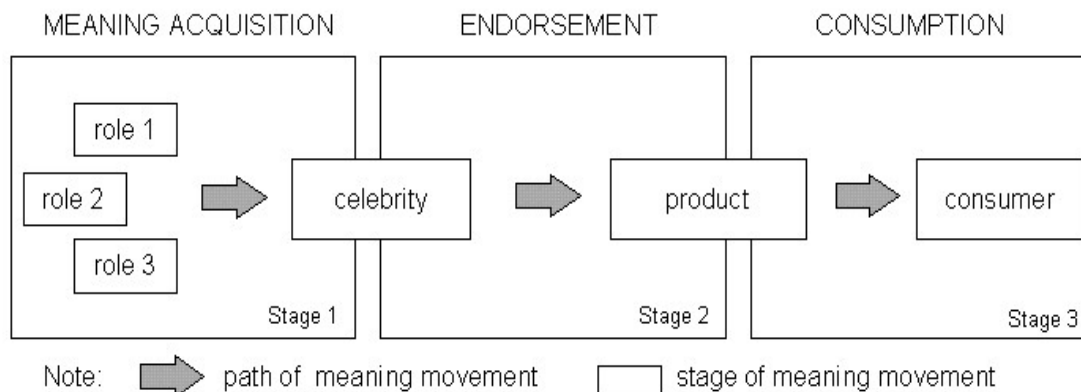


Figure 2.3: The meaning transfer model
 Source: Keller (2013)

Stage 1: Meaning Acquisition.

As advocated by the model, celebrities carry a unique constitution of meaning due to their association in the community and their social power. Celebrities bring higher value compared to anonymous models in adding credibility and power to the advertisement based on their lifestyle and personalities. Celebrities possess a high degree of power and as advocated by Mgbakoigba, (2017) celebrities have a God like status, which transcends to a powerful enchantment of persuasion to consumers. At the first stage “culture” a celebrity is defined by all characteristics that correspond to his or her image in the media through work performed, statements, roles played, etc. Tianchi (2012) suggested that celebrities bear a variety of the existing cultural meanings in people’s life, such as status, class, gender, age, personalities and lifestyles. More importantly, the cultural meanings brought by a celebrity can be transferred from the endorser to the endorsed products (McCracken (1989).

Stage 2: Endorsement.

At the second stage “endorsement” various celebrity associations are transferred to the product advertised by him or her. The key issue at this stage is to determine the symbolic properties of the brand to be strengthened or created through advertising activities, and to then select a celebrity who is consistent with desired symbolic properties. The endorsement process allows a celebrity to spread out their popularity and pass it on to the product. The underlying protocol is however to obtain a celebrity who possesses the features that match with the product. As observed by Basu (2009) using celebrity endorsement requires the congruent between celebrity’s characteristics and brand image.

Stage 3: Consumption.

At this particular stage meaning has been transferred from the celebrity to the brand and the consumer becomes a part of a larger whole, gains self-appreciation and strengthens his or her own self-image through the transfer of such meanings. McCracken, (1989) highlighted that the final stage can be examined as the most important and sophisticated step. Basu (2009) stressed out that it is easy to get a celebrity as the face of the brand, however the hard task is that of ensuring consistence. As observed by Beerli & Josefa (2013) a celebrity endorsed advert only succeeds if it creates a durable perception in customer’s mind, the resultant implication should be high brand awareness such that whenever a consumer comes across the representative celebrity, they should automatically recall about the brand. This model is a significant extension of the match-up model because it emphasizes not only the celebrity- brand match-up but also the choice of meanings to be transferred from the celebrity to the advertised brand. An elaboration of this approach is proposed by Misra & Sharon (2010) who implied that meanings are transferred from two directions which are; from the celebrity to the brand and from the brand to the celebrity.

