



Relationship between Celebrity Endorsement and Impulse Buying Behaviour Among University Undergraduates

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between celebrity endorsement and impulse buying behavior among university undergraduates. The participants were 244 undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. They comprised of 112 males (45.9%) and 132 females (54.1%). Data were collected using Ohanian (1990) celebrity endorsement scale and Rook and Fisher (1995) impulse buying behaviour scale. Pearson product moment correlation statistic was used for the analysis. The results revealed that expertise ($r=.17, p<.05$), attractiveness ($r=.24, p<.01$) and trustworthiness ($r=.19, p<.05$) all had a significant positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour. The implication of these findings is that since these young consumers are easily influenced by these celebrities, firms and marketers may use that medium to exploit them. It was then recommended that Nigerian Consumer Protection Council should come up with good policies that will see that manufacturers and marketers are not exploiting the use of celebrity endorser to deceive consumers into buying products that are of substandard quality.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement, Expertise, Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Impulse Buying Behaviour, Awka

Introduction

According to economists, production cycle is not complete until product gets to the final consumer. In line with this submission, producers and marketers employ different strategies in marketing their products. The competitive nature of market environment has made marketers to constantly look for means that will help them to deliver their product to consumer. In recent time, producers and marketers spend much of their time in packaging, advertising, and promoting their products in a manner that will lure consumers into making spontaneous purchase. Researchers have also observed that unplanned purchase which they referred to as impulse buying has become the most significant trend in today's business environment (Gangai & Agrawal, 2016, Muruganatham & Bhakat, 2013).

Scholars have offered different definitions but similar ideas on the meaning of impulse buying behaviour. According to Aragoncillo and Orus (2018), impulse buying is a strong, uncontrollable and spontaneous urge for immediate possession of products and services with little evaluation of purchase consequences. Ghani and Jan (2011) observed that impulse buying occurs when a consumer experiences sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy a product immediately. For Rook (1987), individuals making impulse buying think less on the consequences of making such purchase because their attention is focused on the immediate gratification. The center point here is that individuals engage in impulse buying due to irresistible emotional attachment they have with the product. In this sense, they make a rapid purchase that is devoid of reflective thinking and careful evaluations.

Researchers have discovered that impulse buying involves affective component of behaviour (Akram et al., 2016; Ganga & Agrawal, 2016; Rook & Fisher, 1995). This goes on to show that individuals who involve more in impulse buying have easy affection with the products they are purchasing. Although impulsive buyers may engage in certain level of cognitive appraisal of the product, the affective state in most cases overcomes the cognitive deliberation. This is the reason why they find it difficult to resist the temptation to make

such purchase. In line with this thinking, Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) explained the impulse buying is a struggle between psychological forces of desires and willpower.

Impulse buying unlike planned buying is based on emotional preferences rather than rational evaluation. According to Cha (2001), unplanned apparel purchase is divided into four types by purchase evaluation process. Rational impulse purchase involves emotional preferences and objective evaluation. Emotional impulse purchase is connected with emotional preferences. Cautions impulse purchase involves only objective evaluation. Lastly, gender impulse purchase is related to gender preferences. This categorization shows the level of affection versus cognition that precedes the decision process. As we have suggested earlier, impulse buying involves combination of cognitive and affective influence but the affective influence in most cases overpowers the cognitive evaluation.

Impulse buying is thoughtless, unreflective and immediate ownership of a product by an individual shopper (Rook & Finisher, 1995). Though unplanned and unintended purchase, the outcome or consequences of taking such risk can be positive or negative. Rook (1987) rightly observed that individuals who engage in impulse shopping can either end up with the satisfaction or regret, taking such a quick decision and wasting their money on the product that did not address their needs. This reveals that impulse shoppers still have expectations on the product they are purchasing. If the product they purchased meets their expectation, they not only get satisfied but will also be willing to repurchase such product in future. However, if the product falls short of their expectation, they regret their decision and will not be disposed to spend their money on such product again. In this sense, impulse buying can serve as an incentive for future patronage. In this sense, satisfied consumers are likely to become brand loyalist of the product.

Several factors have been found to influence individuals' decision to purchase product they did not intend to buy prior to their shopping experience. As multiple as these factors maybe, this study is interested in looking at celebrity endorsement. The use of celebrities in advertising has in recent past become a trending strategy in marketing. Celebrities are individuals who are well-known to the public due to their accomplishment, entertainment and social roles (Speck et al., 1988). In many societies like Nigeria, mostly young people take these celebrities as their role model. They also follow them on social networks and

identify and imitate their lifestyle. Alsmadi (2006) observed that many consumers aspire to share their values and lifestyle. Marketers now capitalize on this by getting these celebrities to endorse their products thereby making the consumers to perceive their product in the same manner they perceive the celebrity endorser.

