Impact of Celebrity Endorsements on Brand Loyalty in Soft Drink Products

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ABSTRACT
Purpose- The purpose of this paper is to explore the linkage between the attributes of celebrity endorsements and brand loyalty and the behavioral components of these attributes within the consumers of soft drink products in the Nigerian Tertiary institutions.
Design/Methodology/approach- A quantitative approach was employed using 22-item, four point likert scaled questionnaire administered to 435 participants with 87 percent useable response rate. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency; Spearmans correlation analysis and Regression analysis.
Findings- Attractiveness emerged as the most outstanding attributes of celebrity endorsements within the soft drink industry context, followed by expertise, and trustworthiness. Attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness were found to have a strong positive influence on brand loyalty.
Research Limitations/ Implications – the findings could not be generalized across other sectors and regions, therefore guides for testing the proposed research model was provided. Practical Implications –celebrity endorsements within the soft drink sector will be more successful, if soft drink companies integrate the antecedents of celebrity endorsements identified in the study in their marketing strategies in order to develop unique and superior marketing communication programmes that will enhance brand loyalty.
Originality /Value –This paper identified 3 attributes that are significant to soft drink consumers, attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness. The findings are acknowledged to be unique because they emerged from a largely under-researched collectivist emerging market where celebrity endorsement is key.

Keywords: Attractiveness, Brand Loyalty, Celebrity Endorsements, Expertise, Trustworthiness.
Paper type – Research paper

1. Introduction

With the rapid paces of product diversification and the nature of competitive intensification in modern retail practices, there have been diverse ways for marketers to introduce new products and promote existing ones, participants in the sector are increasingly becoming aware that increasing sales and profits from the existing customers' based be strategically significant in achieving competitive advantage specifically in market based economies (Hunt, Arnelt and Madhavaran, 2006).

Fundamentally however, the use of celebrities as product endorsers has become one such important way. Therefore, the selection of the most suitable endorsers becomes a significant issue that sellers have to face. Celebrity endorsement can be understood as a channel of communication where celebrities act as spokes person. It has become a trend for businesses and consumers that they observe celebrity endorsement as a victorious rule for brand building in the eyes of consumers.

In recent years, the plenitude of the use of celebrities in advertisement has become more popular than ever. Marketers see this technique of persuasion as a winning strategy to build up brand image, increase revenue accruable from sales and to establish optimum brand loyalty. In celebrity endorsement, companies adopt different celebrities as an endorser and spokesperson who through his/her fame and popularity promotes a brand. (Grivesan, 2013). Additionally, this activity attempts to heighten the fame of a specific brand by applying the fame of that personality in the mind of the people that can enhance the sales level of that specific brand (Hoegele, Schmids and Torgler, 2015; Boonpradub and Theckiatakerng, 2015 Francis and Yazdanifard (2013) did observe from the behaviors of consumers and company's growth that based on the outcomes of this marketing communication techniques, celebrity endorsement is more "affective, truthfulness and attractive" tool for product promotion. This marketing technique can be more influential if the endorser possess the liking, credibility, reputation, attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and beauty as perceived by the people (Owivedi, Johnson and Mc Donald, 2015). Therefore, companies frequently use reputable celebrities of Movies, Sports, Television, Politics and the business world based on the nature of the product they wish to promote (Hayaf, Ghayyur and Siddique 2013).

A plethora of recent studies on celebrity endorsement have accumulated for example, Nasir, Khan, Sabiri and Nasir (2016), investigated Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Buying Intention with mediating Role of Brand performance: An Empirical Consumer Perception in FMCG Sector of Pakistan, Vadivelu and Vadivelu (2015) studied the Relationship variables Celebrity Endorsements and Brand Equity: A comprehensive Review, Sertoghu, Catli and Korkmaz (2014) examined the Effects of Endorser Celebrity on the Consumers, Buying Intentions: An Empirical Study on Turkey, Muda, Musa, Mohamed and Borham (2014) looked at Celebrity Entrepreneur Endersement and Advertising Effectiveness, Zora (2013) researched on the impact of celebrity Brand Endorsement on Brand Image of Product Purchases: A Study for Prune Region of India, Dzisah and Ocloo (2013) studied Celebrity Endorsement and Consumer Buying Behavior: Enhancing the Promotion function of Marketing in the Central Business area of Accra, Ghana and Ibok (2013) investigated the Factors determining the Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsed Advertisements: The case of Nigeria Telecommunication Industry.