2.7 The contribution of brand ambassador to brand awareness in developed countries.

Developing and maintaining strong brands is a key marketing strategy in business-to consumer environments (Homburg & Schmitt, 2010). According to Aaker (2010) building brand awareness economically and efficiently

is considered a major goal of advertising and is argued to have significant influence on consumers. Brand awareness relates to the strength of the brand recognition and recall (Keller, 2010). Hoyer (2010) noted that brand awareness is a basic level of brand knowledge involving at the least, recognition of the brand name.

In developed countries social media is stamping out as a powerful tool with which brand information is travelling from celebrities down to end consumers. Westberg (2010) pointed out that an ambassador has the ability to get access to target groups that, in many cases, would not have been reached and also to increase brand awareness, create or strengthen brand image as well as to achieve brand differentiation. Toshiba signed Sachin on to be their brand ambassador and more consumers became aware of their brand (Manoharan, 2010). Fluenz (2016) also pointed out that a number of selfies on Instagram posted by a popular celebrity usually account with a product from a specific brand displayed prominently in the background. In 2010 Tiger woods became the brand ambassador of Nike and the sales dramatically increased (Forbes, 2012). This is because, when a celebrity is paired and associated with a brand, this association helps shaping the image of the brand in the mind of the consumer (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). The audience of enthusiastic fans, all ready to mimic their favorites, may not even know that a branding exercise is actually in motion here (Fluenz, 2016). Brand ambassador has been around as a marketing communication tool for a long time and its use has continued to be on the rise despite the huge resources it demands. Ateke & Ishmael (2015) conducted a study on the brand positioning of developing countries on the international market, the findings were somewhat significant to the study in question.

The study found out that in order to break the international boundary developing countries should first break the international barrier and create awareness. One of the presented suggestions to create awareness was the use of international celebrities. Ateke & Ishmael (2015) suggested that the use of celebrities in the marketing of international products creates awareness for the international brand through leveraging on the popularity and fan following base of celebrities. According to Segers (2012), the majority of Belgian companies considered sport sponsorship and athlete endorsements in particular as a marketing tool to boost communication with existing and potential consumers. The company considered the use of sport sponsorship and heavy promotional spending using celebrities in an endeavor to boost its sales. Although the revenues of the Belgian companies have not been analyzed in terms of celebrity adverts, the companies create a hint of suggestion that celebrity endorsement is related to sales and brand awareness. McCracken (2013) established that the use of celebrities in marketing contributes to brand name recognition and creates a positive association with the endorsed product. Melford & Nwulu (2015) indicated that celebrity endorsement enhances persuasion and improves advertising effectiveness. In addition Ateke (2013) pointed out that celebrity endorsement has been convincingly advanced as an operative technique to make a brand stand out from the advertising clutter and facilitate brand awareness.

2.8 The celebrities and consumer perception.

In the marketing circles, celebrity brand ambassadors are seen as individuals who enjoy public recognition and use this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (McCracken, 2013). In short, the cultural meaning and status of the celebrity is passed on to the product he associates himself with and therefore, consumers believe that by associating themselves with the product they can get that meaning of the celebrity transferred to them through association with the product as noted by Choi & Rifon (2007). For example, actors or cricketers celebrities in India are worshipped and loved by the people because these celebrities are deemed to be referents by consumers which refers to imaginary or actual individuals envisioned to have significant bearing on the consumer's evaluations, aspirations and behaviour as argued by Jain (2011). This is supported by Khatri (2006) who observed that celebrities give a great impact on perception of choosing the product because consumers perceive their favourite celebrity's association with a product as an endorsement for the use of the product and therefore buy the product because want to be seen like the celebrities.

