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## **The Contribution of Celebrity Endorsement to University Student's Buying Behavior in Developing countries: A Case Study of Chinhoyi University of Technology students**

**Gerald Munyoro and Willmore Nhevere**

Graduate Business School, School of Business Science and Management, Chinhoyi University of Technology, P. Bag 7724, Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe.

### **ABSTRACT**

This study focused on evaluating the contribution of celebrity endorsement to University student's buying behaviour in developing countries and this was achieved through the phenomenological philosophy and a case study design. The sample was made up of 100 respondents. Questionnaires and focus group discussions were used to collect data from the respondents. The results obtained from the study show that celebrity endorsement has a positive influence on university student's buying behaviour. Results from the study also show that celebrities hold power to influence consumer perception and life style choices. Furthermore, it was established that celebrity endorsement positively contributes to sales, brand awareness of the brand. The study findings also show that domestic celebrities from Zimbabwe are not trusted by consumers due to their bad behaviour such as drug abuse. Hence, it was concluded that celebrity endorsement is a powerful advertising tool which positively contributes to consumer buying behaviour but however in implementing celebrity endorsement in developing countries careful evaluation of the endorser has to be taken before the strategy is fully implemented. Therefore, the study recommends that the match up hypothesis model approach and international celebrities should be used by companies in developing countries in order to enhance their marketing skills and sales.

**Keywords:** Celebrities, Celebrity endorsement, Consumers, Buying behaviour, University, University students, Zimbabwe, Marketing

### **INTRODUCTION**

The world is now operating in a global village which has ultimately resulted in the adoption of one common culture across geographical boundaries as noted by More (2018) and who also states that as a result marketing as of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has shifted from traditional marketing to a new paradigm which uses the adoption of strategy and technology. In preparation of this, companies in developed countries have devised modern marketing strategies that enable them to accommodate the changes in the global market. Some of the modern strategies presented are social media marketing, digital marketing and celebrity endorsement (Rantanen, 2017). In the USA as suggested by Solomon (2009) an estimate of more than twenty percent of advertising campaigns in the USA featured celebrities and about fifteen percent was allocated towards paying those celebrities. Furthermore, Chung et al (2013) noted that celebrity endorsement has over the years graduated to become the most sought after advertising technique of all time. In addition, Byberg (2015) noted that celebrity endorsement showed a positive impact on sales and brand image in Sweden. Accordingly, it is

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clear here that as a marketing strategy celebrity endorsement has positively contributed to the survival of the firms in developed nations (Mgbakoigba, 2017). Accordingly, Gomez (2017) is of the opinion that since the cultural imperialism theory suggests that developing countries are depended on the activities of developed nations for their survival, then companies from developing nations are also forced to imitate strategies that would have been adopted in developed nations. Since evidence has significantly shown that celebrity endorsement is working in developed countries then there are expectations that it will work in developing countries even though there is not enough information on celebrity endorsement in Africa including Zimbabwe. This is worrying especially at a time sales in Africa and beyond are deteriorating yet in developed countries the use of celebrity endorsement has been found to be effective in terms of enhancing brand awareness and sales as noted by Byberg (2015) and Israel (2015). Therefore, this study seeks to ascertain the contribution of celebrity endorsement to university student's buying behaviour in developing countries. In addition, the study aims to identifying the consumer perception of celebrities and will then recommends strategies that can be used to ensure success of celebrity endorsements in developing countries.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Karasiewicz & Martyna (2014) suggest that the use of celebrity endorsement in advertising first appeared in the 19th century, and was further developed in the 20th century with the emergence of new advertising media: the radio (1930 s); television (1950 s); and the Internet (1990). Furthermore, Chung (2013) highlights that this advertising technique has over the years graduated to become the most sought after advertising technique of all time. In addition, Erdogan (1999) points out that celebrity branding is now one of the most effective ways to reach consumers. Something that Solomon (2009) suggests that an estimate of more than twenty percent of advertising campaigns in the USA are now using celebrities, and about ten percent of advertising budgets are now being allocated to paying celebrities for their marketing participation. This therefore has produced excellent results in developed countries and this concept of using celebrities to market brands includes top brands such as Pepsi and Nike. Accordingly, these brands still remain dominant in their marketing areas due to successful collaborations with famous celebrities. For example, the collaboration of famous basketball player Michael Jordan and the company Nike, significantly led to the creation of the Nike Jordan label which ultimately generated and is still producing millions of dollars for the company as of today. Furthermore, Choi & Berger (2010); Erdogan (1999) and Gupta et al (2015) are of the opinion that for developed countries such as USA, Britain and Australia just to name a few celebrity endorsement is significant to consumer buying behavior even though this has not been tested in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Thus, the study aims to ascertain the contribution of celebrity endorsement to university students in developing countries and Chinhoyi University of Technology of Zimbabwe will be used as a case study. Having said that, it is vital to note that celebrity endorsement is part of marketing and therefore it is essential to explain here what is marketing for the benefit of the readers of this article.

### **2.1 What is Marketing?**

As observed by Blodgett (2011) marketing is an ongoing communications exchange with customers in a way that educates, informs and builds a relationship over time and therefore every business company aims to effectively reach out to its end customers. This is the reason why Kotler (2012) pointed out that marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Furthermore, marketing is defined as a process of satisfying human needs by bringing products to people in the proper form and at a proper time and place (Asogwa and Okwoche, 2012). The definitions above highlight the significance of marketing in modern world and that it encompasses the process of how companies extend their marketing efforts to reach out to customers. In reaching out to the customer, thus it is suggested in this study that particular attention has to be directed to the marketing mix, which will be explained in detail below.

