

MODERATED MEDIATION EFFECTS OF CELEBRITY ENDORSER CREDIBILITY AND ENDORSEMENTS ON CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIA

Abdulkadir Usman¹, Adamu Mohammed², Ibrahim Isah³, Ibrahim Mohammed Giddi⁴,
Zainab Abubakar⁵, Sayedi, Shuaibu. Ndagi⁶, Bashir
Danlami Sarkindaji⁷, Muhammad Abubakar Mawoli⁸

PhD Candidates¹⁻⁵, Associate Professor⁶, Professor^{7&8}, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Niger State-
Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This quantitative research study investigates the intricate interplay between consumer involvement, consumer purchasing behaviour, and the moderating and mediating effects of perceived credibility of celebrity endorser and celebrity endorsements in Nigeria. The study, conducted through a survey employing a purposive sampling technique, targeted a vast population of 41,543,028 registered MSMEs in Nigeria. The sample size of 501 participants, carefully selected to represent the diverse landscape of MSMEs, provided a robust foundation for analysis. A total of 460 meticulously filled questionnaires were returned, forming the dataset for the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis. The findings revealed that consumer product knowledge did not significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour, aligning with similar findings in existing literature. Consumer product experience also demonstrated a non-significant effect on purchasing behaviour, challenging assumptions prevalent in previous studies. Surprisingly, celebrity endorsement exhibited a counterintuitive outcome, indicating that an increase in celebrity endorsements led to a decrease in consumer purchasing behaviour. The perceived credibility of celebrity endorsers emerged as a crucial factor, showing a positive influence on purchasing behaviour. Further exploration into conditional relationships revealed that perceived credibility of celebrity endorsers played a significant moderating effect in the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement. Conversely, this moderating effect was not observed in the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement.

Keywords: *perceived credibility of celebrity endorser, consumer product knowledge, consumer product experience, consumer purchasing behaviour,*

INTRODUCTION

Consumer purchasing behaviour is a multifaceted concept central to marketing research. It involves the processes and choices made by individuals or households when obtaining goods or services for personal consumption. This includes recognizing needs, gathering information, assessing options, deciding on purchases, and evaluating the experience after the purchase. Understanding the factors influencing consumer decisions is vital for marketers to develop effective strategies (Bhattacharyya, 2023; Roguska, 2023; Peek, 2023). Companies often employ innovative tactics to stand out in competitive markets, such as leveraging engaging marketing materials to attract consumer attention (Lal, 2023).

The rise of technology has transformed consumer reliance on digital platforms for brand insights and purchase decisions. However, enhancing brand awareness alone may not suffice to boost purchase intentions in this digital age (Hameed, et al., 2023). Recent research emphasizes the role of consumer involvement, particularly through proxies like product knowledge and experience, in shaping purchasing behaviour. Celebrity endorsements have also emerged as a popular marketing tool.

Consumer involvement refers to the significance and personal relevance individuals attach to a product category. Goldsmith and Emmert (1991) describe it as interest, passion, and fondness for a product category, influencing the depth of information search, motivation, and decision-making complexity (Arora, et al., 2019). Consumer product knowledge includes familiarity with product features, benefits, and attributes, enabling informed decisions (Nkwagatse, 2023; Khoirunnisa & Albari, 2023; Wajdi, et al., 2020). Highly knowledgeable consumers critically evaluate alternatives, while those with limited knowledge may depend on external cues, such as celebrity endorsements.

Product experience reflects a consumer's past interactions and emotions associated with a product, influencing loyalty and satisfaction. Positive experiences foster brand attachment, repeat purchases, and favourable word-of-mouth, while negative experiences can deter future purchases and harm brand reputation. Both product knowledge and experience significantly affect consumer involvement, driving purchase behaviour and brand loyalty.

Celebrity endorsements are a widely used marketing strategy leveraging the public influence of famous personalities (Anderson & Nickerson, 2019; Austin & Ping, 2019; Driessens, 2019; Xu, et al., 2020). Celebrities from entertainment, sports, and other domains transfer their positive attributes to endorsed products, influencing consumer attitudes and purchase decisions (Arora et al., 2019). The success of endorsements largely depends on the perceived credibility of the endorsers, encompassing their trustworthiness, expertise, and believability. High credibility enhances the effectiveness of endorsements, while low credibility diminishes consumer trust and impact.

