
Use of Celebrities in Social Media Advertising and Customer Purchasing Decision: An Analysis of Helen Paul's Hypo Bleach Advertisements

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the use of celebrities in social media advertising and customer purchasing decision: An analysis of Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements. The objectives of the study were to find out the social media channels through which Benin City residents are exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo Bleach advertisements; find out the frequency of exposure of Benin City residents to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements on social media and Find out the degree to which use of celebrities influence Benin City residents patronage of advertised products. The social Judgement theory was the theoretical framework of the study while survey and questionnaire respectively served as research design and instruments of the study. The study found that the use of celebrities in social media advertisements make Benin City residents patronize advertised products such as Helen Paul's hypo bleach. It was therefore recommended that social media users should always understand that because a celebrity was used for an advert does not automatically make the advertised product authentic. As such, celebrities and social media users should ensure that they confirm the quality of products they respectively advertise and buy in order to avoid advertising or buying substandard products. It was also recommended that advertisers should always strive to carry out quality and effective social media advertisements because it is a powerful tool that helps influence the public buying decision when done well.

Key Words: *Social Media; Advertising; Celebrities; Helen Paul, Hypo Bleach*

INTRODUCTION

A variety of online communication tools that allow users to connect with one another based on common interests are referred to as "social media" (Nwaoboli, Ezeji & Osife-Kurex, 2022; Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). Social media, according to Kietzmann & Kristopher (2011) are platforms that combine web and mobile-based technologies to provide highly dynamic platforms where people and groups may share, co-create, debate and alter user-generated contents. The majority of businesses increasingly use social media for marketing, particularly those aimed at youths, since individuals nowadays, especially the young, spend more time on social media networks than they do on other activities.

Karpinski & Duberstein (2011) also highlighted that there is a connection between product use, celebrity advertisements and reliance on social media sites. Social media has experienced a phenomenal expansion in both the range of its uses and the number of its users due to its unique qualities, such as adaptability, interaction and personalization. As a result, it

has been demonstrated to be a very useful tool in the fields of communication, entertainment, education, and electronic commerce, such as advertisements (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Beli, 2022). On the other hand, celebrity advertisements are a tried-and-true strategy for getting the public's attention, interest and willingness to buy an advertiser's products and services. A popular person who has become well-known as a result of their achievements is referred to as a celebrity. Firat and Venkatesh (2006) noted that celebrities are those who get widespread public awareness from certain demographic groupings on a local and global level due to their impacts, accolades and accomplishments in their various fields. According to Charles (2003), one of the reasons for utilizing celebrities in advertising is that people are less prone to develop defenses against celebrities than they are against corporate communications like advertising agencies, which have clear economic objectives.

Due to the rise of celebrity-targeted product commercials, many firms have adjusted their marketing tactics to capitalize on celebrity-friendly methods. This is a successful tactic in most circumstances since it results in more customer affection when assessing advertisements. While there are many marketing techniques that have produced successful advertising, emotional messaging is often used in the hopes of fostering a closer bond between the business and the customer (Donovan, Jalleh & Henley, 2012). Against this background, this research specifically looks at the usage of celebrities in social media advertising and consumer purchase decisions using Helen Paul's social media advertisements of Hypo bleach as case study.

Statement of the Problem

Chibuikwe (2008) is one of several scholars that carried out studies on the efficacy of using celebrities in advertisements. This research clarified the types of social media advertising that are used, the successes and difficulties encountered in using it and the adoption rate; however, it made no mention of how well social media advertising works to influence or elicit response from consumers when celebrities are featured in such advertisements. However, the effectiveness of using celebrities in social media advertisements to influence the buying decisions of potential and current consumers of Hypo bleach—which is frequently advertised using Helen Paul, a comedienne and professor—has not been fully explored despite the fact that there have been numerous studies on advertising. In order to cover these gaps in social media advertisements and consumer purchasing decisions, the present research assessed the efficacy of the use of celebrities in social media advertising and customer purchasing decision using Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisement as a basis of study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Find out the social media channels through which Benin City residents are exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo Bleach advertisements
2. Find out the frequency of exposure of Benin City residents to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements on social media
3. Find out the degree to which use of celebrities influence Benin City residents patronage of advertised products

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Celebrities

Celebrities are people who are widely known both publicly and privately to a large number of people or a group of people (Giles & Maltby, 2013). According to Gabbler (2010), a celebrity is a person who is well-known for his expertise. Heiman (2015) notes that a person who is well-known to the public (such as an actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) for accomplishments beyond the scope of the product category they are endorsing is referred to as a celebrity. In contrast to earlier definitions like that of Giles & Maltby (2013), Gabbler (2010) thinks that some people have become well-known while accomplishing nothing notable. Celebrities support not just fashion but also young people's physical standards because celebrities have an overly idealized appearance. As such, people who are known to many, but know much fewer, and are the subject of great attention are considered celebrities.

