

**SOCIAL MEDIA CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AND
CONSUMERISM: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION
OF GENEVIEVE NNAJI'S ENDORSEMENT OF LUNA MILK**

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the effects of celebrity endorsement on social media to influence consumer behaviour among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University (EBSU), Abakaliki, with a focus on Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk. 400 students were surveyed using the Taro Yamane method. Social Learning Theory was adopted to explain the behavioural pattern, while four research questions and objectives guided the study. Data was analysed using percentages and 4 Likert scale mean value method. Findings revealed that Genevieve's messages on Facebook and Instagram have the strongest impact on the students and that her endorsements of the product have generated high brand loyalty, which will be sustained for a very long time. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between celebrity endorsement messages, brand loyalty and associated positive purchase decisions. It can be concluded that Genevieve's endorsement of Luna Milk has gone a long way to generate brand loyalty among students. Therefore, the study recommends that marketers should note that advertising has taken a revolutionary spin towards social media. Youths no longer pay much attention to conventional media, and as such it is better to use celebrities who are social media influencers with active followers to advertise products that youths are the significant target consumers.

Keywords: Celebrity, Consumer Behaviour, Advertising, Consumerism.

INTRODUCTION

The linkage between advertising, celebrities, and social media cannot be undermined as the metamorphosis has wielded greater powers to grasp attention, manipulate, and appeal the strength of celebrities. An innovative group of opinion leaders have emerged - social media influencers (SMIs). A social media influencer is characterized as an opinion leader who has been empowered by their network, is very active on social media (Li, 2016), and who can use their online platforms to spread information and significantly impact the opinions and behaviours of their audiences, due to their notable skills, knowledge, and/or attractive characteristics (Moreno et al., 2015). This is very evident considering the followership and fan base they command online.

Celebrities are likely to succeed in persuasion when people accept their social power (Briñol et al., 2017), which resonates with social influence. Social influence is defined as the potential to form and change the beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of a person resulting from the action of

a reference person or group (Tyagi, 2018). Ki and Kim (2019), a celebrity is an individual who possesses the capability to influence others through social media platforms. Due to the prospective influence, many more brands are approaching celebrities to generate branded content, such as product placements or brand recommendations.

Due to the growing popularity of social media, celebrities in Nigeria now thrive because there seems to be a shift in paradigm from traditional media advertising to internet advertising. Celebrities are considered effective endorsers, and many brands approach them to promote their products as a way to enhance the brand's popularity and stimulate purchase intention (Maden, 2018). This idea is called influencer marketing and consists of contracting influential people online to promote brand messages to their audiences

Statement of the Problem

The world is awash with products all competing for the same customers. Consumers rarely pay attention to television and radio commercials, buy hard copies of newspapers and magazines or look at billboards because they are subsumed with their phones, attentively absorbing or contributing to their online communities. Consumers rely on social media for information. Hence, producers have to employ the services of social media influencers who have overwhelming followers to engage consumers who are predominantly conversant with digital technology, as it is guaranteed that the advertorial messages get to the followers.

The world is fast-paced, and consumers are faced with social challenges which arguably hinder or distract them from watching television, listening to the radio, buying newspapers or rarely looking at billboards. A significant majority of consumers have Smartphones, which have fused these channels of communication to access information platforms on social media, hence the decline in conventional modes of advertising. Most celebrity influencers who are used to promoting brands arguably have over 15 million followers the world over, and this is far beyond the expected coverage of traditional advertising. This approach presents a new window to guarantee attention arrest, compliance and a far-reaching target audience within specific ages. This presents a sharp contrast to what traditional modes of advertising can achieve.

The Nigerian market is no different from this scenario as there are many brands and varieties of products competing for the same consumer market. However, the number of youths who are influenced by social media influencers is becoming underestimated. Youths rely more on social media for compulsive purchases or trend waves to influence their purchasing behaviours, which is why many companies now adopt celebrities with recognisable followership bases to become their brand ambassadors. This study aims to investigate EBSU students' perception of Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk to determine if this approach to marketing is viable for manufacturers to adopt.

