

The impact of celebrities' endorsement on brand positioning on mobile telecommunication users in the Eastern Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of celebrities' endorsement on brand positioning on mobile telecommunication users in the Eastern region of Ghana. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample of four and sixty- one from the target population of mobile users between the ages eighteen to sixty. Package for the Social Science's (SPSS) Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Analysis were done base on the main variables in the study. The result shows that only one of the four (4) constructs (Celebrity Popularity) reveal positive significant statistical relationship with Brand positioning. The study recommended that Celebrities alone do not guarantee success nor does a great advertising campaign or the best possible product. It is the combination of several factors and elements that work together for the success of a brand and its acceptance in the minds of consumers as well as for its market offering.

Key words; Sales; Acceptance; Popularity; Variables; Campaign

Introduction

Brand positioning is a major decision in marketing that seeks to build an image of a product or services in the minds of customers. It is a function of the brand's promise and comparison with other choices with regard to quality, innovation, perceived leadership, value, prestige, trust, safety, reliability, performance, and convenience, concern for customers, social responsibility, and technological superiority and so on.

According to Kotler (2002) aptly defined "positioning as the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a meaningful and distinct position in the mind of the target customers". Ries and Trout (1997) suggested that, to succeed in the competitive market, the first step is to position the brand in the target consumers' mind in such a way, that in their perception of the brand, it is distinctive and offers more customer value than its competitors do.

Besides Celebrity endorsement is an easy way to connect with consumers. Celebrities enjoy public recognition and they can use this recognition on behalf of a product by appearing in an advertisement for the product (McCracken, 1989). Strong celebrities can help the consumers' to connect with the brand and lead them to retail outlets to purchase the brand. Celebrities can reduce the time for consumer to move from awareness to action. Sridhar (2006) indicated that a strong brand position means that the brand has a unique, credible, sustainable, and valued place with the customers. Brand has the capacity to capture the imagination. The brand name is what most people remember and recall. Sharply positioned brands stand out from the competition.

Problem of the study

Endorsement is a channel of brand communication in which a celebrity acts as the brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claim and position by extending his/her personality, popularity, stature in the society or expertise in the field to the brand. In a market with a very high proliferation of local, regional and international brands, celebrity endorsement was thought to provide a distinct differentiation.

Advertisers have attempted to quantify and qualify the use of celebrities in their marketing campaigns by evaluating their awareness, appeal, and relevance to a brand's image and the celebrity's influence on consumer buying behavior. Omnicom agency Davie Brown Entertainment has created an independent index for brand marketers and advertising agencies that determine a celebrity's ability to influence brand affinity and consumer purchase intent. According to the Wall Street Journal, the so-called "Davie-Brown Index" will "enable advertisers and ad-agency personnel to determine if a particular public figure will motivate consumers who see them in an ad to purchase the product advertised."

Till and Busler (1998) reported that the majority of research on celebrity endorsers, although concerned with the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers, has provided little direction regarding the management of associations that which celebrities can bring to the endorsed brands. Many studies on celebrity endorsers have considered the impact of celebrities on consumers' attitudes toward brands and/or the advertisements. Based on the research gap, this paper attempted to study the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand positioning of mobile user in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Study Objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of celebrities' endorsement on positioning the brands in the minds of mobile telecommunication users in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The specific research objectives of the study are;

To evaluate the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand positioning
To access the association between celebrity credibility and brand positioning
To investigate the relationship between celebrity Attractiveness brand positioning
To access the relationship between celebrity Popularity and positioning

Research Hypothesis

H1. There is a correlation between celebrity expertise of the endorser and positioning
H1. There is a correlation between celebrity credibility of the endorser and positioning.
H1. There is a correlation between celebrity attractiveness of the endorser and positioning.
H1 There is a correlation between celebrity Popularity of the celebrity and positioning

Literature Review

Silvera & Austad, (2004) defines a celebrity as a person who enjoys public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people and have distinctive characteristics, such as attractiveness and trustworthiness. A celebrity may also be referred to as a person who has gained fame or recognition in the society by virtue of the unique personality (Choi and Berger, 2010).

