

## CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT AND CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF PEPSI NIGERIA WITHIN ILARO METROPOLIS

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the effect of celebrity endorsement on customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria, focusing on Ilaro metropolis, Ogun State. Specifically, it investigated how celebrity attractiveness, credibility, and trustworthiness influence consumer behavior and loyalty. The study adopted a survey design. The population comprised consumers of Pepsi-Cola in Ilaro metropolis, Ogun State. A sample size of 384 consumers was determined using Cochran's formula. Structured questionnaire was administered, and 352 valid responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that celebrity attractiveness ( $\beta = 0.151$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) and credibility ( $\beta = 0.174$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) exert weak but significant positive effects on customer patronage, while celebrity trustworthiness ( $\beta = 0.436$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) demonstrated a moderate and more influential impact. These results indicate that consumers attach greater importance to endorsers' integrity and ethical conduct than to their physical appeal or perceived expertise. The study concludes that celebrity endorsement significantly shapes customer patronage when trustworthiness is emphasized. It recommends that Pepsi Nigeria should engage credible and trustworthy celebrities whose values align with their brand identity to foster authenticity, deepen customer loyalty, and ensure long-term competitiveness.

**Keywords:** celebrity attractiveness, celebrity credibility, celebrity endorsement, celebrity trustworthiness, customer Patronage

### **Introduction**

The world of advertisement is undergoing a change from what it was before to a converted modern route. This contemporaneous route require marketers to uncover strategies that incorporate elements of emotion, humor and the psychological fittings of consumers (Idigo et al., 2023). The idea behind these strategies is to get brand exposure, attention, interest, desire, market acceptance and expansion.

So, to remain afloat in a highly competitive market, marketers think beyond their noses in order to make ends meet (Agam, 2022). In light of the above, brands seek endorsement of well-known celebrities that have charismatic personalities and followership, as well as the "face" and "exposure" to impact consumers' buying behavior, as a strategy (Ogagaoghene, 2021). Celebrity endorsement is commonplace in the advertising world because celebrities influence brand image through transfer of meaning from the endorser to the brand (Okpako & Michael, 2021)

A celebrity is a personality of high popularity, integrity, attractiveness and has area(s) of high accomplishment and charisma. A celebrity could be of local, national or international popularity (Nwankwo et al., 2024). According to Balakrishnan and Kumar (2020), celebrities are attention gathering mechanism that attract media attention and focus the spotlight on a particular issue. They have the ability to influence brand affinity and consumer purchase intention. It is certain that as competition to attract consumer attention and interest in a brand intensifies, it is critical that marketers develop better advertising appeal that arouse consumers' interest and desire, and instigate purchase action. In achieving this purpose, marketers often engage individuals who have achieved some form of celebrity status to serve as spokespersons for their brands through endorsement (Bouquest, 2024).

To this end, celebrities are frequently engaged to endorse products, brands and campaigns (Knoll & Mathes 2023). Regardless, the right choice of celebrity endorsement is a highly effective strategy to gain customer patronage and brand loyalty in a cluttered market (Hennayake, 2022).

In light of this, the power of celebrity endorsement is in its capacity to positively alter buying behaviour. Nwankwo et al. (2024), Bouquest (2024), Idigo et al. (2023), Owuso and Hamilton-Ibama, (2022), and Asiomanokai (2021) reveal that celebrity endorsement result in more favourable advertisement ratings, positive product evaluations.

In Nigeria, celebrity endorsement has witnessed a steadily rise in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, with firms employing this marketing communication strategy to influence consumers to accept, follow and patronize their brands. Renowned celebrities with attractiveness, credibility, and trustworthiness dimensions such as Wizkid, Tiwa Savage, Burna Boy, Davido, Rema, D.J Spinal, among others, have been contracted as endorsers by Pepsi in the FMCG sector in Nigeria to help attract consumers to their brands.

Several studies have been carried out on the contribution of celebrity endorsement to customer patronage and loyalty across industries. However, there is dearth of studies on how celebrity endorsement influence customers' patronage in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods sector, especially in the context of Pepsi Nigeria. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap by examining the effect of celebrity endorsement dimensions such as attractiveness, credibility, and trustworthiness on customers' patronage of Pepsi Nigeria in ilaro metropolis.

