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THE ROLE OF CELEBRITY ADVERTISING ON BRAND PREFERENCE

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ABSTRACT

Celebrity advertising has been regarded as a strategic marketing communication tool that aids productivity of goods and services of firms or organization across the globe. Okorie (2010) has reasoned that advertising is the means to promote brands and create unshakeable consumer preference for the brand. The job of celebrity advertising is indeed to seduce one brand's loyal user and to persuade them to become users of one's own brand. This paper examined the perception of individuals to determine the role of celebrity advertising on brand preference. The method adopted in the study was a survey and its instrument for data collection was questionnaire. From the result of the study, five research questions was presented and analyzed.

KEYWORDS

Celebrities, Advertising, brand, preference and consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Celebrity advertising is a powerful communication tool of business to most firms and organization for them to be able to reach their target market across the globe (Belch & Belch, 2001; Bovee and Thrill, 2003; Jobber, 2003). Jefkin (1998) has posited that the average person is exposed to hundred of celebrity ad messages between the time he opens his eye in the morning and clicks off the light at night. In other words, it is brand communication tool whose sole aim is to promote advertised brands or services in the society.

In the Nigerian society, the use of celebrities in mainstream advertising is a common marketing communication strategy carried out by most multinationals or large organization so as to build and sustain brand equity for goods and services (Okorie, 2010). In addition, companies or firms spend huge amount of money every year on advertising that is aimed at enhancing the productivity of the goods and services of the organization in the target market. In such an approach, the advertiser gets a lot of help from personalities that possess certain phenomenal characteristics to tell the product's story. All the popularity, glamour and charisma attached to a movie star, a sports hero, a TV personality, or even a politician are sold and purchased as the product's own.

Firms or companies use celebrity endorsements for very good reasons. It has said that target prospects are more likely to choose goods and services endorsed by celebrities than those without such endorsements. It is believed that celebrities facilitate instant awareness and immediate attention (Menon and Louis, 2005). Many companies have had considerable successes using famous names and faces. For instance, Kanu Nwankwo leads the way, figuring in multi-category endorsements—from Peak Milk to Pepsi soft drink to USAIDS/NACA anti-AIDS campaign among a long list of other notable brands. Other high-profile endorsers include Banky W for Etisalat, Tuface Idibia for Airtel and Desmond Elliot for Tantalizers.

The trend in the usage of celebrity advertising in the Nigerian society has engineered the interest of these researchers in focusing this study on the role of celebrity advertising in promoting preference for a brand, which Chi-Vita fruit juice was used as an example.

HISTORY OF CHI-VITA JUICE

Chi-Vita juice is manufactured by the division of CHI Nigeria Limited, which is a subsidiary of Tropical General Investment Limited, incorporated in 1980 for the manufacturing and marketing of consumer products. The company has operated for 17 year in the food and beverage industry in Nigeria.

The firm installed ultra modern machineries within their factory complex at Isolo, Lagos. Among these equipments are facilities to extract and compound the concentrates into fruit drink and juices. Thereafter the beverage is processed into laminated aluminum foil pouches and tetra brick cartons under the brand name of **CAPRISONNE and CHIVITA**.

In 1998, Chi-Vita juice was first advertised to the Nigerian society with the usage of a celebrity to endorse its uniqueness and quality. It made use of musical and movie celebrities to advertise the products, some of these celebrities are Jide Kosoko, Sunny Nneji, Omotola Jolade and lot of others.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Ohaja (2003) expounds that research questions refer to a precise statement of the issues of the study. They can be presented in the form of questions it hopes to proffer solutions for. The research questions for the study are listed below:

1. What is the level of respondents' exposure to celebrity adverts on Chi –Vita?
2. What is the level of respondents' preference of Chi-vita as a product?
3. Do the celebrity adverts have any influence on respondents' choice of Chi Vita?
4. How loyal are the respondents to the brand of Chi Vita juice?
5. What is the effect of changes in celebrity adverts on the respondents' preference for Chi Vita?

METHOD

For the purpose of the study, the survey research method is used for a number of reasons. The survey method is a suitable method of getting views of people about why they behave in a particular way and how they will behave if given certain conditions. According to Kerlinger (1973) "survey research involves the psychological variables which include opinions and attitude on one hand and behavior on the other hand (p.87)." Similarly, according to Tejumaiye (2003), survey research involves the psychological variables which include opinion and attitude on one hand and behavior on the other. In essence, survey method provides positive information and they identify present conditions and point present needs. Basically, survey method is probably the best means of measuring attitude and opinion of a group too large to be observed directly. The instrument used by the investigator in the survey research method was questionnaire. Generally, a questionnaire is a data gathering instrument, which provides uniformed questions to be answered by respondents in written form.