Celebrity Endorsement

Breen (2003), Premeaux (2005) and Choi and Rifon (2007) opined that celebrity endorsements are a popular form of advertising enhancement. Farrell et al. (2000) and Erdogan et al., (2001) are of the view that, celebrity endorsement has the potential of improving the financial returns for companies that employ them in their advertising campaigns. Besides, celebrities in general are perceived as more credible than non-celebrity endorsers, exerting greater influences on consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intent (Choi and Rifon 2007).

Brand positioning

Sridhar (2006) indicated that a strong brand position means that the brand has a unique, credible, sustainable, and valued place with the customers. Brand has the capacity to capture the imagination. The brand name is what most people remember and recall. Sharply positioned brands stand out from the competition.

Clow and Baack (2007) stated that the quality of a product, prices charged, methods of distribution, image, communication tactics, and other factors create positioning and are, in turn, affected by the brand's position. Lebu (2006) commented that a brand's positioning constitutes not only a powerful factor contributing to its identification but also an equally powerful instrument of differentiation.

Shimp (2003) pointed out that a good positioning statement should satisfy two requirements : (a) It should reflect the brand's competitive advantage, and (b) it should motivate customers to action. The positioning statement for a brand represents how the company wants customers to think and feel about the brand.

Trout (2005) suggested that branding is about the process of building a brand. Branding and positioning are like two sides of the same coin in that one without the other does not have the same effect. Advertising is one of the most frequently used and powerful communication strategies to build a brand. The central task of advertising is to place the brand in the desired position in the consumers' mind (Trout, 2005).

Surveys suggest that compared to any other types of endorsers, famous people achieve a higher degree of attention and recall. They increase awareness of a company's advertising as well as help in retention of message in the psyche of the audience. Using a celebrity in advertising or for any, other type of communication for brand building is likely to positively affect consumers brand preference, brand attitude, brand association and purchase intentions. To ensure positive results, however, it is critical for advertisers to have a clear understanding of consumer's reactions and reinforcement of celebrity endorsement.

Celebrity attributes

Celebrity attributes are that, that are controlled by the celebrity (Seno & Lukas, 2005). It could not be controlled by the manager or marketer of the brand. It could influence the perception of the respondent towards the brand. Source-based factor for celebrity endorsement included celebrity credibility and celebrity attractiveness.

Celebrity Credibility

Celebrity credibility defined as "perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject" (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Celebrity credibility contains two components which is expertise and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1991).

Celebrity attractiveness

Langmeyer and Shank (1994) stated that celebrity attractiveness not only emphasize on physical beauty, but also non-physical beauty, such as charm and intelligence. Marketers always treat the physical attractiveness as one of criteria of choosing endorsers since it could influence people's attitudes on the advertisement and the products (Kahle and Homer, 1985).

According to Martin (2010) celebrity endorsement guide states that an attractive endorser will have a positive impact on the endorsement. The endorser should be attractive to the target audience in certain aspects like physical appearance, intellectual capabilities, athletic competence, and lifestyle. It has been proven that an endorser that appears attractive as defined above has a greater chance of enhancing the memory of the brand that he/she endorses.

Celebrity popularity

According to Ogunsiji (2012) Empirical finding supports the fact that celebrities have positive effect on both attitude toward ads and brand. These results are in favor of celebrity endorsers because they are widely recognized, are perceived to be more credible and produce greater influence on evaluation of brand and its purchase intentions.

According to Martin (2010) the principle states that for any brand-celebrity collaboration to be successful, the personal credibility of the celebrity is crucial. Credibility is defined here as the celebrities' perceived expertise and trustworthiness. As celebrity endorsements act as an external cue that enable consumers to sift through the tremendous brand clutter in the market, the credibility factor of the celebrity greatly influences the acceptance with consumers.

Celebrity expertise

Erdogan (1999) defines celebrity endorsers' expertise as 'the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions'. The literature investigating source credibility in settings involving persuasive communication generally indicates that a receiver's perception of the source's expertise positively influences source effectiveness (Ohanian, 1990).

Celebrity familiarity and likeability

In some studies, celebrity familiarity and likeability are treated as if each were analogous to attractiveness (Kahle & Homer 1985). Each celebrity attribute may, in fact, be subsumed within the attractiveness construct. But other studies address familiarity and likeability separately, investigating each construct's effect on effectiveness as if each were distinct from endorser attractiveness (O'Mahoney & Meenaghan, 1998). In the celebrity endorsement context, familiarity has been defined as 'knowledge of the source through exposure' (Erdogan 1999). Likeability is defined as 'affection for the source as a result of the source's physical appearance and behaviour' (Erdogan, 1999). The other is celebrity skills, beauty and honesty.