Inspite of a vast amount of previous studies devoted to the field of celebrity advertisement, studies which specifically focus on identifying relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty rarely exist. Celebrity endorsement is generally accepted as a marketing tool used in communicating brand images and information to consumers, while Brand loyalty is the actual effect that companies look out from consumers as the ultimate goal of an effective marketing campaign. Given that the Nigerian soft drink industry has become increasingly competitive and attracting brand loyalty is now more difficult than ever, research effort need to be devoted to this important theme. The present paper therefore aims at building and empirically testing a conceptual model that investigates the interrelationships between the determinants of celebrity endorsements within the soft drink industry context as well as assist companies in the soft drink industry to better grasp consumers opinions concerning celebrity endorsement and most importantly to aid marketers to establish a more efficient way to achieve brand loyalty and maintain it.

2. Literature Review
Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on three theories: Reference Group Theory, the Meaning Transfer Model and the Brand Loyalty Model.
Reference Group Theory
When and Parker (1977) defined a reference group as "an actual or imaginary individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individuals evaluation, aspiration, or behaviours" Three significant motivational influences of reference group exist in literature. These are informational, value expressive and utilitarian reference groups. In the informational reference group, each individual tend to search products shown to have positive credibility by independent expertise which assist in the confirmation of the existence of familiar environment or knowledge. The purchasing decision of the individual is affected by another individuals or reference groups, such as experts, authorities or celebrities (Jones, Harold, Nisbelt and Weiner, 1972; Valins and Weiner, 1972).

The value expressive reference group sees the individual seeking consistency between themselves and a reference group by sharing in common something like the purchase of products used or those recommended by the reference group. In product advertisement, the liking of a person or a reference group can influence an individual to make purchases notwithstanding the fact that the product may or may not fit the individual (When and Parker, 1977).

Utilitarian reference group requires certain congruence in a purchasing situation, else "It is dangerous to conform" (Asch, 1952). The utilitarian influence stresses explicit rewards and punishments as a result of the desire by individual be more accepted by social environment.

THE MEANING TRANSFER MODEL
Consumers link meanings to the endorser and ultimately transfer to the brand (McCraken, 1989). McCraken suggests a meaning transfer model with three subsequent stages: (1) The meaning associated with the famous persons migrates from the endorser to the product or brand. In the consumers mind, the brand is liked to the meaning attributed to

the celebrity (2) The brand meaning is acquired by the consumer, in the consumption process and (3) The state of the model unequivocally depicts the importance consumers role in the process of endorsing brands with celebrities. The meaning transfer model is illustrated in figure 2.1
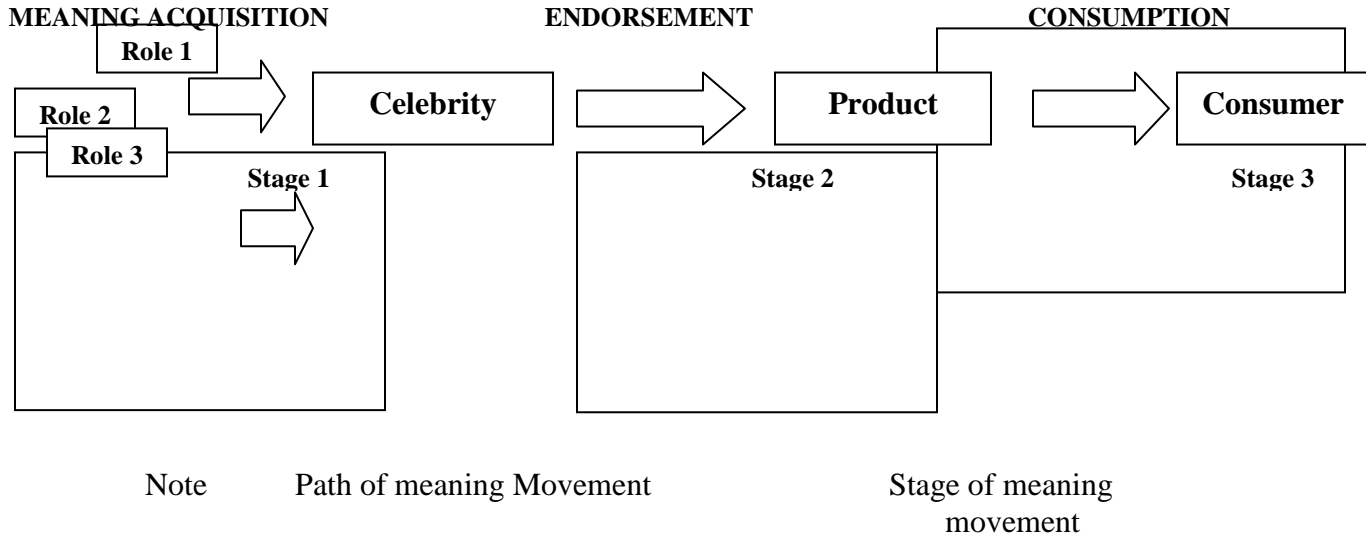
MEANING ACQUISITION   **ENDORSEMENT**   **CONSUMPTION**

