

CELEBRITY ADVERTISING AND THE PERFORMANCE OF NEW PRODUCTS IN GLOBACOM NIGERIA LIMITED

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ABSTRACT

Celebrity endorsement has been established as one of the most popular tools of advertising in recent time. It has become a trend and perceived as a winning formula for new product marketing and brand building. It is easy to choose a celebrity but it is tough to establish a strong association between the product and the endorser. Nowadays, celebrity endorsement is used more than ever before in companies' sales strategies and marketing campaigns. Generally the types of celebrities who are used to endorse products are music artists, movie stars, and also famous athletes and sportsmen. This study was undertaken to assess the impact of celebrity advertising on the performance of new product of Globacom Nigeria Limited. One hypothesis was formulated, to ascertain whether celebrity advertising has any influence on the performance of new product. A population and sample size of about 68 was adopted. The instrument employed to obtain data from the staff of Globacom Nigeria Limited was the questionnaire. Furthermore, the data obtained were analyzed using simple percentage presented in tables and figures and the hypothesis formulated was tested using chi-square test statistic. Our findings showed that celebrity advertising has influence on the performance of new product of Globacom Limited. Based on the findings of our study, the following recommendations were advanced: Telecom organizations should watch out for match-up between the celebrity and the product before engaging in

endorsement contracts, and the Management of Telecom organizations should take note of the cost implication of engaging celebrities in advertising its market new products so as not to incur unnecessary cost.

Key Words: Advertising, Celebrity, Product, New Product Performance

INTRODUCTION

The ever increasing product diversity and competition on the market of goods and services has dictated the pace of growth in the number of advertisements. Despite their admittedly diminished effectiveness over the recent years, advertisements remain the favoured method of sales promotion. Consequently, the challenge for an advertiser is to explore every possible avenue of making an advertisement more noticeable, attractive and impellent for consumers. One way to achieve this is through invoking celebrity endorsements. Over the years, businesses have long sought to attract the attention of potential customers and increase the patronage of their market in a world of ever- increasing commercial advertisements. Every day, people are exposed to thousands of voices and images in magazines, newspapers, bill board, websites, radios, television. One well-used approach at differentiating and communicating advertisements is the use of celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsement has gain acceptance by most organizations in creating awareness about products introduced by organizations and in marketing organizations too.

Celebrity advertising is not a new phenomenon. In recent times, celebrity advert has been on the increase. In fact it has become much more wide spread over the past twenty years since consumers have become increasingly keen on celebrities (Endorgan, 2001). They are interested in people who are well-known simply due to the fact that they have appeared on television – like the stars of reality shows, musicians, actors, footballers, celebrity magazines. A celebrity endorser is a well-known person (e.g actors, sport figures and artists) because of his/her success in a

special field other than the endorsed products class (James, 2004). Celebrities act as spokespeople in advertising to promote products and services (Kambitsis et al, 2002). These spokespersons share attributes like attractiveness, extraordinary life style or special skills and this has made them enjoy high degree of public awareness. This is true for classic form of celebrities - actors (like Jim Iyk, Desmond Eliot, Rita Dominic, Monalisa Chinda); sports – footballers (Kanu Nwanko, Lionel Messi, Mikel Obi); pop stars (like Tufac Idibia, Banky-W, Psquare); business men (Bill Gate, Aliko Dangote).

Globacom uses a lot of celebrity endorsements called Glo Ambassadors to boost its product performance. They consist of popular Nollywood (Nigerian Movie industry) stars and music artists. In fact, Globacom is seen in the fore front of engaging celebrities for brand communication. As for Glo, the faces endorsing its products include Jim Iyk, Ramsey Noah, D’banj, Ini Edo, Psquare, daddy Show Key, Stella Damasus, Desmond Eliot, Ali Nuhu among others. Some of the new products globacom launched within the period considered in this study include – Glo infinito, G-BAM HI5IV, Glo Gista, Glo Flxi, yan-Me-More, Glo 1drfull. Glo infinito was officially launched on Thursday 14th April 2011 in Lagos, Nigeria. Celebrities that endorsed the product were Rita Dominic, Ini Edo, Desmond Eliot, Uche jumbo, Monalisa Chinda among other Nollywood actors and actresses. Some musicians like Ego and Stereoman were also seen at the official launching of this product (Gloworld .com, 2012). By December 17, 2011, Globacom launched new youth package tagged G-BAM HI5IV, which offered the lowest call tariff in the Nigerian telecommunication market. This product was launched at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This was launched in response to the official launch of Airtel Club ¹⁰/₁₀ a product of Airtel Nigeria limited. Furthermore, Companies like Coca Cola Plc, Pepsi bottling Company use more than one celebrity in endorsing their products. Chi Food is also adopting a

similar strategy, which is aiding them in competing with their rivals (Jayaswal, 2008). The reason behind the popularity of this form of advertising is the belief that, products advertised through celebrities achieve a higher degree of attention and recall for customers, which will eventually lead to higher sales.

