

# Exploring the Dynamics of Consumerism in Developing Nations

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## Chapter 8

# The Effect of Celebrity Endorsements on Consumers' Buying Behavior in South West Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*Advertisers engage celebrities to endorse their products. This chapter hinges on the meaning transfer theory of McCracken that says that celebrity image can be transferred to items that users buy. Using the survey method, this work examined if celebrity endorsements affect buying. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on 1,516 residents drawn from urban, suburban, and rural areas of Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria. The Pearson correlation found positive relationships between celebrity endorsements and buyers' decisions. The tests show that celebrity endorsements influence the purchase decisions of the residents, and these buyers' avoidance of a product is more clearly influenced by celebrity endorsements. People buy products because of the celebrities that endorsed them. However, some respondents, especially those in the rural areas, were not as influenced into buying these products as are those from the urban and sub-urban areas. It is advised that advertisers pursue other avenues to draw patronage from this area.*

## **BACKGROUND OF STUDY**

Most celebrities are seen as famous, well known and successful individuals. Their glamour, fame, fortune, social network and lifestyles usually attract media attention. Piyush (2012) and Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade and Momeni (2010) say that the media make millions of people to constantly see their faces, hear their voices and read their names. Some scholars like Driessens (2013), Khatri (2006), Okorie and Agbaleke (2017) agree that celebrities shape their followers' opinions concerning anything through inspirational speeches, expression of talents, expertise, humanitarian advocacies and socially acceptable actions. Ranjbarian, Shekarchizade and Momeni (2010) write that people can become celebrities by ascription, achievement or attribution. Ascribed celebrities inherit family fame, royal flame and business names whilst other superstars achieve elevated status on account of their individual skills, winning of high laurels and accolades. Attributed celebrities achieve prominence by affiliation with famous personalities through regular co-appearances, consanguinity and professional personality management.

Most celebrities are associated with fame. Celebrity advertisements increase awareness and patronage of products. Evidence abounds that advertisers frequently use celebrities as credible sources to influence consumers' attitudes towards their brands and enhance their intention to purchase. McCracken (1989, p. 310) writes that a celebrity endorser is any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition to market a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. Atkin and Block (1983) note that these celebrities attract attention to the advertisement. Generally, they are individuals with attractive and likeable qualities and these are expected to be transferred to the products or services that they endorse. Much as celebrity advertisements promote brand awareness, strengthen brand image and help consumers' decision making, problems are aroused when the celebrity loses status due to moral, legal and controversial issues. As Sneha (2012, p.10) mentions, "when negative information is publicized about a celebrity, it not only influences the consumer's view of the celebrity but also the endorsed product."

Celebrity advertisements and endorsements have been studied by various scholars. Omenugha, Uzuegbunam and Ndolo's (2016) survey of some Nigerian youths show that these young people are exposed to celebrities in the media, love reading about, and watching them. Importantly, these celebrities influence their purchasing habits. Oyeniyi's (2014) study suggests that celebrity advertising affects sales of processed foods and soft drinks. Dumbili (2017) studied celebrity effect on alcohol and drinking behaviours of Nigerian youths. Uzuegbunam (2017) and Itiri (2015) looked at celebrity influence of youths' participation in the Nigerian general election. Nyarko, Asimah, Agbemava and Tsetse (2015) studied the influence of celebrity endorsement of *Fan Milk* on the buying behaviour of Ghanaian youths. They find sales for this product increased. However, the endorsement could not compel everybody to buy *Fan Milk*.

Celebrities are not limited to a particular media of expression. The traditional media of television, radio, newspapers and magazines have captured their stardom. Newer celebrities have been captured through the new media of *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter* and several other online outlets. Traditional media celebrities include Bill Cosby, Mariam Makeba, Barak Obama and Pastor Daniel Kolawole Olukoya. New media celebrities are usually younger. Examples are Emmanuella of the Mark Angels Comedy and the Jalals; two *YouTube* sensations who are followed locally and globally by millions of people for their comics and pranks respectively. According to Akram, Muhammad, Raga and Sana (2017), celebrities

cut across different fields of endeavour: politics, entertainment, sports, business, advocacy, religion and government. What Aririguzoh (2013) labels as the *communication imperative* or the command to communicate is actually what advertisers look for in celebrities. Celebrities are to communicate the advertised brands to their admirers and followers. Advertising professionals have cashed in on their popularity and mass followership to create awareness for some products and services. Belch and Belch (2012), Choi and Rifon (2007) and Odiboh (2002) point out that followership is a major element in advertising; but as McCracken (1989), Menon and Louis (2001) point out, celebrity status may not be permanent. Some lose followership occasioned by immoral conducts, criminal convictions, reduction in performance and outdated expertise while some others remain popular names even after death. What should a marketer do if his brand is suffering losses in a crisis situation? Amodu (2010) readily offers the deployment of public relations. Commercial organizations and prominent brands tend to use celebrities for specific communication roles. Odiboh, Olonode, Adesina, Yartey (2018) observe that some celebrities too are used by Non-Governmental Organizations or hired to support new technologies, for instance, e-transactions in communities.