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive research design. It described data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. The fundamental reason for descriptive research is to identify the cause of something.

Sample Size

This study was conducted in Koforidua, the regional capital of the eastern Region. The researcher conducted a pilot study to determine the sample size. Based on the pilot study of 60 users of mobile services, the actual sample size of 461 mobile users was determined with the help of a sampling formula. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample from the target population of mobile users between the ages 18 to 60. The following question was posed to determine the sample size:-how frequently do you change your TV station when advertise are been aired?

Very Often (8) Often (10) Occasionally (11) Rarely (19) Never (12)

The respondent's answers to occasionally, rarely, and never were treated as a positive outcome: their answers to very often and often were treated as a negative outcome.

The following formula was used for sample size calculation (Kothari, 2003):

$N =$

$$\frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

c^2

N = Size of the sample

z = normal distribution value at 95 % confidence interval = 1.96

p = Sample proportion (positive outcome), - $p = 42/60 = 0.70$

q = negative outcome, $q = 1-p$

$q = 1-0.70=0.30$

$N = (1.96)(1.96) \times 0.70 \times 0.30 / (0.05)(0.05) = 460.99$

Findings

Demographic information

Following the guidelines indicated in the research methodology section, we collected data in 2013.

Table1; Demographic information

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 288 | 62.4% |
| Male | 173 | 37.6 |
| Mobile network users | | |
| MTN | 185 | 40.1 |
| VODAFONE | 96 | 20.82 |
| AIRTEL | 85 | 18.43 |
| TIGO | 91 | 19.6 |
| EXPRESSO | 1 | 0.22 |
| GLO | 3 | 0.65 |
| No of years on the network | | |
| 0-3 years | 201 | 43.6 |
| 4-7 years | 185 | 40.1 |
| 7 years and above | 75 | 16.3 |

Source: field data 2013

In the demographic analysis in the table shows 62.4% are males remaining 37.6% are females. In the case of mobile network used by respondents 40.1,% are on MTN, 20.4% are on Vodafone, 20.82% are on Airtel, 19.6% on Tigo, 0.22% on Glo and 0.65 on Expresso network. As regard to the number of years on the network by respondents,16.3% of the respondents have stay with their network for 7years and above, 40.1% of them have been on their networks for be for 4-7years and 43.% have stay with their network for 0-3 years

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2; descriptive statistics

| Variables | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Expertise(CE) | 461 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.0282 | 2.01550 |
| Credibility(CC) | 461 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.0694 | 2.01180 |
| Attractiveness(CA) | 461 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.0325 | 2.02405 |
| Popularity(CP) | 461 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 4.1258 | 2.74444 |
| Trustworthiness(CT) | 461 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 4.0499 | 2.01292 |
| Honesty(CH) | 461 | 1.00 | 4.00 | 4.0039 | 2.01771 |

From Table 2 it is observed that almost all the mean are in the same range and the highest mean was 4.1258 representing Celebrity popularity(CP) attractiveness whilst the lowest mean was 4.0039 representing Celebrity Honesty. Therefore this study relies on four (4) top means which are (CE) (4.0282), (CC)(4.0694), (CA)(4.0325) and (CP)(4.258)

Testing of research hypotheses

Correlations analysis

Table 3; correlation analysis

| | | | (CE) | (CC) | (CA) | (CP) | (BP) |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Spearman's rho | Expertise(CE) | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .359(**) | .086 | -.116(*) | .170(**) |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .067 | .013 | .060 |
| | | N | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 |
| | Credibility(CC) | Correlation Coefficient | .359(**) | 1.000 | .092(*) | .005 | .034 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .049 | .922 | .472 |
| | | N | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 |
| | Attractiveness (AC) | Correlation Coefficient | .086 | .092(*) | 1.000 | -.028 | .259(**) |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .067 | .049 | . | .547 | .070 |
| | | N | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 |
| | Popularity(CP) | Correlation Coefficient | -.116(*) | .005 | -.028 | 1.000 | .085 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .013 | .922 | .547 | . | .001 |
| | | N | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 |
| | Brand positioning (BP) | Correlation Coefficient | .170(**) | .034 | .259(**) | -.085 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .472 | .000 | .068 | . |
| | | N | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 | 461 |

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis is based on the null assumption that there is no statistical significant linear relationship between brand loyalty and the determinants of celebrity endorsement against the alternative assumption that there are significant linear relations.

