



# Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Brand Awareness in the Telecommunication Industry

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## Abstract

Celebrity endorsement has been around as a marketing communication tool for a long time and its use has continued to be on the rise despite the huge resources it demands. This is because it enables marketers to create awareness for their brands and leverage on the popularity and fan following of celebrities in favour of their brands. The study examines the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand awareness and the objectives are to assess the relationship between celebrity and attractiveness in MTN brand equity and trust worthiness in MTN brand equity. The adopted methodology was a descriptive design with a simple random sampling technique. A Structured questionnaire was designed in the data collection from the respondents of the study area. The collected data was analysed using simple percentage and frequencies and the results were presented in tables. The Findings of the study indicated that celebrity endorsement of MTN products improves the buying behaviour of consumers and the research concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand awareness; and recommends that any brand which seek to remain competitive through enhanced brand recognition should employ celebrity endorsement as a strategic marketing communication tool in presenting their marketing messages to their audiences.

**Keywords:** *Brand awareness, Buying behaviour, Celebrity endorsement and MTN Nigeria.*

## 1. Introduction

Celebrity advertising is a powerful communication tool of business to most firms and organizations for them to be able to reach their target market across the globe (Kotler and Keller (2021). It was argued by Chan (2022) that the average person is exposed to hundreds of celebrity advert messages between the time he opens his eyes 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 strategy carried out by most multinationals or large organizations so as to build brand image and sustain brand equity for goods and services (Chan, 2022). 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 (Buari et al, 2025). All the popularity, glamour and charisma attached to a movie star, as a sports hero, a TV personality, or even a politician is sold and purchased as the product's own. Many companies have had considerable successes using famous names and faces (Ogohi, 2019). 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 includes Banky W for Etisalat, Tuface Idibia for Airtel and Desmond Eliot for Tantalizers. Various companies including MTN are signing deals with celebrities in the hope that by using celebrities they can accomplish a unique and relevant position in the minds of the consumers. (Emonena and Christopher, 2023). Also, according to Reynolds (2020) celebrity endorsement can give a brand a touch of glamour. Brand awareness is the first point of brand knowledge in consumers' minds reflecting their ability to identify a brand; the likelihood that the brand name will come to mind and the ease with which that happens (Kotler and Keller, 2021). Awareness to a brand can be used to describe brand recognition when the consumer can confirm having been exposed to the brand when given a cue (Ovidiu, 2019). Brand awareness and recognition is important in the buying decision making and so a veritable tool for firms to achieve competitive advantage as it will help consumers recall the brand given a product category. It also increases the probability of the brand been part of the evoke set. Kotler and Keller, (2021) opines that brand awareness influences brand associations that form the brand image. Brand awareness is the first point of brand knowledge in consumers' minds reflecting their ability to identify a brand; the likelihood that the brand name will come to mind and the ease with which that happens (Kotler and Keller, 2021). Other empirical findings have shown that use of celebrity endorsers in advertising have effect on recall of both the brand and the advertisement Chan (2022) in his research has shown that celebrity endorsement can influence perceived product quality and uniqueness. There have been several studies on celebrity endorsement, however, majority of these studies were conducted in advanced economies. Therefore, as far as can be determined very few of such research are conducted in developing countries of Africa particularly in Nigeria. This gap in literature is somewhat alarming given the emerging changes in consumers' behavioural pattern that seem to be a snowball of the pattern in developed and developing economies. Also, studies carried out on celebrity endorsement have focused mainly 'traditional celebrities' such as actors, athletes, etc. leaving out the 'new age celebrities such as Twitter and Tiktok influencers, etc (Emonena, and Christopher, 2023; Duh and Thabethe, 2021). This study seeks to combine both.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Celebrity**