Celebrity endorsement has proven to be an effective marketing strategy to promote and to create awareness about a product (Hasnain, et al., 2018). Individuals tend to associate with their model celebrities by using the product the celebrity endorsed. In this sense, such individual is most likely to make an immediate purchase of such product while shopping. It was in this vein that Hussain et al., (2011) expressed that the use of celebrities will lead to greater impulse buying behavior. Udo and Nwulu (2005) observed that the use of celebrity makes advertisement more memorable and the company in the short run generates high brand awareness as well as an increase in market share. These celebrities are preferred by the marketers because they have distinctive characteristics and charisma that made them a model for others. In associating these celebrities with their brand products, marketers believe that consumers are likely to purchase their product in the market even in the absence of the celebrity endorser. This is because the sight of the product is mostly likely to invoke the emotional attachment they had with the endorser. This is in line with Pavlovian (1927) theory that a consumer may start associating a product with a likable endorser when the two has been paired together repeatedly.

In today's competitive environment, the use of celebrities in the advertising and marketing of products have been believed to have attracted greater sales. However whether the use of these celebrities has actually influenced impulse buying has attracted the attention of researchers. In line with, this study has a special interest in looking at the relationship between celebrity endorsement and impulse buying in the Nigerian business environment. This is because of the aggressive manner in which firms and marketers have saturated the Nigerian media space with advert of these celebrities endorsing their products.

The Conceptual Framework

Celebrity endorsement has been defined as recognized, individual who associate their recognition, fame and image with consumer product or with organisations' brands by

promoting such brands through their appearance in commercials or advertisement (McCracken, 1989). The celebrities have been known to share some outstanding characteristics that make them a likable figure. They in turn use their fame and image to influence the behaviours of their fans and followers. This has no doubt made them marketable figures in modern business environment. In looking at some of these characteristics, Ohanian (1990) propose three key dimensions of the endorsers that affect buying behaviour. The first deals with the reliability, honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, dependability, and credibility of the celebrity endorser. Second is attractiveness which deals with likability, elegance, classy and familiarity of the celebrity endorser. Lastly is expertise which deals with experience, knowledge and personal skill of the celebrity endorser. The present study looked at the relationship between each of these dimension and buying behaviour.

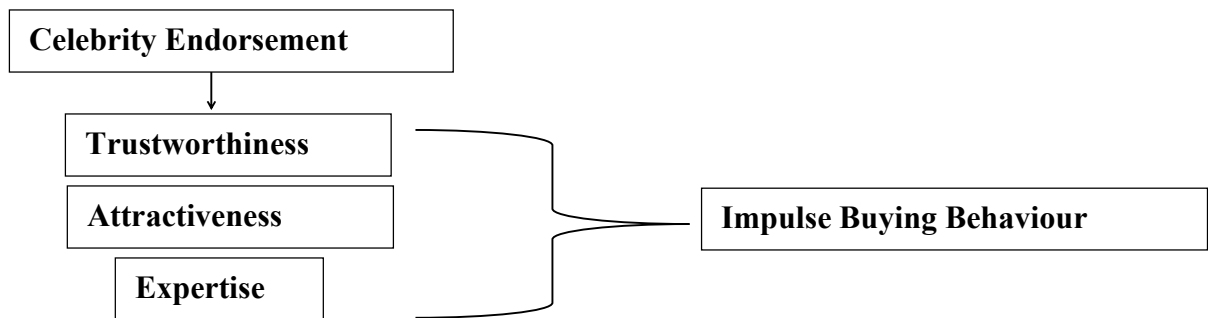


Figure 1: conceptual framework of the relationship between celebrity endorsement and impulse buying behaviour.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was anchored on social learning theory propounded by Bandura (1977). The theory states that people can learn new behaviour by observing and imitating others. Edinyang (2016) stated that individual can imitate and exhibit the behaviours of other people within their environment such as their parents, peers, and influential models. This simply means that individual tends to imitate and model their behaviour by observing the behaviours of important people in their lives. The imitation process offers the individual an opportunity to replicate behaviour. It should be noted that individuals imitate significant others who they form emotional attachment to.

