



Influence of Celebrity Expertise on Brand Loyalty in the Nigerian Telecommunications Sector

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Abstract

This study assessed the effect of celebrity expertise on brand loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, while multiple celebrity endorsements served as a moderating variable. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. A structured questionnaire was used as a research instrument. A sample size of 2000 respondents, out of which 1200 complete responses were judgmentally selected for final analysis. Data were analysed using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation and multiple regression. The findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty ($r = 0.558$, $p < 0.05$); while multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty ($F(2, 1195) = 2484.682$, $p < 0.05$, Adj. R^2 0.327). The study concluded that celebrity expertise exerts a great influence on brand loyalty. It is recommended that telecom service subscribers should base the adoption of telecom services being promoted by a celebrity on the expertise of the endorser. The telecom service providers should engage the services of celebrities who possess behavioural expertise that are in congruence with customers' values and interests.

Introduction

The drive to catch telecom subscribers' attention in Nigeria's telecom market remains a constant phenomenon among telecom service providers to create interest, arouse desire and engender improved market share. In order to achieve this objective, marketing communication practitioners often engage individuals who have achieved fame and popularity to promote and endorse their products and services to have a competitive advantage and experience growth. According to Audi, Al-Masri and Ghazzawi (2015), the idea of featuring celebrities in a brand advertisement is being applied for the purpose of

strengthening the image of the brand in question, creating an emotional and psychological bond with the customers, and thus enhancing long-term brand loyalty.

Celebrity endorsement as a promotional practice is used to promote products and services primarily to engender sales and secondly to create a brand identity and communicate a very important change in the brand. Apejaye (2013) asserts that if properly used, celebrity endorsement can serve as an important role in developing product equity and enhancing a product's competitive position in the market. Many corporate organisations and even literature have realised the importance of celebrity endorsement as a marketing communication tool used to capture audience and customers (Belch & Belch, 2001). Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition by a large share of a certain group of people and they have distinctive characteristics, such as expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness (Silvera & Austad, 2004). Celebrities are individuals who are known to the public through their achievements in areas other than the product class they endorse (Johansson & Sparredal, 2002).

In order for the endorsement to be efficient and effective, certain attributes should be communicated through the celebrity to the consumers. These include knowledge, skill and expertise concerning the brand. Expertise has been conceptualised in literature as authoritativeness, competence and qualification (Magnini, Honeycutt & Cross, 2008). Endorsers are considered to be 'experts' when they endorse products related to areas that have made them popular (Biswas, Biswas & Das, 2006). The perception of an individual celebrity as an expert for a selected product category is the fundamental emphasis that informed the concept behind this study.

The success of any celebrity endorsement arrangement would depend on characteristics such as trustworthiness, likeness, attractiveness and expertise (Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Celebrity endorsers' expertise is a true sign of professionalism and has an encouraging effect on the receiver's loyalty (Ohanian, 1990). Data made available by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) indicates that there are over 163,000,000 active telecom service subscribers in Nigeria as of December 31, 2020 (NCC, 2020). However, a study conducted by Kendall and Rudd (2011) revealed that globally, an average telecom service subscriber switches service providers every twenty-seven (27) months. The study by Kendall and Rudd lent credence to the reality of divided loyalty in the telecom sector.

According to Helm (2007), there is a widespread managerial and academic interest in loyalty of other stakeholder groups, such as customers and employees. Fill (2009), however, notes that many customers display elements of curiosity in their purchase habits, enjoy variety and are happy to switch brands as a result of marketing communication activities and product experience. Despite the controversies on the use of promotional tools to build loyalty, the growth of loyalty programmes has been a significant promotional development in recent years (Kolter & Armstrong, 2006). According to Zipporah and Mberia (2014), investigations of celebrity expertise as a determinant of brand loyalty in consumer settings have led to inconsistent results and remain a matter of debate. This assertion was further corroborated by ZarBari-Nwitambu and Kalu (2017) that there is no direct relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty. This claim, therefore, lends credence to the reality of the problem investigated in the study.

Many studies have been conducted on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty. (Byrne & Whitehead, 2003; Sharma & Kumar, 2013; Nyarko, Asimah, Agbemava & Tsetse, 2015; ZorBari-Nwitambu & Kalu, 2017). Meanwhile, none of these studies could demonstrate the overall fit of the measurement model that was adopted in this study (Onigbinde & Odunlami, 2014). The overall fit of the measurement model was demonstrated using the Nigerian telecommunications market as the study domain. This study, therefore, examined and bridged the identified gap in the sequence of methods and procedures adopted by the previous studies. The study hence focused on the perception of telecom service subscribers on celebrity expertise and its influence on brand loyalty in Nigeria, using multiple celebrity endorsements as an intervening variable.

