

Influence of Celebrity Endorsements on Young Consumers' Brand recall Behaviour in Kenya A Case of Nairobi County

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Abstract

Celebrity endorsement has become a major form of advertising and Kenyan companies are increasingly using it to promote and position their brands targeting different market segments. The purpose of this study was to examine the Influence of Celebrity Endorsements on Young Consumers' Brand recall behaviour in Kenya. Researcher-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from a sample of 167 youth drawn from Nairobi County. A multi-stage non-probability sampling was employed and the data analyzed using descriptive and factor analysis. The main findings revealed that celebrity endorsement generally influenced young consumers' brand recall behaviour. When used as endorsers, celebrities were found to add an appeal to the endorsed brand making it easier for consumers to correctly remember it as having been previously seen or heard in the crowded market. The findings will provide guidance to marketing and advertising practitioners on how to improve the effectiveness of celebrity-based advertising by way of aligning their brand with a celebrity that resonates with the target market. To future researchers, this study will act as a catalyst and help them in defining future research agendas. Replication of this study using larger samples, different age groups and in different geographic settings is suggested for cross-validation purposes.

Introduction

Celebrity endorsement has become one of the most popular forms of advertising across the globe (Okorie & Aderogba, 2011). The ability of celebrities to influence consumer behaviour has been suggested both in academic and practitioners' literature. Erdogan (1999) argues that when a celebrity is used to endorse a product, the attributes associated with that celebrity are transferred to the product. This strongly influences consumer's attitude towards the endorsed brand, their purchase intentions as well as follow-through and many other aspects of their consumer behaviour. Consequently, companies are spending billions of dollars on celebrity endorsement contracts as they align themselves and their brands with celebrity endorsers all in a bid to promote and sell their brands world all over (Ayuk & Nyaseda, 2008; Latif & Abideen, 2011).

According to McCracken (1989) young consumers are more influenced by celebrities than any other segment of society. Young people usually form secondary attachments to celebrities portrayed in the mass media and this plays an important part in their transition to adulthood through the development of an adult identity (Boon & Lomore, 2001). Marketers have found celebrities to be a powerful asset to drive and respond to young consumers' behavior since they serve as a reference point when they are forming values and attitudes, or behavior. Consequently, most celebrity endorsed adverts in whichever form majorly targets the young generation (Taylor & Stern, 1997; Weiss, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

Companies in Kenya are increasingly using celebrity endorsement to promote and better still position their products in the name of providing a better appeal to the different market segments. Considering this trend, the main problem is therefore the apparent use of celebrities in advertisements campaigns without determining their influence on the target audience. While noteworthy studies on the relative effects of

celebrity endorsement on consumer behaviour exist (Spry, Pappn, & Cornwell, 2011; Pringle & Binet, 2005; Menon, 2001; Roy, 2006; Pornpitakpan, 2003; Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). Ayuk & Nyaseda (2008) and Appiah (2011) observed that a large portion of the existing empirical findings comes from the developed nations and that few studies on the influence of celebrities on young consumer behaviour have been undertaken in non-Western context and the Kenya context in particular. Therefore, the available evidence of the influence of celebrity endorsement on young consumers' behaviour need not hold true when generalized in Kenya due to the differences in terms of geographical, societal and cultural contexts. Besides, different celebrity endorsement appeals differently to different consumer age groups and thus the available evidence may not be applicable to younger consumers particularly in Kenyan context. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of celebrity endorsement on young consumers' brand recall behaviour in Kenya, a sub-Saharan African country.