It is vital to note that every celebrity brand ambassador through their performance, creates an impression in the society that persuade people to associate with them through attributes such as trustworthiness, reliability, credibility, likeability and attractiveness with different celebrities (McCracken, 2012). In a recent chartroom discussing the concept of brand ambassadors, Gaurav (2016) ascertained that brand ambassadors are a symbol for consumer aspirations, centrally of how consumers want to look like, want to date like, live like, to be loved like, to be talented like. In developed countries, it was established that being popular generates lots of income for the celebrity through the use of social media platforms like Face book and Instagram. Generally, brand ambassadors are seen as part of the social elite who engage in the public relations machine of television and movie roles, special event appearances, talk shows and gossip magazine placements (Gaurav, 2016; Agrawal & Kamakura, 2015). As observed by McCracken (2016) and Elberse (2017) brand ambassadors are often admired especially by young consumers, who borrow from such celebrities for their identity construction. Accordingly, brand ambassador constitute inspirational figures and comparative referents and are sometimes considered heroes, providing the high

standards of achievement to which consumers desire to achieve to (Gaurav, 2016). In a recent chat forum discussing on why the strategy of brand ambassador works, Strategic Marketing Institute (2016) advocated that consumers like to see a popular face on a product such as Beyoncé, Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian, Kanye just to mention a few.

Issues addressed on the forum pertain to the fact that consumers admire fame and when they see for example Queen Beyoncé in the Pepsi commercial or their print advert, it ultimately catches their attention. Most fans, believe that if their favorite celebrity features in a commercial, the product is favorable, and as noted by Steve (2018) is most likely to buy the product. Consequently, Zufer et al (2015) point out that there are 3 types of endorsers which are expert endorsers, celebrities and lay endorsers. If a celebrity holds certain expertise in a field of study, when that celebrity endorses a product from that particular field, the outcome should be positive word of mouth and increased sales. Cristiano Ronaldo as an example stamps out as the 4th paid celebrity from Nike's celebrity list (Nike News, 2015). These celebrity as suggested by Atkin & Block (2013) are talented with dynamic, attractive and likeable qualities. Thus, most companies try to align these qualities to their products through marketing communication strategies and an advertisement featuring a celebrity delivers a higher degree of appeal compared to the adverts without celebrities (Farell, et al 2010). As observed by Pughazhendi & Ranindran (2012) marketing ultimate objective is to instil a strong position in consumers mind by developing a mighty brand.



Figure 2.4: Beyoncé Pepsi commercial, Davido Pepsi commercial.

Source: pepsi news

As observed by Pughazhendi & Ranindran (2012) marketing ultimate objective is to instill a strong position in consumers mind by developing a mighty brand. The question asked by all firms is how to significantly attract and retain customers. The study by Pughazhendi concluded that when a purchase requires high involvement, such as purchase of a motor vehicle customers like to see celebrities endorsing their vehicle or brand of choice. In the marketing of durable products like automobiles customers want to see, male celebrities endorsing automobiles than female celebrities. K.V (2012) advocated that a product which is endorsed by a celebrity is more likely to be remembered by customers. Customers pay additional attention to advertisements in which a product or service is endorsed by a celebrity and they recall it for a longer period of time. The study by K.V (2012) also noted that for durable products celebrity endorsements do not have any influence but when it comes to products that require choice of quality and price considerations celebrity endorsements have a relative impact. The study concluded that in selection of a brand customers select those brands which are endorsed by a celebrity.

Al Zoubi & Bataineh (2011) stressed out that broadcast advertising using celebrities is widely done and successful to a target of mass market of consumers. In addition the researcher highlighted that advertising appeal can be magnified by using the face of a celebrity. Consumers as pointed out by Al Zoubi & Bataineh (2011) are more attracted by celebrity endorsed adverts. Celebrities as advocated by Shukre & Dugar (2013) have a strong positive effect on consumer's memory and learning approach. Shukre & Dugar (2013) conducted a study on the effect of celebrity endorsements on consumers' decision making processes on 100 students of National Capital Region in India and found that if the respondents' favourite celebrity endorses a certain product then they are more likely to

go and buy the product within a month after watching the advertisement. The study also revealed that females are more likely to go and purchase the product as opposed to males.