The advent of digital technology has transformed the world into a global village. The improvements in the logistic industry globally have further exacerbated the predicament many local firms face to maintain their market share due to intense increase in competition resulting in depletion of profits. Many companies spend large chunk of their revenue on promotion of products and services to boost their revenue; but how these promotional overhead expenses translate into effective and efficient marketing communication strategy is still a source of concern for marketing professionals and academics. This necessitates the development of promotional strategies that are quantifiable and deliver substantial returns on the company's investment (Kamble, 2014).

Companies in attempt to boost sales revenue and expand their market share, result in promotional activities to better communicate their target consumers. One of the novel ways companies strived to achieve this is through the use of celebrity to advertise product and services. Celebrities have become a force to reckon with when it comes to promoting brand because of the large followership and affections they enjoyed from their followers. Celebrity endorsement method of brand advertisement is on the rise across the world (Arora et al., 2019). Celebrities are individuals who are known for their exceptional ability to captivate and entertain audiences, often through performances in film, music or sports.

Many studies have investigated the relationship between consumer involvement and consumer purchasing behaviour/intention (Khoirunnisa & Albari, 2023; Lal, 2023; & Al Mamun, et al., 2023). Some of these studies included the interplay of celebrity endorsement or perceived credibility of celebrity endorser as moderator, mediator or independent variable(s) (Hongsuchon & Li, 2022; Bilal, et al., 2021; Ebrahimi, et al., 2021; Phogat & Singh, 2023; Li, et al., 2023; Wijayanto, et al., 2023). Some of these studies revealed that consumer involvement has significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour/intention (Lal, 2023; & Al Mamun, et al., 2023). While Khoirunnisa and Albari, (2023) reported otherwise.

Khoirunnisa and Albari, (2023) used SEM to examine the impact of consumer product knowledge on purchase intention in Indonesia. The findings revealed that consumer product knowledge has no significant effect on purchase intention. Hongsuchon and Li (2022) used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to investigate the effect of consumer participation on purchase intention through the mediation of community identity in Thailand. The results indicate that customer engagement behaviour has significant impact on purchasing intention. Also, community identity was found to mediate between consumer involvement and purchasing intention. Ma et al. (2021) used SEM to examine how social ties influence customers' involvement and online purchase intentions. The findings revealed customer involvement has positive and significant effect on customer purchasing intention. Bilal et al. (2021) used PLS-SEM to explore how consumer brand engagement affects consumer purchasing intention. The result indicated that consumer involvement has significant influence on consumer purchasing intention. Ebrahimi et al. (2021) used PLS-SEM to study the relationship between consumer knowledge sharing behaviour and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nungary. The findings of the study revealed that consumer knowledge sharing behaviour has significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour. Lal (2023) used weighted mean to investigate the effect of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing behaviour in Nepal. The findings showed that celebrity endorsement has significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour. Al-Mamun et al. (2023) studied celebrity endorsement and consumer interest on attitude, purchase intention, and willingness to pay a premium price for green skincare products in Malaysia. The findings of the study revealed that celebrity endorsement has significant effect on consumer purchasing intention.

This study is therefore, motivated by five major factors. Firstly, none of these studies is conducted in Nigeria or African soil. Secondly, the findings of these studies reported to have no consensus results. Thirdly, none of these studies measured consumer involvement construct through the proxies of consumer product knowledge and consumer product experience. Fourthly, none of these studies combined consumer involvement, consumer purchasing behaviour, perceived credibility of celebrity endorser and celebrity endorsement as exogenous, endogenous, moderating and mediating variables. Fifthly, many related studies failed to use any underpinning theory to further illustrate how the relationship between the study variables influences each other. Hence, there is need to re-examine these relationships. It is against these backdrops that this study intends to examine the moderating effect of perceived credibility of celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer involvement and consumer purchasing behaviour through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement in Nigeria.

This study aims to investigate the Moderated Mediation Effects of Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser and Celebrity Endorsements on the Relationship between Consumer Involvement and Consumer Purchasing Behaviour in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To investigate the effect of consumer product knowledge, Consumer product experience, celebrity endorsement, and Perceived credibility of celebrity endorser on consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria.
- ii. To investigate the effect of consumer product knowledge, Consumer product experience, and Perceived credibility of celebrity endorser on celebrity endorsement in Nigeria.
- iii. To assess the moderating role of Perceived credibility of celebrity endorser in the relationship between Consumer product knowledge, Consumer product experience, celebrity endorsement, and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria.
- iv. To evaluate the mediation role of Celebrity endorsement in the relationship between consumer product knowledge, consumer product experience, perceived credibility of celebrity endorser and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria.
- v. To determine the moderating effect of Perceived credibility of celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product knowledge, consumer product experience, and consumer purchasing behaviour through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Consumer Purchasing Behaviour