### **Concept of Celebrity Endorsement**

Celebrity endorsement according to Anioke (2022), is a strategy for advertising a product or brand, where the status or fame of a well-known person is used to promote a product or raise awareness on environmental and social matters. Similarly, Odili and Ukpai (2021) and Udo and Nwulu (2015) posits that celebrity endorsement is the technique of portraying a well-recognized sports star, entertainer and actor among others, to be brand ambassadors or spokespeople for a company to promote a product.

Awobamise and Yosra (2022) define celebrity endorsement as the channel of brand communication in which a celebrity acts as a brand's spokesperson and certifies the brand's claims and position by extending their personality, popularity, status in the society or expertise in their field to the brand. Celebrity endorsement therefore, is the engagement of a celebrity by a company or a marketer to create brand awareness, brand loyalty and to influence the purchase decisions of consumers in order to increase sales and extend market share of a company or the marketer (Anioke, 2022).

To be effective, brand must deliver its message clearly, confirms its credibility, influence its target audience emotionally and incentivize its customers; its messages authoritatively state and advocate its promises convincingly; and reach its target audiences powerfully (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). These goals of brand communication are easier achieved when the brand's spokespeople are perceived as attractive, credible and trustworthy.

As an influential reference group, celebrities influence customer patronage regarding of products or brands by confirming the benefits of using it (Chan et al., 2023). McCracken (2022) observe that celebrity endorsement is a convincing communication tool because that has the power to attract attention. In view of the changing media landscape and consumer preferences, brands are increasingly turning to digital platforms to reach target audiences effectively (Pham & Johansson, 2020). Oguntuase et al. (2024) argue that celebrity endorsements offer numerous benefits, including increased brand recall, credibility, and market reach.

Celebrities possess some characteristics that make them effective promotional tools. These include attractiveness, credibility, and trustworthiness. Thus, this study adopted celebrity

attractiveness, celebrity credibility, and celebrity trustworthiness as dimensions of celebrity endorsement.

### **Celebrity attractiveness**

Celebrity attractiveness refers to the appealing qualities of a celebrity that make them desirable to consumers, and which can influence perceptions of a brand or product they endorse. Attractiveness extends beyond physical beauty to include charisma, personality, lifestyle, and perceived social status. According to Kahle and Homer (2020) the effectiveness of an endorser often depends on their physical attractiveness, as attractive celebrities tend to create more positive attitudes toward advertisements and endorsed products. McCracken (2022) emphasize that attractiveness encompasses more than just appearance; it also involves symbolic meanings that resonate with target audiences, such as elegance, sophistication, or youthfulness.

Celebrity attractiveness is an essential aspect of celebrity endorsement, as it is associated with the endorser's physical appearance and attractiveness, personality, likeability and similarity to target audience (Nyamakanga, Ford, & Viljoen, 2019). Attractiveness reflects the characteristics of physical attractiveness to get the target audience in terms of demography, and personality traits (Freeman & Chen, 2025). Respect for a celebrity highlight the celebrity's outstanding performance, appealing attributes and public admiration toward them (Belch & Belch, 2021).

Munyau and Mwirigi (2023) aver that advertisement with physically attractive spokespersons fare better than advertisements with less attractive people. This personality component helps viewers form emotional bonds with the celebrity. If a celebrity is seen as having a sour personality even if physically beautiful, consumers are less likely to develop an emotional bond with the individual and the product (Munyau, & Mwirigi, 2023).

### **Celebrity credibility**

Endorser credibility is a determinant of customer buying behaviour. Celebrity credibility is defined by ZorBari-Nwitambu and Kalu (2022) as the integrity, honesty and dependability of a celebrity regarding the subject matter. Credibility determines how the advertising information would impact the receiver. Spry et al. (2021) argue that celebrity credibility has a positive impact on the credibility of an endorsed brand. Ibok (2023) contributed that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers depends mostly on perceived expertise and credibility. Thus, celebrity credibility is a significant determinant of the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement.

The evolving landscape of social media has introduced new dimensions to celebrity credibility, as influencers and public figures engage directly with their audiences. According to Freberg et al. (2021), the rise of social media has shifted the dynamics of celebrity credibility, as audiences now have the opportunity to interact with and assess the authenticity of celebrities in real-time. This direct engagement can enhance or diminish a celebrity's credibility based on their perceived authenticity and relate-ability.