Because of the identified problem, the main goal of the study is to assess the influence of celebrity expertise vis-à-vis multiple-celebrity endorsement on brand loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications sector; however, the specific objectives of the study are to

- i. determine the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty in the telecoms sector in Nigeria; and
- ii. Investigate the moderating effects of multiple celebrity endorsements on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty in the telecoms sector in Nigeria.

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions become imperative.

- i. What is the level of relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?
- ii. To what extent does multiple celebrity endorsement moderate the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications sector?

To consolidate the research questions highlighted above, the following hypotheses were formulated

H11: Celebrity expertise has a significant relationship with brand loyalty.

H12: Multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Conceptual clarification

In this section, it is imperative to present different thoughts, views, opinions, ideas, perceptions and beliefs of previous scholars and researchers on the subject matter of celebrity endorsement, celebrity expertise and brand loyalty.

Concepts of celebrity endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is a way to get a brand noticed among its contemporaries in a marketplace, which might affect consumers' purchase intention and attitudes toward the product (Lutz, MacKenzie & Belch, 1983). Ahmed, Mir and Farooq (2012) state that celebrity endorsement is the best tool to get the most targeted audience and catch their attention, thereby having a significant effect on financial returns and helping to get a competitive advantage. Endorsement arrangements are used for various purposes, such as getting attention from consumers and penetrating commercial clutter (Liu, 2009; Zipporah & Mberia, 2014). Chaudhary and Asthana (2015) assert that for a celebrity endorser to be well accepted by members of the public, he/she must exhibit certain unique characteristics that are capable of projecting the image of the firm and its product highly if employed.

Concepts of celebrity expertise

The concept of expertise as it relates to celebrity endorsement is defined as the extent to which an endorser is perceived to be a source of valid assertions or authority (Erdogan, 1999). With regard to endorsement, the celebrity should be really an expert in the field. Amos, Holmes and Strutton (2008) state that the level of celebrity expertise will determine its effectiveness. In other words, the more expertise a celebrity has, the more effective his or her endorsement would be. Moreover, the expertise of a celebrity might not be changed by negative publicity, but the believability and credibility might be negatively influenced. In addition, the expertise of a celebrity provides consumers with more concrete information on the product offering, which can then lead to a favourable attitude towards the brand (Magnini, Honeycutt & Cross,

[2008](#)). It is against this backdrop that Malik and Qureshi ([2016](#)) remark that perceived expertise of the celebrity is concerned with the experience, knowledge, skill and ability of the celebrity concerned to promote the endorsed product. Moreover, the level of expertise and competence displayed by a celebrity in getting his/her message across to the public will also determine the degree of his/her likability and admiration. Thus, consumers will tend to have a positive disposition towards a celebrity who is good at what he/she does, thereby commanding more attraction and followership.

Concepts of brand loyalty

The customers are more pressured by many competitors with equal or better offers, especially in this contemporary regime of fair trade in goods and services. The challenge, therefore, is to produce delighted customers and not merely satisfied customers. The delighted customers are the loyal customers. It is therefore imperative for every organisation that strives or seeks to grow its sales and profits to enhance brand loyalty on a sustainable basis. The concept of loyalty has attracted a lot of research attention in recent times. Loyalty at one level can be demonstrated by increasing sales volume; that is, fostering loyal purchase behaviour (Ballester & Aleman, 2001).

The concept of brand loyalty has attracted much research attention because of the regular adoption of this approach in contemporary relationship marketing management. According to Helm ([2007](#)), there is a widespread managerial and academic interest in loyalty of other stakeholder groups, such as customers and employees. Fill ([2009](#)), however, notes that many customers display elements of curiosity in their purchase habits, enjoy variety and are happy to switch brands as a result of marketing communication activities and product experience. Despite the controversies on the use of promotional tools to build loyalty, the growth of loyalty programmes has been a significant promotional development in recent years ([Kolter & Armstrong, 2006](#)).

Helm ([2007](#)) remarks that loyalty is a behavioural attribute since individuals usually act according to an affective predisposition. Consequently, affective loyalty should be viewed as an antecedent to behavioural loyalty as loyalty at one level can be seen to be about fostering loyal purchase behaviour (Ballester & Aleman, 2001). High levels of repeat purchase, however, are not necessarily an adequate measure of loyalty, as there may be a number of situational factors determining purchase behaviour, such as brand availability ([Hanzaee & Farsani, 2011](#)). However, since consumers are capable of varying degrees of loyalty; hence, there is no true form of loyalty ([Rundle-Thiele, 2004](#)). A study conducted in the leisure and hospitality industry has re-emphasised the significance of brand loyalty as a key to sustaining long-term business success ([Nozar, 1999](#)).