Social learning theory has been widely used to explain consumer buying behaviour such as impulse buying (e.g Mittal et al., 2015; Afzal et al., 2020). Impulse buying is a strong, uncontrollable and spontaneous urge for immediate possession of products and services with little evaluation of purchase consequences (Argonicillo & Orus, 2018). Impulse buying behavior like every other behavior can be an outcome of social learning. In this sense, individual simply purchase the product because they have observed their significant models using the product, and they tend to identify with the model. Hu et al., (2019) observed that social influence contributes to evoke impulse buying tendency as it represents the material symbols of social identity. The important point to note here is individual on some occasion engages in impulse buying in order to identify with their adorned celebrities who the individual has observed using or endorsing such product in media advert.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Previous studies have been able to establish link between celebrity endorsement and impulse buying behaviour. Cohen and Golden (1972) observed that physical attractiveness influences individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behavior like impulse buying. Kahle and Homer (1988) manipulated celebrity physical attractiveness and likability and found the two factors to have influenced consumers purchase intention including impulse buying. Zhu et al., (2021) investigated on celebrity attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness and found the three-celebrity model to be related to impulse buying. This collaborated with the study of Munjal (2020) who also observed significant positive relationship between the three models and impulse buying behavior. Gupta et al., (2015) investigation revealed that celebrity endorsement has a significant impact on impulse buying. Working with Nigeria samples, Onu et al., (2019) found that celebrity physical attractiveness and trustworthiness have link with consumer purchase intention. Malik and Qureshi (2016) also in their research found celebrity endorsement to be a good predictor of consumer buying behaviours.

From our review so far, it is evident that strong link exists between celebrity endorsement and impulse buying. Marketers have trapped on these premises as they have widely been using celebrities in advertising their products. The review revealed that the main three

dimensions of celebrity endorsement, physical attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness have good relationship with impulse buying. However, we were still able to realize that most of the studies reviewed were done in western countries with different cultural orientation from Nigeria. In trying to understand the state of celebrity endorsement and impulse buying among Nigerian consumers, the following hypotheses have been posited for study.

- i. Celebrity endorser's expertise will have a significant relationship with impulse buying behaviour.
- ii. Celebrity endorser's attractiveness will have a significant relationship with impulse buying behaviour.
- iii. Celebrity endorser's trustworthiness will have a significant relationship with impulse buying behaviour.

Method

Participants

A total of two hundred and forty-four students from departments of Mass Communication, Accountancy and Microbiology of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka participated in the study. The departments were chosen through stratified random sampling technique. Online google form was posted on their WhatsApp platforms and only students that filled the form within stipulated time participated in the study. The participants comprised of 112 male students (45.9%) and 132 female students (54.1%). The age range of the participants is from 17 to 30 years, with the mean age of 23 and standard deviation of 3.4.

Instruments

The following instruments were used for data collection.

Celebrity Endorsement Scale (CES)

Celebrity Endorsement Scale (CES) developed by Ohanian (1990) measures the influence of celebrities supporting a brand. The scale has three models or dimensions. Expertise measures the extent to which the endorsement is perceived to be knowledgeable, skillful

and experienced. It has a test-retest reliability of 0.75 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.92. Trustworthiness measures the extent to which the endorser is perceived to be believable, honest and dependable. It has a test-retest reliability of 0.86 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.95. Attractiveness measures the extent to which the endorser is perceived to be likable, familiar and similar. It has a test-retest reliability of 0.81 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. All the items used a five-point Likert response ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

Impulse Buying Behaviour Scale (IBBS)

Impulse buying behaviour scale (IBBS short form) was developed by Rook and Fisher (1995). The scale measures the individual tendency of engaging in spontaneous purchase. It consists of nine items that is measured by five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agrees (5) to strongly disagree (1). The participants can respond about the extent to which they agree with each of the statements on the scale. The higher the score, the higher is the impulse buying level. It has a test-retest reliability of 0.79 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

Procedure

The data for this research was collected using online google form. The researcher developed an online google form with the items from the two measurement instruments celebrity endorsement scale and impulse buying behaviour scales, with the addition of demographic factors. The form was posted on different student's WhatsApp group. The researchers maintained a timeline of 72 hours for members to attend to the questionnaire. Only data collected from 244 participants within the 72 hours deadline was used for analysis.

Design / Statistics

This study employed correlational research design. Being that researchers were looking to establish relationships between two variables, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistic was used for analysis.

Results

Based on the analysis, the following findings were made.

Summary Table of Descriptive Statistics and Correlation among Study Variables

| Variables | Mean | Std | r |
|--------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Impulse Buying Behaviour | 36.5 | 12.3 | |
| Age | 23. | 3.4 | . |
| Gender | 1.5 | .40 | |
| Expertise | 15.7 | 9.4 | .17* |
| Attractiveness | 20.8 | 14.7 | .24** |
| Trustworthiness | 16.4 | 12.3 | .19* |

*Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$*

The correlation table showed that the two demographic factors tested age ($r = .09$, $p > .05$) and gender ($r = .05$, $p > .05$) had no significant relationship with impulse buying behaviour. Across the three model of celebrity endorsement tested, expertise ($r = .17$, $p < .05$), attractiveness ($r = .24$, $p < .01$) and trustworthiness ($r = .19$, $p < .05$) all had a positive significant relationship with impulse buying behaviour.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between models of celebrity endorsement and impulse buying behaviour among students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. It looked at how each of the model relate to impulse buying behaviour.