Role 1

Role 2

Role 3

Celebrity   Product   Consumer

Stage 1   Stage 2   Stage 3

Note   Path of meaning Movement   Stage of meaning
                                                                                movement

Figure 2.1: Meaning transfer in the endorsement process (Adapted from Mc Craken, 1989

Brand Loyalty Model

The Brand Loyalty model explains the different factors that influences and leads to brand loyalty. The behavioral and attitudinal aspects are influential causes in the entire model and terminate at the stage of customer brand loyalty. These three aspects lead to additional behavior in the domain of likeability. A positive outcome will lead to repeat purchase behavior gathering strength from genuine likelihood and then transform into customer brand loyalty. A captious look at the model portrays that a link exists between customers' perceptions, actions, preferences and behavior. The summation of these efforts leads to brand loyalty due to certain behavior and attitudes towards a brand. This is shown below:
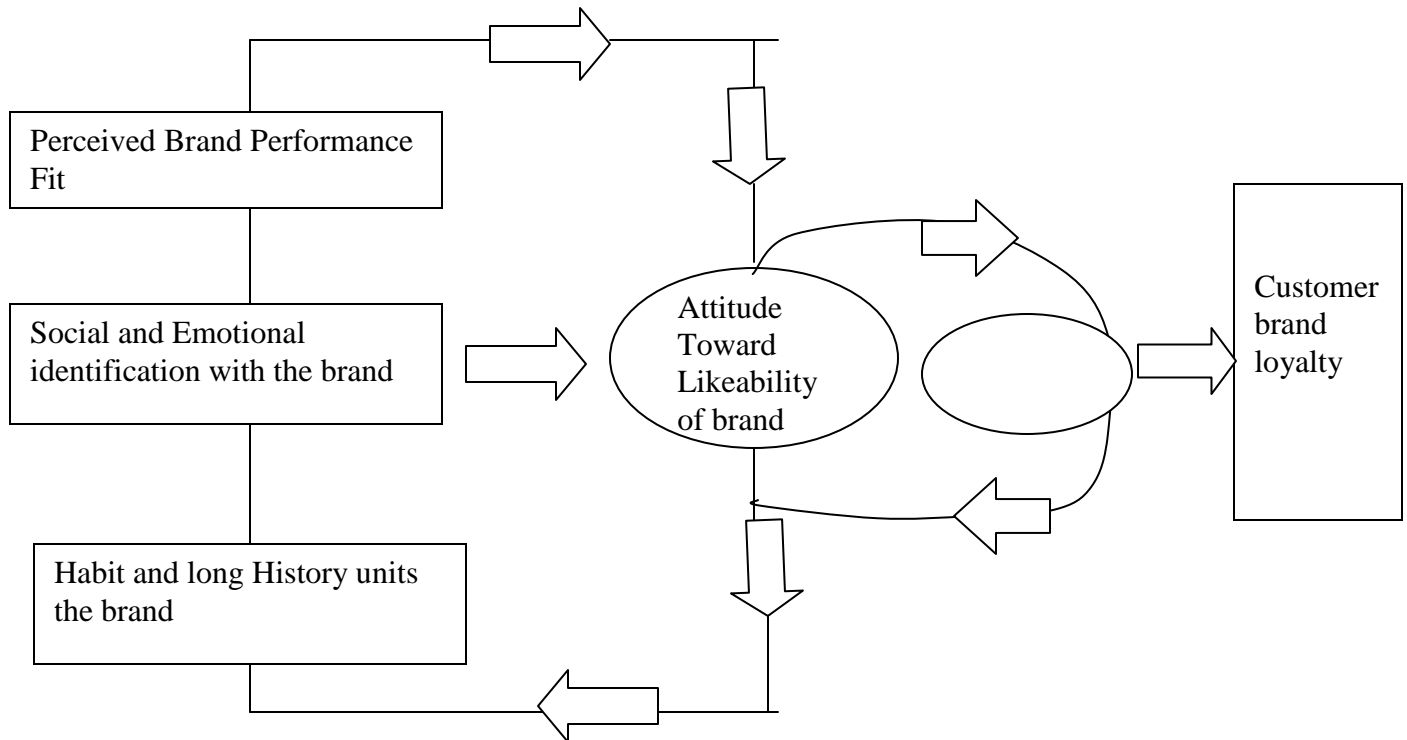
Figure 2.2: Brand Loyalty Model
Source: Adopted from Dick and Besu (1994) Consumer Loyalty toward an Integrated Conceptual Approach