3.0 Methodology

Phenomenology as a research philosophy was adopted. Hui Lien (2012) points out that phenomenology is a philosophy and a method which aims to better understand life experiences. The research used the phenomenological research philosophy which was defined by Saunders (2009) as a valuable means of finding out what is happening, seeking new insights, asking questions and assessing phenomena through the use of literature search, engaging experts and conducting focus group interviews. The study adopted a case study design approach which was explained by Creswell (2002), as a study that provides an opportunity to explore in depth, the phenomenon while controlling other factors like time, costs and resources. A case study provides a useful base for building theories. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) noted that a case study attempts to extract a deeper understanding of little understood phenomenon by focusing on a single entity. The selection of a case study approach will be considered mostly when the focus is to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and also when the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions that he or she believes are relevant to the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2003). This research is focused on university students. The total population of this study was composed of up of around 8177 students (Students account records). This includes students from all varied faculties from Chinhoyi University of technology. For this research a sample of 100 students were chosen. The sample which was carefully selected to provide data which represents the whole population from which it has been drawn. The questionnaire and an interview guide were the main data collection instruments used. Quantitative data analysis was done using SPSS and qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis.

4.0 Research Findings

A response rate of 100 % was obtained from this study which was regarded as high and relevant. This was achieved through self-administered questionnaires that were administered on random basis, respondents were given enough time to voice their opinions about the study. The table and figure below shows the response rate of the questionnaires.

Table 1:4.1: Questionnaire response rate.

Respondents	Distributed	Returned	Response rate (%)
Level 1 students	25	25	100
Level 2 students	25	25	100
Level 3 students	25	25	100
Level 4 students	25	25	100
Total	100	100	100

Source: survey

In this study an analysis of the age group of respondents was done and results obtained show that age group of 18-25 accounted for a greater proportion of the respondents. This was generally because of the functional educational system in Zimbabwe which allows learning at younger ages. The results obtained signal that 79.2% of the respondents were of the age 18-25 with the exception of only 20% that were of the age groups 26-30 and 31-35. This shows the functional educational system within Zimbabwe which allows learning at younger ages. It was noted that that 83% of the university students follow celebrities. This outcome is generally attributed to the fact that everyone in life has got people that he or she aspires to be and to live a life like. In support of this Knibbs (2013) highlighted that celebrities are loved and followed by the people because of their ability to make it in life than others.

In this study it was noted that the age group of 18-25 accounted that university students view Musicians 58% as their favourite celebrity endorser type. Actors 14.0% are also viewed as effective endorsers by a few of the students. This result may be attributed to the fact that music amongst all entertainment is usually enjoyed by all, university students in particular spent most of their time streaming to online music on YouTube that is why they like musicians significantly. The results obtained from the study show that a total of 82% of the respondents agree that celebrity endorsement contributes to consumer buying behavior in developing countries. This is supported by Balakrishnan & Kumar (2012) who noted that celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on

consumer buying behavior. Furthermore Jain (2011) presented an exciting remark that celebrities are loved and worshipped in India but however they should be studied before being implemented on the market.

To add on, the strategy is also being used extensively in western Africa. Ghana in particular with particular reference given to Fan Milk Ghana has used Michael Essien the famous Chelsea football player as the face of its brand. The results of that move as presented by Israel & Vincent (2015) was a significant rise in sales and consumer buying behaviour. In china it was also shown that celebrity endorsement positively contributes to consumer buying behaviour and awareness of local products thus according to a research by Hong-Xia and YI (2011).