In relations to Table 3, the correlation coefficient between CE and BP is .06 which is significant at 1%. The results indicate no significant relationship between CE and BP; therefore the **null hypothesis is accepted**.

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient between CC and BP is 0.34 which is significant at 1%. The results indicate no significant relationship between CP and BP; therefore the **null hypothesis is accepted**.

In Table 3, the correlation coefficient between CA and BP is .007 which is significant at 1%. The results indicate significant positive relationship between CA and BP; therefore the **null hypothesis is accepted**.

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient between CP and BP is .001 which is significant at 1%. The results indicate significant positive relationship between CP and BP; therefore the **null hypothesis is rejected**.

Discussions

The study investigated the relationship between endorse celebrity and brand positioning among users of mobile telecom in the Eastern region of Ghana. Following the outcomes of literature reviews and frameworks, five hypotheses were assessed. The results of the study show that one (1) of the five (4) constructs (celebrity popularity) showed positive correlations with brand positioning, whereas celebrity likability and familiarity, celebrity credibility and celebrity attractiveness did not reveal any significant statistical relationship with brand positioning.

The data from the respondents show that there exists a major relationship between the Popularity of the endorser of a product and its brand positioning among telecommunication network consumers in the Koforidua municipality "The effectiveness of a communication is commonly assumed to depend to a considerable extent upon who delivers it." (Hovland et al., 1953).

The expression suggests that Celebrity endorsement is an easy way to connect with consumers. Celebrities enjoy public recognition and they can use this recognition on behalf of a product by appearing in an advertisement for the product (McCracken, 1989). Strong celebrities can help the consumers to connect with the brand and lead them to retail outlets to purchase the brand. Celebrities can reduce the time for consumer to move from awareness to action.

Besides, Joseph (1982) stated that physically attractive celebrities have a positive effect on the consumers' evaluations and opinions of a product. An attractive celebrity is likely to be an especially potent source of brand image because of the dual impact of their celebrity status and attractiveness. Physically attractive celebrities have a positive effect on the products and brands with which they are associated.

Hsu and McDonald (2002) suggested that multi-celebrity endorsement advertising might appeal to multiple audiences. Given that advertisers can afford to employ a number of celebrities, multi-celebrity endorsement advertising may help the advertisers to build a sense of consensus, avoid audience boredom and appeal to multiple audiences.

In contrast, Ogunsiyi, (2012) study found that the case of multiple endorsements, both in terms of a single brand hiring multiple celebrities and that of a single celebrity endorsing multiple brands, controversial, consumers do get confused about the brand

endorsed when a single celebrity endorses numerous brands. Consequently the recall then gets reduced and reduces the popularity of the brand. Baker(200) however found using multiple celebrities or a single celebrity partially depends on the time scale a campaign is using to have impact.

For instance Glo adopts a multiple endorsement using Nonso Diobi, Ini Edo, Mona Lisa Chinda and Peter and Paul, and yet got a comprehensive/holistic marketing leverage.

According to Friedman and Friedman (1979) hypothesized and later concluded that the use of celebrity rather than no celebrity endorsers in advertisements leads to higher believability, a more favorable evaluation by consumers of the product and advertisements, and a significantly higher intention among consumers to purchase the product.

Pringles (2004) stated that celebrity endorsements act as signposts to quality and can significantly enhance brand reputations. Consumers who use products that are associated with celebrities get a little bit extra in terms of imagery, aspiration, and entertainment, factors that often just may be enough to tip the balance in favour of one brand over its competitors on the supermarket shelf or in an Internet search engine return.

A message source with greater credibility is usually more effective compared to a message source that has lower credibility. Behavioral changes are caused by positive attitudes which are created when the message is delivered by a highly creditable source. (Craig and McCann, 1978; Woodside and Davenport, 1974), so advertisers trend to go for celebrities whom they believe have a greater level of creditability.

