

# STRATEGIC ADVERTISING COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA'S TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR: ASSESSING CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AND BRAND PREFERENCE

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated customers' perception of Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Brand Preference in the telecommunication industry. A sample size of 384 customers of telecommunication services was determined using random sampling. Copies of structured questionnaire were administered and the retrieved data was analysed using regression analysis. The result of the study revealed that the dimensions of celebrity endorsement, such as celebrity image, trustworthiness and expertise had their different levels of impact on brand preference dimensions, including, consumer brand loyalty, brand association and perceived quality. The study concluded that celebrity endorsement has a role to play in consumer brand preference. Conclusions and Implications were established in the study.*

**Keywords:** Celebrity Endorsement, Consumer Brand Preference, Telecommunication.

## INTRODUCTION

The engagement of renowned personalities is a common form of bringing awareness of new and existing products used by organizations to improve their market shares, increase sales, and add value to their products. By engaging the endorsement form, the organizational manager attempts to stimulate consumers' interest and their preference for their brands through the use of well-known celebrities during advertising campaigns (Huang & Emine, 2012). The rate at which it is used as a tool for strategic marketing communication has drastically increased over time. This is because celebrities are known to have built a personal image that people have an attraction to. The growth of celebrity endorsement is universal to all sectors or industries. Statistics from the United States reveal that 25% of all advertisements in newspapers and magazines employ the use of famous personalities (Escalas & Bettman, 2015).

In the world of today, consumers treat their favourite celebrities as models or idols (Freire et al., 2018). It is also a fact that consumers tend to emulate their lifestyles as related to their favourite renowned personalities (Sambath & Jyh-Fu, 2015). This creates an impact on the consumers because they carry a psychological notion that using the products/brand endorsed by their favourite celebrity, means that they are of a similar social class and would likely possess similar physical attributes, for example, skin colour, as their preferred celebrity (Carlsona et al.,