An individual who is well known to the public for their well-known-ness and has an impact on public consciousness (Chan, 2022). How do individuals who are known to the public for their well-known-ness use that influence to impact the public consciousness? More specifically for the purpose of this study, how do these individuals use their influence to “impact the public consciousness” for the benefit of other companies or themselves? Celebrity endorsement and celebrity entrepreneurship are two important mediums used to exploit celebrity. They are defined below as are the underlying mechanisms that make these medium effective influencers of public consciousness (Emonena and Christopher, 2023). Celebrities engage in a range of paid activities when working with companies and products. According to Kamen et al., (2017) the way in which celebrities are used can be broken down into four (although not mutually exclusive) categories: Testimonial, endorser, actor, and spokesman. In a testimonial “the individual attests to the superiority or excellence of a product or service on the basis of personal experience with it”, while endorsement occurs when an individual is (often explicitly) associated with a brand

### **2.2. Brand Awareness**



Developing and maintaining strong brands is a key marketing strategy in Business-to- Consumer (B2C) environments (Homburg et al, 2020). Thus, building brand awareness economically and efficiently is considered a major goal of marketing and is argued to have significant influence on consumers (Ogohi, 2020). Brand awareness is a basic level of brand knowledge involving at the least, recognition of the brand name (Kumar and Singh, 2023).