Purchasing behaviour encompasses a consumer's attitudes, preferences, aspirations, and choices in the marketplace when acquiring goods or services (Hill & Grimsley, 2021). Bhattacharyya (2023) describes it as a complex process involving the stages of need recognition, information gathering, assessing alternatives, making a purchase decision, and evaluating the purchase afterward. Need recognition marks the starting point, where consumers recognize a disparity between their current condition and a desired state, leading them to seek potential solutions in the form of products or services. During the information search phase, consumers gather insights from personal experiences, advertising, online reviews, and social networks, with the depth of the search influenced by factors like perceived risk and the importance of the purchase. Following this, consumers evaluate various options by considering factors such as price, quality, brand reputation, and recommendations, a process shaped by individual preferences and societal norms. The purchase decision is influenced by considerations like budget constraints, brand loyalty, promotions, and availability.

Consumer Involvement in the Product Category

Consumer involvement refers to the level of interest, attention, and personal importance a consumer attaches to a product or service, influencing behaviour and decision-making (Samoszuk, 2021). It ranges from low to high, shaping purchase processes and emotional attachment. Low-involvement products, like basic groceries, require minimal attention and often rely on habitual decisions or brand loyalty. In contrast, high-involvement products, such as cars or expensive electronics, demand extensive research, comparison, and recommendations, reflecting their financial or lifestyle significance. High involvement

often generates strong purchase intentions and emotional responses, enhancing satisfaction (Wu, 2022). Marketers must align strategies to involvement levels - persuasive campaigns for high-involvement products and simple reminders for low-involvement ones

Celebrity Endorsements

Celebrity endorsements involve using famous individuals to promote products or services, leveraging their popularity to attract consumer attention. Majid et al. (2023) and Gupta and Mishra (2021) describe it as a marketing strategy where organizations use celebrities' influence to reach wider audiences. The attractiveness and credibility of endorsers play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions. Celebrity endorsements enhance brand awareness by associating a recognizable figure with the brand, generating curiosity and media coverage. They also build credibility, as consumers often perceive celebrities as trustworthy, transferring this trust to the endorsed brand. Additionally, endorsements can positively influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions by creating favourable associations. However, risks include negative publicity affecting the celebrity, which can damage the brand's image, and the need for careful alignment between the endorser, brand values, and target audience. When strategically implemented, celebrity endorsements can effectively boost brand visibility, credibility, and consumer influence.

Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser

The perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser significantly influences consumer behaviour, enhancing purchase intention and brand retention (Friis-Jespersen, 2017). Consumers often view celebrities as credible sources of information, assuming their endorsement reflects product quality. Credibility depends on factors such as relevant expertise, with endorsers aligned with the product category - like athletes promoting sports equipment - being more persuasive. Trustworthiness, reliability, and an unblemished reputation further enhance credibility, while scandals can undermine it. Additionally, a strong match between the celebrity and the target audience fosters identification and trust, making endorsements more effective.

Empirical Review

Al Mamun et al. (2023) examined the influence of celebrity credibility and consumer interest in celebrities on attitudes toward green skincare advertisements, purchase intentions, and willingness to pay a premium. Using data from 778 Malaysian consumers and analyzed via PLS-SEM, the study found that credibility traits such as trustworthiness, personality, dignified image, expertise, and consumer attention significantly shaped attitudes toward advertisements and brands. Positive attitudes, in turn, strongly influenced purchase intentions and premium pricing willingness. The findings provide insights for the cosmetics industry to optimize marketing strategies for eco-friendly products. Phogat and Singh (2023) conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of celebrity endorsement on consumers' purchasing decisions towards cosmetics in India. They collected data from secondary sources such as research papers and journals. The findings showed that the involvement of celebrities has a significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour.

Li et al. (2023) examined the impact of celebrity endorsements on consumer psychology, impulsive buying, and loyalty among 442 Tokopedia customers and celebrity fans in Indonesia. Using SmartPLS

analysis, they found that celebrity endorsements positively influence consumer loyalty and impulsive buying, with loyalty further driving impulsive behaviour. The findings highlight the significant role of celebrity endorsements in shaping consumer behaviour in e-commerce. Li et al. (2023) explored celebrity endorsements' influence on consumer psychology, impulsive buying, and loyalty among 442 Tokopedia customers in Indonesia. Their SmartPLS analysis revealed that celebrity endorsements enhance loyalty and impulsive buying, with loyalty further amplifying impulsive behaviour, underscoring their impact on e-commerce consumer behaviour.