The research study has a population of undergraduate students, post graduate students and lecturers in the University of Lagos, which constitute about 35,000 people as population and Lagos State polytechnic, with approximate 15,000 people as population. The selection of these tertiary institutions were determined with the use of simple random sampling technique, where all the tertiary institutions were given equal opportunity to be selected i.e. University of Lagos, Lagos State University, Pan African University, Wolex polytechnic and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education.

Out of a research population of approximately 35,000 people in the University of Lagos and 15,000 people in Lagos State polytechnic, 500 respondents which represent 1% of the entire population constitute the sample size of the study. It is believed that the number would represent the population of the study.

Owing to the impracticability of studying the entire population in research, sampling of the population is therefore important. Therefore, the investigator made use of stratified sampling technique to divide each tertiary institution into groups. This was stratified into the college of Science and Technology and the College of Development Studies. Then the researcher made use of multi –stage random sampling to further divide these groups to cluster samples for effective representation of the study. In a single tier cluster, the college was clustered into schools, there are six schools i.e. school of social sciences, school of environmental sciences, school of human resource, school of business, school of engineering and school of natural. The researcher used simple random sampling to select one school from each of the colleges.

In a two tier cluster, the schools were clustered to departments, and then two departments were selected in each tertiary institution by the use of simple random sampling technique.

In a three tier cluster, the departments were clustered to programs, and then simple random sampling technique was used to select two programs in each tertiary institution. The programme selected was Accounting and Computer engineering. Then, the researcher made use of the systematic sampling to select the student from the sampling frame. The research questions were analyzed with frequency tables and bar charts.

RESULT

500 copies of questionnaire were administered, out of which 483 copies were retrieved. This represented a high response rate of 96.6% and a mortality rate of only 3.4%. Of the number that were received and used, 260 respondents were males representing 53.8%. While the remaining 223 respondents were females representing 46.2% of the total respondents who turned properly completed copies of the questionnaire.

In terms of age, 7 respondents (1.4%) were between 35 and 44 years of age. 40 respondents representing 8.3% were between 25 and 34, while 435 respondents representing 90.1% were between 15 and 24. Table one below summarizes the age distribution thus:

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

Age		Percent
Valid	15-24	90.1%
	25-34	8.3%
	35-44	1.4%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%
		N=483

Distribution of respondents according to their tertiary institution reveals that 300 respondents were from University of Lagos, which represents 60% of the total population of the study, while 200 respondents were from the Lagos State Polytechnic representing 40% of the total study population. Table 2 summarizes the distribution of respondents according to their tertiary institution.

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ALONG THEIR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Tertiary institutions	Percent
-----------------------	---------

Valid	UNILAG	60..0%
	LASPOLY	39.8%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%
		N = 483

In terms of religious affiliation, 383 of the respondents are Christians representing 79.3% of the population study, while 99 of the respondents are Muslims representing 20.5% of the population study.

Table 3 shows that respondents view or listen to commercials on television or radio. From the table, 417 respondents or 85.7% of the respondents view or listen to adverts i.e. 32.5% of respondents indicated strongly agree, while 53.6% respondents indicated they agree that they view or listen to commercials. However, 19 respondents or 3.7% revealed they don't watch adverts on television or radio

TABLE 3: AUDIENCE EXPOSURE TO COMMERCIALS

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	32.5%
	Agree	53.2%
	Undecided	10.1%
	Disagree	3.5%
	strongly disagree	.4%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100%
		N= 483

More importantly, table 4 presented below shows that respondents view or listen to Chi Vita commercials. The table 4 reveals that 471 respondents or 94.5% of the respondents revealed that they view or listen to commercials on Chi Vita. Only, 3.4% of the respondents indicated that they don't view or listen to commercials on Chi Vita.

RESEARCH QUESTION ANALYSIS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What is the level of respondent's exposure to celebrity adverts on Chi –Vita?

TABLE 4: AUDIENCE EXPOSURE TO CHI VITA COMMERCIAL

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	93.1%
	Agree	1.4%
	Undecided	1.9%
	Disagree	3.4%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%
		N=483

Table 5 provided the data on the effectiveness of the commercials on Chi Vita. Table 5 reveals that 90. 6% of the respondents believe that the commercials are quite effective i.e. 14.8% respondents or 100 respondents indicated strongly agree, while 371 respondents indicated they agreed that the commercials on Chi Vita were effective. While, 1.2% of the respondents thought otherwise.

