

THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS AMONG GEN-Z IN KANO, NIGERIA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CULTURE

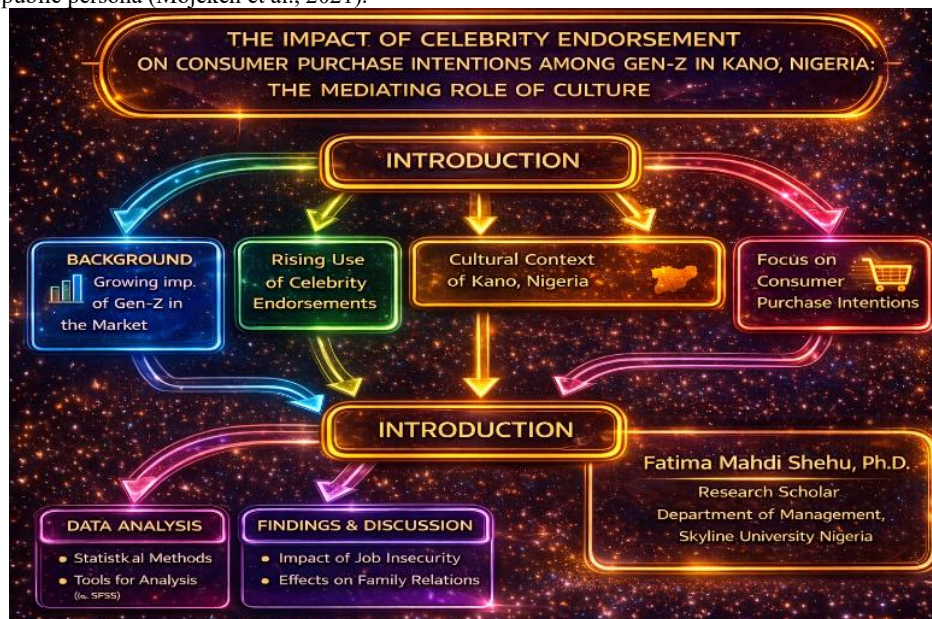
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ABSTRACT

Social media platforms enable direct celebrity-fan interaction which creates a stronger marketing impact from celebrity endorsement because digital technology has improved this method. The research examines how celebrity endorsement affects Generation Z consumers in Kano Nigeria through their buying behavior while cultural factors serve as a mediating element. The research investigates which three main components of celebrity endorsement which include trustworthiness expertise and attractiveness affect Gen Z consumer decision-making during their buying process. The researchers used a quantitative research method to collect data from Generation Z consumers in Kano State through structured questionnaires. The study investigates how cultural values function as mediators between celebrity endorsement attributes and consumer purchase intentions. The unique socio-cultural and religious characteristics of Kano create an environment where culture determines how people understand celebrity endorsement and react to advertising communications. The research results will demonstrate that trustworthiness and attractiveness lead to consumer purchase intention through cultural elements which function as intermediaries. The research expands existing knowledge about celebrity endorsement by studying cultural elements in a northern Nigerian context. The study provides marketers with usable information about how to create endorsement strategies which respect cultural differences while effectively reaching Generation Z consumers. **Keywords:** *Celebrity endorsement, purchase intention, Generation Z, culture, trustworthiness, attractiveness, Kano Nigeria.*

Introduction

Celebrities now use their public status as an effective marketing technique which enables businesses to change how customers interact with their products in the current digital economy. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) enable celebrities to connect with fans in a more interactive way which affects how people perceive products and decide which items to buy (Hanaysha, 2016; 2018). Celebrities increase brand visibility and product trustworthiness and customer emotional ties to products when they promote their own lifestyle through their public persona (Mojekeh et al., 2021).