Research Questions

1. Which Genevieve Nnaji's social media handles have the most impact on EBSU students?
2. What is the perception of EBSU students of Genevieve Nnaji as a Social Media Influencer?

3. What message on Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk makes students of EBSU purchase the product?
4. To what extent does Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk generate brand loyalty among students of EBSU?

Objectives

1. To identify the social media handles of Genevieve Nnaji that have an impact on EBSU students.
2. To examine EBSU students' perception of Genevieve Nnaji as a Social Media Influencer.
3. To find out the message on Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk that makes students of EBSU to purchase the product.
4. To determine the extent to which Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk generates brand loyalty among students of EBSU.

Significance of the Study

It is important for academics and marketing professionals to have an improved calculative understanding of celebrity influencer marketing. This study intends to provide more insight into social media marketing.

The study will be advantageous to social media influencers because it is expected to amplify characteristics of celebrities that promote positive consumer purchasing behaviour and brand loyalty. Marketers and brand statisticians will benefit from this research, which will provide necessary data on the extent to which celebrities help to achieve positive consumer behaviour.

Definition of Terms

Consumerism: This is the idea that increasing the consumption of goods and services purchased in the market is always a desirable goal and that a person's well-being and happiness depend fundamentally on obtaining consumer goods and material possessions.

Consumer Behaviour: This refers to how a customer acts or reacts in relation to the products and services they use and the companies that provide them. It deals mostly on the psychology, motivations and behaviour of individuals (Hayes, 2024).

Celebrity Influencers. They are opinion leaders with a huge network potential and influential power over consumers, and actively create and disseminate user-generated content (UGC) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) that is received, believed and positively responded to by unknown large audiences, in the form of textual and visual content depicting celebrities personal lives, lifestyles and purchasing choices (Gräve, 2017).

Genevieve Nnaji: Is a Nigerian Nollywood/Hollywood actress, screenwriter and movie producer. She is regarded as one the most respected elegant female Nigerian actress of the 21st century with over 13 million followers on her social media handles.

Scope of the Study

This study will cover the aspects of social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter/X and WhatsApp) and influence marketing. The study will focus on Genevieve Nnaji, a social media influencer, and her endorsement of Luna Milk. The study will generate perceptions strictly from undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU). This is because students are ardent users of social media, and Milk is usually the most common product they regularly consume as part of breakfast and dinner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

This year, Nigeria was home to 36.75 million social media users in January 2024, which is 16.2% of the total population. A total of 205.4 million cellular mobile connections were active in Nigeria in early 2024, with this figure equivalent to 90.7% of the total population (Kemp 2024). Social media is becoming a part of all aspects of people's lives and affects the way individuals interact with each other and with organisations (Alalwan, 2018). Evidently, social media is a virtual community where people connect across the world through various platforms, such as blogs and social networks like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. This is why the dearth of traditional modes of advertising is no longer getting maximum results. Evidence abounds as social media have a far greater capacity to reach mass audiences and are replacing traditional media. Also, the overall time spent on social media is increasing, and the number of users continues to grow worldwide, with 58.11% of the world's population being active on social media when considering eligible audiences aged 13+ years (Dean, 2021).

This new wave of social media has prompted marketers to adapt their marketing strategies and seek customers where they spend a great part of their time (Evans et al., 2021). Brands started incorporating social media as a way to attract consumers, due to its efficacy and the great opportunities it presents (Alalwan et al., 2017). Social media allows easier reach and engagement with the brand's target audiences and constitutes a more effective way to gather information, which allows companies to better understand consumers' behaviour and needs. Moreover, it is a cost-effective form of advertising since it requires less investment and effort compared to other marketing strategies linked to traditional advertising.

This phenomenon, known as social media marketing, can be defined as the use of social media technologies, platforms, and channels to create, share, and communicate information and offerings with the goal of positively influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour (Maden, 2019). Social media marketing is regularly connected with relationship marketing, in the sense that, instead of only trying to sell their products, brands try to connect with consumers.