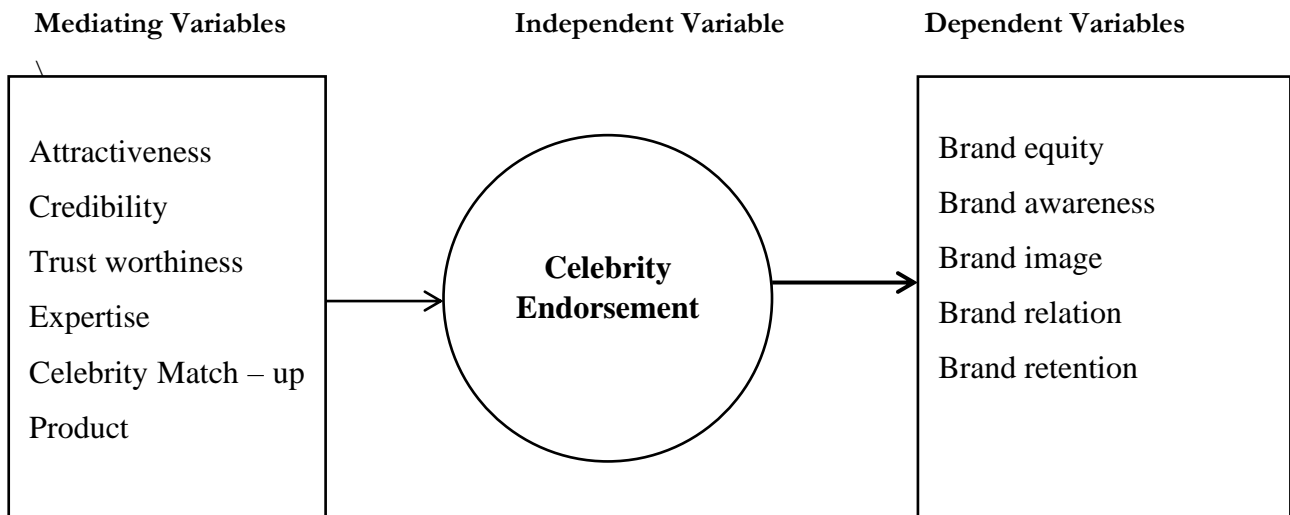
### **2.3. Empirical Review**

Buari et al., (2025); Kurdi et al., (2022); Emonena, (2023); Chan (2022) and Herdiani (2018) conducted researches on Celebrity endorsement advertising: brand awareness, brand recall, brand loyalty as Antecedent of consumer' purchase behavior on various products. The main purposes of these researches were to examine whether or not marketers can utilise celebrity endorsement to promote their products or brands to consumers effectively and to establish whether brand recall, brand awareness, brand loyalty and purchase behavior are positively influenced by celebrity endorsement advertising. The conclusions were the celebrity endorsement directly and positively affects, brand awareness, purchase behavior, brand recall, brand loyalty. It is important to also note that brand awareness and purchase behavior are negatively correlated implying that consumers merely knowing about a brand is not motivation enough for them to be loyal to that brand. However, the extent to which it does so depends on how well the marketing communications team executes the strategy in the relevant target market (Duh and Thabethe, 2021).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The connection between celebrity attractiveness and attitude changes towards products, issues, and advertising evaluations have been shown in many studies (Chaiken 2019). The following are theoretical justifications for the foundation of the celebrity endorsement theory. First, according to the notion of endorsement, when a third party or spokesperson endorses a product or brand, buyers are psychologically drawn to it. A celebrity, product expert, or regular consumer can serve as the spokesperson (Friedman and Friedman, 1979). The benefits of using the firm or product will be explained by the representative. The message will be more convincing if it originates from a reliable source, regardless of whether it is delivered by a person or a machine. According to Atkin and Block (1983), endorsers are considered likeable when they behave in this manner. The corresponding organization or business performs successfully if the celebrity has a high level of public recognition. The Meaning Transfer Model is the second. According to McCracken (1986), hypothesized celebrities derive some integrated meaning from their personal accomplishments, campaigns, and positions. Furthermore, it asserts that the cultural practices of potential clients may influence how the celebrity's actions are interpreted and how the meaning is conveyed to the item or situation that the clients face. The Source Credibility Model is the third. Simons (1970) asserts that communicators who are appealing should have a greater impact than those who are not. This concept was further expanded upon by Ohanian (1990), who offered three elements that affect source credibility. "We're examining credibility and trust." An audience will pay more attention to an entertainer if they have greater faith in him (Hovland et al. 1953). According to Ohanian (1990), "it is determined by his or her apparent dependability, honesty, reliability, and sincerity." Lastly, the Product Match-Up Model assesses how well the spokesperson's qualities and those of the product selected for the commercial match (Kamins & Gupta 1994; Lynch & Schuler 1994). To guarantee a proper fit between the communicator and the product, product matching is therefore essential. Researchers must take into account the celebrity's personality and the fact that the product being sold must be viewed favourably by customers, according to the models that form the foundation of celebrity endorsement theory. Purchase intention was positively correlated with

celebrity endorsement. In this study, the dimension of similarity was added to the existing dimensions of celebrity endorsement which are expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Generally, in persuasive communication, the source's expertise and skill refers to the skill and expertise observed from them, has a positive effect on changing consumers' attitudes. Also, the celebrity's achievements and special skills may act as a suitable connection with the product, and result in the endorsement being more acceptable by the consumers (Till and Bulser, 2020).