Underpinning theory

The study is anchored on social exchange theory. This theory was propounded in 1952 by Thibault and Kelly. The fundamental assumptions and principles of the social exchange theory state that:

- i. Every marketing transaction involves an exchange of benefits between the marketer and its customers.
- ii. Consumers try to get from marketers the benefits that are in congruence with their respective beliefs and values.

The social exchange theory explains how an individual customer feels about a relationship with the celebrity 'idols' deployed by the marketing company, depending on an individual's perception of the balance between the characteristic traits in a celebrity and the value system of the individual customer. The theory is based on the exchange of values and cherished behavioural attributes to quantify the values or quality of outcomes from different situations for an individual ([Onigbinde & Ojo, 2016](#)).

Customers as corporate citizens strive to minimise costs and maximise rewards and then base the likelihood of developing a relationship with celebrities that demonstrate behavioural attributes that are in congruence with their personality traits. The viability of social exchange theory rests on the assumption that human beings recognise each other's needs and in some ways, are likely to engage in reciprocity. In other words, humans act with other humans in full recognition that their acts will be noticed and, in some way, reciprocated; for example, that they will receive a return on their communicative investment.

The social exchange theory encourages explicit acknowledgement of the costs and benefits of actions to be promoted in a marketing communication activity ([Folarin, 2002](#)). In line with the philosophy of social exchange theory, consumers tend to give loyalty in return for the marketing promotional effort of a celebrity, while the celebrity may have to continue demonstrating the perceived desirable standards of behaviour that are in congruence with consumers' needs and wants in return for continuous patronage from the customers.

The first hypothesis of the study is about celebrity expertise and brand loyalty. Customer attitude regarding the brands and products is well enhanced by celebrities, but whether it generates repeat purchase intention and brand loyalty is not made explicit ([Byrne & Whitehead, 2003](#)). However, Nyarko *et al.* ([2015](#)) found that there is no evidence proving that the adoption of celebrity expertise will achieve stronger brand loyalty in comparison to the non-use of celebrity expertise. In the work of Silvera and Austad (2004), they found that the expertise of an endorser correlates with the validity of the claims concerning the product and is thus an important factor in increasing the persuasiveness of marketing messages.

ZorBari-Nwitambu and Kalu ([2017](#)) state that consumers will tend to have a positive disposition towards a celebrity who is good at what he/she does, thereby commanding more attraction and followership. Expertise is one of the main dimensions of celebrity endorsement (Ohanian, 1990). Some studies, however, have found the construct of celebrity expertise to be the most important dimension of celebrity endorsement ([Maddux & Rogers, 1980](#); [Sharma & Kumar, 2013](#)). Therefore, suffice to conclude that celebrity expertise, when in synchronisation with the customer tastes, can indeed lead to brand loyalty. Based on this, hypothesis I (H₁1) was introduced.

In the same vein, celebrity endorsement as reflected in the endorser's perceived consistency improves the perceived quality of the brand and is correlated with repeat purchase intention ([Kamins, Brand, Hoeke & Moe, 1989](#)). The second hypothesis that multiple celebrity endorsements exert some level of influence on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty was well conceived. Previous studies by Jain ([2011](#)); and Zipporah and Mberia (2014) suggest that the use of celebrity in advertisements positively affects consumer brand attitude and repeat purchase intention. In addition, Nyarko *et al.* ([2015](#)) found that consumers are more likely to purchase and stay loyal to the endorsed brands being used and promoted by celebrities. Based on the above, hypothesis II (H₁2) was introduced.