### **2.2 The Marketing mix.**

The marketing mix refers to the set of tactics and actions that a company deploys in order to promote its brand or product in the market. In support of this, Kotler (2012) noted that the marketing mix elements make up the business plan for a company and when handled right, can guide it towards great success. In addition, Kareh (2018) established that the marketing mix is a complex issue which needs understanding through proper market research. As observed by Kotler (2012) the marketing mix comprises of product, price, place and promotion and this study will only concentrate on promotion.

### **2.3 The Promotion mix.**

The promotion mix are the tools used by a firm to create, sustain and increase the demand for goods and services (Armstrong, 2012). In addition, it was also established that promotional mix elements can be used as tools to communicate to the target market in order to achieve organizational sales goals and profits. Thus, Kotler (2012) pointed out that there are several promotional tools that can be used by the organization to create, sustain and increase the demand for goods and services. The stated tools are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. For that reason, Vemkatrao (2015) notes that amongst all these promotional mix elements, advertising stamps out as the most effective tool to reach out to consumers and establish brand awareness. In support of this, Nikabadi (2015) conducted a study on the role of advertising on brand awareness, the findings were that advertising creates brand awareness and contributes to brand equity. The concept of brand awareness is discussed below.

### **2.4 The Brand awareness concept**



**Source: Author**

Kotler and Keller (2016) defined brand awareness as fostering people’s ability to recall or recognize the brand in sufficient detail to make a purchase. As highlighted on the figure above, advertising has a significant role in the creation of brand awareness. In support of this, Maven (2018) establishes that in this current era consumers have many product options available to them, having a differentiated message and an audience that can easily pick out a company’s brand from that of rivals is detrimental for success. Furthermore, when shoppers are aware of the product that a company offers, they are more likely to go straight to that company if they need that product, instead of researching other places that are offering that particular product (Keller, 2013). In addition, Byberg (2015) suggests that companies should generally direct their marketing efforts towards creating brand awareness and celebrity endorsement is one of the tools that can be used because it is believed to be a powerful tool towards awareness creation and the building of brand equity. Accordingly, the concept of celebrity endorsement is discussed below.

**2.5 What is Celebrity endorsement?**

Kotler (2006) observed that celebrity endorsement is a particular strategy used by marketers to advertise a product from such a platform through which consumers can associate themselves with the brand value from the perspective of the celebrity personnel. In this case, celebrity endorsement is seen as a channel of brand communication which requires the use of a celebrity or a well-known person to use their social status or their fame to help promote a brand (Martin, 2018). Therefore, marketers use celebrity endorsers in the hope that the positive images of the celebrity will be passed on to the products or the brand (McCracken, 1989). In addition, Khatri (2006) also noted that the celebrity endorsement is a promotion strategy used for the sole purpose of attracting customers by making a distinctive remark through use of highly famous or powerful people in society such as Michael Jackson and Beyoncé just to name a few. Furthermore, marketers in an endeavor to instill brand recall, indulge in the hiring of a famous celebrity to act as the voice or the ambassador of the brand (McCracken, 1989) and amazingly most of these celebrity endorsers come from the entertainment world (Jain, 2011).

## **2.6 The celebrities and consumer perception.**

In the marketing circles, celebrities are seen as individuals who enjoy public recognition and use this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (McCracken, 1989). In short, the cultural meaning and status of the celebrity is passed on to the product he associates himself with and therefore, consumers believe that by associating themselves with the product they can get that meaning of the celebrity transferred to them through association with the product as noted by Choi & Rifon (2007). For example, actors or cricketers celebrities in India are worshipped and loved by the people because these celebrities are deemed to be referents by consumers which refers to imaginary or actual individuals envisioned to have significant bearing on the consumer's evaluations, aspirations and behavior as argued by Jain (2011). This is supported by Khatri (2006) who observed that celebrities give a great impact on perception of choosing the product because consumers perceive their favourite celebrity's association with a product as an endorsement for the use of the product and therefore buy the product because want to be seen like the celebrities. It is vital to note that every celebrity through their performance, creates an impression in the society that persuade people to associate with them through attributes such as trustworthiness, reliability, credibility, likeability and attractiveness with different celebrities (McCracken, 1989).

In a recent chatroom discussing the concept of why consumers are crazy about celebrities, Gaurav (2016) ascertained that celebrities are a symbol for consumer aspirations, centrally of how consumers want to look like, want to date like, live like, to be loved like, to be talented like. In developed countries, it was established that being popular generates lots of income for the celebrity through the use of social media platforms like Face book and Instagram. Generally, celebrities are seen as part of the social elite who engage in the public relations machine of television and movie roles, special event appearances, talk shows and gossip magazine placements (Gaurav , 2016; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). As observed by McCracken (1986) and Elberse (2017) celebrities are often admired especially by young consumers, who borrow from such celebrities for their identity construction. Accordingly, celebrities constitute inspirational figures and comparative referents and are sometimes considered heroes, providing the high standards of achievement to which consumers desire to achieve to (Gaurav, 2016). In a recent chat forum discussing on why the strategy of celebrity endorsements works, Strategic Marketing Institute (2016) advocated that consumers like to see a popular face on a product such as Beyoncé, Kylie Jenner, Kim Kardashian, Kanye just to mention a few. Issues addressed on the forum pertain to the fact that consumers admire fame and when they see for example Queen Beyoncé in the Pepsi commercial or their print advert, it ultimately catches their attention. Most fans, believe that if their favorite celebrity features in a commercial, the product is favorable, and as noted by Steve (2018) is most likely to buy the product.