In a growing economy like Nigeria, some advertisers have followed the norm of using famous people to advertise some products and services. Celebrity endorsement can create instant brand awareness, recall and patronage. Popular celebrity advertisements include Nollywood actress Ini Edo advertising *Glo* Telecommunications Network and footballer Kanu Nwankwo endorsing *Peak Milk*. Another celebrity like Pastor Enoch Adeboye - the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God - has been seen in a Lagos State Government-sponsored advertisement asking people to pay their taxes so that the state can provide more social amenities. In Ghana celebrities too also endorse. Actress Jackie Appiah endorses the computer firm IPMC; singer Emmanuel Andrews (stage name, Samini), MTN; and professional footballer, John Mensah, *Jago Milk*. The legendary Ivorian football star, Didier Drogba became the Digital Bank Ambassador for Standard Chartered Bank in Africa.

As Nigeria's economy advances, the need for advertising continues to grow. Aggressive marketing communication strategies have been observed as brands aim to convince, capture, retain and recapture prospects through celebrity applications to products. Dzisah and Ocloo (2013) see advertising as part of marketing promotions. They add that advertisers use celebrities to positively influence the behaviour of the consumers towards purchasing what the company is offering. Professionals see these strategic windows as assured paths to attracting and encouraging increased patronage from customers. Amodu (2007) notes that even the banks are not left out in trying to attract customers. The marvel of celebrities is quickly spreading in Nigeria. This however poses a different challenge for brands in Nigeria where marketing managers have to take into consideration the country's multi-cultural nature; and how some consumers may examine the advertisement based on the celebrity that is endorsing the brand. Notably, the effect of celebrity advertisements on consumers' buying behaviour in Nigeria, an emerging market has received little scholarly attention. This is a gap this study aims to fill. This paper examined the effect of celebrity advertisements on the buying behaviour of consumers in the urban, suburban and rural areas in Lagos and Ogun States in south western Nigeria. Lagos is the media capital of Nigeria, housing most of the country's advertising agencies that engage the celebrities. Ogun State is proximate to Lagos, thereby benefiting from the spill over of product manufacturing and preponderant brand communication activities. Residents in the two states are exposed to different forms of celebrity advertisements.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Advertising creates and maintains awareness about products and services through the mass media. Usually, it promotes specific goods and services to target consumers across rural, urban or suburban geo-boundaries. Urban centres are characterised by high flux of business activities and bubbly lifestyles. The urban places are in the metropolis. Rural areas are known to be sleepy in spite of the inhabiting population whose needs must be met. The rural areas are located outside the cities and towns but not included within the urban areas. Suburban areas are in between ruralscape and cityscape; inhabited by city workers and agro-cottage industry operators. The suburban areas are neither urban nor rural. Though each of these three locations have their media consumption peculiarities, access to advertisements of all sorts is guaranteed.

However, whilst celebrities may live with their metropolitan audiences, they remain distant from suburban and rural targets of endorsed advertisements. How would the advert messages influence buying behaviours across the demographic boundaries?

This research is expected to access the correlation between consumers buying behaviour and celebrity advertisements. Do celebrity advertisements have impact and actually influence the buying behaviours of consumers irrespective of their geographical locations? This is the major problem of investigation. Residents were selected from urban, suburban and rural areas in South western Nigeria. The selected urban areas are Victoria Island, Surulere and Ikeja while the rural communities are Ikotun, Iyesi, Egbeda, Atan and Ilugun, Abeokuta. The suburban regions are Oko Oba, Olorunsogo, Abeokuta and Ogba.