An overview of celebrity endorsement in Kenya

The concept of a celebrity endorsement is not new in Kenya and can be traced back to the 1970s when Kipchoge Keino, the 1968 Mexico Olympic gold medalist, was signed by the Coca-Cola Company to feature in Coca-Cola adverts (Karuku, 2010). Since then, this strategy has become a popular approach to communicate about brands. Many companies in Kenya are now turning towards well-known musicians, sport personalities, comedians, media personalities, beauty queens, as well as local actors and actresses to endorse their products and services. Interestingly, celebrity endorsement in Kenya is not sector specific as it is being employed across industries be it in tele-communication, financial services, auto-mobile or consumables and regardless of product type (Karuku, 2010). Examples of such local marketing effort include: the signing of Paul Julius Nunda (Jua Cali) by Telkom Kenya in its Orange 'Dunda' Campaign in 2009 and Yego, a javelin medalist in 2012 London Olympic, to promote Orange's Internet services in 2013. East African Breweries Limited (EABL) have featured eminent musicians David Mathenge (Nameless) and Esther Wahome; and sports legend Paul Tergat in their adverts. Similarly, Coca Cola Company picked on Charles Bukeko, who acts as Papa Shirandula as the face of their Coca Cola "Brrr" campaign that was ran globally. On their part, Equity Bank featured the former Miss Kenya, Cecilia Mwangi, marathoner Paul Tergat and Afro-fusion musician Susan Owiyo in their "Karibu Member" advertising campaign. From the above illustrations, it is evident that celebrity endorsement in Kenya has increasingly become a common feature of modern advertising.

Theoretical Literature review

According to Braunstein & Zhang (2005) several models have been proposed as possible lens to study how endorsers might influence consumers and what attributes of the celebrity are more influential. Nevertheless, the theoretical background for this study is situated on four prominent models: the Source Credibility Model (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951), the Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1968), the Product Match-Up Hypothesis (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1989, 1990), and the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989).

The Source Credibility Model

Hovland, Janis & Kelley (1951) proposed the source credibility model which holds that effectiveness of a message depends on perceived levels of expertise and trustworthiness of an endorser. Thus, information acquired from a credible source will have a favorable impact on the opinions, beliefs, action and behavior of a recipient, in this case the consumer (Kelman, 1961; Erdogan, 1999). Credibility refers to the listener's level of acceptance of, and degree of confidence in the endorser and the message (Ohanian, 1990) and it is made up of two components: expertise (knowledge) and trustworthiness (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Maddux & Rogers, 1980; Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985). Expertise is the perceived ability of an endorser to make or provide valid assertions about something based on their perceived level of knowledge, skills and experience in that field (Ohanian, 1991; Hovland et al., 1953).

Trustworthiness is the target audience's perceived level of integrity, honesty and believability of the endorser (Ohanian, 1991; Erdogan et al. 2001).

The Source Attractiveness Model

The source attractiveness model argues that attractiveness of a perceived source have a favorable effect on the receptivity of the message (Erdogan, 1999; Meenaghan, 1995; Kelman, 1961). Source attractiveness is the endorser's physical approach personality, likeability, and similarity to the receiver (Solomon, 2009). According to McGuire (1968) attractiveness is made up of three interrelated dimensions: familiarity, similarity and likeability. Familiarity of an endorser is the extent to which the receiver (customer) has knowledge or is aware of the source (endorser) resulting from exposure. Similarity is the extent to which the receiver (customer) finds imaginary resemblance between the source (endorser) and itself. Likeability is the degree to which the receiver holds affection/acceptance of the source (endorser) based on its physical appearance, intellectual skills or behavior (McCracken, 1989; McGuire, 1968).

The Product Matchup Hypothesis

The product match-up hypothesis holds that for an endorsement to be effectiveness a lucid 'fit' should exist between the brand being endorsed and the celebrity endorsing it (Till & Busler, 1998). The model specifically stresses that the personality characteristics of a celebrity endorser will enhance a product's evaluations only if the celebrity's image 'match-up' with the product's characteristics (Erdogan 1999). This product-celebrity match-up doesn't only depend on just conventional congruency but also on the physical attractiveness of the celebrity. Thus, for any endorsement to be perceived credible enough to enhance the image of the product and influence on consumers' behavior, the celebrity and product features should be seen to complement each other (Kamins, 1990). According to Misra & Beatty (1990) there should be a 'fit' between the celebrity's characteristics, personality, image and the brand's attributes.