Statement of the Problem

Human beings are dynamic beings, their behaviors and preferences change over time and so, despite all the enormous benefits and the advantages one can see in this form of advertising, there are great problems associated with this form of advertising. There are cases in which celebrities used in advertising over shadow the product they are advertising. This can be seen especially, when a very popular celebrity is used to advertise a newly introduced product - a new product that has no fit with the celebrity can quickly be overshadowed. When this happens, it is said that the celebrity vampires the product. Most times, the celebrity's value, the category benefit and the new product values are not closely linked. This therefore creates chances that the celebrity is remembered more than the product (Belch and Belch, 2001; Gellene, 1998).

Issues of scandals which have dented the images of celebrities have also translated into the products being advertised by the celebrities. Of course the negative impression imprinted as a result of scandals is said to have drastically affected the product's patronage as well as its success. Also some of the celebrities may lose relevance in their fields with time. When that happens, the products and the messages being conveyed about the product may make no sense to the audience. Sonny Ineji was dropped as a Glo ambassador because he lost relevance in the music industry. Most Nigerian celebrities are celebrated just for a short time and thereafter, they are dumped for the new and upcoming ones. The implication on the new product usually is the memory of the new product quickly fades away in the minds of the customers and potential customers as the

celebrity is forgotten. Finally, some of the celebrities sign more than one endorsement contracts and this alone can reduce the effectiveness of the celebrity. This implies that the celebrity may not have much of his attention as expected to promote new product of the company.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent does celebrity advertising influence the performance of new products?
- ii. What are the stages involved in the selection of celebrities for endorsement?
- iii. Does match-up, fit, and congruency exist between the endorser and the products they are endorsing?

Objectives of the Study

The salient objective of this study is to assess the impact of celebrity advert on the performance of new products. We however identified the following as the objectives of the study.

- i. To determine the influence of celebrity advertising on the performance of new products.
- ii. To examine the various stages involved in the selection of a celebrity for endorsement.
- iii. To find out whether match-up, fit and congruency exist between the endorsers and the product they are endorsing.

Research Hypothesis

Ho: Celebrity advertising has no influence on the performance of new products of Globacom Limited.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Advertising has a long history, from oral to print and to the current electronic media. Companies use various objects in their advertisements, from cartoons to animals in order to get the message across. The use of human models has been advocated as it could provoke attitudinal and

emotional reactions (kanungo and Pang, 1973). Therefore, humans who are placed as models and are seen as in support of the advertiser and/or its claim are known as endorsers (Tellis, 1998). According to Junokait et al (2007), Celebrities are individuals who enjoy public recognition and use this recognition on behalf of a consumer by appearing with it in an advertisement. A celebrity is a well known personality actor, entertainer, or athlete' who is known to the public for his or her accomplishment in area other than the product class endorsed (Shimp, 2003).

Celebrity Endorsement Strategy

Marketers use individuals who have achieved some form of celebrity status to serve as spokespersons for their companies. When a company decides upon using an endorsement strategy as their marketing communication tool, the main focus lies in exposing their brand (Kotler et al, 2001). In an endorsement strategy, a sort of product is given a new brand name that is unique for that product. Besides the unique brand name, they also get provided with the name of an endorser. In this case, the endorser is a celebrity and functions as endorsement which means an approval or support that can be seen as a guarantee of recommendation for consumers. This means that the name of the endorser should be clearly visible next to the name of the product he or she is endorsing. Companies have jointly been using their products and themselves, through the use of celebrity endorsers, with the hope that celebrities may boost the performance of the product at long run (Belch & Belch, 2001).

Why Companies use celebrities in Advertising

Celebrity advertising has been recognized as a ubiquitous feature of modern day marketing (McCraken, 1989; Keller, 2008). The main goal of using celebrities in advertising is to generate publicity and attention to the product being advertised (Biswas, 2009) as well as influence consumer perceptions of the brand stemming from their knowledge of the celebrity (Keller,

2008). Kaikati (1987), expressed five advantages of employing celebrities to endorse products: drawing attention, crisis management, brand positioning, global marketing, and boosting sales. Biswas et al (2009), found that the reason for recalling celebrities included popularity, status symbol, attractiveness and glamour, likability and recall value or familiarity of the celebrities. The increased awareness and attention resulting from celebrity advertising is thought to combat the challenge of advertising clutter and bring instant credibility and brand recall to consumers. Products that may be of inferior quality to their competitor's, or have fewer features can benefit from using a high profile celebrity to pitch them to consumers.