## **HYPOTHESES**

Two hypotheses are formulated for this study:

### **Hypothesis 1**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Celebrity endorsement has impact on the purchase decisions of urban, suburban and rural areas residents

### **Hypothesis 2**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Residents avoidance of a product is more significantly influenced by celebrity endorsements

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Nigerian brands have continued to use celebrities for advertisements. Zinkhan and Hong (1991) write that an advertisement's effectiveness is grounded in the interrelationship between a brand's perceived image and the consumer's self-image. Individuals derive meanings from an advertisement through culturally-accepted perception closely linked to the brand image held by the individual. Keller (1993,

p.3) remarks that the perception about a brand is reflected by the brand's association in the memory of the individual. Fleck, Korchia and Roy (2012); Kamins and Gupta (1994); Lynch and Schuler (1994); Misra and Beatty (1990) confirm that companies select celebrities to endorse their brands in anticipation that these particular persons hopefully convey the right meaning and highlight the congruence between them and the brands. This further leads to the idea of congruence and its effect on advertisement effectiveness. Fleck, Korchia and Roy (2012) say that *congruence* has been used in several researches on brand extension, co-branding, sponsoring, and endorsement to assess the fit between a brand and another entity. Solomon (1996) shares the opinion that congruity is applied to advertising and consumer behaviour when addressing how outlooks are affected when a person, such as a celebrity, is linked to a brand or company. He lays emphasis on the congruence between the advertising cues and the brand. Heckler and Childers (1992) examine the congruence between visual and verbal elements in advertisements.

Advertisements are expected to create meanings in the minds of the consumers. Smith (2007) expects individuals to be actively engaged in the meaning-making process because meanings are individually constructed even though it is derived from a cultural boundary. Mick and Buhl (1992) add that personal history, nationality, the community, family, and the private self affect the meanings that consumers attach to advertisements. Williamson (1978) points out that the viewer/reader is an essential participant in the process of meaning transfer. He must successfully decode the message presented in the advertisement to make meaning out of it. In addition, Shimp (1993, p.11) suggests that advertisers aim to appeal to "customer's functional, symbolic and experiential needs through effective communications". Aririguzoh (2007) assumes that they are media literates. MacInnis, Moorman and Jaworski (1991) and Tybout, Calder and Sternthal's (1981) studies report that advertising executional cues can influence communication effectiveness. However, they note that customers' processing of the message of the advertisement is a consequence of not only what they think about, but, also how they think about it. This explains why different individuals attach different meanings to the same advertisement.

Scholars like McCracken (1989); Erdogan, Baker and Tagg (2001) aver that a celebrity endorsement is not the same as a celebrity advertisement even though most people often use them interchangeably. However, they agree that a celebrity endorsement occurs when a famous name, signature or picture appears on a brand. The product is backed up with the authenticity of the personality. They are sometimes hired to speak about the brands at launches, and other events with large audiences. In celebrity advertisement, the celebrity appears in the advertisement and is seen using the product, commending its users or recommending it to potential users. Celebrity advertisements are used for competitive advantage and conversion of celebrity followers to brand admirers. Admiration is usually expected to translate to brand awareness and purchase. Aliede (2016) writes that celebrities may be associated with brand identity creation. Roozen and Claeys (2010) claim that celebrity advertisements attract positive effects for the target audience, brands, and the celebrity himself. Mogaji, Badejo and Charles (2018) share the view that sportswomen can also be brand ambassadors. As long as particular celebrities are shown in advertisements, they have the opportunities to attract more converts and increase their status value. Consumers grow confident since their heroes approve the products. Famous people sell products because their followers easily believe them and thus place the products on the top of their minds' ladder. Culture may be the rope tying the celebrities with their followers, especially if the product so endorsed has cultural significance in the eyes of consumers. Mogaji (2016) is of the opinion that this will enhance the perception of the brands that the celebrities are endorsing. Pil and Shavitt (1994) agree that advertising messages that reflect the dominant cultural norms are more persuasive than those that do not.

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The credibility of the celebrity is crucial. Ohanian's (1990) source credibility model offers three credibility measures: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Credibility refers to the 'extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject'. The celebrity's credibility enhances consumers' attitude towards the advert and the brand. The studies of Erdogan, (1999), and Silvera and Benedikte (2004) provide evidence suggesting that companies employing celebrities in their advertising campaigns make significant profits.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Meaning Transfer Theory of McCracken (1989) explains how effective celebrity endorsement influences the minds of the consumers through the transference of meanings. McCracken says that celebrities' effectiveness as endorsers rise from the cultural meanings consumers believe are bestowed on them. Celebrities transfer various meanings to the goods or services that they endorse. McCracken's postulations lie on three factors:

- The construction of celebrity image
- The movement of the celebrity image to the product
- The transfer of meaning from product to consumers

The celebrity is an icon known for specific things, for example, sports. A sportsman presence in an advertisement means that he is deliberately telling buyers that they should equate their value of him with the product. In other words, he is transferring the image he has built in his field of endeavour to the product that he is now endorsing. It is this transfer that creates consumer awareness and purchase. For example, if a sportsman endorses a brand of milk, he is directly telling the buyers and all his fans that buying and consuming this specific brand will make them to be like him: a successful sportsman. What the celebrity has actually done is to associate his personality traits to traits that the consumers may regard as important. Abdurrahman, Owusu, Soladoye and Kalimuthu (2018, p. 417) point out that "celebrities, due to their relevance and popularity, therefore, are believed to have characteristically, the ability and power to influence buyers to swap their loyalties to the endorsed brands."