TABLE 5: AUDIENCE PERCEPTION TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CHI VITA COMMERCIALS

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	14.8%
	Agree	75.8%
	Disagree	9.2%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%
		N = 483

DISCUSSION

Several empirical studies reveal that advertising can provide invaluable support for other elements of the promotional mix by creating awareness and positive attitude towards the organization's products or goods and services. Bearden and Ingran (2003) noted that one advertising objective might be to increase brand awareness say from 10 to 35 percent of all consumers within a particular market. The finding was made exceptionally clear in the data result of research question 1, which table 4 and 5 immensely represented. The statistical data in table 4, revealed that 471 respondents or 94.5% of the respondents indicated that they view or listen to commercials on Chi Vita. However, 3.4% of the respondents indicated that they don't view or listen to commercials on Chi Vita. Table 5 reveals that 90.6% of the respondents believe that the commercials were effective in nature i.e. 14.8% respondents or 100 respondents indicated strongly agree; while 371 respondents indicated they agreed that commercials on Chi Vita were effective. However, 9.2% of the respondents disagreed that commercials on Chi Vita were not effective. From the statistical data, it can be inferred that the level of respondents' exposure to Chi Vita commercials was relatively high

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What is the level of respondents' preference of Chi-vita as a product?

Table 6 presents data on the audience purchase of Chi Vita juice. The table presented below revealed that 403 respondents representing 83% purchase Chi Vita juice. Nevertheless, 2 respondents representing 0.4% could not decide whether or not if they purchase Chi vita for consumption, this represented 0.4%. Also, 77 respondents representing 18.9% revealed that they do not purchase Chi Vita as a choice of fruit drink at all.

TABLE 6: AUDIENCE PURCHASE OF CHI VITA JUICE

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	3.1%
	Agree	80.3%
	Undecided	.4%
	Disagree	15.9%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%
		N=483

In addition, table 7 shows the level of preference for Chi Vita as a product. The table presented 90.8 percent of the respondents prefer chi vita as a product, only 5% of the respondents didn't prefer Chi Vita as a product.

TABLE 7: AUDIENCE LEVEL OF PREFERENCE FOR CHI VITA

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	20.4%
	Agree	70.4%
	Disagree	9.8%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%
		N = 483

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to determine the level of brand loyalty and preference for Chi Vita juice. Interestingly, research question 2 helped provides answers to this research objective, which was revealed in table 6 and 7. Table 6 presented data on the audience purchase of Chi Vita juice, it revealed that 403 respondents or 83% of the study population purchase Chi Vita for consumption. Nevertheless, 2 respondents representing 0.4% of the study population remained undecided on whether they purchase Chi vita for consumption or not. Also, 77 respondents of the study population representing 18.9% revealed that some audiences do not purchase Chi Vita as a choice of fruit drink at all. Table 7 shows the level of preference for Chi Vita as a product. The table presented 90.8 percent of the population study that prefer chi vita as a product. However, it also revealed only 5% of the study population that do not prefer Chi Vita as a product. From the statistical data presented, it can be inferred that level of respondents' preference for the product was relatively high.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: Do the celebrity adverts have any influence on respondents' choice of Chi Vita?

Table 8 and chart 1 provide statistical information about the influence of respondents' exposure to the media on their preference for Chi-Vita. From the table and chart presented below, 415 respondents or 86.1% of the study population revealed that media exposure influenced their preference. However, 67 respondents representing 13.9% remained undecided whether or not their exposure to the media had any influence on their preference for the fruit juice.

TABLE 8: MEDIA INFLUENCE ON RESPONDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR CHI-VITA

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	81.2%
	Agree	4.8%
	Undecided	13.9%
	Total	99.8%