According to Heiman (2015), celebrities are often employed by marketers to lend their personalities to a product or brand since their power has effectively enslaved the majority of people and has a significant influence on them. Celebrities take on the role of contemporary heroes by assisting people in making meaning of their life. Numerous scholars contend that since Nollywood, marketing, and the media produce fame, it is not really genuine (Gabler, 2000). Gabler (2000) contends that celebrity lives and relationships lack authenticity, consumers may yet find significance in celebrities. The growth of contemporary media has increased public interest in celebrities, which has even led to the establishment of a self-substantiating circuit (the cult of celebrity).

Advertising

Advertising is any impersonal, persuasive transfer of information about products, services, or ideas across many media that is funded by known sponsors (Bovee,). In other words, advertising is any type of information that is sent to an unknown audience with the intention of generating or maintaining interest in the advertising topic and marketing it as a product. Advertising, according to Moriarity, Mitchel & Wells (2009, p. 55) cited in Francis (2014) is described as "a paid form of persuasive communication that uses mass and interactive media to reach broad [mass] audiences in order to connect an identified sponsor with buyers [target audience] and provide information about products [goods, services, and ideas]".

Arens, Weigold, and Arens (2008) defined it as a structured and composed non-personal communication of information about products (goods), services, and ideas by an identified sponsor(s) through various media. Despite the fact that there are many different definitions of advertising, the traditional definition comprises the following six basic elements:

- a) A kind of communication that is paid for.
- b) The existence of a sponsor who can be recognized.
- c) Using the media to disseminate the information.
- d) The existence of a certain target audience.
- e) Inadequate personalisation of disseminated data
- f) Targeted action

Customer Purchasing Decisions

Customer Purchasing Decisions are the procedures used when individuals or groups choose, pay for, use, or discard products, service concepts, or experiences in accordance with their needs and preferences (Kayode & Afolami, 2013). A consumer purchasing decision includes looking for, paying for, assessing and getting rid of products and services that one believes would effectively satisfy one's needs. As such, a person's purchasing decision may be described as how they think, feel, and/or act in connection to a range of qualities of items in their surroundings (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010).

The attitude structures describe how the consumer reacts to different market stimuli, such as advertisements, as well as how the consumer perceives them. Demographic, situational, environmental, and psychological factors have a substantial influence on consumers' purchase choices; as a result, businesses and policymakers may utilize these factors to develop strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of different types of customers. In order to better understand how these elements affect consumers' levels of satisfaction, additional information must be gathered.

In addition to being a crucial aspect of successful marketing, keeping pleased customers is one of the most crucial factors in promoting repeat business from current clients. Contrary to the traditional concept of consumer pleasure, Gustafsson (2006) proposed that customer satisfaction is an emotional characteristic for consumer purchasing decisions.

Imperatives of the Use of Celebrities in Social Media Advertising

Celebrities are used in social media advertising for a variety of purposes. However, according to this researcher, the primary purposes of using celebrities for advertising are:

- 1. New Product Launch:** Celebrities are used in the introduction of new items to the social media market. With celebrities, a company can present itself and its goods to the general audience and as well convince them that the products or services are good and worth their purchase and consumption.
- 2. Promotion of a positive public image:** Using celebrities, especially well renowned and respected ones promotes the advertiser's reputation on social media. It also allows a company to convey its accomplishments in order to meet the demands of its consumers. This improves the firm's goodwill and reputation, which is important in order to compete in the market. Without promotion, a new business will struggle to create an impression on potential clients and using celebrities for such advert allows for immediate market exposure.
- 3. Sales Promotion:** Celebrities are used to promote the purchase products and services by informing and convincing social media users to do so. This often works because celebrities attract the attention of the public and people often consider what they advertise as credible as no celebrity would want to taint his or her reputation by advertising a product or service that is of low quality or that is hazardous to the society.
- 4. Getting the interest of consumers to advertised products and services:** Using celebrities for advertising makes potential and existing consumers interested in the advertised products and services. This is because most people find interest in celebrities and in extension anything they say or do. As such, people may broaden their understanding by hearing a celebrity highlighting a product's usefulness and in extension embrace new lifestyles and let go off old ones.