Wijayanto et al. (2023) examined the influence of TikTok social media marketing and product knowledge on purchase intention on the Shopee marketplace, moderated by price discounts. Using structural equation modelling and data from 120 respondents in Pekanbaru City, they found that social media marketing and product knowledge significantly enhance purchase intention, with price discounts further amplifying this effect. Ao, et al., (2023) performed a meta-analysis of 62 studies with 22,554 participants to examine how social media influencers' attributes affect customer engagement and purchase intention. They found moderate to strong correlations for characteristics such as homophily, expertise, trustworthiness, credibility, congruence, entertainment, and informativeness. Entertainment value emerged as the strongest driver of customer engagement, while credibility had the most significant influence on purchase intention.

Hameed et al. (2023) explored the effect of brand awareness and purchase intention in the age of digital communication, specifically examining the moderated mediation model of celebrity endorsement and consumer attitude. Their study utilized quantitative research design and collected data conveniently from 208 responses. They found that brand awareness in the presence of celebrity endorsement contributes to developing a positive attitude that positively influences purchase intention.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data on MSMEs in Nigeria, a sector critical to the national economy with 41,543,028 registered MSMEs (NBS, 2023). The sample size was initially determined using the Yamani formula, which suggested 385 respondents. To account for potential data issues, the sample size was increased by 30%, resulting in 501 respondents. A purposive sampling technique was used to identify MSMEs relevant to the study. Data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM with the aid SmartPLS 4 software.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

MEASUREMENT (OUTER) MODEL

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the measurement model, which included five constructs: Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser (PCCE), Consumer Product Knowledge (CPK), Consumer Product Experience (CPE), Celebrity Endorser (CE), and Consumer Purchasing Behaviour (CPB), each measured by five items. Most items showed factor loadings above the threshold of $> .70$, confirming model robustness. However, items PCCE 4 and 5, CPK 4 and 5, and CPE 1 and 2 had loadings below the acceptable level. These items were excluded to improve model validity and reliability, following best practices recommended by DeVellis (2012) and Hair et al. (2014) for refining measurement models.