Celebrity Endorsement
Hung (2014) asserts that the concept of celebrity endorsement was first applied in 1983 in the field of marketing when Lillie Langtory endorsed Pears' soap, while the study of celebrity endorsement can be traced to a longtime ago when several scholars posits their definitions of celebrity endorsement. Friedman and Friedman (1979) considered the term "celebrity" as an individual known to the public as a result of attained achievement in an area different from the product class endorsed. Patra and Datta (2012) treats a celebrity as a person that has achieved greatness in a particular profession widely acclaimed in the society and posses enormous fans and enjoys media attention Solomon (2002), assets that celebrity endorsement is the use of acclaimed athletes, movie stars, music icons and television stars in promoting or advertising products and services. In this study celebrity endorsement is conceptualized as a blueprint focusing on the attainment of enhanced marketing performance that benefits a company. The essence of the use of celebrities is to enable companies sell their products to target market or turn around the behavior of consumers positively (Byrne et al, 2003; Silvera and Austad, 2004).

Ohanian (1990) suggests celebrity endorsement dimensions as trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. These dimensions have also been used by several recent studies to evaluate the construct of celebrity endorsement (e.g Lord and Putrevu, 2009; Sprey et al 2011; Hussain etal, 2014). Moreover, some studies found that trustworthiness is the most significant attribute of celebrity endorsement (e.g. Kamins, 1989; McGinnis and Wood, 1980). Several other studies underpins expertise (e.g Swartz, 1984; Maddu and Rogers,

1980) and in support of attractiveness (e.g Silver a and Hustad, 2004; Kahle and Homer, 1985) This study adopts the dimensions of Ohanian (1990) namely; trustworthiness expertise and attractiveness.

Brand Loyalty

There are two kinds of loyalty: Behavioral loyalty and Attitudinal Loyalty. Behavioral loyalty indicates a consumers purchasing motive (repeat purchase) of a particular product or brand which can lead to the development of Loyalty (Bandyopadhyay and Martell (2007) Posits that "behavior is a function of a favorable repeat purchase pattern" while Claudhung and Holbrook (2001) asserts that the possibility exist that might make a practice of brand loyalty in accordance with behavioral perspective by a conventional more or deficiency of literacy as estimated by other choices.