The digital landscape enables this method to succeed because visual storytelling together with peer influence creates a stronger marketing effect. Generation Z in Nigeria now accesses the internet and social media which leads to fundamental changes in their buying behavior. Celebrities should use their marketing power to reach out to this group which prefers authentic content because they spend most of their time online. The impact of celebrity endorsement depends on the specific circumstances. The way people respond to products depends on their cultural values and religious beliefs and their understanding of social customs. In the culturally distinct area of Kano State, which has strong traditions and religious beliefs, celebrities must maintain their public image according to the community values to achieve successful endorsement deals. The research shows that brands use celebrity endorsements in northern Nigeria yet cultural factors have not been studied as an influence on Gen Z endorsement effectiveness. The research studies how celebrity endorsement affects Gen Z purchasing behavior in Kano State with a specific interest in how cultural factors influence this relationship. The research provides theoretical knowledge and practical marketing guidance for businesses that want to create effective cultural marketing approaches. The research study tackles these research questions

- i) To what extent does trustworthiness affect consumer purchase intentions?
- ii) To what extent does attractiveness affect consumer purchase intentions?
- iii) To what extent does culture mediate the relationship between trustworthiness and consumer purchase intentions?

Research Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine the effect of trustworthiness on consumer purchase intentions
- ii. To determine the effect of attractiveness on consumer purchase intentions
- iii. To determine whether culture mediates the relationship between trustworthiness and consumer purchase intentions.

Literature Review 2.0

The chapter summarizes all published work which relates to the study about how celebrity endorsements affect Generation Z purchasing behavior in Kano State Nigeria while using cultural factors as a mediating element. The chapter aims to develop a solid theoretical and empirical base for the investigation by analyzing all scholarly research which corresponds to the major research elements being studied.

2.1 Celebrity Endorsement in Digital Marketing: The modern digital marketing field uses celebrity endorsement as its main marketing approach because media personalities have achieved more power through their presence on both traditional media and social media platforms. Celebrities achieve their social media recognition because they first became famous through their work in music, film, and sports, before they started using social media platforms (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The public recognition which celebrities possess enables them to attract audience attention while establishing credibility, which brands use to modify consumer views and buying decisions. Celebrities use Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) to connect with audiences about their daily life, personal stories, and brand sponsorships. The way they interact with people enables consumers to see them as trustworthy and real, which becomes essential for young customers who seek direct contact and honest information about products (Lin, Bruning, & Swarna, 2018). The presence of celebrities in advertisements creates more trustworthy and convincing messages because people see these messages as better than traditional advertising methods. Generation Z consumers display strong attraction to fashion, beauty, technology, and lifestyle products which use celebrity endorsement as their main marketing strategy. The following consumers view celebrities as their role models who determine their personal preferences through their actual lifestyle choices and brand values (Harper, 2019). Celebrities establish consumption patterns and brand evaluations within this age group through their repeated public appearances. Celebrities showcase their promotional products through their daily life stories, which leads to better advertising results because customers trust their content more (Ooi et al., 2023). Sponsored content which celebrities deliver to their audience creates genuine impressions through its less disruptive advertising nature, which leads customers to trust their content more (Ooi et al., 2023). The modern marketing techniques of today use celebrity endorsement as a fundamental element to establish better brand recognition while maintaining customer relationships (De Jans et al., 2020).

2.2 Purchase Intention: Researchers in consumer behavior science consider purchase intention to be a key idea which can predict how customers will make their future purchases. The study measures the likelihood of someone buying a specific product through their conscious decision to make an actual purchase. Marketers use purchase intention in their studies to measure how successful their advertising and promotional activities have been. The psychological concept of intention describes how ready a person feels to complete a certain action.

2.2.1 Concept of Purchase Intention: Different scholars have defined purchase intention using different terms which describe the same concept. Vineyard (2014) defines purchase intention as an individual's likelihood or willingness to purchase a product or service in the near future. Dr. Naveen Prasadula (2025) define purchase intention as the possibility that customers will buy a specific product, which predicts actual purchasing behavior based on specific conditions. Customers who plan to buy products show their decision-making process through purchase intention, which depends on three factors: their product attitude, the perceived product value, and the external marketing influences (Goyal, 2014). Research shows that people who intend to buy something will follow through with their purchase, so marketers use this information to evaluate their advertising and marketing campaigns (Febriyantoro, 2020).