The connection between celebrity attractiveness and attitude changes towards products, issues, and advertising evaluations have been shown in many studies (Chaiken 1979; Kahle and Homer, 1985). A good-looking celebrity can be used to endorse a product related to attractiveness (Kahle and Homer, 1985). In contrast to this, if the two were inconsistent with each other, then the favorability of both of them would be compromised (Kamins, 1990). Belch & Belch(2001) explains that it is often the celebrity's knowledge, experience, and skill in a certain product or service that leads to them being selected as the spokesperson for that product or service.

In addition to this, Ohanian and Roobina (1991) claims that when compared to their attractiveness or trustworthiness, it is the celebrity's observed skill, is of greater importance in explaining buying intentions.

Recommendations

Even though to an observer it may seem that Nike's success is totally based on Tiger Wood's association with the brand, nothing can be far from the truth. As a brand, Nike has established a very strong brand identity and a brand personality over the years. What Nike did was to use celebrity endorsement as one of the main channels of communicating its brand to a highly focused set of customers. So, Nike's association with Tiger Woods was one of the parts of an entire branding process that Nike has been practicing consistently. Contrary to this, most brands that have used celebrity endorsements have used it as the main brand building tool. Before any brand signs on a celebrity, they should consider three main aspects.

The research would recommend that the following three aspects of a celebrity must be considered.

The endorser should be attractive to the target audience in certain aspects like physical appearance, intellectual capabilities, athletic competence, and lifestyle. It has been proven that an endorser that appears attractive as has a greater chance of enhancing the memory of the brand that he/she endorses.

Also for any brand-celebrity collaboration to be successful, the personal credibility of the celebrity is crucial. Credibility is defined here as the celebrities' perceived expertise and trustworthiness. As celebrity endorsements act as an external cue that enable consumers to sift through the tremendous brand clutter in the market, the credibility factor of the celebrity greatly influences the acceptance with consumers.

Thirdly, that the success of the brand-celebrity collaboration heavily depends on the compatibility between the brand and the celebrity in terms of identity, personality, positioning in the market vis-à-vis competitors, and lifestyle. When a brand signs on a celebrity, these are some of the compatibility factors that have to exist for the brand to leverage the maximum from that collaboration.

Even though these three major principles must be adhered to by companies, practically it might be difficult to find celebrities that satisfy all these three conditions. Depending on the nature of the brand and the kind of product being used, companies can selectively emphasize one factor over the other.

Companies should monitor the behavior, conduct and public image of the endorser continuously to minimize any potential negative publicity. One of the most effective ways to do this is to ensure that celebrity endorsement contracts are effectively drafted, keeping in mind any such negative events.

Consistent with the principles discussed earlier, companies should ensure a match between the brand being endorsed and the endorser so that the endorsements are able to strongly influence the thought processes of consumers and create a positive perception of the brand

As with branding, companies should try to maintain consistency between the endorser and the brand to establish a strong personality and identity. More importantly, companies should view celebrity endorsements as long-term strategic decisions affecting the brand.

When celebrities are used to endorse brands, one obvious result could be the potential overshadowing of the brand by the celebrity. Companies should ensure that this does not happen by formulating advertising collaterals and other communications.

When celebrities are used to endorse brands, one obvious result could be the potential overshadowing of the brand by the celebrity. Companies should ensure that this does not happen by formulating advertising collaterals and other communications

Conclusion

Finally we have concluded there is no relationship between celebrity endorsement and the brand positioning so we have accepted Null Hypothesis H0. It means (celebrity) had no impact on brand positioning of the demand for telecommunication net work product. The study reviewed by the researcher demonstrated that Celebrities notwithstanding diverse views goes a long way to improve on purchase of brands.

The use of celebrity for endorsements of brands creates a very favorable impact on the consumer and it creates a connection which forces a consumer to purchase a product. However, as several failures show, it is essential for advertisers to be aware of the complex processes, expectations and views underlying celebrity endorsement.

It has therefore been proven from the discussion that celebrity endorsements are a powerful and useful tool that magnifies the effect of campaign on brand loyalty but the word of caution to be followed seriously. Celebrities alone do not guarantee success nor does a great advertising campaign or the best possible product. It is the combination of several factors and elements that work together for the success of a brand and its acceptance in the minds of consumers as well as for its market offering.

Companies must realize that having a celebrity endorsing a brand is not a goal in itself; rather it is one part of the communication mix that falls under the broader category of sponsorship marketing

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