The Meaning Transfer Model

The meaning transfer model holds that celebrity endorsers bears a set of meanings which resides in them such as gender, age, social-status, class, personality, lifestyle types, and cultural meanings (McCracken, 1989; Brierley, 1995). The Meaning Transfer Model revolves around meanings and their transfer along a path comprising three successive stages. Every celebrity encompasses a unique set of meanings which during the endorsement process are transferred to the product being endorsed thereby creating a product personality that depends on the symbolic properties conveyed by the endorser. Eventually, when a consumer buys the product, these meanings are transferred to the consumer (McCracken, 1989).

Empirical Literature review

Celebrity endorsement has been found to enhance consumers' assessment of the products, aid in the recognition of brand names (Petty et al., 1983; Menon, 2001; Clark & Horstman, 2003) and eventually to generate a greater likelihood of customers' choosing the endorsed brand (Kahle & Homer 1985; Kamins et al., 1989; Ohanian, 1991). According to Kahle & Homer (1985), the attractiveness of a celebrity can enhance the attractiveness of a brand which consequently increases the possibility of it being remembered. Burroughs & Feinberg (1987) have argued that the presence of a celebrity endorser in an advert aids in the identification of brands that are associated with such an endorser. Further, the duo noted that if a proper association is established between a product name and the endorser, the presentation of an endorser's name tends to significantly increase the likelihood that the product name will also be recalled to mind.

While investigating the effectiveness of matching endorsers with a brand, Misra & Beatty (1990) found that the attitudes toward adverts and the recall of products in such adverts improves when there is congruence between the endorser and the brand name. Buttressing the same proposition, Aaker & Day (2010) pointed that if the consumers establish a link between the endorser and the brand, the consumers

ends up having a positive belief and disposition toward the brand. Similarly, while studying the impact of celebrity match on consumers in China, Ogunsiji (2012) found out that celebrity match with the target audience increases the marketability of a brand due to the increased attention and the resultant brand recall. Hsu & McDonald (2002) also noted that it is easy to recall a product or brand that is very often associated with a particular endorser over a long period of time in advertising. In her study, Ohanian (1991) acknowledges that a celebrity has the ability to create awareness and initial interest for an advert. Okorie & Aderogba (2011) on their part argues that celebrity's endorsement helps maintain consumers' brand attention and recall which is likely to influence them to choose goods and services endorsed by celebrities compared to those without such endorsements.

Nevertheless, evidence has also shown that celebrity endorsement does not always project the thoughts that are linked to the brand in a consumer's memory. In their respective studies, Petty et al. (1983) and Friedman & Friedman (1979) argued that celebrity endorsers enhanced brand recall and increased brand recognition but only under low involvement conditions. Supporting their argument, Kokil (1991) while investigating the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand building in India, argued that the correct choice of a celebrity can influence consumer behavior but its effects on the long term brand recall and loyalty was yet somewhat arguable. Further still, while studying the effects of endorsers on purchase intentions among Philippine consumers, Rodriguez (2008) found that there are other variables apart from the physical attractiveness of the celebrity which affects the effectiveness of the message and brand recall.

From the above discussion, it is clear that literature has contradictory evidence about the impact of the credibility dimensions on consumers' brand recall. While some studies found out that celebrity endorsements were likely to persuade and induce a high level of brand recall in consumers, others found that this was dependent on other factors apart from the celebrity attributes such as the type of buying, levels of involvement etc. and thus the influence of celebrity endorsement is still highly debatable and subject to investigation.