It was established that 84 % of the respondents agreed that they are likely to buy products that have been advertised by celebrities. In support of this Herbert Hainer (2015) found out that Germany consumers ultimately respond to celebrity endorsements, a report by the Chief executive of Adidas showed that sales of Adidas significantly increased when Kanye West signed as the brand ambassador. In addition, it was shown In the United states of America that when a celebrity endorses a product, sales of that brand endorsed significantly increase. With reference to Gatorade's sales it was shown that celebrity endorsement contributes to sales. Elberse (2016) showed that consumers from America increased their purchase habits when Maria Sharapova won the acura open and australlian open classic. Furthermore, it was also shown in Sweden that celebrity endorsements enhances sales and consumer buying behaviour, a case study of volvo was put forward which significantly shows the positive relationship between sales and celebrity endorsement. 97.2% of university students agreed that celebrity endorsement contributes to awareness of many local and international brands. Focus group discussions findings show that university students recall some of the top brands that were endorsed by celebrities. In support of this Mooij (1994); Hofstede (1984), highlighted that the advertising strategy can be used to create awareness across international borders. In Sweden celebrity endorsement strategy was also found to be enhancing brand image and sales of Volvo (Byberg, 2015). In addition South African journal for sport conducted a research on celebrity endorsement, the results showed that for those products that lack tangible cues, celebrity endorsement can relatively provide product cues that shape consumer perception and awareness.

It was established that 95% of the respondents agreed to the fact that celebrity endorsement instigates brand recall. In support of this Shumba (2017) indicated that even though consumers are exposed to a lot of television commercials the celebrity advert seldom goes unnoticed and is easy to recall amongst other brands. In addition Ateke & Ishmael (2015) advocated that if a celebrity is a brand ambassador of a product, when consumers see the celebrity they should automatically think about the product which the celebrity is currently endorsing. With reference to Zimbabwe when a famous celebrity such as Oliver Mtukudzi is mentioned, Zimbabweans who are fans of Oliver Mtukudzi might significantly relate to his deal as the African ambassador for Jazz. Another example might be that of Winky D and his relationship with the Gtel brand. This notion however maybe more applicable to international celebrities than domestic celebrities.

88% of university students agreed to the fact that celebrities hold power to change their lifestyle and perceptions. In support of this Choi & Rifon (2007) specify that celebrities are deemed as referents groups by consumers, which refers to imaginary or actual individuals envisioned to have significant bearing on the consumer's evaluations, aspirations and behavior. The power of the celebrities lies in these influences that they exert on consumers, even though they themselves are physically and socially distant from an average consumer. Jain (2011) Argues that, be it actors or cricketers, celebrities in India are worshipped and loved by the people. Khatri (2006) argued that sometimes celebrities do not instill a purchase intention from consumers but they give a great impact on perception of choosing the product. Gaurav (2016) ascertained that celebrities are a symbol for our aspirations, centrally of how consumers want to look like, want to date like, live like, to be loved like, to be talented like. In Ghana it was shown that Michael Essien was able to change the perception of Fan milk products, before his endorsement deal with the company consumers in Ghana viewed the product as inferior but shortly after association with product consumers changed their perception (Israel, 2015).

It was noted that 70% of the respondents agreed that university student's choices and preferences are influenced by celebrities. In a recent chat forum discussing on why the strategy of celebrity endorsements works, Strategic Marketing Institute (2016) advocated that consumers like to see a popular face on a product, the likes of Beyoncé, Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian, Kanye to mention a few. Issues addressed on the forum pertain to the fact that consumers admire fame and when they see for example Queen Beyoncé in the Pepsi commercial or their print advert, it ultimately catches their attention. In support of this Shukre & Dugar (2013) postulated that in Indian consumers after seeing an advert on television rush to purchase the advertised product. It was highlighted that 77 % of the respondents agree that celebrities hold power to influence society behavior. This was a notion

deduced from consumer choices and preferences selection that if celebrities can influence consumers at individual level, the influence can also be at society level. In developing countries with reference to Zimbabwean zimdancehall artistes, their influence on society behavior is of great magnitude.