Attitudinal loyalty as seen by Bandyopadhyay and Mortell (2007) constitute a conducive inclination concerning the brand. Six diverse prerequisites that may indicate loyalty was reviewed by the theory. These are : (1) the biases

(2) Behavioural response (3) Expressed overtime

(4) by some decision making unit, 5, with respect to one or more (6) is a function of psychological decision making, evaluative,. The consumers evaluate these conditions when developing a loyalty for the brand.

From the review of related literature, we developed three working hypotheses to guide the study.

H$_1$: Trustworthiness positively influence Brand Loyalty

H$_2$: Expertise positively influence Brand Loyalty

H$_3$: Attractiveness positively influence Brand Loyalty

3. Research Methodology

Sample and Data

This study collected data from a randomly generated sample of tertiary institutions students located in Rivers State in South-South Nigeria, chosen for the fact that it has a high concentration of students who consume soft drink products. A total of 500 students were contacted within eight-week study period. Of the 500 students contacted 435 participated in the study, resulting in a response rate of 87 percent and this is in line with the confirmation in literature that a response rate of about 30 percent is a good and acceptable level when the study is questionnaire-based (Moser and Kalton, 1971).

The 435 respondents produced the useable response rate on which the analysis of the study was based. 248 or 57 percent of the respondents were male while 187 or 43 percent were female. In terms of respondent's age, 153 or 36.2 percent of the respondents were within the age brackets of 16-30, 133 or 30.6 percent were within 31-45, while 75 or 17.2 percent were 46-60years and 74 or 17.0 percent were 61 years and above. On the programme of study, respondents who are undergraduates reported the highest frequency of 305 or 70 percent and the respondents who were post graduate students recorded 130 or 30 percent.

Research Instrument
Based on the quantitative and exploratory nature of this study, a scientifically developed questionnaire was used to generate data. The participants were instructed to complete a self administered questionnaire that assessed the perception of students on celebrity endorsement and brand loyalty. All the respondents were heavy consumers of soft drink products further, the conceptualized constructs (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) were all measured on a four point Likert point scale with 4 = "strongly agree" and 1 = "strongly disagree" at both extreme. A total of 22 scale items were employed and used to test the operational constructs some of the scales were adopted and modified in line with approaches used in past studies (e.g Ohanian 1990; Sertogha et al 2014) in line with previous studies with similar aim. For instance, Nasir et al, (2016) conducted a field survey of Pakistan FMCG Sector aimed at examining the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements for the sake of achieving of achieving buying intentions. Similarly, other past studies (e.g Muda et al, 2014; Ozisah and Ocloo 2013, Ibok, 2013 and Zora, 2013) were all survey based. A single industry was adopted because it enabled us to reduce the potential puzzles of celebrity endorsement that may emerge from industry differences.

However, non contradictory to the approach adopted by some key past studies (Nasir et al, 2016; Sertogh et al, 2014), This paper approaches the subject matter from the consumers perspective because it is perceived that soft drink companies will likely fake their responses. So rather than studying firms and facing the consequences of obtaining beguiled results, the responses were rather generated from the consumers.

To assess the scale reliability, the Cronbach's test of internal consistency was used, were as the Spearman correlation coefficient was used to test the research hypotheses. The multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the effect of attributes of celebrity endorsement on brand loyalty.

4. Results
Table 4.1: Result of Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Trustworthiness	0.942
Expertise	0.727
Attractiveness	0.851
Brand Loyalty	0.85

Source: SPSS 17.0 Window Output, 2016

It is expected that given the same setting, the same result would emanate if the questionnaire is re-administered, indicating the reliability of the research instrument used.

Relationship between variables
Table 4.2 below depicts the statistical estimation of the strength of the relationship between the determinants of celebrity endorsements and brand loyalty. The Spearman's rank correlation was used.

2.: Correlation Analysis showing the Relationship between determinants of celebrity endorsements and brand loyalty
Correlation

Type	Variable	Statistics	Attributes of celebrity Endorsements	Brand loyalty
Spearman's rho	Attributes Of Celebrity Endorsement	Correlation coefficients Sig(2-tailed) N	1.000 . 435	.629*** .000 435
	Brand Loyalty	Correlation coefficient Sig (2-tailed) N	629*** .000 435	1.000 . 435

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed
Source: SPSS 17.0 Window output, 2016.