Research Methods

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey research design to assess the influence of celebrity expertise on brand loyalty vis-à-vis the moderating role of multiple-celebrity endorsement. A cross-sectional survey is used in social and behavioural sciences for investigating the nature, cause and effects of a phenomenon ([Severin & Tankard, 2001](#)). The population of the study comprised all telecom service subscribers that cut across different geopolitical zones in Nigeria, totalling 163, 872,904 (NCC, 2020). Since the population of telecom service subscribers that operate the platform of GSM technology is finite, the application of a statistical formula for determining the sample size becomes imperative. The sample size for this study was determined using the formula by Krejcie and Morgan ([1970](#)). This is given by the formula below:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where:

S = Desired Sample Size

X = Z value (e.g. 1.96 or 95% confidence level)

N = Population Size

P = Population proportion (expressed as a decimal and assumed to be 0.5 or 50%)

d = Degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion is 0.035 as a margin of error

With a working population of 163,872,904 active telecom service subscribers (as at December 31, 2020) and at a 0.035 degree of accuracy (error limit) using Krejcie and Morgan guide:

$$S = \frac{1.96^2 \times 163,872,904 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)}{0.035^2 (163,872,904-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5 (1-0.5)} = 800.0937$$

$$S \approx 800$$

According to Comrey and Lee (1992) as cited in Howitt and Cramer (2008), the sample size of 800 respondents is relatively small for factor analysis. Simon and Burstein (1985) also state that the sample size for research into human and institutional populations should be between 1,000 and 1,500 respondents. Therefore, 50 per cent of the sample derived was added to achieve excellent result, in line with the research suggestions of Comrey and Lee (1992) as cited in Howitt and Cramer (2008).

Therefore, the sample size = 800+400 = **1,200**

1,200 (at 96.5% level of confidence and a 0.035 error limit) will be the sample size. However, due to 60% complete response rate recorded at the pilot stage, the estimated response rate of 60% was used to calculate the final sample size so as to guide against inadequate sampling. That is, given a base sample size of 1200 respondents:

Aggregate Sample Size provided = 1200/0.60 = **2000 respondents** (out of which **1200 complete responses** were judgmentally selected for final analysis).

For the purpose of the study, a six-point Likert interval scale structured questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument in line with the research suggestions of Onigbinde & Odunlami (2014). The instrument was coded 6 for Strongly Agree, 5 for Agree, 4 for Partially Agree, 3 for Partially Disagree, 2 for Disagree and 1 for Strongly Disagree (Asika, 2002). The instrument was designed to obtain major sets of data, with a focus on the customers' perceptions of various dimensions of celebrity expertise vis-a-vis brand loyalty. The research instrument was subjected to expert opinion (content) validity as used by Osuagwu (2004) and Onigbinde (2013). Senior academics specialising in marketing, mass communication and applied psychology validated the research instrument; in addition to the expert opinion of some top-level executives in the Advertising, Public Relations and Integrated Marketing Communication industry. On the other hand, the reliability of the research instrument was determined using test-retest reliability. In the use of the test-retest reliability technique, the research instrument would be used to take two separate measurements on the same population at different but similar occasions (Anastasi & Urbina, 2008). Responses from the two pilot tests were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of reliability at the pilot stage indicated a high level of internal consistency among the constructs: celebrity expertise (0.71), multiple-celebrity endorsements (0.73), and brand loyalty (0.71). Having all constructs exceeded the .70 benchmark for Cronbach's Alpha reliability as recommended by Nunnally (1993), and having all the calculated Composite Coefficients of Reliability (CR) above the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Onigbinde & Awolusi, 2013), the overall reliability of the whole scale is therefore guaranteed. Meanwhile, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of reliability (AVE>0.70) for the constructs also served as additional evidence of convergent validity (Nunnally, 1993); hence, the internal consistency of the entire construct is assured.

The data collection instrument was administered via face-to-face method with the aid of three trained Research Assistants. Subscribers who were selected as respondents to the questionnaire were those who had access to and usage of GSM telecommunication services for a minimum duration of 12 calendar months. A total of 2000 copies of research instrument were administered to the respondents in six (6) geo-political zones in Nigeria, using the networks of NCC's consumer outreaches in Abuja, Bauchi, Enugu, Ibadan, Kano, and Port Harcourt for North-Central Nigeria, North-East Nigeria, South-East Nigeria, South-West Nigeria, North-West Nigeria, and South-South Nigeria respectively.

Cognisance of the proportional tele-density of each of the geo-political zones in Nigeria was taken into consideration when determining the proportion of respondents that were administered questionnaires from each of the zones. The Nigeria SIM Card Registration Survey's (NCC, 2021) report was used as a guide in this respect. The proportional allocation of the research instrument to the respondents was done by the tele-density ratio of each geopolitical zone as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Allocation of the Research Instrument

Geo-Political Zone(a)	Number of Registered SIM (b)	Percentage of Registered SIM	Proportion of the Research Instrument Allocated
North Central Nigeria	20525825	0.1798	359
North-East Nigeria	3806995	0.0333	67
North-West Nigeria	10704690	0.0938	188
South-East Nigeria	8883285	0.0778	156
South-South Nigeria	20350780	0.1783	356
South West Nigeria	49884690	0.437	874