Social Media Celebrity: A social media celebrity is a standard Internet user with a sizable number of followers on social media (Dean, 2021), whose opinions, knowledge and reputation are respected by their audiences, and who has the ability, above the average individuals, to inform, entertain and, influence attitudes and behaviours (Grave, 2017). These new opinion leaders have

a huge network potential and influential power over consumers and actively create and disseminate UGC and eWOM that is received by unknown large audiences in the form of textual and visual content depicting celebrities' personal lives, lifestyles and purchasing choices (Gräve, 2017). SMIs are very well known to the audience and are recognised based on admiration, association, aspiration, and/or recognition (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). A celebrities' popularity is based on having reliable characteristics such as confidence, friendliness, credibility, and interactivity, as well as the ability to communicate skilfully. Moreover, these influential individuals are overall described as verbal, smart, ambitious, productive, and self-assured (Conde, 2019; Forbes, 2016; Freberg et al., 2011).

In this context, they actively speak their own identity to others through social media, while trying to control their audience's perceptions of their image. As such, they carefully decide what to unveil about themselves in the content they share and opt to highlight mainly positive and relatable aspects of themselves and their lives in their online profiles, albeit without getting too far from reality (Conde, 2019). By doing this, celebrities maintain a consistent personal brand, which leads to the practice of self-branding, also known as personal branding. This concept refers to the development of a unique public image with the objective of commercial gain and is based on the attention economy and the narrative. A persuasive narrative can potentially attract followers for several motives, such as the message being inspirational, relatable, informative, and/or advisory (Khamis et al, 2017).

Genevieve Nnaji as a Social Media Influencer

Genevieve Nnaji, the fourth out of eight children was born May 3, 1979, in Mbaise, Imo State, Nigeria. She graduated from the University of Lagos with a degree in Creative Arts, where she started auditioning for acting roles in Nollywood. Her first role was in 1998 at the age of 19 where she featured in *Most Wanted*. In 2005, she won the Africa Movie Award (AMAA) for Best Actress in a Leading Role. In 2009 she was one of the best paid female actors in Nollywood. In 2015 she produced her first film called *Road to Yesterday*. By 2018, her directorial debut, *Lionheart*, was acquired by online streaming service Netflix, making it the first Netflix original film from Nigeria.

Genevieve Nnaji is also a women's activist. She advocates for Nigerian girls to be able to have a say in who they choose to marry, and she is against early marriage for the girl child and abuse of women in society. She is a strong feminist. She is a model who has been featured in many commercials, including Pronto (beverage), Lux (face of Lux 2004), and Omo detergent and owns her own clothing line, St. Genevieve, which donates its proceeds to charity. She has over 13 million followers on her social media handles.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing refers to the set of practices that identify, encourage, and use selected SMIs to create and promote sponsored content to their followers and the brand's target consumers (Lou & Yuan, 2019). In this type of marketing, brands give power to strategies involving these key individuals and opinion leaders who influence their audiences to aid in their marketing activities

by carrying and communicating the brand's message, with the goal of driving brand awareness and influencing consumers' purchasing decisions (Sammis et al., 2015).

There are two types of influencer marketing: earned and paid. Earned influencer marketing refers to SMIs voluntary promotion of brands and to the free recommendations or mentions of products, resultant of a pre-existing relationship between the SMI and the brand, or with the objective of social ascension by gaining the appreciation of others (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). On the other hand, paid influencer marketing relates to sponsored content, meaning the promotion of the brand's products is directly or indirectly paid (Delbaere et al., 2021). Nonetheless, out of the two, the most common form of influencer marketing is the latter, entailing sponsored content (Boerman et al., 2017).

Empirical Review

Lajnef (2023) considered the effect of social influencers on teenagers' behaviour in Tunisia using questionnaires. He adopted an empirical strategy using the cognitive map technique. The study added to the psychological literature by suggesting a new approach for constructing general cognitive maps to extrapolate the effect of social media influencers' distinctive features on teenagers' behaviour. The study also revealed that the influencers' distinctive features are interconnected.