Therefore, Kamins (2020) opine that consumers are more likely to accept product claims made by celebrities who are perceived as credible, as this credibility can enhance the believability of the endorsement. Additionally, Till and Busler (2020) suggests that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is contingent upon the match between the celebrity's credibility and the product being promoted. This alignment can further bolster the perceived authenticity of the endorsement, making it more persuasive to the target audience.

### **Celebrity trustworthiness**

The character of the celebrity can make or mar an advertising campaign. Celebrities therefore need to take specific actions in ensuring that they live a scandal-free life, worthy of trust and

emulation. Trustworthiness is the level of confidence and believability that consumers pose in a celebrity. Some attributes of trust include favourable disposition and wide acceptance of the celebrity and the brand he/she represents (Pamar & Patel, 2025). Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence consumers place in a communicator's intent to convey the assertions they consider most valid (Ohanian, 2021). Awobamise and Yosra (2022) describes favorable disposition, acceptance, psychological safety, and perceived supportive climate as favorable consequences of trust.

Wang (2022) defined celebrity trustworthiness as the attribute of dignity, believability and honesty possessed by the endorser and observed by consumers. When a consumer believes that a source is trustworthy, he or she also assumes that the communicated message is highly believable (Hovland & Wiess, 2022). Hence, an integrated brand promotion strategy could be associating with celebrity endorsers who consumers perceive as honest, believable and dependable.

In addition, efficacy of a celebrity endorser may transfer from a greater perceived trustworthiness of the celebrity by the consumer (Hovland & Wiess, 2022). Choi and Rifon (2022) aver that trustworthiness is particularly important where consumers are more likely to follow recommendations from celebrities they view as credible and trustworthy. This highlights the importance of trust in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Spry et al. (2021) emphasize that celebrity trustworthiness plays a moderating role in advertising effectiveness, especially in contexts where consumers are skeptical of marketing messages. In markets like Nigeria, where brand authenticity is increasingly important, celebrities who have cultivated a reputation for honesty both in their careers and personal lives are more likely to influence consumer behavior positively.

### **Customer Patronage**

Customer patronage is a deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive purchasing of the same brand, despite situational influences and marketing efforts (Onyeonoro et al., 2024). Gremler and Brown (2020) define it as the degree to which a customer exhibits repeat purchase behavior or positive attitudinal disposition towards a service provider. Loyalty is therefore an attitude or behavior that customers explicitly exhibit.

Nwinkinaka and Poi (2023) define customer patronage as a commitment to consistently purchase products from an organization. In agreement, Almotairi (2021) added that customer patronage is a term used to describe a customer's allegiance to a company; buying its products regularly and sharing positive reviews about the brand. Chow et al. (2021) and Nkpurukwe et al. (2020) indicate that customer patronage is the succour provided by customers to a particular brand in terms of constant purchase. Seock (2019) describe customer patronage as purchase behavior at a particular store for either the same products or other products derived from the degree of customer satisfaction.

The whole essence of setting up a business is to create customer vis-a-vis customer satisfaction. In light of this, the result of customer satisfaction is more customer patronage (Dadras, 2025). Krey et al. (2024) opine that a company's effort to satisfy its customers helps in building patronage. Therefore, customer patronage is an essential condition for a firm to maintain business continuity, basis for stability and market share (Dick & Basu, 2024).

### **Celebrity Endorsement and Customer Patronage**

Celebrity endorsement has become a ubiquitous marketing strategy in the food and beverage industry. These endorsements leverage the fame, popularity and perceived trustworthiness of celebrities to influence consumer choices. While the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements on purchase decisions is well-documented, its impact on customer patronage is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Oguntuase et al., 2024).

One key pathway through which celebrity endorsement fosters customer patronage is by creating positive image in the mind of consumers; as they often associate the celebrity's image and characteristics with the endorsed brand. Therefore, if a celebrity is viewed as trustworthy, attractive, credible, and aligns with the consumer's values, these positive associations can transfer to the brand, leading to increased patronage and loyalty (Till & Busler, 2020).

The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in boosting customer patronage is influenced by perceived congruence between the celebrity's image and the product. Kamins (2020) suggests that endorsement is more effective when there is a clear alignment between the celebrity's persona and the brand's values. The alignment of brand values with youthful, energetic, and aspirational lifestyles of a celebrity endorser can create a sense of authenticity.