Consequently, Zufer et al (2015) point out that there are 3 types of endorsers which are expert endorsers, celebrities and lay endorsers. If a celebrity holds certain expertise in a field of study, when that celebrity endorses a product from that particular field, the outcome should be positive word of mouth and increased sales. Cristiano Ronaldo as an example stamps out as the 4<sup>th</sup> paid celebrity from Nike's celebrity list (Nike News, 2015). These celebrity as suggested by Atkin & Block (1983) are talented with dynamic, attractive and likeable qualities. Thus, most companies

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try to align these qualities to their products through marketing communication strategies and an advertisement featuring a celebrity delivers a higher degree of appeal compared to the adverts without celebrities (Farell, et al 2000). As observed by Pughazhendi & Ranindran (2012) marketing ultimate objective is to instill a strong position in consumers mind by developing a mighty brand.

### **2.7 Drawbacks of celebrity endorsement.**

However, in some developed countries it was found out that not all that glitters is gold as noted by Zahaf and Anderson (2008), Thwaites and Lowe (2012). As highlighted by Klebba and Unger (1982) and Till and Shimp (1995) advertising strategy does not always produce positive results for companies, despite the various benefits of celebrity endorsements, there are still many potential risks involved in using celebrities to endorse products. Argument put down was that a celebrity is a human being who is prone to human distraction socially (Dholakia, 2018) for the reasons that the negative atmosphere around a celebrity may cause consumers confusion. For instance, Pepsi Co suffered a lot as a result of sullied celebrities such as Mike Tyson, Madonna and Michael Jackson (Katyal, 2007). In this case, companies have faced serious embarrassment when their spokesperson or celebrity endorsers are deeply involved in a controversies, the case of Tiger woods and his multiple sexual harassment scandals and the effect it had on Nike (Erdogan, 1999; Dholakia, 2018). The effects of celebrity endorsements are known as:

- **The Vampire effect.**

Dholakia (2018) in an article about the effects of celebrity endorsements advocated the vampire effect, which is also known to marketing experts as the “overshadowing effect”. This effect occurs when the persona and sheer force of personality of the celebrity endorser overshadows the advertised brand (Erdogan, 1999). Rather than helping to sell the brand and enhance its stature, the celebrity presence reduces the advert’s effectiveness and hurts the brand as noted by advertising expert Robert (2009). Robert Evans suggests that the use of celebrities, if they don't have a distinct and specific relationship to the product they are advertising, tends to produce the vampire effect and in the process they suck the life-blood of the product dry and resultantly all the audience will remember is the celebrity and not the product. The major issue that arises out of this problem is that consumers fail to notice the brand being endorsed because they are more focused on the celebrity (Erdogan, 1999; Dholakia, 2018).

- **Hired Gun problem.**

Another important issue concerning celebrity endorsement is that sometimes most famous celebrities often indulge in endorsing much different type of products and services just for the sake of the returns that they present. For example, Roger Federer according to Forbes most paid athletes, was the most paid in relation to endorsements earning 58 million dollars from endorsements alone (Murray, 2017). The hired gun as with most celebrities applies to Roger Federer whose current endorsement deals amount to a total of 12 from reputable brands such as Rolex, Mercedes Benz, Rimowa, Net jets, Credit Suisse, Jura Elektroapparate, Moet and Chandon, Barilla, Lindt, Wilson (Shukla, 2018). Solomon et al (2002) referred to this as the hired gun problem, where the spokesperson is perceived as endorsing the product only for the sake of money. The argument

raised by most commentators is that negative information about a celebrity not only influences consumer's perception for the celebrity, but also the product endorsed by him (Till & Shimp, 1995). Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) suggest that celebrity endorsers have now become a liability to the brand they endorse, as there are decreasing returns associated with celebrities. Some critics also referred celebrities as a puppet in the hands of marketers implying that they perceive the celebrities to be fake and lying, while endorsing certain brands (Temperley & Tangen, 2006).

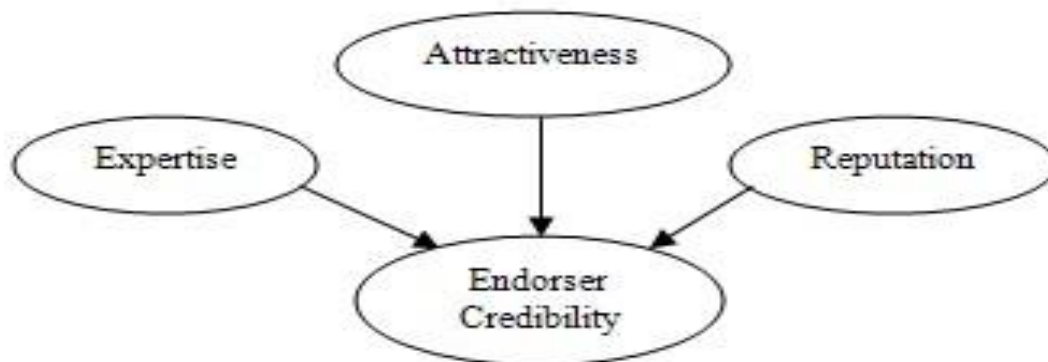
### 2.8 Celebrity endorsement models.