Similarly, Liu and Zheng (2024) investigated the persuasive power of social media influencers with regard to brand credibility and the purchase intention of their followers. A survey approach using online questionnaires on Sojump (one of the biggest online apps for surveys) with a 7-point Likert scale measurement to gather information. Findings indicated that the informative value of influencers' content, authenticity and homophile positively affect their social relationships, which in turn, influences followers' purchase intention and evaluation of brand credibility.

De Castro (2023) in Ireland investigated the influence of social media influencers' content on young people's lives. The study used a questionnaire and thematic analysis using Nvivo. The study's sample population comprised 81 participants between the ages of 16 and 26. It concluded that young people are vulnerable to being influenced by SMIs in different circumstances. In this case, according to him, three drivers play crucial roles in parasocial relationships: trust, relation, and relationship.

No work has been done on celebrity dogmatism, which makes followers hero-worship, adore and acknowledge any information and appeal from their desired role models. Marketers are taking advantage of this new discovery as they have identified the firm grip and mind control of celebrities over millions of fans. This clearly can boost marketing sales beyond the expected rate if compared to conventional advertising channels.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory (SLT) was developed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s as an expansion of traditional learning theories, which primarily focused on direct reinforcement as a method of learning. Bandura argued that learning could occur through observation, imitation, and modelling, without requiring direct reinforcement or punishment. The core components of Social Learning Theory include:

1. Attention: For learning to take place, an individual must pay attention to a model's behaviour and its consequences.
2. Retention: The observed behaviour must be remembered in order to be replicated later. This involves storing the behaviour in memory.
3. Reproduction: The individual must have the physical and cognitive ability to reproduce the observed behaviour.
4. Motivation: An individual must be motivated to replicate the observed behaviour. This motivation could come from expected rewards, the desire to be like the model, or the perceived value of the behaviour.

Social Learning Theory posits that behaviour is influenced not only by direct experiences but also by observing others, especially those who are seen as models or figures of authority. The constant exposure to these behaviours allows followers to retain the information, which can influence their attitudes and perceptions toward the Naira. This theory explains the motivation why many youths subscribe to beauty, health and skin care products online without caution. Their attention has been arrested by the contents they see online; the lifestyle diffused in their memory while they make efforts to replicate such social appeal by patronizing the product.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was adopted. Ndiyo (2005) described it as a process of extracting information from a target population through observations, questionnaires, and/or interviews and subjecting the data obtained to statistical analysis to draw conclusions.

Population of the Study

The population will be undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki (EBSU), who are between 200 and 500 Levels. 100-level students will not be involved because they have not spent up to two months since the inception of the 2024/2025 academic session, and their knowledge and accessibility on campus will be limited. The population of the students is 12,076 (Information from Registry Department in October 2024).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This tries to show the techniques used in selecting the sample size from the entire study population. The formula propounded by Taro Yamane (1967) is used to achieve this.

Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = the sample size

N = the total population for the study

e = the error margin

1 = constant

Therefore;

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{12,076}{1+12,076 (0.05)^2} \\ n &= \frac{12,076}{1+ 12,076 (0.0025)} \\ n &= \frac{12,076}{30.1925} \\ &= 399.96 \\ \therefore \text{The sample size (n)} &= 400 \end{aligned}$$

A stratified random sampling technique will be adopted because it gives each unit in the population equal opportunity or the same probability of being selected in the sample.