Celebrity endorsement is effective because the consumers associate the product with the endorser first, and then transfer this association to the product being endorsed. Advertisers try to create successful associations between the consumption of the product to the consumers' ideas of their own success stories. The consumers are made to feel that their purchasing the particular product endorsed by a celebrity make them to be connected to the endorsers. However, there is neither an automatic creation of meaning nor the automatic transformation of the consumer to exactly what the endorser is. It becomes the work of the advertiser to present the celebrity in such ways that align with the expectations of the consumers. The consumers must feel happy from using the product. It is not just enough to use celebrities in advertising. Kambitsis, Harahousou, Theodorakis and Chatzibeis (2002) add that these celebrities should be easily recognized and much admired. Thus, companies marketing their brands should pick celebrities that evoke the appropriate responses from the buyers.

## METHOD OF STUDY

The survey research design is the method used to study a large number of people in their natural habitats, especially when an aggregation of their opinions on an issue is needed. It shows how the primary data is collected from the sample population and then analysed to draw a conclusion on the general population. The *probability sampling* technique allows the samples to be gathered in such a way that the individual elements in the population have equal chances of being selected. The sample locations are randomly chosen from Lagos and Ogun States. The locations are described as urban, suburban or rural. The urban areas of Victoria Island, Surulere and Ikeja are demarcated by streets. On each street are numbered houses. Individual elements are picked from individual houses. A similar fashion is followed for the suburban areas of Oko Oba, Olorunsogo, Abeokuta and Ogba. Some parts of the rural communities in Ikotun, Iyesi, Egbeda, Atan and Ilugun are not demarcated into clear cut streets. Samples were picked from different houses there. Each respondent was randomly chosen to guarantee every resident in a specified location an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. The assumption is that the resultant sample is as close a representation of the whole population as possible. The total number of respondents for the study are drawn from the chosen areas as shown below:

- Urban: 501
- Suburban: 505
- Rural: 510
- Total: 1,516 respondents

## DATA PRESENTATION

Respondents from the rural, semi-urban and urban areas contributed 33.6%, 33.3% and 33.0% of the total respondents that were administered copies of the questionnaire. They are made up of 44.5% males and 55.5% females aged from 12 years and above. There are some respondents aged above 52 years. A few of them have no formal education or have basic education or secondary school education. Others have OND/NCE and university degrees. Others did not specify their educational status.

Irrespective of location, almost all the respondents know who is a celebrity. This may be because celebrities are famous, popular and regularly make appearances in the mass media or public events. The more they appear in these places, the more the public gets to know them. Some of them are already household names with their fans adoring them. Nevertheless, respondents from the rural areas do not know them as much as those in the urban and suburban areas do.

*Table 1. Knowing who a celebrity is*

Responses	Urban (%)	Suburban (%)	Rural (%)	Total (%)
Yes	31.9	32.1	30.4	<b>94.4</b>
No	1.2	1.2	3.2	<b>5.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

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*Table 2. Knowing about celebrity advertisement*

Responses	Urban (%)	Suburban (%)	Rural (%)	Total (%)
Yes	31.5	31.5	30.5	<b>93.5</b>
No	1.6	1.8	3.1	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

Almost all the respondents confirm that they know about celebrity advertisements. It is importantly to point out that the respondents in the urban and suburban areas know more of celebrity advertisements than those in the rural areas. Those in the rural areas know least. However, the gap is very small. This may be explained by the fact they celebrities may be urban based and more of their activities are carried out in these cosmopolitan areas.

Respondents further identify the first three classes of celebrities that they know. They are the actors, musicians and sportsmen. The most popular of the celebrities are those in the movie world. These may not be surprising since Nigeria's movie industry popularly called, *Nollywood*, churns out entertaining movies with speed. The actors and actress literarily charm their fans with their craft. The faces of actors and actresses adorn television and cinema screens. The second group of celebrities are musicians. Their sonorous and electrifying dance steps may have sent many respondents into dancing and imitating then. The sportsmen are also famous. Their physical fitness and prowess in competitive sports events for example, football, have endeared them to many. Nigeria has a lot of sports icons including Kanu Nwankwo. Nevertheless, there are also some distinguished celebrities in religion, for example, Pastor Daniel Olukoya; politics, for example, Dr Goodluck Jonathan; and literary circles such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It should be pointed out that respondents in the urban areas know of sports and religious celebrities most. Respondents from the suburban areas know movie and musical celebrities most. The respondents from the rural zones know of political celebrities and writers.