It is significant to discuss the models that describe celebrity endorsement and the purpose of each model is to shed light on the relationship between the product brand, celebrity, and process by which a celebrity's characteristics are transferred to the brand.

- **Source attractiveness Model.**

This model is based on a social psychology philosophy, which defines two elements which are trustworthiness and expertise (Hovland & Weiss, 1995; McGuire, 1985). The model as advocated by Karasiewicz & Martyna (2014) is based on the three assumptions which are that, the recipients will believe and accept an advertising message if the celebrity involved is trustworthy, an expert and is attractive. In this case, credibility refers to a person's perception of the truth of a piece of information (Hovland et al, 1976). Therefore, celebrity trustworthiness is defined as the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions McCracken (1989). Whilst, celebrity expertise is defined as the perceived ability of the source to make valid assertions (Shukre & Dugar, 2013). Lastly, attractiveness is defined as a celebrity's popularity and physical attractiveness. Accordingly, Umeougu & Bonachristus (2012) suggest that celebrity reputation, expertise and trustworthiness are the essential factors that can influence consumer's perceived credibility of a message. Consequently, the source attractiveness model assumes that using a celebrity with certain characteristics such as trustworthiness, expertness and or attractiveness in advertising activities relating to any product category brings positive effects on the product (Weiner & Mowen, 1986).

#### Antecedents of Endorser Credibility (Ohanian, 1991)



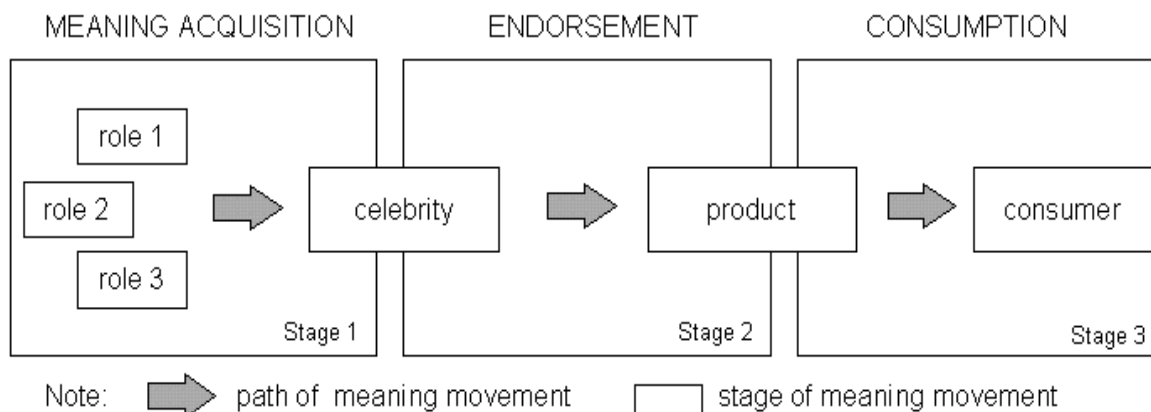
- **Match up-Hypothesis model.**

The match-up model also known as the Product Match-up Hypothesis or Celebrity-brand congruence model is based on the hypothesis that suggests that the effects of using a celebrity in marketing communications depends on the degree of perceived fit between the brand (product name, symbol, image, benefits and attributes) and image of the celebrity as noted by Kamins & Gupta (1994) and Kamins (1990). The model argues that not every celebrity will effectively advertise every brand in any product category and celebrities being human are prone to too many risks which may ultimately misrepresent the brand (Taylor & Francis, 2000). For example, celebrities are prone to risk of bad behavior and risk of associating with too many brand names (Erdogan, 1999; Dholakia, 2018). A study by Liu (2005) to investigate the influence of celebrities in relation to the match-up with product confirms that only a high match between a product and a celebrity has a positive influence of generating more purchase intentions compared with low celebrity product match and that the attractiveness level of celebrities is not statistically significant to influence subjects' purchase intention. The model's limitation is its inability to define and measure celebrity characteristics that are important for individual product categories and brands. Several studies by Choi & Nora (2005), Braustein & Zhang (2005), Ohanian (1991) and Kahle & Homer (1985) show that match-up between endorser and product is positively related to consumer's attitudes and purchase intentions.

- **The Meaning transfer model.**

The model comes as an improvement to the Sources attractiveness model and the match up hypothesis model. The sources attractiveness models have been tested and accepted by Fink et al (2004), Hunter et al (2008), Hovland and Weiss (1951) and Kahle and Homer (1985) but McCracken (1988) criticized them for not portraying all the elements that determine communication effectiveness and argues that it is impossible to know why a celebrity only works out for certain products, and not for others. In addition, the source attractiveness models do not provide a method to discriminate celebrities in a useful way. In remedy of this McCracken (1989) and Basu (2009) suggest the meaning transfer model, which consists of three stages showing the transfer of characteristics or meanings.