Instrument for Data Collection

The questionnaire was used in sourcing information. This will be in the form of a Likert scale measurement. The decision to use a Likert scale is to allow different views to be expressed by the respondents. Also, the data can be easily analysed to judge sentiment or feelings towards

particular things. It is equally used to find out all the problems mentioned in the statement of problem in relation to solving them. Likert scale of measurement will be used because it helps not only to establish a relationship but also to explain the extent of the relationship.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The structured questionnaire will be validated by senior researchers from Department of Mass Communication, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AE-FUNAI). To obtain the reliability of the instrument, it will be subjected to trial study. The same questionnaire will be administered to selected respondents from the study areas (that is 400 level students of Mass Communication, AE-FUNAI). The data to be collected are expected to be in line with the focus and objectives of the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The resultant data will be analysed using descriptive statistics with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). SPSS enables the data to be summarized and enables the researcher to build and validate predictive models. The data will be presented using tables, frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data that were collected were analysed and presented in tabular form. It should be noted that four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were distributed but fifteen (15) of them were disqualified because of multiple answers. Three hundred and eight-five (385) copies were valid. Therefore, this analysis was based on the three hundred and eighty-five (385) copies of the questionnaire that were returned and are valid. The decision was that when the total agreement is 50% and above, we accept the statement item, but when the total agreement is below 50%, we reject the statement item.

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Statement Items	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	168	43.6
	Female	217	56.4
Age	16-20 years	156	40.5
	21-25 years	123	31.9
	26-30 years	86	22.3
	Above 30 years	20	5.3
Marital Status	Single	296	76.9
	Married	86	22.3
	Divorced	2	0.5
	Widowed	1	0.3

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Religion	Christianity	324	84.2
	Islam	59	15.3
	Traditional Religion	2	0.5
Academic Level	200 Level	137	35.5
	300 Level	108	28.1
	400 Level	111	28.8
	500 Level	29	7.6
Faculty	Social Sciences	68	17.7
	Humanities	59	15.3
	Engineering	47	12.2
	Medical Sciences	48	12.5
	Physical Sciences	64	16.6
	Biological Sciences	51	13.2
Academic Sponsor(s)	Environmental Sc.	48	12.5
	Self	53	13.8
	Parents	261	67.8
	Relatives	48	12.4
	Scholars	23	6.0
	Monthly Allowance/Income	Less than ₦10,000	2
₦10,000-₦30,000		215	55.8
₦30,001-₦50,000		91	23.6
₦50,001-₦70,000		48	12.5
₦70,001-₦100,000		10	2.6
	Above ₦100,000	19	4.9
TOTAL		385	100%

From table 1 above, it can be seen that the respondents were made up of male and female. The male in the sample were 168 (43.6%) while the female was 217 representing 56.4% of the entire sample. In term of age, most of the respondents (72.4%) were between the age of 16 – 25 years. The least category, those above the year of 30 years. They are 20 in number representing 5.3% of the total sample.

It was also observed from Table 1 that the majority of the respondents (296 or 76.9%) were single. Those who were married were only 86, representing 22.3% of the entire sample. Similarly, majority of the respondents (296 or 76.9%) were Christians. In terms of the academic level of the students, the majority of them (385 or 100%) were from the 200, 300 and 400 levels. The faculty that contributed the highest number to the sample is Social Sciences (68 or 17.7%), followed by Physical Sciences (64 or 16.6%), while the least is the Faculty of Engineering, with only 47 respondents. It was reported that majority of the respondents (215 or 55.8%) had monthly allowances/income of #10,000-#30,000. This is followed by those who received monthly allowance/income of #30,001-#50,000. The last category is those who received monthly allowance/income of #70,001-#100,000. They make up 2.9% of the entire sample.

Thematic Issues

Here, the results on issues related to the study's core objectives are analysed and presented. The following keys should guide the understanding of the tables below: SA = Strongly Agreed, A = Agreed, UD = Undecided, DA = Disagreed, and SDA = Strongly Disagreed, while N = the Total number of participants used.