This data on this table (Table 4) establishes that most of the residents pay conscious attention to advertisements featuring celebrities. Whether they are living in urban, suburban and rural communities do not make any difference. It is most surprising that respondents from the rural and suburban locations

*Table 3. Classes of celebrities*

Responses	Urban (%)	Suburban (%)	Rural (%)	Total (%)
Movies	12.3	15.0	14.6	<b>42.0</b>
Musical	9.9	9.9	7.5	<b>27.3</b>
Sports	7.3	4.8	6.3	<b>18.5</b>
Religious	1.8	1.6	1.5	<b>4.9</b>
Political	1.4	1.2	2.0	<b>4.6</b>
Writers	0.3	0.7	1.4	<b>2.4</b>
Others	0	0.1	0.3	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

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*Table 4. Conscious paying of attention to celebrity advertisements*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Yes	22.3	23.2	25.4	<b>70.9</b>
No	10.8	9.8	8.5	<b>29.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

pay more attention to celebrity advertisements than those in the urban areas. However, the differences are almost insignificant. Residents in the urban areas live in cities where industrialization and paid employment are the norms. Those in the rural areas are people who value communal life and engage in subsistence living. There is little or no industrialization in their communities. The suburban residents have characteristics of the other two as most suburban areas are mixes of the industrialized cities and the rustic elements of rural life.

Respondents from these three different areas further confirm that they buy products because a celebrity has endorsed it. However, some interesting variations emerge. The respondents from the suburban areas appear most susceptible to buying products that have been so endorsed. They are followed by the respondents from the urban areas. But the respondents from the rural areas are least influenced in buying products because a celebrity has endorsed it. Rural dwellers may not be dazzled by the celebrity status of those endorsing products if they are *not one of their own*. Life in the rural areas are more based on personal relationships and face-to-face communication, not mass communication.

*Table 5. Buying a product because of celebrity endorsement*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	4.4	5.1	4.6	<b>14.1</b>
Agree	9.3	9.1	8.6	<b>27.0</b>
Undecided	6.1	6.3	6.6	<b>19.0</b>
Disagree	10.5	9.8	9.7	<b>30.0</b>
Strongly Disagree	2.8	2.7	4.4	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>33.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

*Table 6. Likelihood of buying a product endorsed by a celebrity*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	4.6	4.7	5.7	<b>15.0</b>
Agree	10.2	9.0	9.1	<b>28.3</b>
Undecided	6.8	6.5	7.1	<b>20.4</b>
Disagree	8.4	9.7	8.6	<b>26.8</b>
Strongly Disagree	3.1	3.4	3.1	<b>9.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

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It is interesting to find out an equal number of respondents from the urban and rural areas agreeing on the likelihood of their buying a product endorsed by a celebrity than one that is not so endorsed. However, a slightly lower number of respondents from the suburban areas also concur. A somewhat higher number of respondents from the rural communities disagree to this opinion. Similarly, some of the respondents from the urban and suburban areas also disagree. There are also some respondents from these three clusters who are undecided.

Overall, celebrity endorsement seems to have more positive impact on the respondents' purchase behaviour. However, the impact is more pronounced among residents in the suburban and urban areas than those resident in the rural areas. Respondents from the rural areas disagree that celebrity endorsements influence them in their decisions in buying a product. Some respondents from both the urban and suburban areas also disagree. It is important to notice the number of respondents who are undecided as to whether celebrity endorsements influence them in their decisions, especially those from the rural areas. Thus, it can be summarized that celebrity endorsement on products is more effective with residents in the urbanized and urbanizing areas than on those in the rural areas.

Celebrities endorsements may make products popular. However, the buyers reserve the right to which particular products that they want to purchase. Respondents who may be unfamiliar with a particular celebrity may refuse to buy a product that he is endorsing. It can be seen that a lesser number of respondents from the urban and suburban areas confirm that they may not buy a product if they are unfamiliar with the celebrity endorsing the product. More respondents from the rural areas agree that they will also not buy. More respondents from the suburban and urban than the rural areas disagreed on the opinion

*Table 7. Positive impact of celebrity endorsement on a purchase decision*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	6.7	7.9	7.2	<b>21.8</b>
Agree	12.4	12.2	9.8	<b>34.4</b>
Undecided	6.7	4.9	8.0	<b>19.6</b>
Disagree	5.6	6.2	6.7	<b>18.5</b>
Strongly Disagree	1.7	2.0	1.9	<b>5.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N= 1,516