Methodology

Sample Selection and Data Collection

The study adopted a deductive approach given that it attempted to build on an already well-established theoretical framework as it sought to explain the casual relationship between the variables. The strategy of enquiry adopted was a descriptive survey with a view of establishing the influence of celebrity endorsement on young consumers' brand recall behaviour in Kenya (Kothari, 2004; Creswell, 2003). A quantitative-descriptive research design was employed to help establish the state of affairs as it existed as argued by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, (2009); Creswell, (2003) and Kothari (2004). Descriptive and exploratory factor analysis were used to analyze the collected data. Questionnaires were designed and used to collect primary data in the survey from 180 youth drawn from drawn from six selected divisions in Nairobi County, Kenya. A youth was defined as any individual within the republic of Kenya who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35 (GOK, 2010). Nairobi County has eight administrative divisions: Westlands, Kibera, Embakasi, Dagoretti, Pumwani and Kasarani which have further been categorized into three distinct market zones namely; Upper income, Middle income and Lower income markets based on the economic development and well-being of their inhabitants (Nairobi City, 2010). Taking cognizant of the heterogeneous nature of the population, a multi-stage non-probability sampling was employed. First, a total of six divisions were purposively selected, two divisions from each of the three aforementioned market segment, based on the Nairobi City household sampling frame (Nairobi City, 2010). Secondly, convenience sampling was employed to hand-pick respondents found at the local shopping malls, churches, markets and other youth forums within the selected divisions. Respondents were identified on the basis of their proximity, ease of access and willingness to participate in the study while taking care to ensure diversity in terms gender, levels of education, employment status and income level. Convenience sampling was deemed appropriate as it has been found to be the most common sampling technique used when dealing with young consumers as the sampling unit (Kumar, Kim

& Lou, 2009; La Ferle & Chan, 2008; Martin & Bush, 2000). A total of 180 questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the help of two researcher assistants trained before-hand. The research was conducted in the month of February, 2014 and took a period of ten man days.

Data Analyses

To validate the scale used in the study, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the principal component analysis (PCA) and the Cronbach's alpha test was used to check for internal consistency among the resulting variables using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Before conducting the factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was conducted to establish the proportion of variance in the variables that might be caused by underlying factors and an overall KMO for the data was 0.623 recorded. According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham (2006) this value was considered sufficient for the study to progress with factor analysis given that a sample ought to have a KMO MSA greater than 0.6 for it to be considered adequate. The Bartlett's test of Sphericity showed a significant value of 0.0000, which meant that a strong relationship exists among the variables which made it possible for them to cluster. The initial factor solution resulted in six components which accounted for 67.836% of the total variance. To get more refined and useful factors than the direct component loadings, the resulting factors were then rotated for factor loadings using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method as argued by Hair et al. (2006). For a variable to be included in the final revised structure, two rules were followed: (Test 1) an item must have had a loading threshold of at least 0.40 (Hair et al., 2006); and (Test 2) a difference between square loading (factor/item-total correlation) of at least 0.30 factor loading on at least one factor (Blankson & Stokes, 2002). In addition, Eigen-values specified for the factor analysis was only for values greater than one as argued by Malhotra & Birks (2007). This resulted to four factors which accounted for 57.149% of the total variance (**Table I**).

Findings and Discussions

A total of 180 questionnaires were administered out of which 167 were completely filled giving a 92.78% response rate. 51.5% (86) of the respondents were female while the remaining 48.5% (81) were male. Majority of the respondents (73%) had post-secondary education (56 university graduates and 71 college graduates); 20.7% were high school graduates while the remaining 6.3% had graduated from primary school. Many of the respondents (51.7%) were either salaried or in self-employment, thirteen respondents (7.5%) were unemployed while over forty percent of the respondents were students (**Table II**).

The twenty-one items in the questionnaire were subjected to an EFA using the PCA followed by a Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method. This resulted to four components which accounted for 57.149% of the total variance and they had an overall Cronbach's Alpha value 0.850 was considered sufficient (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). One statement, "I choose a product if it is endorsed by celebrities whom we share similar lifestyle" did not load on any component thus was not clustered with any other. A reliability test was then performed on the all the four components using the Cronbach's Alpha test. Component 1 recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.815, component 2 had an (α) value = 0.813, component 3 had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.753 while component 4 had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.775 (**Table III**).