Table 2: The social media handles of Genevieve Nnaji that have the most impact on EBSU Students

Statement Items	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total Agreed	Decision
Facebook has a strong impact	109	211	6	41	18	320	Accepted
	28.3%	54.8%	1.6%	10.6%	4.7%	83.1%	
Instagram has a strong impact	216	132	2	30	5	348	Accepted
	56.1%	34.3%	0.5%	7.8%	1.3%	90.4%	
Twitter (X) has a strong impact	38	101	35	168	43	139	Rejected
	9.9%	26.2%	9.1%	43.6%	11.2%	36.1%	
WhatsApp has a strong impact	10	97	112	69	97	107	Rejected
	2.6%	25.2%	29.1%	17.2%	25.2%	27.8	

Source: Fieldwork 2024

N = 385

The study investigated the social media handles of Genevieve Nnaji that has the most impact on students. Result shows that two social media handles actually made the greatest impact on the students. These social media handles are Facebook and Instagram. In actual fact, 83.1% of the participants agreed that Genevieve Nnaji's messages on Facebook have made a very high impact on them. Similarly, 90.4% of the participants also believed that Genevieve Nnaji's messages on Instagram also made great impact on the students. The two handles present Genevieve Nnaji's messages the way it is appreciated by the followers. On the other hand, the respondents said that Genevieve Nnaji's messages on Twitter (X) and WhatsApp handles are either unknown to them or did not make any impact on them.

Table 3: Perception of EBSU Students on Genevieve Nnaji as a Social Media Influencer

Statement Items	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total Agreed	Decision
Genevieve Nnaji is an excellent media influencer	160	193	0	31	1	353	Accepted
	41.6%	50.1%	0%	8.1%	0.3%	91.7%	

Genevieve Nnaji is just a good social media influencer	178	201	0	3	3	379	Accepted
	46.2%	52.2%	0%	0.8%	0.8%	98.4%	
Genevieve Nnaji is just a fair social media influencer	5	6	61	207	106	11	Rejected
	1.3%	1.6%	15.8%	53.8%	27.5%	2.9%	
The huge amount paid to Genevieve Nnaji as a social media influencer is worth it.	219	115	23	7	21	334	Accepted
	56.9%	29.9%	6.0%	1.8%	5.5%	86.8%	
Genevieve Nnaji as a social media influencer lives up to expectation.	228	126	0	21	10	354	Accepted
	59.2%	32.7%	0%	5.5%	2.6%	91.9%	

Source: Fieldwork 2024

N = 385

The study also examined the perception of EBSU students on Genevieve Nnaji as a social media influencer. Almost all the participants agreed that Genevieve Nnaji is an excellent social media influencer and that she is very good at her job as a social media influencer (Table 3). The respondents also believed the huge amount of money that is paid to her as social media influencer and brand promoter is worth it. It is the agreement of most of the respondents that Genevieve Nnaji, as a social media influencer, is living up to expectations. In other words, the use of social media influencers for the advertisement and promotion of a brand is a worthwhile venture.

Table 4: The Messages of Genevieve Nnaji’s Endorsement of Luna Milk that Makes Students of EBSU to Purchase their Products

Statement Items	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total	Decision
						Agreed	
I am proud to be a brand ambassador of Luna Milk	192	79	26	48	40	271	Accepted
	49.9%	20.5%	6.8%	12.5%	10.4%	70.4%	
Follow my family breakfast to taste the perfect milk for nourishment	86	58	102	81	58	144	Rejected
	22.3%	15.1%	26.5%	21.0%	15.1%	37.4%	
My Luna and I	261	86	2	27	9	347	Accepted
	67.8%	22.3%	0.5%	7.0%	2.3%	90.1%	
Genevieve Nnaji sipping tea with her daughter made from Luna Milk	79	198	7	66	42	277	Accepted
	20.5%	51.4%	1.8%	17.1%	10.9%	71.9%	
Genevieve Nnaji keeping fit with Luna	108	126	28	69	54	234	Accepted

Milk in the background picture	28.1%	32.7%	7.3%	17.9%	14.0%	60.8%	
Your wonderful milk is here, Luna Milk!	116	141	10	81	37	257	Accepted
	30.1%	36.6%	2.6%	21.0%	9.6%	66.8%	

Source: Fieldwork 2024

N = 385

Table 4 presents the results of the assessment of the messages of Genevieve Nnaji’s endorsement of Luna Milk that make the students purchase the products. It was that four of her messages were most striking. The messages are: “I am proud to be a brand ambassador of Luna Milk”, “Follow my family breakfast to taste the perfect milk for nourishment”, “My Luna and I”, “Genevieve Nnaji sipping tea with her daughter made from Luna Milk” and “Genevieve Nnaji keeping fit with Luna Milk in the background picture”. It was discovered that most of the participants have been patronising Luna Milk as a result of their exposure to Genevieve Nnaji’s messages.