Source for a & b: NCC ([2021](#)). Telecoms Industry Statistics-SIM Registration Survey

Copies of the research instrument were administered to the selected respondents in each of the locations on weekdays during which the researchers and the trained research assistants were strategically located to guide the respondents (where necessary), and to encourage them on the imperative of accurate and sincere responses. The respondents were encouraged to make concerted efforts to carefully read and adhere to every instruction written before responding to the construct items on each section of the research instrument. The networks of NCC's consumer outreaches were so helpful in enabling purposive selection of enlightened respondents who are slightly knowledgeable on the subject matter of celebrity expertise vis-à-vis celebrity endorsements. This went a long way in enhancing the quality of respondents' inputs.

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, Pearson's Product-Moment correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression. Descriptive statistical tools were used to present the respondents' demographics and the variables related to the usage of telecom services. Pearson's Product-Moment correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty, while the regression procedure was used to determine the moderating effect of multiple celebrity endorsements on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty.

The multiple regression model for this study is given as:

$$Brand\ loyalty_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CEP_{it} + \beta_2 MCE_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Where:

CEP is celebrity expertise

MCE is a multiple-celebrity endorsement

Results and Discussions

Profile of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 2 below. From the analysis of respondents' demography, 1152 (57.6%) of the respondents are male, while 848 (42.4%) are female. The marital status showed that 1074 (53.7%) of the respondents are single, 890 (44.5%) are married, and 60 (14.3%) are widowed. The age distribution of respondents showed that 922 (46.1%) of the respondents are within the ages of 16-20 years, 572 (28.6%) are within the ages of 21-30 years, 324 (16.2%) are within the ages of 31-40 years, 126 (6.3%) are within the ages of 41-50 years, and 56 (2.8%) are within the age of 51 years and above. The educational qualification showed that 766 (38.3%) of the respondents are GCE (O'Level)/WASSCE holders, 836 (41.8%) are HND/Bachelor's degree holders, 330 (16.5%) are Master's degree holders, and 68 (3.4%) are Doctorate holders. The responses towards favourite telecom service provider showed that 494 (24.7%) of the respondents used Airtel, 558 (27.9%) used Glo, 842 (42.1%) used MTN, and 106 (5.3%) used 9Mobile as their favourite service provider. In terms of year(s) of usage of favourite telecom service, no respondent (0.0%) signified that the usage of his/her favourite telecom service was below 1 year. However, 472 (23.6%) of the respondents have used their favourite telecom service between 1 and 3 years, 1038 (51.9%) have used their favourite service between 4 and 6 years, and 490 (24.5%) have used their favourite service for more than 6 years. In terms of the type of telecom account used, 1750 respondents (87.5.0%) used a pre-paid platform, 246 (12.3%) used a post-paid platform, and 4 (0.2%) used other platforms.

Table 2: Analysis of the Respondents' Demography

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Gender		
Male	1152	57.6
Female	848	42.4
Total	2000	100.0
Marital status		
Single	1074	53.7
Married	890	44.5
Widowed	36	1.8
Total	2000	100.0
Age		
16-20	922	46.1
21-30	572	28.6
31-40	324	16.2
41-50	126	6.3
51 and above	56	2.8
Total	2000	100.0
Educational qualification		
GCE (O'Level)/WASSCE	766	38.3
HND/Bachelor's Degree	836	41.8
Master's Degree	330	16.5
Doctorate Degree	68	3.4

Table 1 Contd.

Total	2000	100.0
Favourite telecom service provider		
Airtel	494	24.7
Glo	558	27.9
MTN	842	42.1
9Mobile	106	5.3
Total	2000	100.0
Year(s) of usage of telecom service		
Below 1 year	-	0.00
1 – 3 years	472	23.6
4 – 6 years	1038	51.9
Above 6 years	490	24.5
Total	2000	100.0
Type of telecoms account used		
Pre-paid	1750	87.5
Post-Paid	246	12.3
Others	4	0.2
Total	2000	100.0

Source: Researchers' Field Survey

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive data on the constructs of celebrity expertise vis-à-vis multiple-celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty are given thus:

Table 3 depicts that participants partially agreed with the celebrity expertise scale (\bar{x} = 4.37). Participants partially agreed that: the celebrity endorsers engaged by their favourite telecom service provider were certainly competent (\bar{x} = 4.47), they received situational information (e.g. on consumer promo.) regarding the brand of telecom service they used through the celebrity endorsers engaged by their service provider (\bar{x} = 4.39), they gained better understanding on the brand of telecom service they used through the information provided by the celebrity endorsers (\bar{x} = 4.32) and that the celebrity endorsers engaged by their telecom service provider often made truthful statement on the usage of its brand of services (\bar{x} = 4.31). From these, it could be inferred that there was partial celebrity expertise in the Nigerian telecommunication sector.