**Figure 1: The meaning transfer process.**



- **Stage 1: Meaning Acquisition.**

As advocated by the model, celebrities carry a unique constitution of meaning due to their association in the community and their social power (Choi & Berger, 2010). The assumption is that celebrities bring higher value compared to anonymous models in adding credibility and power to the advertisement based on their lifestyle and personalities (Vyas, 2012). In this case, celebrities are assumed to possess a high degree of power and as advocated by Mgbakoigba (2017) celebrities have a God like status, which transcends to a powerful enchantment of persuasion to consumers. At the first stage, a celebrity is defined by all characteristics that correspond to his or her image in the media through work performed, statements, roles played and so on (Zufer, Micheal & Stephen, 2015). This is why, Tianchi (2012) suggests that celebrities bear a variety of the existing cultural meanings in people's life, such as status, class, gender, age, personalities and lifestyles. More importantly, the cultural meanings brought by a celebrity can be transferred from the endorser to the endorsed products (McCracken, 1989).

- **Stage 2: Endorsement.**

In the second stage, celebrity associations are transferred to the product advertised by him or her (Misra & Sharon, 1990). The key issue in this stage is to determine the symbolic properties of the brand to be strengthened or created through advertising activities, and to then select a celebrity who is consistent with desired symbolic properties (Rajakumar & Tamizhhyothi, 2011). In this case, the endorsement process allows a celebrity to spread out their popularity and pass it on to the product (Creswell (2008), the underlying protocol is however to obtain a celebrity who possesses the features that match with the product as noted by McCracken (1989). As observed by Basu (2009) using celebrity endorsement requires the congruent between celebrity's characteristics and brand image.

- **Stage 3: Consumption.**

In this particular stage, the meaning is transferred from the celebrity to the brand and the consumer becomes a part of a larger whole, gains self-appreciation and strengthens his or her own self-image through the transfer of such meanings (Basu, 2009). McCracken (1989) suggests that the final stage is treated as the most important and sophisticated step. As observed by Beerli & Josefa (2013) a celebrity endorsed advert only succeeds if it creates a durable perception in customer's mind, the resultant implication should be high brand awareness such that whenever a consumer comes across the representative celebrity, they should automatically recall about the brand. It is vital to note that this model is a significant extension of the match-up model because it emphasizes not only the celebrity-brand match-up but also the choice of meanings to be transferred from the celebrity to the advertised brand (Misra & Sharon, 1990).

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the phenomenology philosophy (Hui Lien, 2012) for the reason that it is a valuable means of finding out what is happening, seeking new insights, asking questions and assessing phenomena through the use of literature search, engaging experts and conducting focus group interviews (Saunders, 2009) and is very effective at bringing out experiences and

perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives (Polit & Hungler, 1999). Likewise, the study adopted phenomenology as its research philosophy for the reason of engaging a wider responder base in the study of how celebrity endorsement contributes to university student’s buying behaviour. Furthermore, the study adopted the case study design approach due to the fact that it provided the researchers with the opportunity to explore in depth the phenomenon while controlling other factors like time, costs and other essential resources (Creswell, 2002; Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). The population of the study was made up of around 8177 students (www.cut.ac.zw). Whilst, the sample was made up of 100 students. The sample was carefully selected to provide data which represents the whole population from which it has been drawn and this was based on limited resources needed to conduct the research (Munyoro, 2014). This was also helped by the convenience sampling or haphazard sampling which is involves selecting haphazardly those cases that are easiest to obtain for a sample (Saunders et al, 2009). Furthermore, convenience sampling respondents are selected on the basis of proximity, ease of access and willingness to participate and it enabled the researchers to gather information from the targeted group of people and for this study convenience sampling was used for easy access to students since they are occupied most of the time (Timothy, 2005). This study adopted structured questionnaire method as a research instrument to collect primary data for convenience and effectiveness purpose (Munyoro, 2014; Malhotra, 2008; Myers and Avison, 2002). The study used both closed and open ended questionnaires to ensure that the respondents are not limited to answer their questions and give their own views and recommendations. In addition, the questionnaires were supported by focus groups. As outlined by Munyoro & Chirimba (2017) and Polit & Hungler (1993) validity and reliability were at the heart of the research because the precision and accuracy of an instrument is vital to any study (De Vos, 2001). To ensure validity and reliability Hassan (2006) also stressed out that content validity can be achieved by constant administering of questionnaires and at the same time ensuring use of simple non vague language that respondents can easily understand. The results obtained in this study were accuracy and not biased in any manner (Mayo & Onwuegbuzie, 2014). The respondents in this study were treated with outmost respect throughout the data collection process and all information gathered will be kept confidentially (Munyoro, 2014).