Source: Sivesan, 2018

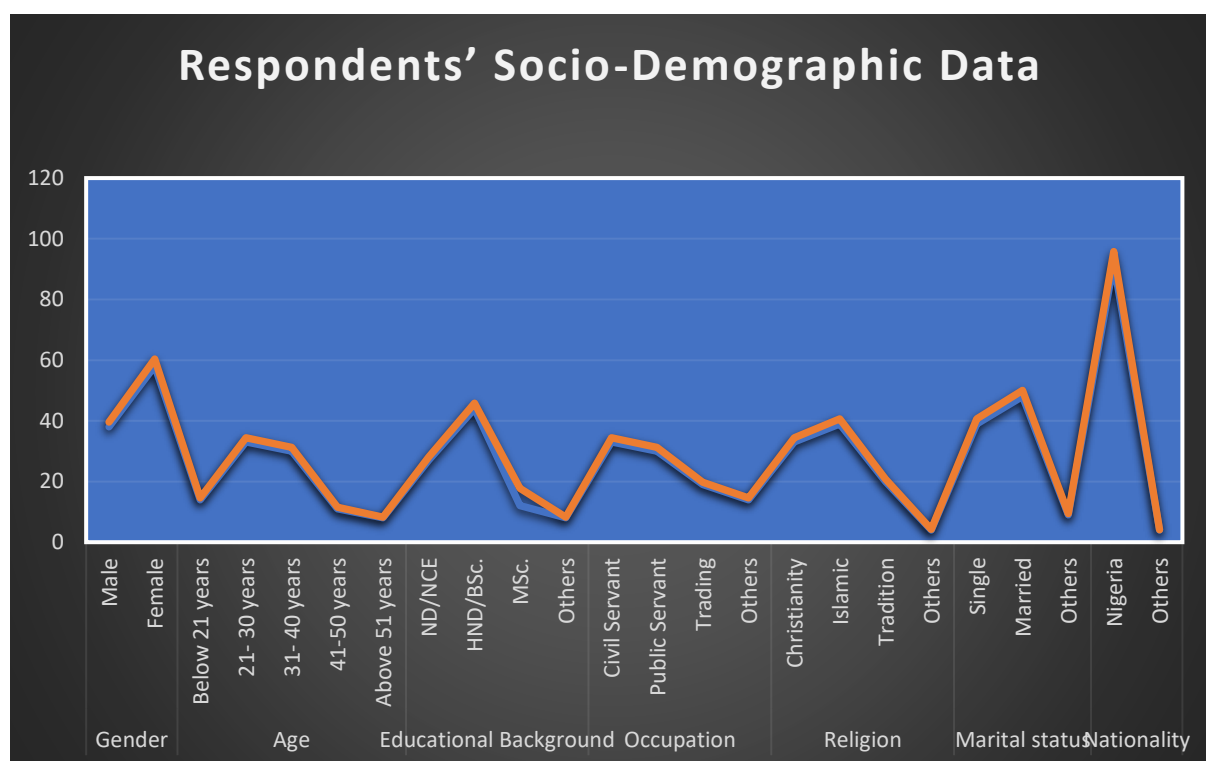
## 4. Research Methodology

Osogbo Metropolitan, Osun State, Nigeria is the study area of this research. The Influence Of Celebrity Endorsement On Telecommunication Industry Brand Awareness were investigated, using MTN Group Limited (formerly M-Cell) being one of topmost multinational mobile telecommunications company, operating in Nigeria. Using a quantitative approach, a well-structured questionnaire was adopted in data collection. A total of hundred (100) copies of questionnaire were given out to both retails and corporate customers of which ninety-six (96) copies of questionnaire were retrieved amounting to 96 % of all the questionnaires and representing a high response rate of 96% with 4.0% not retrieved and this was used for the analysis. The simple percentage and frequency were employed to analyze the respondents' biodata and their responses to opinion questions on the influence of celebrity endorsements and brand awareness in the telecommunication industry. Adopted methodology was based on similar researches by; Kumar et al., (2019), Buari et al, (2021), Buari et al, (2022), Ajao et al., (2022), Ola, (2023) Buari et al., 2025 Abiodun et al, 2025; Amode et al., 2025. The population for this study was limited to MTN Nigeria, Osogbo branch customers (retails and corporates) as one of the topmost

Telecommunication companies which are enclosed in the Osun State Bureau of Statistics Fact Findings. Hundred (100) MTN Nigeria, Osogbo branch customers were chosen randomly as part of the sample size.

## 5. Data analysis and discussion

The results of Data analysis from all the elements of the population (consumers and retailers of MTN products) are presented below. The target respondents were 100 and only 96 respondents representing 96 % of the target responded. Figure1 below present the responses of the participants when asked about the personal information, questions are based on; gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, and occupation and religion



Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 1 above depicts the demography data of the respondent's participants in this study. It was discovered in the table that majority of the participants in the study are Female, who account for 58 (60.4%) of the respondents and 38 (39.6%) are Male. In term of Age, 14 (14.6%) are within the age below 21 years, 33 (34.4%) are within the age of 21 - 30, 30 (31.3%) are with the age group of 31 - 40 years, 11 (11.5%) are within the age of 41 – 50 years and 8 (8.3%) for age above 50 years. Also, 44 (45.8%) have highest educational qualification to be HND/BSc, 27 (28.1%) had ND/NCE., 17 (17.7%) had a MSc., and 8 (8.3%) had others. About 33 (33.4%) are Civil servants, 30 (31.3%) are public servants, 19 (19.8%) are Traders while 14 (14.6%) have other occupations. We have 33 (34.4%) who are Christianity, 39 (40.6%) are Muslim, 19 (19.8%) are Traditional worship and 14 (14.6%) have other religion apart from the above-mentioned. 92 (95.8%) are



Nigerians while 4 (4.1%) are other people from another country. Finally, 39 (40.6%) are Single, 48 (50.0%) are Married, and 9 (9.4%) are Divorced.