Table 3: Celebrity Expertise

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	PA F (%)	PD F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
The celebrity endorsers engaged by my favourite telecom service provider are certainly competent	203 (16.9)	447 (37.3)	389 (32.4)	74 (6.2)	47 (3.9)	40 (3.3)	4.47	1.16
I do receive situational information (e.g. on consumer promo.) regarding the brand of telecom service I use through the celebrity endorsers engaged by my service provider	210 (17.5)	416 (34.7)	361 (30.1)	99 (8.3)	71 (5.9)	43 (3.6)	4.39	1.24
I gained a better understanding of the brand of telecom service I use through the information provided by the celebrity endorsers	186 (15.5)	394 (32.8)	387 (32.3)	123 (10.3)	67 (5.6)	43 (3.6)	4.32	1.22
The celebrity endorsers engaged by my telecom service provider often make truthful statements on the usage of its brand of services	167 (13.9)	410 (34.2)	394 (32.8)	130 (10.8)	56 (4.7)	43 (3.6)	4.31	1.19
Average							4.37	1.20

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, PA=Partially Agree, PD=Partially Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, ***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Strongly Disagree; 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Partially Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Partially Agree; 4.5 to 5.49= Agree; 5.5 to 6 = Strongly Agree

Table 4 depicts that participants partially agreed with the multiple celebrity endorsement scale (\bar{x} = 4.32). Participants partially agreed that: generally, they appreciated the use of many celebrity endorsements for the brand of telecom service being offered by their favourite service provider (\bar{x} = 4.39), adoption of many celebrity endorsers by their favourite telecom service provider motivates them to use its brand of telecom service more (\bar{x} = 4.39), multiple celebrity endorsements enhanced the liking for the brand of telecom service being offered by their favourite service provider (\bar{x} = 4.26), and that involvement of multiple celebrity endorsers by their favourite telecom service provider made them to be more passionate about its brand of service (\bar{x} = 4.24). This implies that there was partial multiple celebrity endorsement in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

Table 4: Multiple Celebrity Endorsements

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	PA F (%)	PD F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
Generally, I appreciate the use of many celebrity endorsements for the brand of telecom service being offered by my favourite service provider	226 (18.8)	385 (32.1)	361 (30.1)	130 (10.8)	53 (4.4)	45 (3.8)	4.39	1.24
Adoption of many celebrity endorsers by my favourite service telecom provider motivates me to use its brand telecom service more	182 (15.2)	432 (36)	399 (33.3)	84 (7.0)	59 (4.9)	44 (3.7)	4.39	1.19
Multiple celebrity endorsements enhance the liking for the brand of telecom service being offered by my favourite service provider	148 (12.3)	396 (33)	425 (35.4)	126 (10.5)	57 (4.8)	48 (4.0)	4.26	1.19
Involving multiple celebrity endorsers by my favourite telecom service provider makes me more passionate about its brand of service	116 (9.7)	436 (36.3)	402 (33.5)	150 (12.5)	60 (5.0)	36 (3.0)	4.24	1.14
Average							4.32	1.19

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, PA=Partially Agree, PD=Partially Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, ***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Strongly Disagree; 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Partially Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Partially Agree; 4.5 to 5.49= Agree; 5.5 to 6 = Strongly Agree

Table 5 indicates that participants agreed with the brand loyalty scale ($\bar{x} = 4.78$). Participants agreed that: they would retrieve their SIM card if damaged, stolen or lost to remain on their favourite telecoms network ($\bar{x} = 5.02$); they would consider their favourite telecom service provider a first choice always and in all ways ($\bar{x} = 4.75$), they would encourage friends and family members to patronize the brand of telecom service offered by their service provider ($\bar{x} = 4.73$), they would say positive things to other people within their sphere of influence about the brand of telecom services being offered by their favourite service provider ($\bar{x} = 4.372$) and that they would recommend the brand of telecom service offered by their service provider to someone who sought their opinion ($\bar{x} = 4.68$). This suggests that there was brand loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunication sector.