Belch & Belch (2001), stated that the reasons why companies spend huge amount of money to have celebrities appear in their ads and endorse their products is that celebrities have stopping power. They draw attention to advertising messages and enhance message recall. Celebrities help in recognition of brand names, create positive attitudes towards the brand and create a personality for the endorsed brand. Moreover, it is believed that celebrities could favorably influence customers' feelings, attitudes and purchase behavior. The significance of celebrity endorsers in brand communication strategies does not only rely in the fact that they are used by firms who wish to increase income, but in how these celebrities add value to a company, brand or product. Compared to other endorser types, famous people achieve higher degree of attention and recall. They increase awareness of a company's advertising, create positive feelings towards brands and are perceived by consumers as more entertaining (Solomon, 2002).

The Match – Up (Congruency) Hypothesis

The match-up (congruency) hypothesis suggests the existence of a “fit” between the celebrity and endorsed product (Khatri, 2006). It emphasizes that the physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorser will enhance valuation of the products characteristics only if the characteristics of the

products “match-up” with the image conveyed by the celebrity. Marketers must match the product or company’s image to the features of the target market, and the personality of the celebrity, in order to establish effective messages and the determinant of the match between celebrity and product depends on the degrees of perceived association between product (product name, attributes) and celebrity image (Khatri, 2006; Okorie, 2010). The congruence between endorser and message leads to greater live ability and acceptance by the end-user making the endorsement more trustworthy. The image of the celebrity ends to match that of the product for increasing livability and building credibility, thus, validating the match-up hypothesis Biswas et al (2009).

Selecting Celebrity Endorsers

The decision of selecting the best endorsers is a pertinent issue fixed by marketers from their promotion (khatri, 2006). Synergy is therefore required between brand and celebrity. The celebrity actually helps in accelerating the brand image formulating process. Analysis of several literatures revealed that there are many models and criteria for selection of celebrity endorsers. Some authors define only the main selection criteria; others suggest using models comprising number of criteria for celebrity selection. Among this is source credibility model, that is based on the assumption that consumers are more likely to accept a message if they find it credible. This model involves two main criteria; source expertise and trustworthiness. The source attractiveness model includes such criteria as similarity, familiarity and liking that could be generalized as attractiveness. To help select a celebrity endorser, many companies rely on Q-ratings that are calculated by dividing the popularity percentage with familiarity percentage. The Q-rating is an answer to how appealing the person is among those who do know him or her.

According to Shimp (2000), the TEARS model encompasses such attributes as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect and similarity. It takes into consideration such aspects as

celebrity credibility, celebrity and audience. Match-up, celebrity and product match-up, celebrity attractiveness, cost considerations, working as or difficulty saturation factor and trouble factor. Each of these models repeats some basic attributes the stability of which allows suggesting them to be a foundation for celebrity endorser selection. All effort must be inputted in order to select an ideal celebrity as a brand (product) endorser who is able to infuse and bring about change in the fortunes of a brand (khatri, 2006).

New Product Performance

For most firms, successful new products are engines of growth. New product introduction can change the future of firms when the right innovational and promotional tool (incentives are used. New product introduction can influence performance (firm's value) and the competitive strength of the firm. The performance of new products has been studied extensively in the diffusion-of-innovation literature (Mahajan and Wind, 1991). Among its major findings are that revenue from new products may take considerable time to materialize and that revenue level may depend on several factors, including the degree of products innovation. In addition, new product introduction may have a persistent effect on revenues, therefore the assessment of new product effects on revenue should distinguish short-term (immediate) effects and Long-term effects, which could be temporary (adjustment, dust-setting or persistent, permanent). Financial performance of a firm may benefit from new product introductions through increase demand, increased profit margin and lower customer acquisition and retention cost (Bayus et al 2003). The further noted that a new product can have a temporary effect on a firm's financial position due to the specific product innovation or could have a permanent effect because it transforms competitive capabilities.