Missing System	.2%
Total	100.0%
	N = 483

Media influence on respondents' preference for Chi-Vita

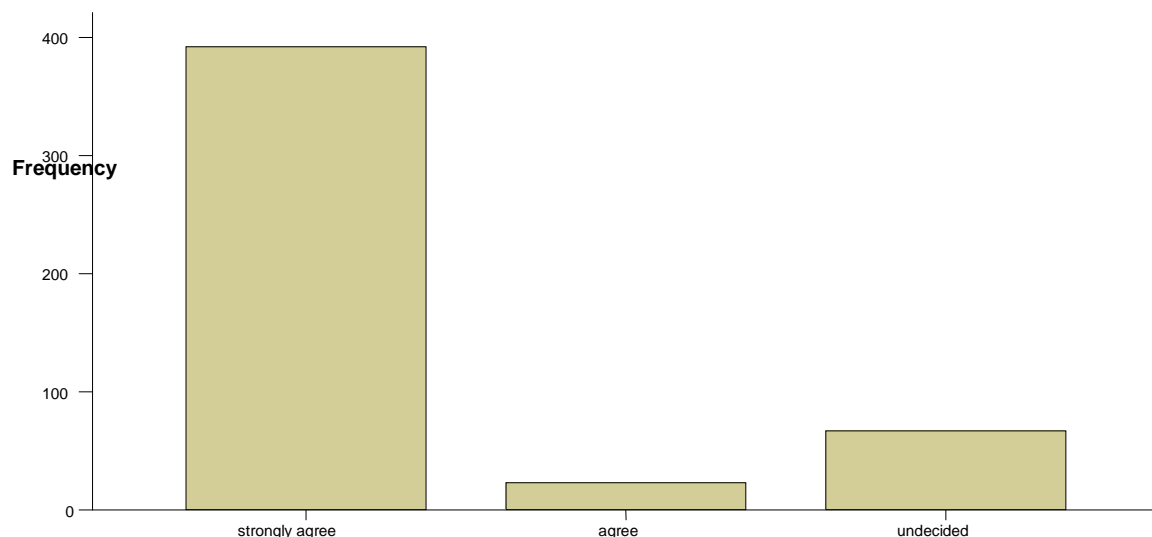


Table 9 presented data on the influence of celebrity adverts on respondents' preference for Chi Vita juice. From the table below, 185 respondents representing 48.3% of the sampled indicated that the usage of celebrity advert contributed to preference for Chi Vita. However, 51.6% respondents remained undecided on whether or not if the celebrity adverts contributed to their preference, while 9.9% of the respondents indicated that such adverts do not have any influence on their preference of fruit juice.

TABLE 9: INFLUENCE OF CELEBRITY ADVERTS ON RESPONDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR CHI VITA

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	17.4%
	Agree	30.9%
	Undecided	41.6%
	Disagree	9.5%
	strongly disagree	.4%
	Total	99.8%
Missing System		.2%
Total		100.0%
		N = 483

DISCUSSION

Table eight and chart one provides statistical information about media exposure contributing to the preference of Chi Vita. 415 respondents representing 86.1% of the study population revealed that media exposure contributed to their preference. While, 67 respondents representing 13.9% were undecided on whether or not media exposure contributed to their preference. This is in an agreement with Jeffkins (1998), which states that the object of advertising is to charge or influence. It aims to persuade individuals to buy a product 'A' instead of product 'B' or promoting the habit of continuing to buy a product 'A'. In addition, table nine presented data on the influence of celebrity adverts on respondents' preference for Chi Vita juice. From the table, it is clear that 185 respondents representing 48.3% of the population indicated that the usage of celebrity advert contributed to preference for Chi Vita. However, 51.6% respondents remained undecided on the influence of celebrity adverts on their choice of Chi Vita, while 9.9% of the respondents indicated that adverts didn't contribute to their preference. From the statistical data presented, it can be inferred that celebrity adverts have significant influence on the respondents' choice of Chi Vita.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: How loyal are the respondents to the brand of Chi Vita juice?

Table 10 presents data on audience as brand loyal. The table presented below, revealed that 482 respondents of the study population, which represents 99.8% of the study population indicated to be brand loyal to products.

TABLE 10: AUDIENCE AS BRAND LOYAL TO PRODUCTS

Categories		Percent
Valid	Agree	99.0%
	Disagree	.8%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%

N = 483

Table 11 shows the data on audience as brand loyal to Chi Vita. The table showed that 317 respondents representing 65.7% of the study population are brand loyal to Chi Vita juice i.e. 16.8% of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that they were loyal to Chi Vita juice, while 48.9% of the respondents indicated that they agreed that they were loyal to the purchase of chi vita juice. However, 113 respondents representing 23.4% remained undecided on whether or not they were loyal to Chi Vita juice, while 49 respondents representing 10.3% of the population study indicated they were not loyal to Chi Vita brand

TABLE 11: AUDIENCE PURCHASE OF CHI VITA AS BRAND LOYAL

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	16.8%
	Agree	48.9%
	Undecided	23.4%
	Disagree	7.0%
	strongly disagree	3.3%
	Total	99.4%
Missing	System	.6%
Total		100.0%