Table 5: Brand Loyalty

Items	SA F (%)	A F (%)	PA F (%)	PD F (%)	D F (%)	SD F (%)	\bar{x}	SD
I would retrieve my SIM card if damaged, stolen or lost to remain on my favourite telecoms network	518 (43.2)	399 (33.3)	174 (14.5)	41 (3.4)	38 (3.2)	30 (2.5)	5.02	1.18
I would consider my favourite telecom service provider a first choice always and in all ways	299 (24.9)	517 (43.1)	250 (20.8)	70 (5.8)	42 (3.5)	22 (1.8)	4.75	1.11
I would encourage friends and family members to patronise the brand of telecom service being offered by my service provider	278 (23.2)	497 (41.4)	313 (26.1)	66 (5.5)	27 (2.3)	19 (1.6)	4.73	1.05
I would say positive things to other people within my sphere of influence about the brand of telecom services being offered by my favourite service provider	287 (23.9)	497 (41.4)	298 (24.8)	54 (4.5)	35 (2.9)	27 (2.3)	4.72	1.10
I would recommend the brand of telecom service being offered by my service provider to someone who seeks my opinion	217 (18.1)	579 (48.3)	275 (22.9)	74 (6.2)	36 (3.0)	19 (1.6)	4.68	1.04
Average							4.78	1.10

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, PA=Partially Agree, PD=Partially Disagree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, ***Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 =Strongly Disagree; 1.5 to 2.49 = Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 =Partially Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49= Partially Agree; 4.5 to 5.49= Agree; 5.5 to 6 = Strongly Agree

Test of hypotheses

The pre-test level of significance for this study was 0.05. The hypotheses presumed that there was a significant influence between the variables under consideration. If the P-value, which indicated the significance or the probability value, was greater than the pre-test level of significance ($P > 0.05$), the hypothesis stated in the alternate form was rejected. However, if the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 ($P \leq 0.05$), the hypothesis was accepted.

H11: *Celebrity expertise has a significant relationship with brand loyalty.*

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between Celebrity Expertise and Brand Loyalty

Constructs		Brand Loyalty	
Celebrity Expertise	Pearson Correlation	1	0.558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	1200	

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

Table 6 shows that celebrity expertise had a moderately significant positive relationship with brand loyalty ($r = 0.558$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that improved celebrity expertise was associated with better brand loyalty. Therefore, an increase in celebrity expertise led to improved brand loyalty and vice versa in the Nigerian telecommunications sector. Consequently, the hypothesis that celebrity expertise has a significant relationship with brand loyalty was accepted.

H12: *Multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty.*

Table 7: Stepwise Regression Testing the Significant Effect of Multiple Celebrity Endorsements on the Relationship between Celebrity Expertise and Brand Loyalty

Model	Construct	B	R	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	10.951		27.846	0.000
	Celebrity Expertise	0.631	0.558	23.244	0.000
	(Constant)	10.085		24.057	0.000
2	Celebrity Expertise	0.479	0.423	12.443	0.000
	Multiple Celebrity Endorsements	0.216	0.187	5.504	0.000
	Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty				

Table 7 shows that multiple celebrity endorsements had a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty ($p < 0.05$). The first model indicates that celebrity expertise significantly influenced brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.631$, $T = 23.244$, $p < 0.05$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.311$). The introduction of multiple celebrity endorsements in the second model showed that the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty was improved by 1.6 per cent Adj. R square change ($F_{(2, 1195)} = 2484.682$, $p < 0.05$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.327$). This suggests that multiple celebrity endorsements improved the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty. The implication of this is that multiple celebrity endorsements should be used to make the effect of celebrity expertise result in better brand loyalty. Therefore, the hypothesis that multiple celebrity endorsement has a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty was accepted.

Discussion of findings

The study investigated the influence of celebrity expertise on brand loyalty in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, using multiple celebrity endorsements as a moderator. Table 4 shows that celebrity expertise had a moderately significant positive relationship with brand loyalty ($r = 0.558$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that improved celebrity expertise was associated with better brand loyalty. Therefore, an increase in celebrity expertise led to improved brand loyalty and vice versa in the Nigerian telecommunications sector. This result corroborates the findings of Byrne and Whitehead (2003) that customer attitude regarding the brands and products are well enhanced by celebrities. The result is also in consonance with the findings of Silvera and Austad (2004) that the expertise of an endorser correlates with

the validity of the claims concerning the product and is thus an important factor in increasing the persuasiveness of marketing messages. The result is also in tandem with the findings of ZorBari-Nwitambu and Kalu (2017) that consumers will tend to have a positive disposition towards a celebrity who is exemplary at what he/she does, thereby commanding more attraction and followership. However, the result contradicts the findings of Nyarko *et al.* (2015) that there is no evidence proving that the adoption of celebrity expertise will achieve stronger brand loyalty in comparison to the non-use of celebrity expertise. In addition, the outcome of the current study corroborates social exchange theory which affirms that consumers tend to give loyalty in return for the marketing promotional effort of a celebrity, while the celebrity may have to continue demonstrating the perceived desirable standards of behaviour that are in congruence with consumers' needs and wants in return for continuous patronage from the customers.