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficients (r) are estimated as 0.629***. This value depicts strong relationships between the attributes of celebrity endorsements and brand loyalty. The positive sign of this correlation coefficient shows that the attributes of celebrity endorsements and brand loyalty are directly related .i.e. increase in the determinants of celebrity endorsements is accompanied with increase in brand loyalty.
Test of Hypotheses

Table 4.3 Correlation Analysis showing the direction and strength of relationship between trustworthiness and Brand Loyalty

Correlation

Type	Variable	Statistics	Attributes of celebrity Endorsements	Brand loyalty
Spearman's rho	Trustworthiness	Correlation coefficients Sig(2-tailed) N	1.000 . 435	.629*** .000 435
	Brand Loyalty	Correlation coefficient Sig (2-tailed) N	612** .000 435	1.000 . 435

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

Table 4.3 gives the correlation coefficient as (r) = 0.612, indicating a strong relationship between trustworthiness and Brand loyalty. The sign of correlation is positive indicating that when Trustworthiness of a celebrity increases, brand loyalty also increases. Since the significant/probability value (PV) = 0.000 < 0.05. , the researchers concludes that: Trustworthiness positively influence Brand Loyalty, implying that as a celebrity is known for trustworthiness, he/she will influence a repeat patronage and brand loyalty, as the consumers will build trust and confidence on the brand.

Hypothesis 2

H₂: Expertise positively influence brand loyalty

Table 4.4. Correlation Analysis showing the strength and direction of relationship between expertise and brand Loyalty correlations
Correlation

Type	Variable 1	Statistics	Expertise	Brand loyalty
Spearman's rho	Expertise	Correlation coefficients Sig(2-tailed) N	1.000 . 435	.629*** .000 435
	Expertise	Correlation coefficient Sig (2-tailed) N	630** .000 435	1.000 . 435

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

The strength of the relationship between expertise and brand loyalty as indicated in table 4.4 above is strong with a correlation coefficient of (r) = 0.630. The direction of the relationship as determined using the sign of the correlation coefficient is positive, this implies that when celebrities are experts in their field and transfer the meaning to the product endorsed, consumers will be loyal to that brand. The significant/probability value (PV) = 0.000, therefore it is concluded that expertise positively influence brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 3

H₃: Attractiveness positively influence brand loyalty.

Table 4.5: Correlation Analysis Showing the direction and Strength of Relationship between Attractiveness and Brand Loyalty

Correlation

Type	Variable	Statistics	Attributes of celebrity Endorsements	Brand loyalty
Spearman's rho	Attractiveness	Correlation coefficients Sig(2-tailed) N	1.000 . 435	.741*** .000 435
	Brand Loyalty	Correlation coefficient Sig (2-tailed) N	629*** .000 435	1.000 . 435

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

Table 4.5 Shows that the correlation coefficient (r) = 0,741. The magnitude of this correlation is high indicating that a strong relationship exists between attractiveness and brand loyalty. The significant/probability value (PV) = 0.000< 0.05, therefore. we conclude that: Attractiveness positively influence brand loyalty, implying that when an attractive celebrity endorses a product, this will in turn influence the consumers brand loyalty.

Table 4.6: Summary of Decisions Reached on Test of Hypotheses

s/n	Statement of hypotheses	R	Direction	Decision	Conclusion
H$_1$	Trustworthiness positively Influence Brand Loyalty	**0.612****	**+ve**	**Accept**	**Significant**
H$_2$	Expertise Positively Influence Brand Loyalty	0.630**	+ve	Accept	Significant
H$_3$	Attractiveness Positively influence Brand Loyalty	0.741	+ve	Accept	Significant

Effects of Attributes of Celebrity Endorsements on Brand Loyalty

Table 4.7 Regression Analysis showing the Effects of Trustworthiness,

Expertise and Alternativeness on Brand Loyalty

Variable	Coef	t-cal	t-tab	Sig. t	r	R^2	f.cal	F-Tab	Sig F
Constant	**1.512**	**8617**	**1.96**	**0.000**					
	0.667	15.967		0.000	0.861	0.741	255	3.84	0.000

Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty
Source: SPPC 17.0 Window output, 2016-11-15

ROP = $a_1 + a_2 + a_2 R_1$
ROP = 152 + 0.667 R1
T Values = (8.617) (15.967)

Table 4.7 above depicts a simple correlation coefficient of 0.861. This implies that a very strong correlation exists between attributes of celebrity endorsements and brand loyalty. The coefficients of determination (R^2) is used to determine the goodness of fit of a model, if the R^2 value is greater than 0.50 or 50%, we then conclude that the greater part of the dependent variables are explained by the independent variables. Therefore, the coefficient of determination (R$_2$) = 0.741. This shows that 74.1% variation in Brand Loyalty is accounted for by variations on attributes of Celebrity endorsements. The remaining 29.9% is explained by other variables not included in the model. This implies that 74.1% of the independent variables will actually determine brand loyalty. The F-calculated of 255 had a significant f= value of 0.000, the researchers therefore concludes a good model

utility, since the f-calculated is greater than the f-tabulated. This also means that the model can be used to forecast and predict patterns of brand loyalty.

The test of significance conducted shows that the attributes of celebrity endorsements had a calculated t-value of 15.9 and a corresponding significant value/probability value P V of 0.000. This is less than 0.05 level of significance, therefore the Researchers concludes that attributes of celebrity endorsements had a significant positive effect on brand loyalty. This implies that celebrity endorsement attributes of Trustworthiness, Expertise and Attractiveness has significant impact on consumers decision on what brand to be loyal to. It can be used to predict their brand loyalty.

5. Discussions and Implications

Celebrity endorsements in advertising have been consistently encouraged as a successful business practice worldwide. As competition has increased with customers becoming more difficult to retain, companies need to work harder in order to come up with better means of building loyal customers. This paper presents an empirically tested conceptual model of how the attributes of celebrity endorsements within the soft drink consumers context as well as the behavioral components of these attributes in a tertiary institutions in a West African country affects brand loyalty. Some unique outcomes were generated and discussed herein.

The analysis identified a total of three key attributes of celebrity endorsements within the soft drink consumer context. The result of the influence of trustworthiness on brand loyalty shows an (r) = 0.612), confirming the existence of a direct and significant association between trustworthiness and brand loyalty. This implies that customers will treasure a celebrity that is highly trusted and would continue to be loyal to the brand endorsed by the celebrity. This finding is consistent with the findings of Mowen and Stephen (1981).

The result of the influence of expertise on brand loyalty shows an (r) = 0.630), confirming the existence of a direct significant association between expertise and brand loyalty. This implies that the high level of expertise demonstrated by celebrities, has the tendency of building brand loyal on consumers who patronize the endorsed products. This is in line with the findings of Ohanian (1990).

The result of the influence of attractiveness on brand loyalty shows an (r) =0.74), confirming the existence of a direct and significant association between attractiveness and brand loyalty. This implies that the more a celebrity becomes attractive to the people who use the product that is being endorsed, the more the attractiveness pass on to the product. This will lead to continuous patronage which will subsequently lead to brand loyalty. This collaborates Busler (2000) and Thomson (2006) who declared that celebrity's effectiveness in product endorsement is determined by their perceived characteristics.

The findings of this study are very unique and it makes great marketing sense for soft drink companies to integrate the antecedents of celebrity endorsements identified in this study in their marketing strategies in order to develop unique and superior marketing communication programmes that will enhance brand loyalty.

The findings of this study as a quantitative study were not intended to be representative of the entire population of consumers of soft drinks under survey, but to provide insight

for an indebt comprehension of the phenomenon of celebrity endorsement within the context of the soft drink industry. The research was conducted within the tertiary institutions located in Rivers State in the South-South part of Nigeria and its structure in terms of customer may not reflect the consumers of other sectors/geographic regions. Further research on the proposed model is therefore needed across other industrial sectors and geographic regions/Countries to ascertain whether similar results can be established.

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