This perception of authenticity leads to increased trust in the brand, which is a crucial to customer patronage. When consumers view the endorsed product as genuinely reflecting their values and aspirations, they are more likely to make repeat purchases (Smith et al., 2020). Thus, Celebrity endorsement is a powerful tool that shapes customer patronage and drives brand success. By leveraging the attractiveness, credibility, and trustworthiness of celebrity endorsers, organizations can effectively cultivate strong connections with its target audience.

As evidenced by Oguntuase et al. (2024) and Anioke (2022), the strategic use of celebrity endorsement helps maintain top-of-mind awareness, increases brand recall, and solidifies consumer trust. This ultimately drives repeat purchase and long-term brand loyalty. Through these endorsements, firms reinforce their position in the competitive market, showcasing the profound impact of celebrity endorsement on customer patronage (Chan et al., 2023).

### **Theoretical Review**

This study was predicated on Reference Group Theory (Hyman, 1942). According to reference group theory, an individual or group is thought to display a significant impact on the motivations, behaviors and assessments of other individuals (Shrestha 2023). It makes the case that buyers often search for brands that have been verified as having positive credibility by an impartial expert. This supports the notion that customers are already aware of a brand. Consequently, the reference group theory holds that majority of customers see celebrities as trustworthy sources to validate their product knowledge. Moreover, the theory argues that in order for customers to patronize a brand, there must be a certain degree of celebrity likeness; if not, doing so is dangerous.

In the context of this study, reference group theory posits that individuals look up to groups or people they admire, such as celebrities, for guidance in shaping their attitudes, behaviors, and purchase decisions. Celebrities act as reference points for their fans, influencing lifestyle choices and brand preferences. By associating brands with these respected public figures, a firm can leverage their influence to shape consumer perceptions and behaviors, thereby increasing brand desirability and patronage. The visibility of these celebrities in campaigns reinforces social acceptance and trendiness, encouraging fans to emulate their idols by choosing the brand/product as their preferred choice within a particular industry.

## Empirical Review

In Coruña, Spain, Calvo-Porral et al. (2021) examined whether consumers' food purchase intention and consumers' willingness to pay a premium price is influenced by celebrity endorsement. An empirical study was developed through Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) based on data gathered from 316 consumers who read celebrity recommendations. Findings showed that consumers are mostly influenced in their food consumption behavior by congruence between celebrity endorsement and product being recommended, and by the celebrity credibility. Celebrity recommendations show a similar influencing pattern both for consumers' food purchase intention and consumers' willingness to pay a premium price for food.

In Ghana, Bouquest (2024) investigated the effect of celebrity endorsement dimensions on brand loyalty in the telecommunication industry. The study showed a significant relationship between source credibility, source attractiveness, and brand loyalty in the telecommunication industry of Ghana. Oguntuase et al. (2024) investigated the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in influencing consumer's choices in Southwest Nigeria's Food and Beverage Sector. The findings indicated that celebrity endorsements have a minor influence on consumer perceptions of food and beverages in Southwest Nigeria.

Similarly, Owuso and Hamilton-Ibama (2022) examined the relationship between celebrity advertising strategies and customer patronage of selected detergent firms in Port Harcourt, The statistical evidence showed that a relationship exist between celebrity advertising and customer patronage of selected detergent firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Based on the forgoing, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** celebrity attractiveness has no significant impact on customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis, Ogun state.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** celebrity credibility has no significant influence on customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis, Ogun state.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** celebrity trustworthiness has no significant effect on customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis, Ogun state.