N = 483

DISCUSSION

Most scholars in the field of marketing communication have reasoned that brand loyalty is the ultimate goal a company set for a branded product. It is seen as a consumer's preference to buy a particular brand in a product category. This occurs because consumers perceive that the brand offers the right price, quality and need. Research question 4 aimed to find out how loyal are the respondents to the brand of Chi Vita juice? From the available data presented in table 10, about 482 respondents representing 99.8% indicated that they were brand loyal to various categories of products. In addition, table 11 shows the data on audience as brand loyal to Chi Vita. It revealed that 317 respondents representing 65.7% were brand loyal to Chi Vita juice. 16.8% of the respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that they were loyal to Chi Vita juice, while 48.9% of the respondent indicated that they agreed that they were loyal to the purchase of chi vita juice. In addition, 23.4% of the respondents remained undecided of loyalty to Chi Vita juice, while 49 of the respondents representing 10.3% indicated they were not loyal to Chi Vita brand. From the statistical data presented, it can be inferred that overwhelming majority of respondents were brand loyals to Chi Vita.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: What is the effect of changes in celebrity ad on the respondents' preference for Chi Vita?

Table 12 presents data on the awareness level of changes in celebrities' endorsement of Chi-Vita. From the table presented below, 475 respondents representing 98.4% indicated that they are aware of the changes in celebrities endorsement i.e. 1.9% of the respondents indicated they strongly agreed, while 96.9% indicated that they agreed that they are aware of changes in the use of celebrities. However, 6 respondents representing 1.2% of the study population indicated they aren't aware of any changes in the use of celebrities in Chi Vita juice advert

TABLE 12: AWARENESS LEVEL OF CHANGES IN THE USE OF CELEBRITIES

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	1.9%
	Agree	96.5%
	Undecided	.2%
	Disagree	1.2%
	Total	99.8%
Missing	System	.2%
Total		100.0%

N= 483

Table 13 provides data on the changes in the contribution of celebrity adverts to preference of the product. From the table, 474 respondents representing 99% indicated that changes contributed to their preference of Chi Vita juice. However, 1.4% of the study population were undecided on whether such changes influenced their preference of the product.

TABLE 13: INFLUENCE OF CHANGES IN CELEBRITY ADVERTS ON PREFERENCE OF CHI VITA

Categories		Percent
Valid	strongly agree	97.6%
	Agree	.4%
	Undecided	1.4%
	Total	99.4%
Missing	System	.6%
Total		100.0%
		N= 483

DISCUSSION

In the Nigerian society, marketers have been using celebrities in commercials, print campaigns and promotions for years. Menon and Louis (2005) have noted that celebrities get the viewer's attention; but whether they work to sell the product depends on proper celebrity casting. Selecting the right star to "pitch" your product means finding the person to whom your buyers can relate — the person your buyers want to believe. In other words, selecting a celebrity requires a deliberate planning as well as research so as to select the appropriate celebrity to reach the target audience. The Chi Company, the producer of Chi-Vita fruit juice has been changing its celebrities yearly or once every two years, this happens as a result of the company's desire to derive maximum benefit from the celebrity adverts. Research question five was to find out the effect of changes in celebrity ad on the respondents' preference for Chi Vita. Table twelve presents data on the awareness level of changes in the use of celebrities. It revealed that 475 respondents representing 98.4% of the population of the study indicated that they are aware of the changes in the use of celebrities i.e. 1.9% indicated they strongly agreed, while 96.9% indicated that they agreed that they are aware of changes in the use of celebrities. However, 6 respondents representing 1.2% indicated they aren't aware of the changes in the use of celebrities in Chi Vita juice advert. Table thirteen provides data on the changes in celebrity adverts contribution to preference to the product. From the table, 474 respondents representing 99% indicated that changes in the use of celebrity contributed to their preference for the product. However, 1.4% of the study population remained undecided on whether or not such changes contributed to their preference for the product. From the statistical data presented, it can therefore be inferred that changes in celebrity adverts contributed significantly to the respondents' preference for Chi Vita.

CONCLUSION

In the world of business and marketing communication, celebrity advertising performs a pivotal role in brand management and choice making. The role of celebrity advertising is very essential for any firm that wants to engage in the selling or transaction of goods and services in the society. Beside the persuasive nature of advertising, celebrity advertising exerts information that reinforces brand values as well as deliberately projecting a good or service to a particular target audience in an excellent light, in which consumers become favorably disposed to a product. . It performs a cardinal function of promoting the organizational goods or services, generating revenue or profit for the organization as well as projects a positive image of the firm and the product to individuals in the Nigerian society.

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