2.2.2 Purchase Intention and Celebrity Endorsement: The marketing field now recognizes celebrity endorsements as a major factor that determines whether customers will make purchases through digital and social media platforms. Celebrities function as powerful external factors which determine how consumers perceive products and develop their purchasing behavior. Celebrities use their public presence and reliable status and their ability to represent particular social status and lifestyle and trust to promote brands which results in higher consumer buying intent (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The consumer decision-making process typically involves stages such as need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour (Hoyer et al., 2010). Consumers use celebrity endorsement during the information search and evaluation stages of their decision-making process because they trust credible and respected figures to help them understand potential risks and uncertain situations. Celebrity endorsements function as decision-making shortcuts which help consumers decide what to buy by creating patterns which link endorsements to their product preferences. **2.2.3 Purchase Intention, Generation Z, and Cultural Context Among Generation Z consumers,** purchase intention is particularly susceptible to celebrity influence due to their high media consumption, strong identification with public figures, and tendency to form parasocial relationships with celebrities. Gen-Z consumers who watch celebrity endorsement material tend to view these messages as aspirational which leads them to purchase the products which stay backed by these celebrities. Cultural values through which consumers understand celebrity endorsements in Kano State Nigeria determine how cultural factors affect their decision to buy products. Consumers decide whether to accept celebrity endorsement messages or reject or reinterpret them based on their cultural beliefs and common societal standards which govern their behavior. The research should examine how different cultures affect the way people respond to celebrity endorsements and their purchasing decision

2.3 Celebrity Credibility: Celebrity presence becomes more effective as a marketing tool when consumers trust the celebrity as a credible person. The credibility of marketing messages depends on how audiences judge an endorser to be trustworthy and believable and persuasive (Ooi et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2021). The persuasive power of an endorsement depends on how credible the celebrity is perceived to be because the audience needs to trust both the endorsement and the associated brand.

2.3.1 Concept of Trustworthiness: Trustworthiness is one of the most influential dimensions of celebrity credibility and significantly impacts the effectiveness of endorsement. The source provides honest and trustworthy information which consumers use to determine whether information is real or fake (Xiao et al., 2018; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Trustworthiness represents the level of trust which consumers have in the endorser who they believe will provide them with reliable information. By marketing literature trustworthiness refers to the level of confidence which people have that the communicator delivers precise and truthful content (Wongweeranonchai & McClelland, 2016). Trustworthiness exists when consumers believe both the message is authentic and the celebrity promotes products that benefit customers. Trusted sources have become essential for consumers because they now view promotional messages through a skeptical lens and need reliable guidance for their purchasing decisions (Weismueller et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Concept of Attractiveness: Attractiveness refers to the degree to which a celebrity or influencer's appearance, personal style, lifestyle portrayal, and overall image create aesthetic and emotional appeal for the audience. Attractiveness in marketing communication includes physical beauty but also includes personality traits and fashion sense and confidence and ability to showcase an aspirational lifestyle which attracts followers. The endorser possesses these qualities which enable them to draw in viewers while generating positive feelings that lead to friendly sentiments towards the brands they promote.

2.4 Empirical Literature on Dimensions and Purchase Intention: The studies that researchers conducted in the field show that the credibility dimensions function as a key element which transforms consumer exposure to advertisements into their subsequent positive behavior. Young consumers particularly demonstrate this behavior when they watch endorsement content on platforms which show visual content and they use influencer opinions to make their buying decisions.

2.4.1 Attractiveness and Purchase Intention: Endorsement effectiveness relies on attractiveness as a persuasive cue which creates attention while producing positive emotions and establishing good first impressions. Digital marketing defines attractiveness as a concept which includes physical beauty and the way people present their lifestyle and fashion choices and personal charisma and their entire online image. Empirical literature demonstrates that attractive endorsers generate positive emotional reactions which lead to better brand attitudes and increased purchase intention. The latest research demonstrates that attractiveness maintains its importance in Instagram and TikTok which focus on visual content. The research conducted by Altaf, Amin, and Rizvi (2023) shows that attractive endorsers increase purchase intention because they create stronger emotional bonds between customers and the brand. The study shows that attractiveness makes messages more convincing because it helps viewers find the sponsored content more interesting and easy to understand. Malik, Awan, and Zubair (2024) showed that Generation Z consumers give more value to attractiveness when it matches their preferred lifestyle and social identity which means young people assess attractiveness according to their personal values and the lifestyles they want to achieve. Culture as a Mediator Between Trustworthiness and Purchase Intention Trustworthiness exists as a fundamental element of cultural value systems which define how society recognizes honesty and integrity and sincerity through social practices that have cultural backing. Cultural standards establish which sources people trust and which endorsement methods they regard

as valid and acceptable. High-context and collectivist cultures tend to build trust through shared values and social endorsement which uses reputation as a method of proving trust instead of relying on factual information (Hofstede, 2001; De Mooij, 2019). Recent empirical studies indicate that culture mediates the relationship between trustworthiness and purchase intention. Loureiro et al. (2022) found that cultural values significantly influence how consumers interpret influencer sincerity and credibility, thereby affecting purchase intention. Abubakar et al. (2023) found that trustworthiness produced a stronger indirect impact on purchase intention when it passed through social norms and cultural acceptance. The findings demonstrate that trustworthiness leads to purchase intention when customers consider the endorser's behavior as appropriate to their cultural values and social norms.