**Table 1:** Choice of MTN due to favourite celebrity endorsement

| S/N | Responses         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree    | 32        | 33.3           |
| 2.  | Agree             | 30        | 31.3           |
| 3.  | Undecided         | 4         | 4.2            |
| 4.  | Disagree          | 15        | 16.7           |
| 5.  | Strongly Disagree | 14        | 14.6           |
| 6.  | Total             | 96        | 100            |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

From the table 2.0, 30 (31.3%) of the respondents agreed that when asked why respondent choose MTN brand because their favorite celebrity endorse it, 32 (33.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that when asked why respondent choose MTN brand because their favorite celebrity endorse it, 4 (4.2%) were unable to decide, 15 (16.7%) disagreed that when asked why respondent choose MTN brand because their favorite celebrity endorse it, while 14 (14.6%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that most respondent choose MTN brand because their favorite celebrity endorse it

**Table 2:** Choice of purchase based on favourite celebrity endorsement

| S/N | Responses         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree    | 39        | 40.6           |
| 2.  | Agree             | 38        | 39.6           |
| 3.  | Undecided         | 2         | 2.1            |
| 4.  | Disagree          | 9         | 9.4            |
| 5.  | Strongly Disagree | 8         | 8.3            |
| 6.  | Total             | 96        | 100            |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

Table 2 indicated that 39.6% (38 ) of the respondents agreed that when asked if customers would buy the brand if their favorite celebrity endorse it, 39 (40.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed when asked if customers would buy the brand if their favorite celebrity endorse it, 2 (2.1%) were unable to decide, 9 (9.4%) disagreed when asked if customers would buy the brand if their favorite celebrity endorse it, while 8 (8.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that most customers would buy the brand if their favorite celebrity endorse it

**Table 3:** whether favourite celebrity gives a positive image of MTN bhand

| S/N | Responses      | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree | 36        | 37.5           |
| 2.  | Agree          | 40        | 41.7           |



|    |                   |    |      |
|----|-------------------|----|------|
| 3. | Undecided         | 3  | 3.1  |
| 4. | Disagree          | 10 | 10.4 |
| 5. | Strongly Disagree | 7  | 7.3  |
| 6. | Total             | 96 | 100  |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

From the table 3 above, 40 (41.7%) of the respondents agreed when asked if customers favorite celebrity gives a positive image of MTN brand, 36 (37.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed when asked if customers favorite celebrity gives a positive image of MTN brand, 3 (3.1%) were unable to decide, 10 (10.4%) disagreed when asked if customers favorite celebrity gives a positive image of MTN brand, while 7 (7.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that most customer's favorite celebrity gives a positive image of MTN brand

**Table 4** Customer's belief on uses of MTN by favourite celebrity

| S/N | Responses         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree    | 33        | 34.4           |
| 2.  | Agree             | 31        | 32.3           |
| 3.  | Undecided         | 18        | 16.7           |
| 4.  | Disagree          | 8         | 8.3            |
| 5.  | Strongly Disagree | 8         | 8.3            |
| 6.  | Total             | 96        | 100            |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

Table 4 revealed that around 32.3% of the respondents agreed when asked if customers believe celebrity also uses MTN brand they advertise, 33 (34.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed when asked if customers believe celebrity also uses MTN brand they advertise, 16 (15.7%) were unable to decide, 8 (8.3%) disagreed when asked if customers believe celebrity also uses MTN brand they advertise, while 8 (8.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that most customers believe celebrity also uses MTN brand they advertise