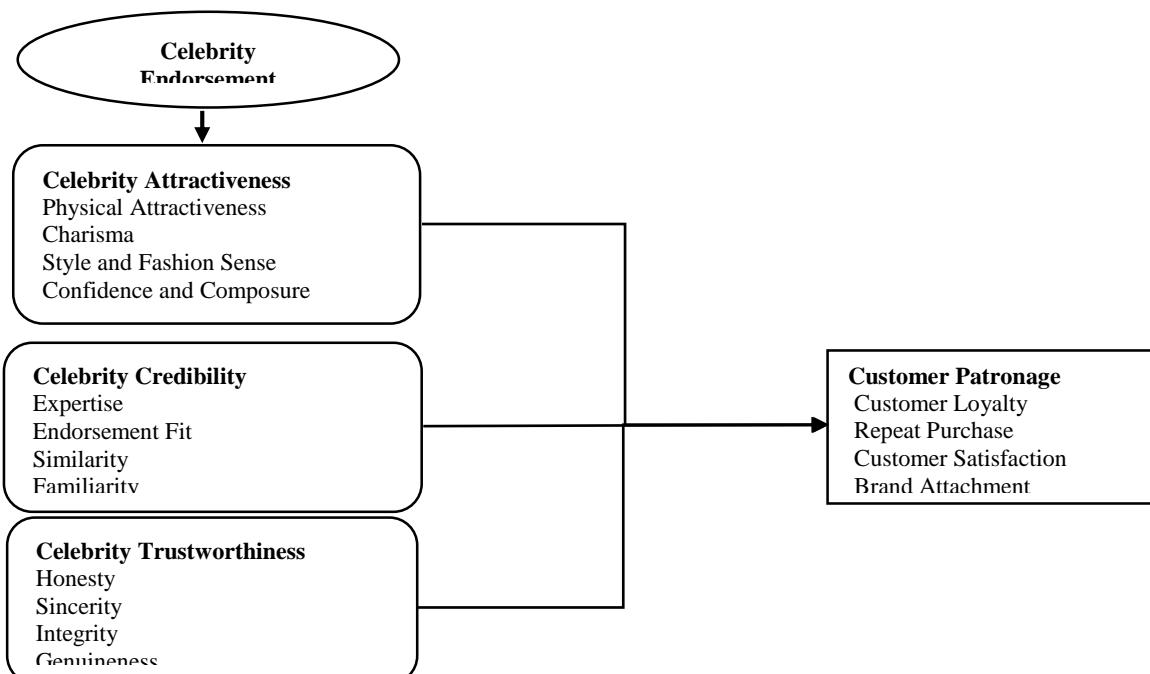


Fig. Conceptual framework of celebrity endorsement and customer patronage.

Source: adapted from: Odili and Ukpai (2021).

Fig. 1 demonstrates the relationship between celebrity endorsement and customer patronage. It suggests that each attribute of celebrity, representing a dimension of celebrity endorsement (attractiveness, credibility, trustworthiness), potentially influences level of customer loyalty, repeat purchase customer satisfaction, and brand attachment.

### Methodology

A survey research design was employed, with data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to consumers of Pepsi soft drinks in Ilaro metropolis. As the population size could not be determined, it was considered large and indefinite. Cochran's (1977) sample size determination formula was therefore applied, yielding a sample of 384 respondents selected through simple random sampling. Primary data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypotheses and assess the statistical relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Creswell, 2014).

### Model Specification

The model describing the relationship between celebrity endorsement and customer patronage is given as:

Multiple Regression Model

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \mu$$

$$CP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CA + \beta_2 CC + \beta_3 CT + \mu$$

Where:

CP = Customer Patronage

CA = celebrity Attractiveness

CC = Celebrity Credibility

CT = celebrity Trustworthiness

$\beta_0$  = intercept and is the value of dependent variable when all the independent variables is zero

$\mu$  = error term or value that account for the change but are not part of the survey at present

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = Regression co-efficient of each independent variables

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1: Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval**

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned	352	92.0
Non-returned	32	8.0
Total	384	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that out of 384 questionnaires distributed/administered to the respondents, 352 which represents 92.0% were filled correctly and returned. Therefore, the findings of this study will be based on the opinion of 352 respondents.

**Table 2: Reliability of Research Instrument**

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Value
Celebrity Attractiveness	5	0.777
Celebrity Credibility	5	0.816
Celebrity Trustworthiness	5	0.817
Customer Patronage	5	0.838

Source: SPSS output, 2025

Table 2 shows that all the variables exceed the minimum acceptable reliability threshold of 0.70. This indicates a high level of internal consistency among the items within each variable. From

the table, it can therefore be inferred that the instrument used for data collection (questionnaire) is highly reliable, and the data obtained from it is suitable for further statistical analysis and interpretation of the study.