Research Methodology

Research Design: The study uses a quantitative research design which involves collecting data through cross-sectional surveys. The single time data collection method allows researchers to study connections between different variables while evaluating mediation effects. The study uses a quantitative research method because it needs to test research hypotheses and make predictions about the entire population which it studies.

Population of the Study: The study population consists of Gen-Z consumers from Kano State Nigeria who actively use Instagram TikTok YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) to view celebrity endorsements. The researchers selected these individuals because they frequently use digital platforms and they buy products that celebrities endorse.

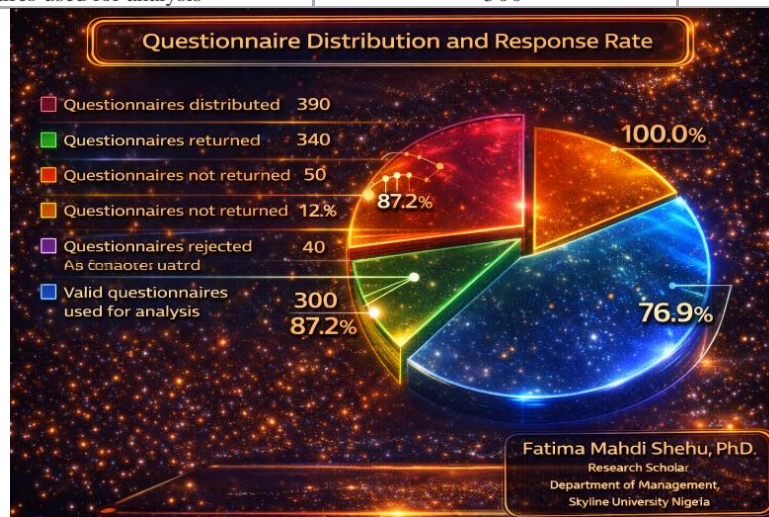
Sample Size and Sampling Technique : The study sample size is established through the application of multivariate analysis guidelines which determine sample requirements. The model requires 300 respondents as the minimum sample size because it contains multiple constructs and indicators which require strong statistical analysis particularly for mediation analysis through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The researchers used convenience sampling to select Gen-Z respondents who fulfill the study criteria of active social media use and celebrity endorsement knowledge. The research needs this method because the study needs to reach people who have specific characteristics and the research needs to explore consumer behavior patterns.

Instrument for Data Collection: The researchers used a structured self-administered questionnaire to collect data which is suitable for quantitative research that studies relationships between latent constructs. Researchers can collect data from many people through self-administered instruments which also prevent bias and protect respondent privacy. The questionnaire was designed to achieve the study goals and match the theoretical framework of the research.

Response Rate: The study collected data from social media users who belong to Generation Z and live in Kano State Nigeria and who see celebrity endorsements. The initial sample size of 300 respondents proved sufficient for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis through PLS-SEM according to multivariate analysis and predictive research model guidelines which Hair et al. (2022) recommend. The researchers increased the sample size by 30% to reduce sampling error while anticipating non-response and missing questionnaire data which resulted in distributing 390 questionnaires according to Israel (2013) recommendations. The response rate for the study reached 87% as 340 out of 390 questionnaires were returned. The data screening process identified 300 questionnaires as valid for analysis while 40 questionnaires were removed because they contained unfinished answers and too much missing data. The study achieved a valid response rate of 77% which exceeds the survey research minimum requirement because social science research considers 30% to be a sufficient response rate according to Sekaran and Bougie (2016). The study uses 300 respondents as its sample size which provides enough data to meet study requirements while delivering strong evidence about how celebrity endorsement affects Gen-Z consumer behavior in Kano Nigeria while culture acts as a mediating factor.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Description	No of Questionnaires	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires distributed	390	100.0
Questionnaires returned	340	87.2
Questionnaires not returned	50	12.8
Questionnaires rejected (incomplete/ invalid)	40	10.3
Valid questionnaires used for analysis	300	76.9



Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section describes the demographic characteristics of Generation Z respondents who took part in the study from Kano State Nigeria. The definition of Generation Z states that individuals who belong to this group must be between 18 and 26 years old at the time of data collection (Dimock 2019 Francis Hoefel 2018). The research team included only respondents who met the age requirement for the study. The researchers examined multiple demographic variables which included gender, marital status, educational level, and age, and social media usage experience to study consumer behavior and celebrity endorsement effects in the socio-cultural context of Kano State.

The results are shown through frequencies and percentages which Table 4.2 presents.

Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of Generation Z Respondents in Kano State (n = 300)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	192	64.0	64.0
	Female	108	36.0	100.0
Marital Status	Single	241	80.3	80.3
	Married	59	19.7	100.0
Education Level	Secondary school & below	88	29.3	29.3
	Diploma / NCE	96	32.0	61.3
	Undergrad- uate degree	92	30.7	92

	Postgraduate degree	24	8.0	100
Age (Gen Z)	18–20 years	91	30.3	30.3
	21–23 years	136	45.3	75.6
	24–26 years	73	24.4	100.0
Social Media Usage Experience	Below 3 years	42	14.0	14.0
	3–5 years	171	57.0	71.0
	Above 5 years	87	29.0	100.0

Results of Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion

	Attractiveness			
Attractiveness	0.787			
Culture	0.719	0.811		
Expertise	0.450	0.480	0.758	
Purchase Intention	0.676	0.631	0.550	0.801
Trustworthiness	0.			

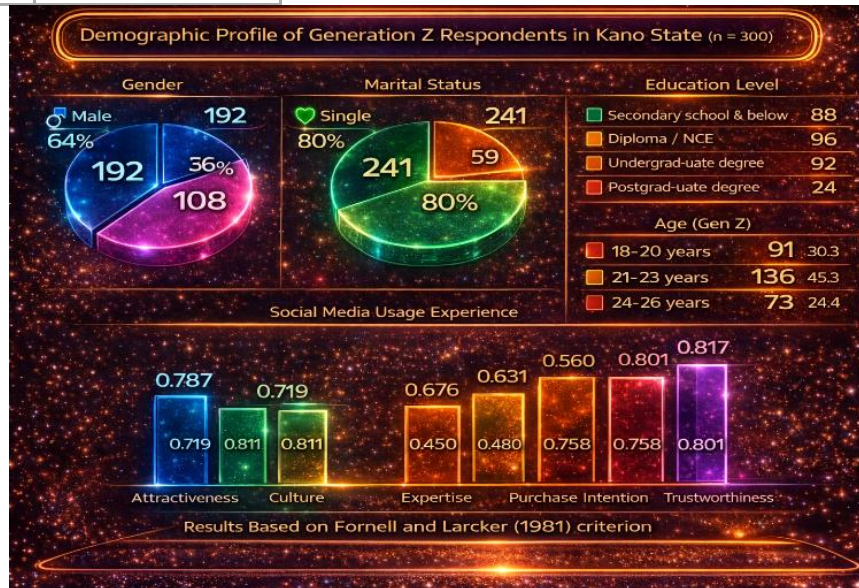
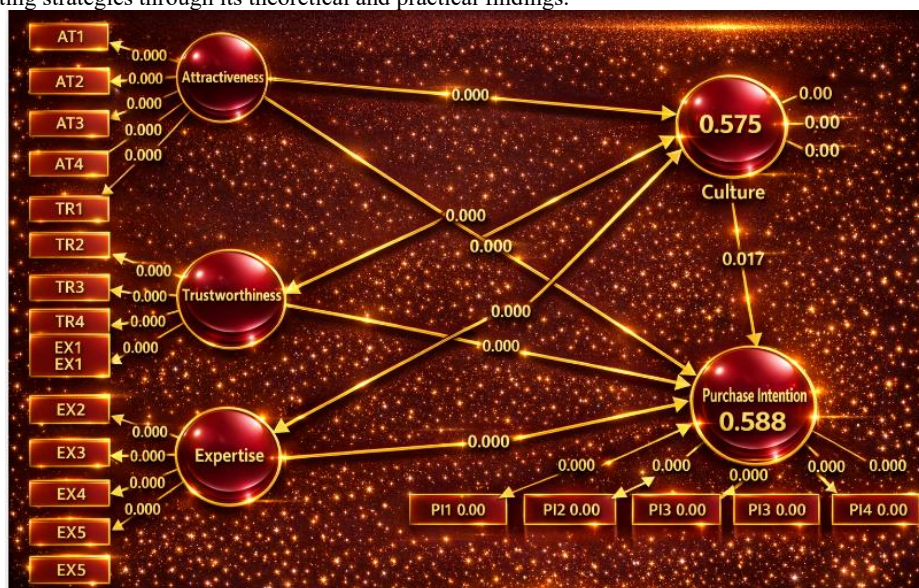