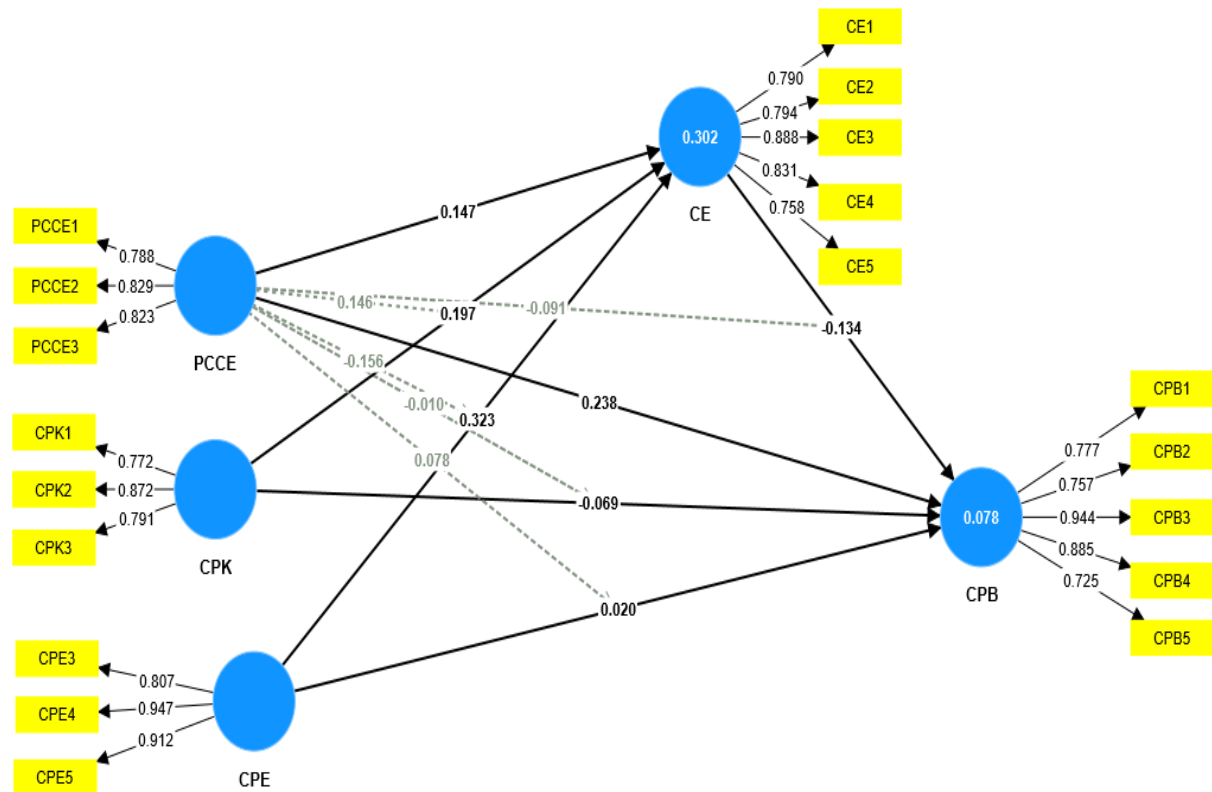


Figure 1: Path Coefficient

EVALUATION OF MEASUREMENT (OUTER) MODEL

RELIABILITY TEST

The initial phase of our evaluation focused on assessing the reliability of the measurement tests, with specific attention to Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) values. These metrics are crucial in determining the internal consistency and stability of the constructs under consideration. A widely accepted standard in the field stipulates that for a construct to be deemed reliable, both CA and CR values should surpass the .7 threshold (Black, Babin, & Anderson 2010; Fornell & Larcker 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein 1994; Raj, 2018; & Fawad, 2021).

Table 2 Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)
CE	0.871	0.907
CPB	0.876	0.911
CPE	0.871	0.920
CPK	0.741	0.853
PCCE	0.745	0.854

Table 2 displays the reliability test results, with CA and CR values for each construct exceeding the .7 threshold, indicating strong reliability. The CA and CR values ranged from .741 to .920, confirming

consistent performance. Constructs like "CE" (CA = 0.871, CR = 0.907), "CPB" (CA = 0.876, CR = 0.911), and "CPE" (CA = 0.871, CR = 0.920) showed high reliability. "CPK" (CA = 0.741, CR = 0.853) and "PCCE" (CA = 0.745, CR = 0.854) also met the threshold. These values align with established benchmarks (Black et al., 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Raj, 2018; Fawad, 2021), ensuring data dependability for further analysis.

Convergent Validity Test

In the assessment of convergent validity, the study employed the Fornell Larcker criterion, which emphasizes the importance of factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), for a construct to be deemed to have achieved convergent validity, its factor loading and AVE should be greater than 0.50, and the CR value should exceed 0.70.

Table 3 **Fornell and Larcker Criteria**

Variables	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR
PCCE1	0.788	0.661	0.854
PCCE2	0.829		
PCCE3	0.823		
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser			
CPK1	0.772	0.660	0.853
CPK2	0.872		
CPK3	0.791		
Consumer Product Knowledge			
CE1	0.790	0.661	0.907
CE2	0.794		
CE3	0.888		
CE4	0.831		
CE5	0.758		
Consumer Endorser			
CPE3	0.807	0.794	0.920
CPE4	0.947		
CPE5	0.912		
Consumer Product Experience			
CPB1	0.777		
CPB2	0.757		

CPB3	0.944		
CPB4	0.885		
CPB5	0.725		
Consumer Purchasing Behaviour		0.675	0.911

Table 3 shows the convergent validity results for each variable, with factor loadings, AVE, and CR values exceeding the established thresholds. For example, "Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser" (PCCE) had factor loadings of PCCE1: 0.788, PCCE2: 0.829, and PCCE3: 0.823, all above 0.50. The AVE value for PCCE (0.661) surpassed the 0.50 threshold, and the CR value (0.854) exceeded 0.70, indicating strong reliability. Similar results were found for other constructs like "Consumer Product Knowledge" (CPK), "Consumer Endorser" (CE), and "Consumer Product Experience" (CPB), confirming high convergent validity across all variables. These findings assure the reliability of the measurement model, providing a solid foundation for further analysis of consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions.

DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY TEST

Discriminant Validity – HTMT Criteria

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio criterion is employed to further assess discriminant validity, focusing on the comparison between heterotrait and monotrait correlations. Henseler et al. (2015) suggest that the sum of all model construct variances should not exceed their individual variances, and the HTMT value should not surpass 0.90 for adequate discriminant validity.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratio Criterion

	CE	CPB	CPE	CPK	PCCE	PCCE x CPE	PCCE x CPK	PCCE x CE
CE								
CPB	0.104							
CPE	0.518	0.035						
CPK	0.417	0.141	0.522					
PCCE	0.296	0.265	0.233	0.092				
PCCE x CPE	0.233	0.069	0.210	0.104	0.190			
PCCE x CPK	0.071	0.042	0.025	0.036	0.062	0.435		
PCCE x CE	0.249	0.084	0.211	0.061	0.248	0.705	0.326	

Table 4 presents the HTMT Ratio values for each pair of constructs, all of which are below the 0.90 threshold, confirming that the study meets the requirements for discriminant validity. For example, the HTMT Ratio between "Consumer Endorser" (CE) and "Consumer Product Knowledge" (CPK) is 0.417, indicating appropriate discriminant validity. This pattern is consistent across other construct pairs and interaction terms (e.g., PCCE x CPE, PCCE x CPK, PCCE x CE), with all values below 0.90. These results affirm that the constructs and their interactions are measuring distinct aspects, enhancing the study's robustness in terms of discriminant validity.

EVALUATION OF STRUCTURAL (INNER) MODEL

Coefficient of determination R²

The R-square (R^2) value in structural equation modelling (SEM) quantifies the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. R^2 values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater explanatory power. According to Chen in Fauzi (2022), R^2 values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 represent weak, moderate, and strong levels of influence, respectively. An R^2 value below 0.19 suggests weak explanatory power, values between 0.19 and 0.33 indicate moderate influence, and values above 0.67 suggest a strong impact. Table 5 presents the study's coefficient of determination (R^2).

Table 5 R-square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
CE	0.302	0.295
CPB	0.078	0.063

Table 5 shows that the model explains 30.2% of the variance in "CE" (adjusted R-square = 29.5%), indicating a strong explanatory power for this variable. In contrast, the model explains only 7.8% of the variance in "CPB" (adjusted R-square = 6.3%), suggesting limited explanatory power for "CPB" and indicating that other factors may influence its variance. Overall, the model is more effective in explaining "CE" than "CPB," highlighting potential limitations for further exploration.

Effect size f-square analysis

The examination of effect sizes, particularly through the use of Q^2 predict, is a crucial step in understanding the practical significance and explanatory power of the model. Q^2 predict measures the importance of exogenous constructs in predicting endogenous constructs by recalculating the R^2 values. This metric helps to quantify the extent of the relationship between latent variables and provides valuable insights into the model's predictive ability.

Table 6 Q^2 predict

	Q^2 predict	RMSE	MAE
CE	0.276	0.856	0.699
CPB	0.029	0.996	0.729

Table 6 presents the Q^2 predict values for the endogenous constructs "Consumer Endorser" (CE) and "Consumer Product Knowledge" (CPB). The Q^2 predict for CE is 0.276, indicating that the exogenous constructs explain 27.6% of the variance in CE, suggesting a substantial effect size. For CPB, the Q^2 predict value is 0.029, showing that the exogenous constructs explain 2.9% of the variance, indicating a smaller effect size. The RMSE and MAE values further assess the model's predictive performance, with lower values suggesting better model fit and prediction accuracy.

Bootstrapping Procedure:

In order to examine the research hypothesis, a bootstrapping approach involving 5000 resamples was employed, following the recommendation by Hair et al. (2017). The criterion for determining the significance of an effect for any variable is based on a t-statistic value exceeding 1.96, and the corresponding P-value being less than .05. table 7 shows the result of the direct relationship between the study variables.