*Table 8. Not buying a product because of unfamiliarity with endorsing celebrity*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	3.0	1.6	4.8	<b>9.4</b>
Agree	4.5	5.8	4.9	<b>15.2</b>
Undecided	5.9	5.2	5.1	<b>16.2</b>
Disagree	14.6	13.7	13.7	<b>42.1</b>
Strongly Disagree	5.1	6.9	5.1	<b>17.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N = 1,516

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that they will buy a product if they are unfamiliar with the endorsing celebrity. Quite some number of respondents are indecisive. Thus, it can be drawn that residents in the rural areas will not buy products if the endorsing celebrities are not known to them.

More respondents from the rural areas claim that they may not buy a product because of the endorsing celebrity. This means that they are not influenced by the status of the celebrity into buying a product he has endorsed. His image does not influence them. However, the respondents in the cities, first and then the suburbs are not so disposed. They do not avoid buying a product because of the endorsing celebrity. It is possible that they actually buy the products because of the endorsement. This means that celebrity endorsements seem to have more impact on urban residents and least impact on the rural dwellers. It is important to point out that some respondents in the different locations were not decided as to whether they will or will not buy a product because of the celebrity who endorsed it.

Expectedly, most of the respondents from the rural areas agree that they will not buy some products if they do not know the celebrities endorsing them. They are closely followed by the respondents from the suburban areas. Those respondents from the urban cities trailed behind. This appears to follow the earlier findings where respondents from the rural areas do not seem to revel with celebrities. Nevertheless, the urban based respondents appear to glow in their knowledge of the acclaimed famous people. The urban and suburban based respondents disagree that they will not buy some products because of not their knowing the endorsing celebrities. The ruralites adhered to their pattern of not cheering the celebrities with buying products they have endorsed. Some other respondents are irresolute as to their buying some products because of not knowing the endorsing celebrity.

*Table 9. Respondents not buying a product because of celebrity who endorsed it*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	2.6	3.1	3.8	<b>9.5</b>
Agree	4.3	4.6	4.8	<b>13.7</b>
Undecided	7.2	5.7	7.1	<b>20.0</b>
Disagree	14.6	15.0	13.9	<b>43.6</b>
Strongly Disagree	4.3	4.9	4.1	<b>13.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N= 1,516

*Table 10. Respondents not buying some products because of not knowing the endorsing celebrity*

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Suburban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	2.2	2.6	3.2	<b>8.1</b>
Agree	4.5	5.7	5.6	<b>15.8</b>
Undecided	5.7	4.6	5.5	<b>15.8</b>
Disagree	15.2	13.1	13.8	<b>42.1</b>
Strongly Disagree	5.3	7.3	5.5	<b>18.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>33.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

N= 1,516

## TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses of the study are tested for acceptance or rejection using the Pearson Bivariate Two-Tailed Correlation tests. These tests compute the association between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable is celebrity advertisements and the dependent variable is consumers' buying behaviour.

### Hypothesis 1

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Celebrity endorsements have impact on the purchase decisions of urban, suburban and rural areas residents.

A functional equation can be stated explicitly as follows:

$$Y_{ce} = a_0 + a_1T_{bp} + a_2T_{lb} + a_3T_{ep} + U \dots \quad (1)$$

where:

1 = Respondents buying a product because a celebrity has endorsed it

2 = Respondents more likely to buy a product that have been endorsed by a celebrity than one that is not so endorsed

3 = Overall, the presence of celebrity endorsement is positive when respondents are making a purchase decision to buy a product

U = Error term representing other factors not included in the model

At 0.01 level of significance, there are significant and positive relationships in the effect of celebrity endorsement and the buying behaviour of the residents in the urban, suburban and rural areas residents. This means that respondents in the urban, suburban and rural areas buy a product because a celebrity has endorsed it. Hence, celebrity endorsements have positive influence on respondents purchasing behaviour.