Measuring New Product Success

New products are important for business success of enterprise as a whole. Measuring new product success and its contribution to business performance of enterprise as a whole is a very complex process. A fundamental problem when measuring new product success lies in the meaning of such success, as it has not been well defined. The interpretation of success is affected by the interest groups involved in new product development (R&D, production, marketing). Complexity of measuring comes from character of innovation - radical, incremental, compatible and incompatible. Radical innovation has a high probability of failure but can be more profitable than incremental innovation. Similarly, incompatible innovation can be more profitable than compatible one. An idea is radical if it meets one or more of three tests: it changes customer expectations and behaviors, it changes the basis of competitive advantage and it changes industry economics (Hamel and Getz 2004; Sheremata, 2004). The time perspective of new product success also increases the difficulty of selecting relevant measures (Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1995; Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1993; Cooper, 1999). In the short term, it is most important to launch a new product to market. In the long term, the emphasis is on financial performance. Success can be a value-laden concept. These problems have been aggravated by the fact that little theoretical work has separated success indicators and determinants (for example, if customer acceptance is an indicator or a measure of new product success (Huang, Soutar and Brown, 2004). Measuring success implies a possibility to make a difference between project success and contribution of program of new product development to the success of enterprise as a whole. The majority of the proposed measures are noncumulative and theoretical, making comparisons difficult or impossible. New products impact on an organization can be multilevel and multidimensional, complex and dynamic, subtle and perceivable in the long term (Hart, 1993).

There are no reconciled opinions in the literature on new product success measures. Hultink and Robben (1995), identified five independent categories of success measures: product utility measures, program success measures, individual product success measures, financial performance measures, and measures of customer acceptance of new products. Many authors cited individual measures that could be used in new product success evaluation. The number of measures varies. Some authors induced 10 measures (Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1995): rate of success, percent of sales, profitability relative to investment, range of technical success, influence on sales, influence on profit, success in meeting sale goals, success in meeting profit goals, profitability relative to competition and global success.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken to assess the impact of Celebrity Advertising on the performance of new products, using Globcom Ltd (Gloworld outlet in Jos) as a case study. The population is 68 staff of both the Marketing and Human Resources Departments. We decided to adopt the population as our sample size due to the size of the population.

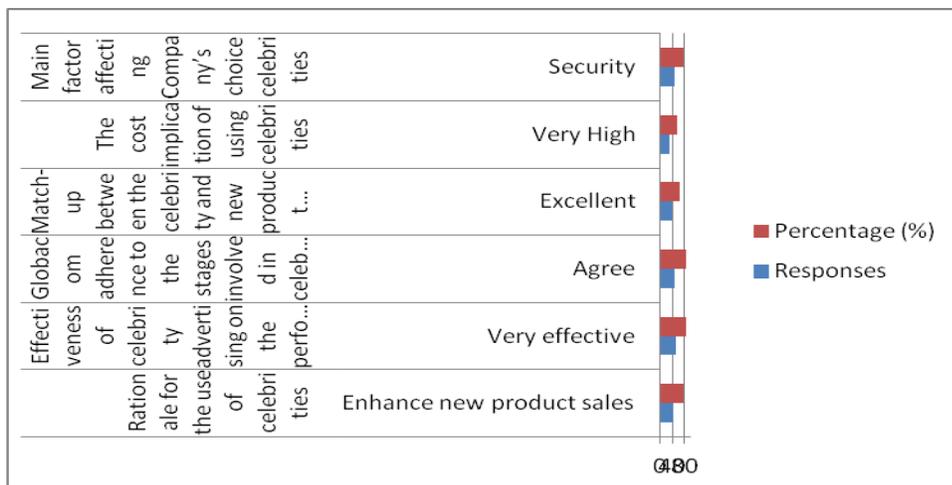
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

68 copies of the questionnaire were distributed. However, only 58 copies were properly filled and returned.

Table 1: Results of the Responses of Staff of Globacom Ltd, Jos

	Questions	Options	Responses	Percentage (%)
A	Rationale for the use of celebrities	Enhance new product sales	44	75.8
		Increase profit	22	37.9
		Outsmart Competitors	30	51.7
		Reduce waste	4	6.9
B	Effectiveness of celebrity advertising on the performance of new products	Very effective	50	86.2
		Effective	16	27.6
		Not Effective	11	18.9
		Not Very Effective	23	39.7
C	Globacom adherence to the stages involved in celebrity selection	Strongly Agree	39	67.2
		Agree	49	84.5
		Disagree	12	20.7
D	Match-up between the celebrity and new product success	Excellent	38	65.5
		Good	30	51.7
		Fair	31	53.4
E	The cost implication of using celebrities	Very High	32	55.1
		High	26	44.8
		Not High	24	41.3
		Not Very High	18	31.0
F	Main factor affecting Company's choice celebrities	Security	45	77.6
		Government Policy	19	32.8
		Organizational Culture	12	20.7
		Statues of celebrity	24	41.4