Test of Hypotheses and Discussion of Findings

Table 11 Test of Hypotheses (Total Effect)

	Coefficient	Standard Error (SE)	T statistics	P values	Decision
Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.134	0.052	2.562	0.010	Rejected
Consumer Product Experience -> Celebrity Endorsement	0.323	0.049	6.617	0.000	Rejected
Consumer Product Experience -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	0.020	0.053	0.386	0.700	Accepted
Consumer Product Knowledge -> Celebrity Endorsement	0.197	0.051	3.846	0.000	Rejected
Consumer Product Knowledge -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.069	0.052	1.324	0.186	Accepted
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser -> Celebrity Endorsement	0.147	0.040	3.712	0.000	Rejected
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	0.238	0.048	5.003	0.000	Rejected
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Consumer Product Experience -> Celebrity Endorsement	-0.156	0.039	4.029	0.000	Rejected
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Consumer Product Experience -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	0.078	0.065	1.200	0.230	Accepted
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Consumer Product Knowledge -> Celebrity Endorsement	0.146	0.061	2.397	0.017	Rejected
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Consumer Product Knowledge -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.010	0.065	0.151	0.880	Accepted

Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.091	0.064	1.415	0.157	Accepted
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The hypothesis (one) asserting that consumer product knowledge has no significant influence on consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria yielded intriguing findings. The analysis, indicated by a coefficient of -0.069, a t-statistic of 1.324, and a p-value of 0.186, led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. It's noteworthy that this finding diverges from other studies, such as that of Khoirunnisa and Albari (2023), which aligns with the present study's results. On the other hand, the contrast with the findings of Phogat and Singh (2023) and Wijayanto et al. (2023) adds complexity to the discussion. These studies assert that product knowledge does play a direct role in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour.

The examination of Hypothesis Two, which posits that consumer product experience has no significant effect on consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria, has provided interesting insights. The analysis, characterized by a coefficient of 0.020, a t-statistic of 0.386, and a p-value of 0.700, resulted in the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This finding aligns with the results of Hongsuchon and Li (2022). On the contrary, the study by Ma et al. (2021) presents a divergent perspective by suggesting that product experience does impact consumer purchasing behaviour.

The investigation into Hypothesis Three, positing that celebrity endorsement does not significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria, unfolded an unexpected revelation. The statistical analysis, characterized by a coefficient of -0.134, a t-statistic of 2.562, and a p-value of 0.010, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The negative coefficient suggests an inverse relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchasing behaviour, implying that as celebrity endorsements increase, consumer purchasing behaviour tends to decrease. Remarkably, this result aligns with the findings of Li et al. (2023), Kurniawan et al. (2023), Ao et al. (2023), Majid et al. (2023), Hameed et al. (2023), and Clara (2023), all of whom similarly concluded that celebrity endorsement can have a direct but positive influence on consumer purchasing behaviour.

The exploration of Hypothesis Four, which posits that the perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser does not significantly affect consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria, uncovered a compelling revelation. The statistical analysis, characterized by a coefficient of 0.238, a t-statistic of 5.003, and a p-value of 0.000, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding aligns with the study by Ao et al. (2023), reinforcing the notion that the perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser can be a powerful influencer of consumer behaviour. The congruence with the findings of Ao et al. (2023) adds credibility to the observed relationship between perceived credibility and consumer purchasing behaviour.

The examination of Hypothesis Five, suggesting that consumer product knowledge has no direct relationship with celebrity endorsement in Nigeria, yielded an intriguing and contrasting outcome. The statistical analysis, characterized by a coefficient of 0.197, a t-statistic of 3.846, and a p-value of 0.000, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The exploration of Hypothesis Six, positing that consumer product experience has no direct relationship with celebrity endorsement in Nigeria, unravelled a compelling and significant outcome. The statistical analysis, characterized by a coefficient of 0.323, a t-statistic of 6.617, and a p-value of 0.000, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The examination of Hypothesis Seven, which posits that perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser has no relationship with celebrity endorsement in Nigeria, unfolded a noteworthy and significant outcome. The statistical analysis, characterized by a coefficient of 0.147, a standard error (SE) of 0.040, a t-statistic of 3.712, and a p-value of 0.000, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that there is indeed a positive relationship between increased perceived credibility of the celebrity endorser and a higher preference for that celebrity as an endorser.

Hypothesis Eight delves into the moderating role of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria. The findings present a compelling narrative, marked by a negative coefficient of -0.156, a t-statistic of 4.029, and a p-value of 0.000. These results signify a significant moderating effect of the perceived credibility of the celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour.

Hypothesis Nine ventures into the examination of the moderating role of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria. The findings present a nuanced narrative, characterized by a positive coefficient of 0.078, a t-statistic of 1.200, and a p-value of 0.230. These results suggest that the perceived credibility of the celebrity endorser does not exert a significant moderating influence on the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour.