**4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Age group of respondents.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	80	79.2	80.0	80.0
	26-30	12	11.9	12.0	92.0
	31-35	8	7.9	8.0	100.0
	Total	100	99.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.0		
Total		101	100.0		

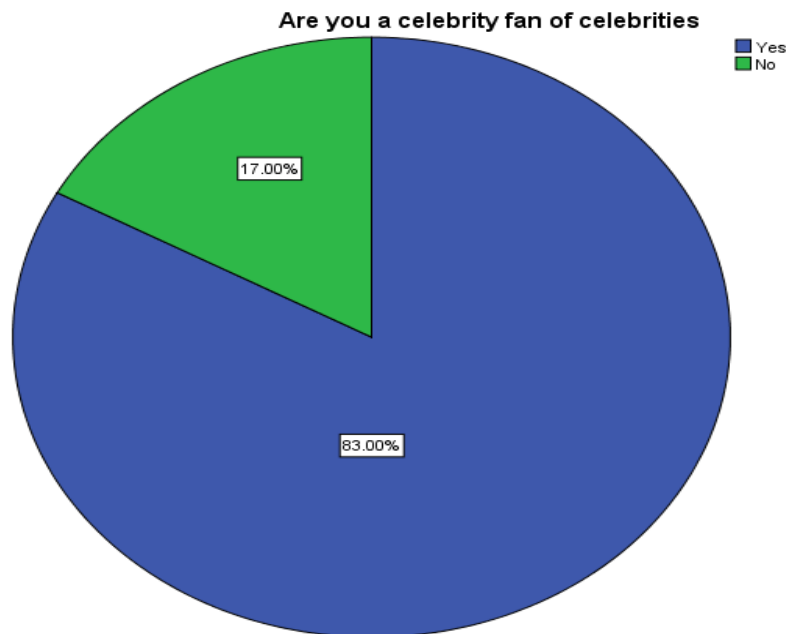
**Source: Authors**

The results obtained signal that 79.2% of the respondents were of the age 18-25 with the exception of only 20% that were of the age groups 26-30 and 31-35. This shows the functional educational system within Zimbabwe which allows learning at younger ages.

**4.3 Celebrity Following.**

The study findings in relation to celebrity following are presented in fig 8 below.

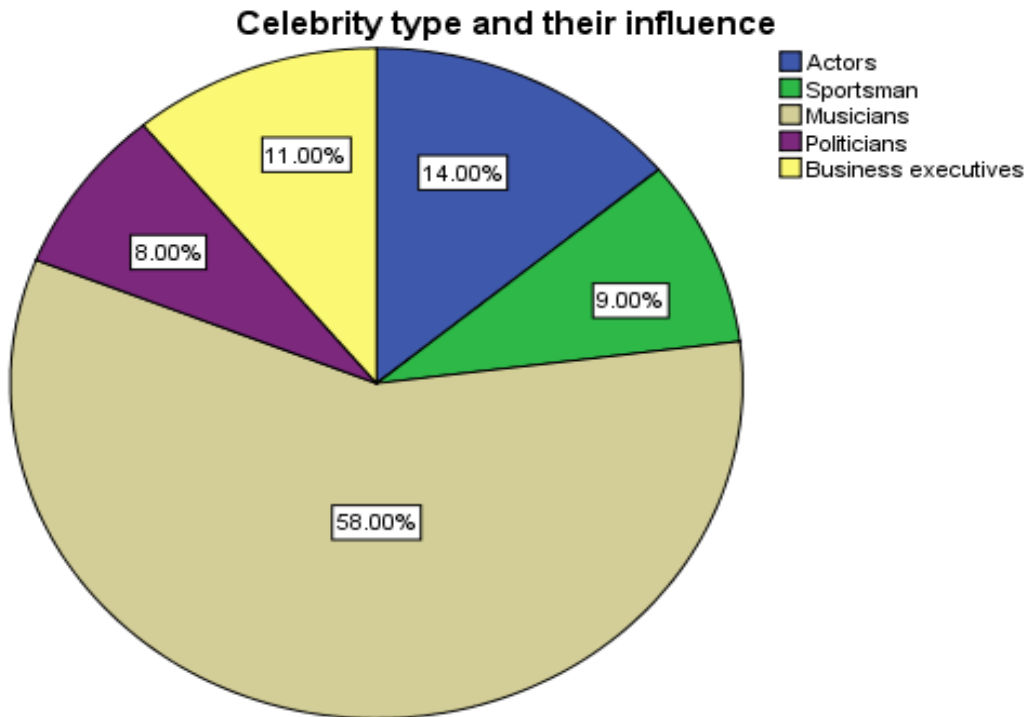
**Celebrity Fan.**



**Source: Authors**

The above results show that 83% of the university students follow celebrities. This outcome is generally attributed to the fact that everyone in life has got people that he or she aspires to be and to live a life like. In support of this Knibbs (2013) highlighted that celebrities are loved and followed by the people because of their ability to make it in life than others.