Chart 1



The table and chart above reveal that 44 (75.8%) of the respondents observed that the rationale for the use of celebrities by the company is to enhance new product sale. 50 (86.2%) of the respondents said that employing celebrity advertising is very effective on the performance of new products. 49 (84.5%) agreed that Globacom adheres to the stages involved in celebrity selection. 38 (65.5%) opined that the match-up between the celebrity and new product success is excellent. Furthermore, 33 (55.1%) of the respondents were of the view that the cost implication of using celebrities is very high. Finally, 45 (77.6%) said that the main factor affecting Company’s choice of celebrities is security.

DATA ANALYSIS

Hypothesis 1

H₀: Celebrity advertising has no influence on the performance of new products of Globacom.

Table 2: Showing Celebrity advertising and the performance of new products of Globacom

Celebrity Advertising	Responses				Total
	Very High Influence	High Influence	Low Influence	Very Low Influence	
A	12 (11.9)	6(9.7)	8(7.4)	7(4)	33
B	9(9.1)	11(7.3)	5(5.6)	0(3)	25
Total	21	17	13	7	58

SOURCE: Field survey, 2012.

DOF = (R – 1) (C – 1) Level of significance = 5% (0.05)

DOF= (2 – 1) (4- 1)

DOF= 3

Table 3: Contingency Table (Chi-Square X^2) for Testing Hypothesis

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	$(Fo-Fe)^2$	$\frac{(Fo-Fe)^2}{Fe}$
A	12	11.9	0.1	0.01	0.0008
	6	9.7	-3.7	13.69	1.41
	8	7.4	0.6	0.36	0.05
	7	4	3	9	2.25
B	9	9.1	-0.1	0.01	0.001
	11	7.3	3.7	13.69	1.86
	5	5.6	-0.6	0.36	0.064
	0	3	-3	9	3
					8.05

Calculated Value = 8.05

Critical Value = 7.82

Where: X^2 = Chi square, Fo = Observed frequency

Fe = Expected frequency, \sum = Summation

DOF = Degree of freedom

Interpretation

The calculated X^2 value is 8.05 is greater than the tabulated X^2 value of 7.82. This means that we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which says that celebrity advertising has influence on the performance of new products of Globacom. The result of the test indicates that firms that use celebrities in advertising their new products stand a better chance of selling more of their products to the customers who are attracted by endorsement of the celebrities. The result agrees with the findings of Jayaswal (2008), who observed that new products advertised through celebrities achieve a higher degree of attention and recall for customers, which will eventually lead to higher sales.

CONCLUSION

Companies are increasingly and continuously facing uncertainty and dynamic environment with so much competition. In such environments, survival becomes the target of most firms and only few strive to distinguish themselves in order to control the market. Hence, most marketing firms that strive to penetrate and control the market finds celebrity advertising very useful. The aim of the study was to assess the influence of celebrity advertising on the performance of the new products of Globacom limited and to also see whether the influence of this promotion strategy (celebrity advertising) can affect the purchase intention of customers. It was therefore discovered through careful analysis of the data collected that, celebrity advertising has great influence on the performance of new products of Globacom. As can be interpreted from the results, celebrity endorsement has reasonable impact on customers as per their attitude and purchase intention of new products. Celebrity endorsement has come out as not only an influential factor but rather a causal factor in the results of this paper. Physical attractiveness, credibility and congruence of celebrity with reference to the endorsed advertisement all have impact on the customer's perception about the advertised product. Another implication of this paper is that it goes out to show the extent to which today's customer is aware and influenced by celebrity Advert. Celebrities are worshipped as icons now. If the customer perceives the physical attractiveness, credibility and the match between celebrity and the new product to be favorable, he or she is inertly being influenced to like that product which leads to the purchase of that product.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings from the analysis, we wish to advance the following recommendations:

- i. Telecom organizations should watch out for match-up and congruency between the product and the celebrity before engaging in endorsement contracts with celebrities.

- ii. Telecom organizations should take note of the cost implication of this form of advertising. The cost of engaging celebrities in advertisements is very high; therefore, management of Telecom organizations should be sensitive in engaging celebrities so that the cost may not be too high.
- iii. Telecom organizations should strictly watch out for attributes in the celebrity such as source power, credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness. This will help the customer remember the new product during shopping.
- iv. Telecom organizations should avoid those celebrities that have dented images because the impression the public has about them can easily be transferred to the products.

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