This study proposed four main celebrity's attributes that influenced on young consumers' brand recall behaviour. These are: celebrity credibility, celebrity attractiveness, celebrity meanings transfer and celebrity match-up. Celebrity attractiveness was the most important aspect of celebrity endorsement that galvanized young consumers' brand recall. It collected eight items that represents a celebrity who is stylish/elegant, presentable, sexy, trustworthy, handsome/beautiful, respectable and likeable. The perceived level of physical attractiveness of the celebrity (beautiful or handsome) was the key determinant of celebrity's attractiveness. Celebrity's attractiveness was found to be based on three interrelated aspects: familiarity, similarity and likeability (McGuire, 1985 & McCracken, 1989). Celebrity's instant recognition (familiarity) enabled consumers to quickly recognize the endorsed

brand. An endorser's name tends to significantly increase the chances that the product being endorsed will be recalled to mind and chosen among the alternatives (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Burroughs & Feinberg, 1987).

Celebrity credibility was the second attribute that influenced brand recall and was found to be a sum total of six elements namely: perceived level trust, experience, knowledge, honesty, dependability and skills. The most important dimension of celebrity credibility was found to be trust followed by experience and knowledge. The effectiveness of the message depends on the perceived level of trustworthiness and expertise of the endorser (Hovland et al., 1953). Trustworthiness is dependent on the perceived honesty and dependability of the celebrity endorser while expertise depends on the perceived extent to which a celebrity provides valid assertions based on their perceived knowledge, experience and or skills (Miciak & Shanklin, 2002; Baker & Churchill, 1977; Maddux & Rogers, 1980; Joseph, 1982 and Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Celebrity meanings transfer consisted of five elements. These elements were all related to the symbolic meanings that consumers associated with celebrity. Lifestyle of the celebrity was found to be the most important element that made up the celebrity meanings transfer. The lifestyle of a celebrity is seen to conform a lot to their personalities and as a result consumers tend to appropriate these to the brand that a celebrity endorses thereby increasing the recall value of that brand. Celebrities have symbolic meanings associated with them, which are drawn from their public career roles and performances, which are then passed to the endorsed product and eventually to the consumers thereby impacting on them (McCraken, 1986; 1989).

Celebrity match-up was found to be made up of three key elements all relating to consumers' ability to identify an associative link between the celebrity with either the product or the targeted audience and a connection between the product and what the celebrity is known for. Celebrity-product match-up was the main element that explained celebrity match-up and this was in agreement with Katyal (2007) who argued that celebrities generated brand recall only when consumers find a lucid fit between the celebrity and the brand. This was also consistent with the findings of Till & Busler, (2000) and Misra & Beatty (1990) who argued that endorsers are more effective when there is a fit between the endorser and the endorsed product. Endorsers who have demographic characteristics similar to those of the target audience are viewed more viable and thus are more influential (Ohanian, 1991; Kamins, 1994; Ogunsiji, 2012; Hsu & McDonald, 2002; Okorie & Aderogba, 2011).

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

This study was carried out to determine the influence of celebrity endorsement on young consumers' brand recall behaviour. Four celebrity's attributes-celebrity attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity meanings transfer and celebrity match-up - were found to positively influence on young consumers' brand recall behaviour. Of the four, celebrity attractiveness was found to be major celebrity attribute which influenced young consumers' intent to recall the endorsed brand. This was followed by celebrity's credibility. Celebrity meanings transfer was third while celebrity match-up was the least influential. Therefore, celebrity endorsement was found to be a cumulative effect of all celebrity's attributes and was found to positively influence on young consumers' brand recall behaviour. This suggests that when used as endorsers, celebrities adds an appeal to the endorsed brand and this makes it easier for consumers to correctly remember (recall) the brand as having been previously seen or heard in the crowded market.