*Table 11. Correlation coefficients between celebrity advertisement and respondents buying the product*

BUYING	LOCATION	1	2	3
1	Urban	1		
	Suburban	1		
	Rural	1		
2	Urban	.421**	1	
	Suburban	.499**	1	
	Rural	.421**	1	
3	Urban	.433**	.507**	1
	Suburban	.465**	.488**	1
	Rural	.399**	.385**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Respondents buy some products because celebrities endorsed them. There are also positive, but moderate and significant relationships among the urban (.421); sub-urban (.499); and rural (.421) respondents being more likely to buy products so endorsed by the celebrities than not buying the product. Respondents too are more likely to buy products that have been endorsed by celebrities than those not so endorsed. The likelihood is most pronounced among respondents from the urban areas ( $R = 0.507$ ,  $P = 0.01$ ), more among those in the suburban areas (.488) and least among those from the rural areas (.385). There are also positive and significant relationships from the urban (.433), semi-urban (.465) and rural (.399) areas on the overall positive effect of celebrity endorsement when they are making purchase decisions on buying a product. All the values are positive and significant. This means that celebrity advertising has a positive impact on the buying of the advertised products. This confirms Piyush's (p.5) observation "that brand communication messages delivered by celebrities and famous personalities generate a higher appeal, attention and recall than those executed by non-celebrities ". This is similar to the observation of Apejaye (2013, p.4) that "that celebrity endorsed advertisement does significantly impact on buyers' purchase intent. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the correlates for respondents from the rural areas are lower than those from the urban and suburban areas. Although these are positive relationships, they are weak. Celebrity advertisements impact is more pronounced in the urban and suburban areas than in the rural areas.

In accepting Hypothesis 1, it can be concluded that there are positive and significant correlations among all the variables that tested buyers' exposure to celebrity advertisement and their buying the same products that they are promoting. The relatively high correlation figures ranging from 0.385 - 0.507 indicate the various ways celebrity advertising has influenced the buying behaviour of the respondents. In other words, a firm and affirmative relationship exist between these celebrity advertisements and consumers purchasing behaviour. This means that the alternative hypothesis that states that celebrity endorsement has impact on the purchase decisions of urban, suburban and rural areas residents is accepted.

## **Hypothesis 2**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Residents avoidance of a product is more significantly influenced by celebrity endorsements.

A functional equation can be stated explicitly as follows:

$$Y_{pd} = a_0 + a_1T_{ab} + a_2T_{nb} + a_3T_{fc} + U \dots \quad (2)$$

where:

- 1 = Respondents avoiding buying a product because of the celebrity who endorsed it
- 2 = Respondents not buying some products because they do not know the celebrity endorsing it
- 3 = Respondents not buying a product if they are not familiar with the celebrity endorsing it
- U = Error term representing other factors not included in the model

Running the Correlation Test (Table 12).

Positive and statistically significant relationships exist between respondents buying a product and the celebrity who endorsed it. This is highest among suburban respondents (.629) and least with the rural dwellers (.424). Respondents from the urban areas (.580) follow in a similar fashion. This means that

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*Table 12. Correlation coefficients between celebrity endorsements and respondents purchase decisions*

DECISION	LOCATION	1	2	3
1	Urban	1		
	Suburban	1		
	Rural	.1		
2	Urban	.580**	1	
	Suburban	.629**	.1*	
	Rural	.424**	1	
3	Urban	.474**	.511**	1
	Suburban	.451**	.530**	1
	Rural	.355**	.392**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

respondents do not avoid buying products because of the celebrity who endorsed it. Will respondents not buy products because they do not know the celebrity that endorsed it? The correlates provide answers. Respondents from the urban (.474), suburban (.451) and rural areas (.355) say they will buy the products whether or not they know the celebrities endorsing them. They buy whether the celebrity is known or unknown to them. Respondents from the urban (.511), suburban (.530) and rural areas (.392) say that they will still buy the products whether or not they are familiar with the celebrity endorsing them. In other words, respondents will not waver in buying a product because of the celebrity who endorsed it; will still buy products whether or not they know the celebrity endorsing them; and even if the endorsing celebrity is unfamiliar to them.

In accepting Hypothesis 2, it can be seen that there are positive and significant correlations among all the variables that tested respondents purchasing products because of celebrity endorsements. Correlation values of .629, .580, .530 and others suggest that respondents buy products because of celebrity advertising even though they may not personally know these personalities. In other words, there is a clear and direct relationship between these celebrity advertisements and consumers purchasing behaviour. This confirms the findings of Jain and Roy (2016) that meanings are transferred to a brand through endorsement. It has been clearly established that irrespective of the location, the respondents are more significantly influenced by celebrity endorsements and will still prefer to buy the products that celebrities have endorsed. Drawing from these, the alternative hypothesis that states that residents in urban, suburban and rural areas buy products because of celebrity endorsements is upheld in this study.

**DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS**

It is interesting to find out that respondents from the three different locations know who a celebrity is and are very aware of advertisements featuring these famous people. However, those in the cities and their adjoining suburbs seem to know more of these renowned people and the advertisements where they feature than those in the rural areas. Possibly, the city dwellers recognize these talented people more than the rural residents because they are more exposed to the media, are media literate and may have even met some of these celebrities at different events. However, slightly more respondents from the country sides

intentionally pay attention to advertisements where these successful people feature. This may possibly be explained by the fact that the celebrities have become household names and these respondents based in the rural areas see them as people to be envied, looked up to or to be imitated. Their stories of success may have challenged them to dare to believe and to persevere that their life situations can change dramatically. The city dwellers and their peripheral neighbours are already more familiar with the stars and may therefore not go out of their way to pay more attention to advertisements featuring them.

All the respondents regardless of their locations know the different classes of celebrities. These include the big names in the sports, movie and music industry. They also categorize the famous people in religion, politics and writing. Nonetheless, movie personalities are most popular with the suburban and rural dwellers than they are with the cosmopolitan residents. The rural dwellers may have more time to watch entertaining films than those in the urban settings who may be slaves to their jobs: rising up very early in the mornings to go to their different work places and returning late in the nights. But the respondents in the urban and suburban places know more of musical celebrities than their counterparts in the rural areas. They attend music festivals. It is also not uncommon for them to listen to music as they drive or commute to work. Music may have become a stress reliever for them. Urban residents also know more celebrity sportsmen and religious leaders. The rural respondents know more about political celebrities than those in the urban and semi-urban areas.

Interestingly, while respondents from the rural areas acknowledge knowing celebrities, yet they have not allowed these talented peoples' endorsement of products to influence their purchase behaviours. They do not buy products because celebrities have endorsed them. In fact, celebrity endorsements have not made appreciable impact on their purchase decisions to buy products. It may be that as much as they appreciate these celebrities, their economic conditions have not allowed them to buy the products the glamorous celebrities are used as models to advertise. They also do not buy some products even though they do not know or are unfamiliar with the celebrities endorsing them. Therefore, it will not be wise for the advertisers to focus much attention to buyers based in these types of locations.

Respondents from the suburban areas appear to be more influenced than their counterparts in the rural and urban areas in their buying decisions because of celebrity advertisements. They would more readily buy products validated by the stars when compared to the respondents from the urban and rural areas. It is therefore not surprising seeing them disagreeing on the likelihood of their buying a product that is not endorsed by a celebrity to one that is so endorsed. Most of them believe that celebrity endorsements have affirmatively swayed their purchasing the products they have validated. They also mostly disagree with three opinions: that they will not buy a product because of their unfamiliarity with the endorsing celebrity; not buying because they do not know the celebrity endorsing it; and not buying because of the particular endorsing celebrity. Much as it has been established that semi-urban residents are the most excited with celebrities, it is still recognized that they still buy products that these stars did not endorse and even those endorsed by personalities that these respondents are unaccustomed to.

Although most of the respondents from the urban areas agree that they buy products because of celebrity validations, yet quite a large chunk of residents still disagree to so doing. It is possible that as much as they admire these famous people, their economic situations have not allowed them to go out of their way to buy all that the celebrities have endorsed. Respondents from the urban areas are exactly like the rural respondents in saying that they would most likely buy a product endorsed by a celebrity than the one that is not. They confirm that celebrity endorsements have positive effect on their purchasing decisions. Neither the unfamiliarity of the endorsing celebrity nor their not knowing him discouraged them from buying the products. They also did not stop buying a product because of not knowing the

endorsing celebrity. It can be seen that celebrity advertising impact on urban residents is neither as pronounced as it is with the suburban respondents but not as low as is found among the rural respondents.

## **CONCLUSION**

Celebrities as famous people are courted by advertisers to endorse their products. This study establishes that celebrities influence their followers and admirers into buying the products that they endorse. Especially, it shows that celebrities' influence and fame permeate the three layers of the society: urban, suburban and rural. Residents in these three locations know who celebrities are and consciously pay attention to the products they advertise. They deliberately buy some products because celebrities have endorsed them. Nevertheless, celebrity endorsement seems to be less influential among the residents in the rural areas but more pronounced among those living in suburban and urban areas. In conclusion, celebrity endorsements have positive impact on the purchase decisions of residents irrespective of their location. Advertisers should consciously use celebrities in future advertising campaigns. However, they celebrities should be people that consumers see as carrying positive values that they can relate with. Where they target rural dwellers, product managers should look for faces and names that fit into the culture and lifestyles of these rural residents to achieve more impact.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The following are recommended for further investigations in new studies:

- If celebrity advertisements work better than brand power on buyers purchase decisions.
- Identify the specific factors that advertisers consider in picking their brand ambassadors.
- Pin-point the specific variables that make residents in semi-urban areas to be more influenced by celebrity endorsements.
- The specific extent to which a celebrity's endorsement influence consumers' re-buy behavior.

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