**4.4 Which type of celebrities is more influential as endorsers?  
Celebrity influence.**

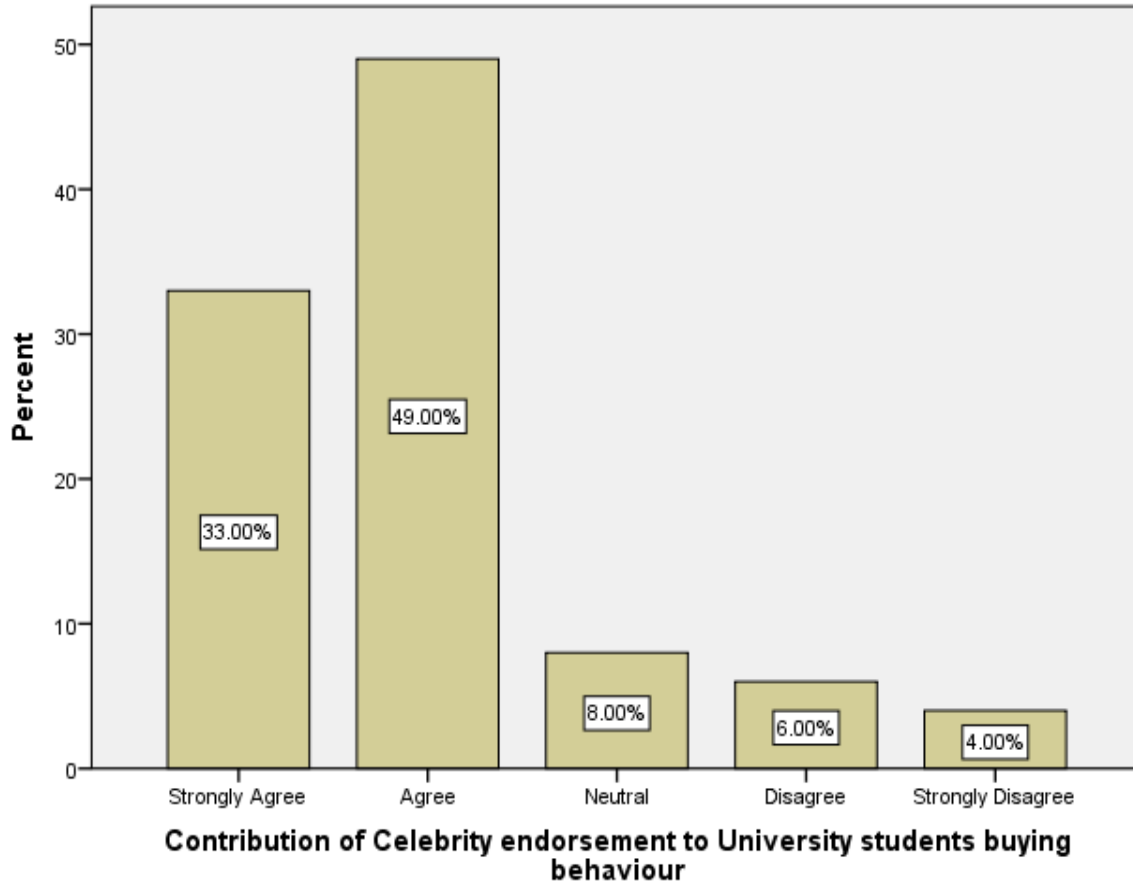


**Source: Authors**

The research findings presented above highlight that university students view Musicians 58% as their favourite celebrity endorser type. Actors 14.0% are also viewed as effective endorsers by a few of the students. This result may be attributed to the fact that music amongst all entertainment is usually enjoyed by all, university students in particular spent most of their time streaming to online music on YouTube that is why they like musicians significantly.

**4.5 Contribution of celebrity endorsement to University student's buying behaviour in developing countries.  
Celebrity contribution.**

**Contribution of Celebrity endorsement to University students buying behaviour**



**Source: Authors**

The results obtained from the study show that a total of 82% of the respondents agree that celebrity endorsement contributes to consumer buying behavior in developing countries. This is supported by Balakrishnan & Kumar (2012) who noted that celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior. Further more Jain (2011) presented an exciting remark that celebrities are loved and worshipped in India but however they should be studied before being implemented on the market. To add on, the strategy is also being used extensively in western Africa. Ghana in particular with particular reference given to Fan Milk Ghana has used Michael Essien the famous Chelsea football player as the face of its brand. The results of that move as presented by Israel & Vincent (2015) was a significant rise in sales and consumer buying behaviour. In china it was also shown that celebrity endorsement positively contributes to consumer buying behaviour and awareness of local products thus according to a research by Hong-Xia and YI (2011).

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## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Major Findings

- **Celebrity Endorsement has a positive contribution to consumer buying behavior.**

Mounting competition between firms in the struggle to attract more consumers towards their products, thus the results show that celebrity endorsement positively affects university student's buying behavior and is inspiring marketers to use celebrities to endorse their products (Croft & Kitchen, 1996; Kulkarni & Gaulkar, 2005). These celebrities are helping advertisements to stand out from the surrounding clutter by appearing in them and by so doing increasing the communicative ability by cutting through excess noise in a communication process Sherman (1985) and Croft & Kitchen (1996). Accordingly, hiring a famous celebrity as their brand endorser is helping companies improve their images, particularly the stained ones. For example, the image of Adidas- the leading manufacture of shoes was fast loosing value but their association with Kanye West jump started the brand back on the market as it restored Adidas' image (Erdogan, 1999; Goldsmith et al, 2000; Mathur & Rangan, 2005). Likewise. the celebrity endorsement is supported by Balakrishnan & Kumar (2012) who notes that celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior in Pakistan because celebrities are loved and worshipped by consumers not only in Pakistan but in India as well (Jain, 2011). In Ghana, the use of Michael Essien, the famous Chelsea football player as the face of Fan Milk brand was found to have a positive effect on consumer buying behavior and hence the significant rise in the sales of the Fan Milk (Israel & Vincent, 2015) was a significant rise in sales. In China, likewise celebrity endorsement was found to be positively contributing to consumer buying behaviour and awareness of local products as noted by Hong-Xia and YI (2011).