Table 4.4 shows that the bold diagonal elements display the square root value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) which applies to each particular construct. The Fornell–Larcker criterion requires that the AVE square root value for each construct must exceed its corresponding inter-construct correlation value which applies to both the row and column of the respective construct. The pattern demonstrates that each construct demonstrates a higher level of shared variance with its corresponding indicators than with any other constructs present in the model. The results demonstrate that the measurement model successfully establishes discriminant validity for all its included constructs. The structural model assessment delivers empirical evidence which shows how celebrity endorsement attributes affect Gen-Z consumers' purchase intentions in Kano while cultural values act as mediating factors between these two relationships and yet the study shows how Nigerian culture affects celebrity-driven marketing strategies through its theoretical and practical findings.



The research in Table 4.13 demonstrates that purchase intention increases when consumers trust celebrities because trustworthiness establishes a positive relationship with purchase intention ($\beta = 0.276, t = 3.675, p < 0.01$). The research demonstrates that trustworthiness establishes a connection between celebrity trust and Gen Z purchasing behavior because Gen Z consumers trust celebrities who they perceive to be authentic. The research supports H1 as the hypothesis becomes validated by trustworthiness results. The research demonstrates that expertise establishes a link between purchase intention and celebrity knowledge because Gen Z consumers show positive buying behavior when they perceive celebrities

as experts. The research supports H2 as the hypothesis becomes validated by expertise results. The research demonstrates that attractiveness establishes a link between purchase intention and celebrity beauty because beautiful celebrities make products more attractive to Gen Z consumers in Kano. The research supports H3 through the results which confirm the hypothesis. Trustworthiness establishes a positive relationship with culture because trustworthy celebrity endorsements help Gen Z consumers to follow their cultural values. The research supports H4 through the results which confirm the hypothesis. The academic research shows that expertise establishes a connection between cultural values and anti-endorsement messages through celebrity endorsement. The research supports H5 through the results which confirm the hypothesis. The research findings show that attractiveness establishes a connection with culture through its strong relationship to cultural values ($\beta = 0.484$, $t = 8.899$, $p < 0.01$). Gen Z consumers in Kano view attractive celebrities as the most important factor which determines their cultural understanding. The research supports H6 through the results which confirm the hypothesis. Culture establishes a positive relationship with purchase intention according to research findings ($\beta = 0.143$, $t = 2.380$, $p < 0.05$) which shows that cultural values strongly impact Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions in Kano. The research establishes cultural values as the main factor which affects Gen Z consumers' purchasing behavior in Kano through cultural values which tie together celebrity endorsements and purchasing decisions. The research supports H7 through the results which confirm the hypothesis.

Discussion

The research investigated how celebrity endorsement features impact Gen Z purchase behavior in Kano, Nigeria while cultural factors acted as a mediating factor between endorsement features and Gen Z purchase behavior. The study explored how celebrity trustworthiness and expertise and attractiveness through cultural mechanisms and direct relationships with purchase intent based on Source Credibility Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

The study had three objectives which the research team planned to achieve.

1. The research team planned to investigate how celebrity trustworthiness affects purchase behavior.
2. The research team needed to study how people view celebrities to help them understand purchase behavior.
3. The study used cultural factors as a mediation factor between celebrity trustworthiness and purchase behavior.