Table 5: The Extent to which Genevieve Nnaji’s Endorsement of Luna Milk Generate Brand Loyalty among EBSU Students.

Statement Items	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	Total	Decision
I became fully aware of Luna Milk because Genevieve Nnaji endorsed them	118	97	27	66	77	215	Accepted
	30.6%	25.2%	7.0%	17.1%	20.0%	55.8%	
I began to drink Luna Milk because Genevieve Nnaji endorsed them	210	69	18	51	37	279	Accepted
	54.5%	17.9%	4.7%	13.2%	9.6%	72.4%	
I have become a regular buyer of Luna Milk since Genevieve Nnaji endorsed them	222	86	9	20	48	308	Accepted
	57.7%	22.3%	2.3%	5.2%	12.5%	80.0%	
I will never stop drinking Luna Milk because it was endorsed by Genevieve Nnaji.	176	103	38	31	37	279	Accepted
	45.7%	26.8%	9.9%	8.1%	9.6%	72.5%	

Source: Fieldwork 2024

N = 385

The study also assessed the extent to which Genevieve Nnaji’s endorsement of Luna Milk has generated brand loyalty among the students. It was found, as can be seen in Table 5, that 55.8% of the participants agreed that they became fully aware of Luna Milk because of Genevieve Nnaji’s endorsement of the products. Similarly, 72.4% agreed that they have been consuming Luna Milk more since Genevieve Nnaji was associated with such a product. The majority of the respondents (80%) also pointed out that they have been regular buyers of Luna Milk since Genevieve Nnaji began to endorse the products. In the same vein, 72.5% of the participants agreed that they would

never stop consuming Luna Milk because of its close association with Genevieve Nnaji. In other words, Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk has generated high brand loyalty, which will be sustained for a very long time.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: Which Genevieve Nnaji's social media handles have the most impact on EBSU students?

The study identified the social media handles of Genevieve Nnaji that have the greatest impact on the students. It was found that Genevieve Nnaji's messages on Facebook and Instagram have the strongest impact on the students. And it actually adjusted their preference for Luna Milk. This finding supports the views of Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) when they pointed out that these days, social media have a far greater capacity to reach mass audiences and are replacing traditional media. This result also aligns with the position of De Veirman et al. (2017) that consumers tend to trust more the opinions shared online by people they perceive as similar to them, believing more in the authenticity of users whom they believe to be willing to share the positive aspects of a product or brand as much as the negative, in contrast to corporate communication. Social media celebrity endorsement can be closely related to Social Learning Theory. This theory posits that individuals learn behaviours through observation and imitation of others, particularly those who hold significant influence, such as celebrities. It becomes evident that the grandeur lifestyles and materialistic displays by these celebrities can serve as a model for their followers.

Research Question Two: What is the perception of EBSU students of Genevieve Nnaji as a Social Media Influencer?

Data revealed that the participants view Genevieve Nnaji as an excellent social media influencer who is worth her onions and lives up to expectations. They strongly believed that Genevieve Nnaji, as a social media influencer, is a good model to copy. They were willing to follow her and any product/brand that is associated with her. This result agrees with the opinion of Liu and Zheng (2024) when they posited that the informative value of influencers' content, authenticity and homophile positively affect their para-social relationships, which, in turn, affects followers' purchase intention and evaluation of brand credibility. From this result, it can be seen that Genevieve Nnaji is believed to be an excellent social media influencer because she has been fulfilling those criteria that were outlined by Domingues Aguiar and Van Reijmersdal (2018) when they said that celebrities serve as brand ambassadors by creating and sharing sponsored content in the form of pictures and videos of the product alone or incorporated in their everyday moments, by mentioning the product in their posts' captions or tags, or sometimes by participating in major advertising events. All these can have witnessed in Genevieve Nnaji's messages about Luna Milk. Similarly, the finding has supported the measures of a good social media influencer as was given by Glucksman (2017) when he noted that displaying products through photographs and videos, connecting brands and consumers, and exchanging opinions and feedback with their followers is essential for the success of social media influencer. The research question in context to social learning theory suggests that individuals learn behaviours through observing and imitating others, particularly those who are perceived as role models, such as celebrities.