**Table 3: Demographic Information of Respondents**

Variable	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	148	42.0
	Female	204	58.0
	Total	352	100.00
Age	20 - 30 years	277	78.7
	31 - 40 years	43	12.2
	41 - 50 years	19	5.4
	51 years and above	13	3.7
	Total	352	100.00
Marital Status	Single	294	83.5
	Married	41	11.6
	Divorced	4	1.1
	Widow	13	3.7
	Total	352	100.00
Academic Qualification	NCE/OND	142	40.3
	HND/B.Sc	187	53.1
	M.Sc/MBA	11	3.1
	Other	12	3.4
	Total	352	100.00
Years of Patronage	0-1 Year	44	12.5
	2-4 Years	35	9.9
	5-7 Years	39	11.1
	8-10 Years	60	17.0
	11 Years and Above	174	49.4
	Total	352	100.00
Do you take Pepsi Soft Drink?	Yes	322	88.1
	No	30	11.9
	Total	352	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows the demographic information of the respondents. The gender distribution of the respondents shows that 148 (42.0%) respondents were male; while the remaining respondents 204 (58.0%) were female. Table 3 also indicates that 277 (78.7%) respondents were within the age range of 20-30 years; 43 (12.2%) respondents were within the range of 31-40 years; 19 (5.4%) respondents were within the age range of 41-50 years; while 13 (3.7%) respondents were within the age range of 51 years and above. Also, 294 (83.5%) respondents were single; 41 (11.6%) respondents were married; 4 (1.1%) respondents were divorced; while 13 (3.7%) were divorced. Furthermore, 142 (40.3%) respondents have NCE/OND certificate; 187 (53.1%) respondents have HND/B.Sc certificate; 11 (3.1%) respondents have M.Sc/MBA certificate; while 12 (3.4%) respondents have other certificate.

Table 3 further indicates that 44 (12.5%) respondents have been patronizing Coca-Cola Nigeria for 0-1 years; 35 (9.9%) respondents have been patronizing Coca-Cola Nigeria for 2-4 years; 39 (11.1%) respondents have been patronizing Coca-Cola Nigeria for 5-7 years; 60 (17.0%) respondents have been patronizing Coca-Cola Nigeria for 8-10 years; while 174 (49.0%) respondents have been patronizing Coca-Cola Nigeria for 11 years and above. This demonstrates

long term customer loyalty. Lastly, Table 3 shows that 322 (91.5%) respondents take Pepsi soft drink; while 30 (8.5%) respondents do not take Pepsi soft drink.

**Table 4: Regression Table<sup>a</sup>**

Source	SS	Df	MS	No. of Obs. = 352
Regression	79.957	3	26.652	F = 92.881
Residual	99.859	348	0.287	Prob>F = 0.000
Total	179.816	351		R-Squared = 0.445 Adj R-Squared = 0.440 R = 0.0.667
	<b>Coef</b>	<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P&gt; t </b>
<b>(Constant)</b>	0.791	0.145	5.464	0.000
<b>Celebrity</b>				
<b>Attractiveness</b>	0.151	0.051	2.958	0.003
<b>Celebrity</b>				
<b>Credibility</b>	0.174	0.050	3.470	0.001
<b>Celebrity</b>				
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	0.436	0.054	8.113	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage

b. Predictors: (Constant), Celebrity Trustworthiness, Celebrity Credibility, Celebrity Attractiveness

Table 4 shows that the coefficient determination is 0.667, which revealed that dimensions of celebrity endorsement contribute about 66.7% to customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis. This indicates a strong positive correlation between observed and predicted values. The R-squared value of 0.445 implies that approximately 44.5% of variation in customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis can be explained by variations in degree of celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity credibility, celebrity attractiveness, while the remaining 55.5% is associated with other models not included in the study. The adjusted R square with a value of 0.440 shows that even after adjusting for degree of freedom, the model could still explain about 44.0% of systematic variation in customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis.

The F-statistic value of 92.881 indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. This imply that in the context of this study, celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity credibility, and celebrity attractiveness were good predictors of customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria. The reported sig. value of 0.000 which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 level of significance therefore inferred that celebrity endorsement has significant effect on customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis.

Based on the regression Table, the multiple regression is specified as:

$$CP = 0.791 + 0.151 CA + 0.174 CC + 0.436 CT$$

The multiple regression equation suggests that the coefficient for the intercept term, denoted as " $\beta_0$ " estimated to be 0.791, implies that when each of the dimensions of celebrity endorsement takes a value of zero, the corresponding value for customer patronage is expected to be 0.791. Therefore, the coefficient value for celebrity attractiveness determined to be 0.151 indicates that when all other variables are not being considered a unit increase in attractiveness of a celebrity endorsed by Pepsi Nigeria, will result to a corresponding increase of 0.151 units in customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis.