- **Celebrity endorsement has a positive contribution to sales.**

The results from the study show that 84 % of the respondents agreed that they are likely to buy products that have been advertised by celebrities and this is also supported by a study in German which show that Germany consumers ultimately respond to celebrity endorsements (Hainer, 2015). In addition, a report by the Chief executive of Adidas showed that sales of Adidas significantly increased when Kanye West signed as the brand ambassador. Furthermore, a study carried out in United States of America show that when a celebrity endorses a product, sales of that brand endorsed significantly increase (Elberse, 2016). Likewise, it was also shown in Sweden that celebrity endorsements enhances sales (Byberg, 2015).

- **Celebrity Endorsement Contributes to Consumer Brand awareness.**

The results from the study show that university students are of the view that celebrity endorsement contributes to awareness of many local and international brands. Furthermore, the results show that university students recall top brands that were endorsed by celebrities as also noted by Mooij (1994) and Hofstede (1984). For example, in Sweden celebrity endorsement strategy was also found to be enhancing brand image and sales of Volvo (Byberg, 2015). In addition, South African journal for sport conducted a research on celebrity endorsement and the results showed that

celebrity endorsement can relatively provide product cues that shape consumer perception and awareness.

- **Celebrities hold power to influence Consumer lifestyle and perceptions.**

The results from the study show that university students support the idea that celebrities hold power to change their lifestyle and perceptions as also noted by Choi & Rifon (2007) who showed that celebrities are deemed as referents groups by consumers and this refers to imaginary or actual individuals envisioned to have significant bearing on the consumer's evaluations, aspirations and behavior. In this case, the power of the celebrities lies in these influences that they exert on consumers, even though they themselves are physically and socially distant from an average consumer. This is why Jain (2011) suggests that actors or cricketers, celebrities in India are worshipped and loved by the people. Whilst, Khatri (2006) notes that sometimes celebrities do not influence a purchase intention from consumers but they give a great impact on perception of choosing the product. As suggested by Gaurav (2016) celebrities are a symbol aspirations, centrally of how consumers want to look like, want to date like, live like, to be loved like, to be talented like. Likewise, in Ghana it was shown that Michael Essien was able to change the perception of Fan milk products (Israel, 2015). The interesting thing is that before the endorsement of Fan Milk by Essien the product was seen as an inferior product but consumers changed their perception after the endorsement by Michael Essien and this then speaks volume of the significance of celebrity endorsement in influencing consumer buying behavior especially young people such as university students (Gaurav, 2016).

- **Celebrities hold power to influence Society Behavior.**

The results show that celebrities hold power to influence society behavior. This was a notion deduced from consumer choices and preferences selection that if celebrities can influence consumers at individual level, the influence can also be at society level. In Zimbabwe, the results suggests that Zimbabwean zimdancehall artistes have influence on society behavior of great magnitude. In Brazil, studies have shown that youngsters follow the lifestyle of popular footballers like Ronaldo and Ronaldinho just to name a few.

- **Celebrities in developing countries are not a trustworthy reference group.**

The study unfortunately show that most so called Zimbabwean celebrities have no effect on student behavior for the reason that they are dishonest, unreliable, undependable reference group and are also associated with drug abuse and ruffian life. In addition, most so called Zimbabwean celebrities are not recognized on the international scene and therefore lack proficiency and consequently have no effect on consumer buying behavior especially on university students. Contrary to this study, in China, domestic celebrities are trusted compared to foreign celebrities, especially in the advertisement of local products (Hong-Xia and YI, 2011; Zufer, et al, 2015).

## 5.2 Recommendations to enhance celebrity endorsement effectiveness in developing countries

- **Use of the Match up hypothesis model approach.**

It is recommended that the match-up model hypothesis be used in developing countries in order to enhance celebrity effectiveness for the reason that the product match-up hypothesis or celebrity-brand congruence model is very effective when using a celebrity in marketing communications because most of these celebrities are perceived to have a fit between the brand, that is product name, symbol, image, benefits and attributes and their image of the celebrity as noted by Kamins and Gupta (1994). Likewise, companies in developing countries such as Zimbabwe should carefully consider if the celebrity reputation is best fit to be associated with the brand to be advertised. Since developing countries are imitators of developed countries, they can as well make reference to the famous collaboration between Nike and Michael Jordan which led to the creation of the Nike Air Jordan brand. In this case, Nike is the leader in terms athletic sportswear. Whilst, Michael Jordan was also the best basketball player at the time of engagement so as a result this created a match up setup with because at the time of endorsement both parties were leaders in their own segments. Accordingly, it is recommended that companies in developing countries make use of international celebrities who are known especially to young people including university students whom they know and want to associate with even though this come with a cost. The study shows that most university students prefer international celebrities than local ones because international celebrities arouse more feelings of purchase than local ones as noted by Liu (2005) who reported that as of 2008, Lenovo a Chinese company dealing in electronics signed the then soccer star Ronaldinho to act as the brand ambassador (Erdogan, 1999; Goldsmith et al, 2000). Furthermore, Mathur & Rangan (2005) suggest that celebrity endorsement do help in restoring or polishing a company's brand image. For most of the multi-national companies while expanding to different countries may face some issues like cultural 'roadblocks' such as time, space, language, relationships, power, risk masculinity, femininity and many others and the use of celebrity endorsement has an effect in overcoming such stumbling blocks (Mooij, 1994; Hofstede 1984). In short, what it means is that celebrity endorsements can be a powerful device to use when entering foreign markets.

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