**Table 5** Relationship between the celebrity attractiveness and MTN brand equity

| S/N | Responses         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree    | 8         | 8.3            |
| 2.  | Agree             | 11        | 14.5           |
| 3.  | Undecided         | 3         | 3.1            |
| 4.  | Disagree          | 34        | 35.4           |
| 5.  | Strongly Disagree | 40        | 41.7           |
| 6.  | Total             | 96        | 100            |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

From the table above 11 respondents, amounting to 14.5% agreed when asked if there is no any relationship between the celebrity attractiveness and MTN brand equity, 8 (8.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed when asked if there is no any relationship between the celebrity attractiveness and MTN brand equity, 3 (3.1%) were unable to decide, 34 (35.4%) disagreed when



asked if there is no any relationship between the celebrity attractiveness and MTN brand equity, while 40 (41.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that there is strong relationship between the celebrity attractiveness and MTN brand equity

**Table 6** *The way celebrities promote MTN band makes it attractive for the users*

| S/N | Responses         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree    | 36        | 37.5           |
| 2.  | Agree             | 39        | 40.6           |
| 3.  | Undecided         | 2         | 2.1            |
| 4.  | Disagree          | 10        | 10.4           |
| 5.  | Strongly Disagree | 9         | 9.4            |
| 6.  | Total             | 96        | 100            |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

From table 7, 39 (40.6%) of the respondents agreed that the way celebrities promote MTN band makes it attractive for the users, 36 (37.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the way celebrities promote MTN band makes it attractive for the users, 2 (2.1%) were unable to decide, 10 (10.4%) disagreed that the way celebrities promote MTN band makes it attractive for the users, while 9 (9.4%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that the way celebrities promote MTN band makes it attractive for the users

**Table 7** *Celebrity creditability of the celebrity leads to the growth of the brand equity*

| S/N | Responses         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1.  | Strongly Agree    | 40        | 41.7           |
| 2.  | Agree             | 42        | 43.8           |
| 3.  | Undecided         | 2         | 2.1            |
| 4.  | Disagree          | 6         | 6.3            |
| 5.  | Strongly Disagree | 6         | 6.3            |
| 6.  | Total             | 96        | 100            |

**Source:** Field Survey, (2025)

From the table above, about 4.1.15, 42 (43.8%) of the respondents agreed that celebrity creditability of the celebrity leads to the growth of the brand equity, 40 (41.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that celebrity creditability of the celebrity leads to the growth of the brand equity, 2 (2.1%) were unable to decide, 6 (6.3%) disagreed that celebrity creditability of the celebrity leads to the growth of the brand equity, while 6 (6.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be concluded that celebrity creditability of the celebrity leads to the growth of the brand equity

## 6. Conclusion

The discussion has shown that celebrity advertisement is a powerful and effective instrument that amplifies the influence of a campaign. However, celebrities alone do not guarantee the success of any excellent advertising campaign or the greatest product imaginable. The combination of



numerous aspects in particular, the price and other components, works together for the brand's success and its acceptability in the eyes of customers and their market share. Modern day consumers are well informed and intelligent; they know that famous people are paid for this and may not even utilize the items. Celebrity endorsement has transformed the conventional manner of marketing entirely. It is recognized as an omnipresent aspect of modern marketing. Advertising is always a means of drawing a consumer's attention. Prominent people have been the easiest method to introduce a new product and will continue to do so in the near future, given its massive appeal and a world of star-stuck dedicated followers. The study therefore concludes by identifying a positive relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand promotion. Conclusively, Celebrity endorsement definitely creates an impact in the brand preference attitude of consumers. In spite of the economic advantage of using relatively unknown personalities as endorsers in advertising campaigns, the choice of celebrities to perform that role has become a universal practice for brands competing in today's cluttered media environment

## 7. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that, Telecommunication Companies should always evaluate celebrities' suitable personalities for promoting their items and also undertake cost-benefit analysis to ensure that the sum paid to the celebrities' services is worth the usage of a celebrity. Also, Telecommunication Companies should made use reputable celebrities in advertising, because of high attractiveness, can help the customers to remember the brand during shopping, and using celebrities can get more attention than the advertisements that don't.

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