Contribution of the Study: The study presents multiple theoretical and methodological and managerial and policy contributions which advance knowledge about how celebrity endorsements affect consumer behavior and their intention to behave. The specific contributions and implications are discussed in the following subsections.

Theoretical and Methodological Contributions : From a theoretical perspective this study makes several important contributions to the existing literature. The research extended the application of Source Credibility Theory (SCT) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to study how celebrity endorsements affect Gen Z consumers in Kano State Nigeria which is a non-Western area with cultural and religious values. The existing research on celebrity endorsement and consumer behavior studies only Western and Asian contexts while sub-Saharan Africa lacks empirical evidence on the subject. The study addresses a significant research gap according to current literature. The study views culture as a variable which operates between celebrity endorsement attributes to establish their connection to purchase intention. The study found that celebrity trustworthiness and attractiveness create a direct effect on purchase intentions while cultural factors lead to an indirect relationship with their acquisition. The study showed that culture operates like subjective norms in TPB according to the theory but especially in collectivist societies.

Managerial Contributions : The study offers several important managerial implications which marketers and brand managers as well as advertising agencies should use to target Gen Z consumers in culturally sensitive markets such as Kano. The findings showed that celebrity trustworthiness creates a strong relation which helps marketers to choose endorsers who demonstrate honesty and reliability and moral integrity. In the Kano context where people base their purchase decisions on cultural and religious values brands should use celebrities who fit societal standards and ethical principles. The research showed that celebrity expertise creates a strong impact on purchase behavior which means brands must choose endorsers who possess relevant product knowledge.

The strategy boosts message credibility while decreasing consumer uncertainty which leads to higher behavioral intention. The research found that Gen Z consumers value celebrity attractiveness because it affects their behavior through culture and creates a direct connection. Managers should use visually appealing endorsement campaigns to reach Gen Z consumers on social media platforms where they spend most of their time. Cultural factors mediate the endorsement process which means that endorsement strategies must match the cultural traits of their target audience.

Summary: The main objective of this research was to examine the mediating role of culture in the relationship between celebrity endorsement attributes (trustworthiness, and attractiveness) and purchase intention among Gen-Z consumers in Kano, Nigeria. The study was conducted because researchers wanted to understand which elements of celebrity endorsement have a strong influence on marketing communication and because they wanted to study how cultural values affect Gen-Z consumers in their purchasing decisions.

The study used a quantitative research design which employed cross-sectional survey methods to achieve its explanatory research objectives. The researchers collected data from Gen-Z consumers in Kano State by using structured questionnaires. The researchers used established measurement scales to assess trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, culture, and purchase intention. The researchers used PLS-SEM to analyze data after they completed measurement model assessment and structural model evaluation procedures.

Conclusion: This study investigated how cultural factors mediate the relationship between celebrity endorsement attributes and purchase intention among Gen-Z consumers in Kano Nigeria. The empirical findings demonstrated through PLS-SEM that celebrity endorsement attributes trustworthiness and attractiveness had indirect effects on purchase intention which operated through cultural factors.

Recommendations: The study results lead to the following recommendations for marketers and brand managers and policymakers and researchers who will conduct future research.

- i. Strategic Selection of Culturally Congruent Celebrities
- ii. Brand managers should select celebrity endorsers based on their compatibility with cultural values.
- iii. The results show that trustworthiness and expertise and attractiveness lead to purchase intention because of their impact on culture.
- iv. Celebrities who share the same values with local cultural norms achieve greater effectiveness in their persuasive efforts according to this finding. Source Credibility Theory indicates that people perceive credibility as context-dependent instead of universally applicable.
- v. Emphasis on Trustworthiness in Marketing Communications
- vi. Organizations need to show the public that their celebrity endorsers demonstrate honesty and integrity and authenticity through their promotional materials.
- vii. Since culture mediates between messages and their impact on Gen-Z consumers in Kano, organizations should create messages that match the cultural values and social responsibilities and moral standards of this group.
- viii. The third section demonstrates how organizations can use their specialist knowledge to develop marketing messages which are suitable for specific cultural groups.
- ix. The companies should select celebrities who possess product knowledge and expertise because these celebrities will display their professional skills through storytelling methods which are suitable for their cultural background. The purpose of endorsements is to show how products will benefit the community because this demonstration will create a stronger link between the products and the shared social goals which TPB defines through its normative and attitudinal components.

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