Influence of the use of Celebrity in Social Media Advertisements on Consumers Purchasing Decisions

The words and pictures that the media feed social media users and customers of all ages have impacts on them (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Nwoko, 2022). Some of these images inspire existing and potential consumers of a product to think about purchase of certain products they would not have purchased if not exposed to the advertisements. The social media places a lot of emphasis on how personality development is influenced by physical appearance. Consumers thus develop a self-centered and self-conscious attitude.

According to Omenugha, Uzuegbunam & Ndolo (2016), teenagers and young adults are more susceptible to the influence of celebrities than the broader population. Teenagers sometimes copy celebrities to make up for qualities they lack in their own life. Many young individuals behave and dress like their favourite performers. Schuebel (2016) asserts that this enables individuals to make up for low self-esteem. Some teens may go to great lengths to have cosmetic surgery in order to resemble their favourite celebrities. The lives of these powerful individuals may be seen from both positive and negative angles. When young people see performances by sports, singers, or movie stars, they compare themselves to them, wishing they could do what they do and wondering what it would take to reach that level (Uzuegbunam, 2015). Schuebel (2016) cites Bandura's social learning theory (1986), which holds that people learn about the world by seeing how others behave, to explain why superstars are likely to be imitated.

According to Schuebel (2016), people develop their own ideas about behaviour by seeing the results of different actions and evaluating their answers. It seems reasonable that people are more prone to copy behaviours they connect with success or successful people. Holmes & Redmond (2010) argue that celebrities have a positive influence on our purchasing decisions because they prioritize success, relationships, discovering young talents, appearing attractive, giving to the needy, and having a strong sense of self-worth and what to buy or not.

According to Holmes & Redmond (2010) study, there are a lot more famous people who serve as good role models both locally and nationally. They encourage healthy lifestyles, take part in anti-drug campaigns, volunteer in schools and community projects, and exhort youngsters to complete their education while being safe. Schuebel (2016) asserts that, despite this, the use of celebrities in advertisements encourages young people to aspire to achievement and to purchase the products promoted. They want to be like the public figures they see in the media and they often have confidence in the goods and services these public figures promote. Because celebrities are used in advertising, some consumers may become interested in, want, and buy the products that the celebrity sells that they otherwise would not have bought. The use of celebrities in advertisements has a direct and indirect impact on how people behave and how they feel about the products being advertised. Additionally, if one sees a successful person they respect, they can opt to purchase the goods they are endorsing simply because the celebrity is their idol.

Empirical Review

Numerous scholars have looked at how celebrities' usage in advertisements affect customers' purchasing decisions. A research on "Determinants of Consumers' Brand Choice in Selected Residential Estates, Nairobi, Kenya" was conducted by Adede (2016). The study's goals were to look at the elements that impact customer brand choice and the degree to which advertising

influences brand preference in Nairobi, Kenya. The survey was the research tool, and the study made use of the framing theory. Within Nairobi City County, 375 dwelling units were selected using a descriptive survey. Consumers in Nairobi City County are exposed to a wide variety of grocery brands, and they must contend with the marketing strategies of several companies in order to choose the finest supermarket brands to support. It demonstrated how, in the last 20 years, Kenya's grocery industry has become very competitive as a result of sector deregulation and the use of celebrities in advertisements. The results also showed that there are ten factors that are important: cleanliness of the store, quality, taste, price, availability, family size, income, smell, thickness, and quantity. The factors that are least important are respondents' religion, the size of the store, the advertisements, the company personnel (the use of female images), the associations of the respondents, the colour of the packaging, and the location of the outlet. It was determined that brand-specific criteria are important in influencing brand choice, whilst personal aspects had the least impact. To see if any results were comparable, the researcher advised doing more study in counties other than Nairobi, which is home to several international cities. The study also recommended that advertisers should learn to always use celebrities for advertisements of grocery products as the research found that use of celebrities in advertising influences purchasing decisions positively.