The research's findings are considered important in that they will provide insight into how celebrity endorsement shapes and influence consumer's behavior among young consumers in Kenya, a sub-Saharan African country. This will help marketing and advertising practitioners to align their brand with a celebrity that resonates with the young consumers whom they are targeting, as well as provide useful information to MNCs when advertising products targeting the youths in the Kenyan market.

Limitations of the study

The major challenge was posed by the respondents who were reluctant to finish responding to all the questions when they felt the questions were too many.

Future research

Replication of this study using alternative research design, larger samples, different age groups and in different geographic settings is suggested for cross-validation purposes. A study using more dimensions of consumer behaviour may also be carried out to provide a richer research base for researchers to compare the outcome with the results of this study.

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Appendix

Table I: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Cumulative %
1	4.663	23.316	23.316	15.634
2	3.405	17.026	40.341	31.255
3	1.843	9.213	49.554	45.039
4	1.519	7.595	57.149	57.149
.				
21	.095	.454	100.000	

Table II: Respondents' Information

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	81	48.5%
	Female	86	51.5%
Age	18-20years	42	25.1%
	21-24 years	35	21.0%
	25-29 years	61	35.5%
	30-34 years	29	17.4%
Education	Primary	11	6.3%
	Secondary	36	20.7%
	College	71	40.8%
	University	56	32.2%
Income (Ksh)	Less than 5000	52	29.9%
	5000-10000	23	13.2%
	10001-20000	20	11.5%
	20001-30000	20	11.5%
	30001-40000	39	22.4%
	40001-50000	13	7.5%
	Over 50000	7	4.0%
	Self-employed	22	12.6%

Employment	Salaried	68	39.1%
	Unemployed	13	7.5%
	Students	71	40.8%

Table III: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Celebrities' attributes)

Items	Factor Loading
<i>Celebrity Attractiveness ($\alpha = 0.758$)</i>	
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it is beautiful or handsome.	.703
I recall a product if it is endorsed by a celebrity whom is liked by other people.	.603
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it is highly regarded (respected) by other people.	.546
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it has a sexual appeal.	.544
I recall a product if I know or am familiar with the celebrity endorsing it.	.502
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it appears to be stylish or elegant.	.482
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it is presentable.	.425
Eigen-value	4.663
Percentage of variance explained	23.316
<i>Celebrity Credibility ($\alpha = 0.829$)</i>	
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it appears to be trustworthy.	.785
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it appears to have some level of experience relating to that product or that particular field.	.723
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it appears to have some level of knowledge relating to that product or that particular field.	.701
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it appears to be honest or sincere.	.692
I recall a product if I can depend or rely on what the celebrity is saying about the product.	.675
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it appears to have some level of skills relevant to that product or that particular field.	.668
Eigen-value	3.405
Percentage of variance explained	17.026
<i>Celebrity Meanings transfer ($\alpha = 0.745$)</i>	
I recall a product if is endorsed by celebrities whom we share similar lifestyle.	.717
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it is a female.	.551
I recall a product if it is endorsed by celebrities who appears to be of high social status.	.528
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it is a youth.	.489
I recall a product if the celebrity endorsing it is a male.	.444
Eigen-value	1.843
Percentage of variance explained	9.213
<i>Celebrity Match-up ($\alpha = 0.712$)</i>	
I recall a product if its features match the personal attributes of the celebrity endorsing it (Celebrity-product match).	.691
I recall a product if it is endorsed by celebrities that I can identify with (celebrity-target audience match).	.664
I recall a product if there is an association between the product and what the celebrity endorsing it is known for.	.605
Eigen-value	1.519
Percentage of variance explained	7.595

Loadings ≥ 0.4 were considered significant

Source: Primary data