Research Question Three: What message on Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk makes students of EBSU to purchase the product?

The study attempted to find out the messages of Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk that make the students purchase the products. Data reveal that the contents of Genevieve Nnaji that appealed to students most are: "I am proud to be a brand ambassador of Luna Milk", "My Luna and I", Genevieve and her daughter sipping tea made with Luna Milk, and "Your wonderful milk is here, Luna Milk". It was found that most of the participants have been patronising Luna Milk as a result of their exposure to Genevieve Nnaji's messages. This result supports the views of Lim et al. (2017) and De Veirman et al. (2017) that SMI's strong social media messages and role allow them to influence the attitudes, decisions, and behaviours of their followers. According to them, there is evidence that a positive perception about the endorser and her content results in a positive perception about the product as well.

Research Question Four: To what extent does Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk generate brand loyalty among students of EBSU?

The result shows that Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk has generated high brand loyalty, which will be sustained for a very long time. In other words, there is a strong relationship between an effective celebrity message and brand loyalty. This result agrees with the opinion of Seiler and Kuzca (2017) that the perception of the product significantly influences purchase intention, and eWOM highly impacts both on social media through the content of the SMI. This is also the reason Lou and Yuan (2019) submitted that brands have been increasingly trying to capitalise on opportunities to influence consumers' purchase intention through social media by communicating interesting content about their products in order to capture their customers' attention and increase brand awareness, with the goal of stimulating consumers' interest on the promoted products and consequent purchase intention. To achieve this, as a result, shows, Berryman & Kavka (2017) suggested that the affective relationships between SMIs and their audience are essential for SMIs' persuasive power and depend on the SMI's ability to be authentic, honest, and genuine in their social media posts. The research question in context with Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn behaviours through observation and imitation, particularly from influential figures such as celebrities. The actions and content shared by these celebrities can significantly shape societal norms and values regarding messages about health and nutrition.

Conclusion

People subscribe most to the media channel they believe will serve them best with information regarding their current pressing needs. This can be seen in the participants' choice of Facebook and Instagram as the media with the strongest impact on Genevieve Nnaji's messages. Similarly, the characteristics of the celebrity determine how effective she will be in influencing the followers' purchase intentions. This is evident in the participants' description of Genevieve Nnaji as an excellent social media influencer and that she is worth all the money spent in contracting her and the endorsement.

It can also be concluded that Genevieve Nnaji's endorsement of Luna Milk have strengthened brand loyalty among students. In other words, there is a strong relationship between celebrity content, endorsement and brand loyalty. Therefore, the use of celebrities as social media influencers has effectively enhanced promotion and marketing of goods and services.

Recommendations

1. Marketers should understand that most youths no longer use much of conventional media (Radio, TV and Newspapers). It is better to use social media to advertise products, as youths are the primary consumers.
2. Celebrities have known followers, and as such, the advertiser/marketer already knows the size of potential viewers/listeners of their messages. This helps in deciding advertising expenditure and expected impact.
3. Celebrities should know that their followers have media of choice, and they should try to use the medium/media where they have the greatest followers.
4. Similarly, social media influencers should that people are following them based on trust. So, they market products that have potential good benefits for their audience. Consumers should also be able to ensure that the social media influencer they follow is actually endorsing a beneficial product. That means, they should ensure that there is a match between the product/service and the SMI.
5. Marketers should be aware of the full potential of SMIs and use them maximally to ensure profitable sales of their products and/or services

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