Table 5 shows that multiple celebrity endorsements had a significant effect on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty ($p < 0.05$). The first model indicates that celebrity expertise significantly influenced brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.631$, $T = 23.244$, $p < 0.05$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.311$). The introduction of multiple celebrity endorsements in the second model showed that the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty was improved by 1.6 per cent Adj. R square change ($F_{(2, 1195)} = 2484.682$, $p < 0.05$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.327$). The average mean value in the descriptive table 4.4 showed that participants partially agreed with the multiple celebrity endorsement ($\bar{x} = 4.32$). This suggests that multiple celebrity endorsements improved the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty. This result is consistent with the empirical findings of Kamins, Brand, Hoeke and Moe (1989) that celebrity endorsement, as reflected in the endorser's perceived consistency, improves the perceived quality of the brand and is correlated with repeat purchase intention. The result further reinforces the findings of Jain (2011); and Zipporah and Mberia (2014) that the use of celebrity in advertisements is positively affected on consumer brand attitude and repeat purchase intention. The result also confirms the findings of Nyarko *et al.* (2015) that consumers are more likely to purchase and stay loyal to the endorsed brands being used and promoted by celebrities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study have shown that celebrity expertise exerts a great influence on brand loyalty, thereby affirming that celebrity endorsement strategies are viable promotional tools for enhancing and sustaining brand loyalty. Therefore, the telecommunication service providers in Nigeria and other developing countries should invest and engage celebrities who are experts and professionals in their fields of endeavour for endorsement to stay afloat in a competitive business environment.

The following are therefore recommended for the stakeholders in the Nigerian telecommunications sector.

- i. It is recommended to telecom service subscribers to base the adoption of telecom services being promoted by a celebrity on the expertise of the endorser.
- ii. There is a need for telecom service subscribers to evaluate the degree of celebrity expertise and make an informed decision on the telecom service provider that best satisfies their desired expectations.
- iii. It is recommended that telecom service providers engage the services of celebrities who possess behavioural expertise that is in congruence with customers' values and interests to ensure increased customer retention and patronage.
- iv. There is a need for telecom service providers to engage a celebrity expert who best satisfies their corporate goals in terms of improved market share, productivity and profitability.

Practical and theoretical implications

There is no gainsaying that a study of this magnitude that aimed at investigating the efficacy of celebrity expertise vis-à-vis brand loyalty in an emerging market, like Nigeria, by proposing a model and validating it empirically, will contribute to expanding the frontiers of knowledge. This is the first known study in the literature that evaluated the moderating effect of multiple celebrity endorsements on the relationship between celebrity expertise and brand loyalty. It is therefore necessary to consider the separate effects of the moderator(s) when analysing the relationship among the constructs adopted in the study. Importantly, the study further expands the concept of brand loyalty beyond the symbolic, experiential and functional benefits of the brand of telecommunication service to include emotional and psychological benefits of the brand in focus. The researchers are of the opinion that this study is not an end to knowledge, but a sincere and wholesome contribution to the existing body of knowledge and a window for further research into ways of enhancing brand loyalty via celebrity expertise.

Limitations and suggestions for further research work

One important limitation of this study is the inability of the researchers to capture all variables that may likely affect brand loyalty in the service-oriented industry which telecommunications belong. It is therefore suggested that further studies in this direction should examine the relative and absolute effects of customer relationship management, vis-à-vis the cost of switching concurrently, on brand loyalty in the service-oriented industry. This is suggested in an addendum to all constructs of celebrity endorsements in order to arrive at a more comprehensive framework on the subject matter of the research topic that was investigated in the course of this study. In addition, the analysis in this study was undertaken at the aggregate level, thereby ignoring the organisational heterogeneity of each of the telecommunication service providers. Further studies are recommended to take cognisance of the identified lacuna. It is also recommended for further studies in this area to use a controlled study sample; that is, to ensure prior exposure of the participants to celebrity endorsements and bring out more clearly the experimental stimuli, which is the expertise.

Data availability statement

The dataset used in the study may be made available on request.

Declaration of Interest

The authors have no conflicting interests.

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