Also, the coefficient value for celebrity credibility which is 0.174 suggests that when all other factors are not at play, a unit increase in the credibility of the celebrity endorsed by Pepsi Nigeria

will cause customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis to increase by 0.174 units. Lastly, the coefficient value for celebrity trustworthiness determined to be 0.436, means that when all other variables are held constant, one-unit increase in the trustworthiness of the celebrity endorsed by Pepsi Nigeria will result to a corresponding increase of 0.436 units in customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria within Ilaro metropolis.

### **Discussion of Findings**

This study assessed the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer patronage. The tests conducted in the study showed that dimensions of celebrity endorsement has positive and statistically significant influence on customer patronage. Particularly, the tests revealed that celebrity attractiveness and celebrity credibility have weak positive influence on customer patronage.

These results suggests that while physical appearance and overall appeal of celebrities do play a role in shaping consumer perceptions, they are not the strongest determinants of purchase behavior. The respondents highlight that customers are influenced by celebrities' style, grooming, fashion sense, body language and physical features, which collectively enhance the attractiveness of Pepsi.

They also mean that while credibility of celebrity endorsers contributes to shaping consumer attitudes, its effect on actual purchasing decisions is modest. The responses revealed that customers perceive Pepsi celebrities as trustworthy, believable, professional, and consistent in presenting product information with integrity, which enhances the persuasiveness and memorability of the brand message.

Also, the tests revealed that celebrity trustworthiness has a moderate positive significant effect on customer patronage. This emphasize that that consumers place considerable value on the integrity and ethical conduct of celebrity endorsers. The respondents perceive Pepsi celebrities as individuals who maintain integrity even under public pressure, demonstrate consistency between their words and actions, and behave in ways that reflect moral and ethical responsibility despite their fame.

These finding of the current study aligns with that of Bouquest (2024) which showed a significant relationship between celebrity attractiveness, and brand loyalty in the telecommunication industry of Ghana; and that of Arogundade (2022) which found that celebrity attractiveness has a positive significant effect on consumers' purchase intention of brewery products in Lagos, Nigeria.

Our findings also corroborates the study of Bouquest (2024) which showed a significant relationship between celebrity credibility, and brand loyalty; and of Odili and Ukpai (2021) which reported that celebrity credibility has significant positive relationship with customer patronage of consumer-goods. More so, our findings confirm the report that celebrity trustworthiness has a moderate positive significant effect on customer patronage (Onu, 2019).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study investigated the effect of celebrity endorsement on customer patronage of Pepsi Nigeria in Ilaro metropolis, Ogun State, with a focus on celebrity attractiveness, credibility, and trustworthiness. The findings demonstrated that celebrity attractiveness has a weak but significant positive effect on customer patronage, suggesting that while consumers are drawn to the style, grooming, and overall appeal of endorsers, such physical qualities are insufficient to guarantee sustained purchasing behavior.

Therefore, the study concludes that while attractiveness and credibility enhance brand appeal, it is trustworthiness that most significantly strengthens consumer confidence and loyalty toward Pepsi Nigeria. Accordingly, it is recommended that Pepsi Nigeria and other FMCG firms prioritize partnerships with celebrities whose integrity and values align with their corporate identity. By doing so, firms can foster authenticity, deepen customer loyalty, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly consumer-conscious marketplace.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made for Pepsi Nigeria:

- i. Pepsi Nigeria should continue to engage attractive celebrities to boost advertisement appeal but combine this with other strategies such as product quality improvement, affordability, and customer engagement initiatives to ensure long-term patronage.
- ii. Pepsi Nigeria should select celebrities whose values, professionalism, and integrity align with the brand's image, while reinforcing credibility with consistent messaging, transparent advertising, and customer-centered campaigns to build deeper consumer trust.
- iii. Pepsi Nigeria should prioritize trustworthy celebrities with good reputations and strong moral standing for endorsements, while ensuring that campaigns emphasize authenticity and ethical brand values to foster consumer loyalty and long-term patronage.

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