Also, Cho (2016) conducted a study on the impact of grocery advertising on Vietnamese consumers' purchasing decisions. Survey served as research design. In the study's research methodology, reliability, factor analysis, regression, t-tests, and one-way analysis of variance were all used. The results demonstrate that four factors—entertainment, informativeness, annoyance, and credibility—have a major influence on consumers' attitudes toward detergent advertising and that the detergent industry makes a lot of money from advertising. Additionally, it was shown that the informativeness was the most crucial element. The research also showed a favourable correlation between Vietnamese consumers' sentiments about detergent advertising and both their purchasing behaviour and detergent brand profitability. According to the study's managerial implications, advertisers should only send messages to consumers with their consent because doing otherwise can result in diminishing returns for their business. The study is relevant to the present one since both used the same research approach and were concerned with the elements affecting consumers' brand purchases.

Jide (2018) examined the impacts of television advertisements on consumer purchasing behaviour with the goal of gaining insight into the consequences, if any, of using female imagery (celebrities) in television advertisements on consumer purchasing behaviour. It was a survey study with a 300-person urban Enugu sample size. According to the study's findings, people's decisions about the consumption of particular products and services as well as their purchasing patterns are genuinely influenced by advertising. It proved that the frequent use of television messaging and the use of female imagery in product marketing had a significant effect. The research recommended that marketers should continue to employ female imagery since it has a significant beneficial impact on consumers' purchasing decisions but that brands should not adversely exploit women by utilizing images that minimize their worth in an effort to attract customers. The research is pertinent to the present study since it asserts that female gender influences customers' decisions about things to buy. The above studies majorly agreed with the current study in terms of research design but differed mostly in terms of theoretical framework and research population.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Social Judgment Theory (SJT)

As a theory of self-persuasion, the Social Judgment Theory (SJT) was developed by Carolyn Sherif, Muzafer Sherif, and Carl Hovland. It is defined as the evaluation and interpretation of a concept based on prevailing emotions. This principle holds that each new thought is weighed and measured against one's current viewpoint to decide where it should fall on the mental attitude scale (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwa-Uwaoma, 2017). The subconscious categorization of ideas that takes place at the moment of observation is referred to as SJT. To study human judgement, the social judgement theory is often used. The study of cognitive perspectives is governed by a meta-theory. The cognitive perspective explains how people interpret the world.

A contrast effect is more likely when a stimulus is further from one's judgement anchor; an assimilation effect is more likely when the stimulus is closer to the anchor. Social judgement theory seeks to translate concepts and research from psychophysical judgement for use in social judgement. With the person's chosen stance acting as the judging anchor, SJT focuses on an individual's internal processes of judgement in connection to the link inside a delivered message. Finding a way to describe when persuasive communications are most likely to be effective was the aim (McQuail, 2010).

The theory states that one must first comprehend the audience's attitudes in order to alter them. The relationship to how individuals see persuasive messages will next be examined. Determining how near or remote one's position is also essential. The next stage is to adjust one's thinking in light of the argument presented. A person changes their mindset when they decide that a new situation falls inside their comfort zone. If the message crosses someone's line of rejection, they will modify their attitude, but not in the way the speaker intends. It is possible that a shift in perspective occurs unintentionally.

The boomerang effect happens when a person's attitude swings in the opposite direction of what the message promotes; instead of being lured to a concept, the listener is pushed away from it. Because of this, fear appeals in advertising can fail to elicit a response from the target market. People tend to act against advice when the audience's perception of risk increases and the likelihood that the desired impact will be achieved increases (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwa-Uwaoma, 2017).

The surrounding social environment may also affect how people's attitudes alter. People often adopt their significant partners' viewpoints in the interpersonal sphere. As a consequence, the general perception of social influencers is one of alignment and compliance. A key finding of the social judgement theory is that persuasion is challenging. Convincing signals that are centred on the receiver's acceptance range and deviate from the anchor location are more effective since the incoming data cannot be analysed or compared. As a result, even the most effective persuasive techniques will only result in minimal attitude changes. SJT claims that persuasion may occur gradually and via a variety of messages. In their research on "implications of social judgement theory for appealing advertising techniques," Asemah & Nwammuo (2017) employed this theory. This research used this theory because it demonstrates how persuasion in advertising, such as the engagement of celebrities in adverts, may increase product patronage and purchase decisions.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed the use of survey design method. The population of the study was Benin City which according to World Population Census in 2021 has 1.496 million residents.