First, endorser's expertise had a positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour. This means that the more celebrities are perceived to have good knowledge, skills and experience, the more consumer are inspired to make a spontaneous purchase of the product they endorsed. This result is similar to the finding of Munjal (2020) and Zhu et al., (2021). This finding may be because the students have so much admiration for the

celebrities' knowledge and skills, and then tend to identify with such personality traits. It means that using celebrities that distinguished themselves in their chosen career will likely increase impulse buying among students.

Second, celebrity endorser's attractiveness was found to have a positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour. It means that celebrities with more likable and attractive attributes will inspire consumers more into making a sudden purchase of the products endorsed by that celebrity. This result corroborated with the findings of Kahle and Homer (1985), Malik and Qureshi (2016) and Onu et al., (2019). This shows how the students were impressed by the physical appearance of the endorsing celebrity. Most times, people are more attracted to their models based on the individuals' physical appearance and such may have played a major role in this regard.

Third, celebrity endorser's trustworthiness was also found to have significant positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour. It also means that the more consumers perceive celebrity endorser to be honest and dependable, the more they are employed into quick purchase of products endorsed by them. These results also correlated with that of Onu et al., Munjal (2020) and Zuh et al., (2021). This finding showed that possessing a trusted personality endowed the students to the celebrity endorser as they will buy any product endorsed by them with the firm believe that such product is good.

The three models of celebrity endorsement tested yield a significant positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour. However, it was further observed that among the models, that attractiveness correlated with impulse buying more than expertise and trustworthiness. This may be the reason why most marketers seem to use more of popular and famous celebrities that people like and adore in their advertisements in order to win the emotion of the consumers. This means that attractiveness of the celebrity is the most potent model that appeals to the emotion of young consumers.

This means that firms and marketers can promote and market their products employing the services of these celebrities. Being that they have distinguished themselves in career, they have attracted numerous fans and followers that branding them on a product or making the potential consumers to believe that they achieved such status because they use

particular product is a good marketing strategy for firms whose products are in high demand by young people. This will give them edge over their competitors in the same market. The celebrities themselves can also tap on this opportunity to better their economic statuses. Adopting a good and decent lifestyle will project their image more and also increase their fans and followers. Achieving such feat increase the demand for them from firms and marketers to endorse their products.

The findings of this study have several implications for marketers and firms in the Nigerian business environment. Using the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), it can be deduced that consumers to large extent tend to imitate the actions of influential celebrities around them. They develop an emotional attachment to these celebrities that made them to always seek to identify with them even in the market environment. Marketers and firms in Nigeria business environment have exploited this opportunity. They have utilized this advantage to promote and market their product. Since the findings of this study revealed that the strategy is effective, managers of firms that produce products that serves the needs of young generation should key into it. This is because getting these celebrities will increase the demand for their products which will be to their own benefit.

The use of these celebrities in product advert and marketing may also have some serious consequences to the young consumers. Being that these young consumers are easily influenced by these celebrities, firms and marketers may use that medium to exploit them. Some of these marketers may use these celebrities to market products that are of substandard quality. This maybe account for why some of consumers who engage in impulse buying later regret their purchase. In most cases, these young consumers make spontaneous purchase not because of the need the product will serve them, but simply because the product has been endorsed by the model celebrity they want to identify with.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher now recommends that firms and marketers that deal on products that mostly serve the needs of young consumers should adopt the use of celebrities in marketing and promoting their products. This empirical evidence provided by this study has shown that it productive strategy. Firms marketing managers should explore this result-oriented strategy in order to be in advantage over their competitors. They should also consider the attractiveness of the celebrity when

chosen who will endorse their products because it has proven to be the most potent factor that appeals to the emotion of young consumers.

The findings also possess a big challenge to Nigerian Consumer Protection Council saddled with the duty of protecting Nigerian consumers from exploitation. The council needs to come up with good policies that will see that manufacturers and marketers are not exploiting the use of celebrity endorser to deceive consumers into buying products that are of substandard quality. A law that will sanction both the company and the celebrity endorsers is needed. This will make this celebrity endorses to ensure that the product they are endorsing is of very good quality. In doing this, we will reduce the negative consequences that arise from impulse buying.

The results of this study have its own limitation. The participants in this study were young consumers. In this sense, the findings will not be generalized to the older consumers who may out of experience and other factors differ on what influence them to engage in impulse buying. This gave room for further research to understand factors that might influence impulse buying among adult and older consumers in Nigeria.

In conclusion, this study was done with the aim of discussing the relationship between celebrity endorsement and impulse buying behaviour. The results showed that celebrity endorsement is strongly linked to impulse buying among Nigerian young consumers. The outcome of this research is helpful to marketers to understand the impulsive buying behaviour of consumer and factors that are related to it. The relevant government agencies should also be on a watch to see that consumers are not exploited.

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