In real life situations youngster's lookup to the most popular people in society and try to copy the lifestyle of those people. In Brazil a developing country from the continent of South America, studies have shown that youngsters follow the lifestyle of popular footballers like Ronaldo and Ronaldinho. In Zimbabwe it is quite unfortunate that most of the popular figures are stamping out from the Zimdancehall category. Mbare where most of these artistes are stamping out from is now known as the ghetto mouthpiece where drug abuse is taking place. Youngsters in Mbare and all over Zimbabwe also look up to their celebrities for guidance and lifestyle, it is quite unfortunate that the guidance and lifestyle patterns they are getting is in the opposite direction. 72% of the respondents signal Zimbabwean celebrities as an untrustworthy reference group. The result obtained is attributed to the fact that domestic celebrities that are here present in developing countries are not recognizable on the international chart due to their domestic behaviors and lack of competence. As indicated by respondents local celebrities are associated with drug abuse and thug life. Contrary to this a study done in China by Hong-Xia and YI (2011) showed that domestic celebrities are trusted in comparison with foreign celebrities in the advertisement of local products. Celebrities as indicated by Zuber, et al (2015) are most likely to be trusted if they hold certain expertise in the area being advertised, for example with reference to local Zim dancehall celebrities if they were to advertise alcoholic products then most consumers would likely trust their decision since they are regarded as experts in that area.

83% of the respondents agreed that they will buy the product even if their favourite celebrity was involved in a scandal. The results show that consumers in developing countries are by far more loyal to their favourite celebrities as compared to consumers in developed countries. Recent developments in Zimbabwe have shown that Zimbabweans are civilized and educated people in terms of how they perceive and approach life situations. One excellent remark by a 5th year mechatronics student was that celebrities are people who have fame and popularity but behind the camera and all the social media fame they are still human beings with blood flowing in their veins. Contrary to this, In Brazil it was shown by a research by Marcon (2018) that celebrity scandal negatively affect consumer buying behaviour in Brazil. The results from Brazil showed that stock prices and consumer sales react favorably to the news of celebrity endorsement and unfavorably to a negative news report. 65% of the students also agreed to the fact that celebrity adverts are more influential on adverts. In Ghana it was shown by Israel (2015) that youth from Ghana find celebrity endorsed adverts more appealing than non-celebrity adverts. In India as presented by Jain, (2011) film actors and cricketers are loved by the people, as a result most of the adverts screening on the Indian television feature a film actor or a cricketer. Silvera & Austard (2004) suggested that an estimate of more than twenty percent of advertising campaigns in the USA used celebrities, and about ten percent of advertising budgets were allocated to paying celebrities for their marketing participation.

5.0 Recommendations

i. Use of the Match up hypothesis model approach.

It is recommended that the match-up model hypothesis be used in developing countries in order to enhance celebrity effectiveness. The Product Match-up Hypothesis -Celebrity-brand congruence model is based on the hypothesis, that the effects of using a celebrity in marketing communications depends on the degree of perceived fit between the brand (product name, symbol, image, benefits and attributes) and image of the celebrity Kamins and Gupta (1994). The model argues that not every celebrity will effectively advertise every brand in any product category. Celebrities being human, are prone to too many risks which may ultimately misrepresent the brand for example (i) risk of bad behaviour (ii) risk of associating with too many brand names.

ii. Use of international celebrity in domestic adverts

It is recommended that International celebrities be used by companies in developing countries. The study findings show that when university students were asked to mention celebrities they view favorably most of the respondents would mention international celebrities than local ones. Although this study did not significantly prove if international celebrities have more impact than local celebrities it is most likely that international celebrities arouse more feelings of purchase than local ones.

Suggestion for future research

The study significantly showed that there is a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and university students buying behavior in developed countries. The study at hand was more broad therefore the researcher recommends for other researchers to continue the study on a more specialized approach. The study should be carried out at industry level with reference to a particular product where celebrities are currently endorsing for

instance focusing on the Gtel brand with reference to how celebrity endorsements are influencing consumer buying behavior in Zimbabwe or SADC region. The study also found out that celebrity adverts are more influential than non-celebrity adverts but however the researcher did not fully examine which gender and physical attributes of the celebrity endorser influence more to consumers.

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