The sample size of the study was determined by the Taro Yamane's sample size calculation propounded by Taro Yamanes in 1967. As such, the sample size for the study was four hundred (400). More so, the sampling technique adopted for this study was the random sampling technique, while questionnaire served as research instrument. Furthermore, the distribution and collection of questionnaire was face-to-face.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Social Media Channels through which Benin City residents are exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Facebook | 103 | 27.3% |
| Twitter | 75 | 19.9% |
| Instagram | 94 | 24.9% |
| Whatsapp | 0 | 0% |
| Youtube | 64 | 16.9% |
| Tik-Tok | 41 | 10.9% |
| Snapchat | 0 | 0% |
| Others | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 377 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 1 showed that the various social media platforms through which Benin City residents are exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Tik-Tok. However, the three dominant social media platforms were Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Table 2: Frequency of exposure of Benin City residents to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements on social media

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| Daily | 23 | 6.1% |
| Twice a week | 44 | 11.7% |
| Three times a week | 75 | 19.9% |
| Weekends | 75 | 19.9% |
| Weekly | 160 | 42.4% |
| Total | 377 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 2 showed that the frequency of exposure of Benin City residents to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements on social media is moderately high. As seen on the table, 160(42.4%) of the respondents are exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements on social media on a weekly basis.

Table 3: Response on whether use of celebrities in social media advertisements make Benin City residents patronize advertised products

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree | 245 | 64.9% |
| Agree | 78 | 20.7% |
| Neutral | 0 | 0% |
| Disagree | 28 | 7.4% |
| Strongly Disagree | 26 | 6.9% |
| Total | 377 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 3 shows that the use of celebrities in social media advertisements make Benin City residents patronize advertised products. However, 7.4% and 6.9% of the respondents respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed that the use of celebrities in social media advertisements make Benin City them patronize advertised products.

Table 4: Degree to which use of celebrities influence Benin City residents patronage of advertised products

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Very High | 119 | 31.6% |
| High | 198 | 32.5% |
| Can't tell | 5 | 1.3% |
| Low | 35 | 9.3% |
| Very Low | 20 | 5.3% |
| Total | 377 | 100% |

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 4 showed that the degree to which use of celebrities influence Benin City residents patronage of advertised products is high. This implies that use of celebrities in social media advertisements truly influence Benin City residents patronage of advertised products such as Hypo bleach.

Discussion of Findings

From the study it was found that showed that the various social media platforms through which Benin City residents are exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Tik-Tok. In addition, the study found that the use of celebrities in social media advertisements make Benin City residents patronize advertised products even though 7.4% and 6.9% of the respondents respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed.

This result also supports Yen-Nee (2010), assertion that states that consumers are sensitive to celebrities and are influenced by them when exposed to adverts by the celebrities. In the same line, the result support Adede (2016) claim that celebrities have a beneficial impact on human lives, and Schuebel (2016) notion that the use of celebrities in advertisements drive people to desire to be successful and to buy the things advertised.

Findings from the study also showed that that Benin City residents perceive the use of celebrities in advertisement to be effective, and that majority of the residents buy Hypo bleach because of the use of Helen Paul in the advert. This also agrees with the Social Judgement Theory used in this study which shows that people's judgement on whether or not to take an action such as the purchase of hypo bleach is determined by several factors including influence by external factors such as the use of celebrities in advertisements.

CONCLUSION

The researcher concludes that Benin City residents were highly exposed to Helen Paul's Hypo bleach advertisements on social media. The researcher also concludes that there exist a significant relationship between high patronage of *Hypo* bleach and Helen Paul's advertisement of the product because a lot of Benin City residents buy bleach because of Helen Paul and thus perceive the product as authentic.

As a result of the things the researcher found out, the following recommendations are made in order to help advertisers, celebrities, and advertising agencies carry out effective advertising campaigns:

1. Social media users should always understand that because a celebrity was used for an advert does not automatically make the advertised product authentic. As such, celebrities and social media users should ensure that they confirm the quality of products they respectively advertise and buy in order to avoid advertising or buying substandard products.
2. Advertisers should always strive to carry out quality and effective social media advertisements because it is a powerful tool that helps influence the public buying decision when done well.
3. Advertising agencies and advertisers should try as much as possible to make use of credible celebrities who can influence their target audience in their social media advertising campaigns.

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