Hypothesis Ten ventures into the examination of the moderating role of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product knowledge and celebrity endorsement in Nigeria. The findings reveal an intriguing and significant outcome, characterized by a positive coefficient of 0.146, a t-statistic of 2.397, and a p-value of 0.017. These results suggest that the perceived credibility of the celebrity endorser does indeed exert a significant moderating effect on the relationship between consumer product knowledge and celebrity endorsement.

Hypothesis Eleven delves into the examination of the moderating role of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product experience and celebrity endorsement in Nigeria. The findings unveil an interesting and nuanced outcome, marked by a negative coefficient of -0.010, a t-statistic of 0.151, and a p-value of 0.880. These results suggest that the perceived credibility of the celebrity endorser does not exert a significant moderating effect on the relationship between consumer product experience and celebrity endorsement.

Hypothesis Twelve investigates the moderating role of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria. The findings reveal an interesting outcome, characterized by a negative coefficient of -0.091, a standard error (SE) of 0.064, a t-statistic of 1.415, and a p-value of 0.157. These results suggest that the perceived credibility

of the celebrity endorser does not exert a significant moderating effect on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumer purchasing behaviour.

Test of Hypotheses (Specific Indirect and Conditional Mediation Effects)

This table reveals interesting insights into the indirect effects and conditional moderation in the relationships between the variables.

Table 11 Test of Hypotheses (Specific Indirect Effects)

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Consumer Product Knowledge -> Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.020	-0.019	0.011	1.731	0.084	Accepted
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser -> Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.020	-0.021	0.010	1.968	0.049	Rejected
Perceived Credibility of Celebrity Endorser x Consumer Product Experience -> Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	0.021	0.021	0.010	2.108	0.035	Rejected
Consumer Product Experience -> Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.043	-0.044	0.018	2.360	0.018	Rejected
Consumer Product Knowledge -> Celebrity Endorsement -> Consumer Purchasing Behaviour	-0.026	-0.028	0.013	1.969	0.049	Rejected

Hypothesis Thirteen investigates into the mediation role of celebrity endorsement in the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria. The findings present a non-significant outcome, marked by a coefficient of -0.020, a t-statistic of 1.731, and a p-value

of 0.084. These results suggest that celebrity endorsement does not mediate the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour in a statistically significant manner.

Hypothesis Fourteen explores into the mediation role of celebrity endorsement in the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria. The findings present a notable and significant outcome, marked by a coefficient of 0.021, a t-statistic of 2.108, and a p-value of 0.035. These results suggest that, contrary to the null hypothesis, celebrity endorsement does mediate the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour in a statistically significant manner.

Hypothesis Fifteen probes into the mediation role of celebrity endorsement in the relationship between perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser and consumer purchasing behaviour in Nigeria. The findings reveal a significant and noteworthy outcome, marked by a coefficient of -0.020, a t-statistic of 1.968, and a p-value of 0.049. These results suggest that, contrary to the null hypothesis, celebrity endorsement does mediate the relationship between perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser and consumer purchasing behaviour in a statistically significant manner.

Hypothesis Sixteen researches into the moderating effect of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour, specifically through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement in Nigeria. The findings reveal a non-significant outcome, marked by a coefficient of -0.020, a t-statistic of 1.731, and a p-value of 0.084. These results suggest that, in this context, the perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser does not have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between consumer product knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement.

Hypothesis Seventeen explores the moderating influence of perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser on the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour, particularly through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement in Nigeria. The findings reveal a significant and noteworthy outcome, characterized by a coefficient of 0.021, a t-statistic of 2.108, and a p-value of 0.035. These results suggest that, contrary to the null hypothesis, the perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser does moderate the relationship between consumer product experience and consumer purchasing behaviour through the mediating role of celebrity endorsement in a statistically significant manner.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that consumer product knowledge and product experience had no significant impact on purchasing behaviour in Nigeria, leading to the acceptance of their null hypotheses. Celebrity endorsement showed an inverse relationship with purchasing behaviour, while perceived credibility of a celebrity endorser significantly influenced it. Both consumer product knowledge and experience directly affected celebrity endorsement. Perceived credibility moderated the relationship between product knowledge and purchasing behaviour, and between product knowledge and celebrity endorsement, but not between product experience and purchasing behaviour, or between celebrity endorsement and purchasing behaviour. Furthermore, celebrity endorsement mediated the relationship between product

experience and purchasing behaviour, as well as between perceived credibility and purchasing behaviour, but did not mediate the link between product knowledge and purchasing behaviour.

Based on the findings presented, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. **Enhancing Consumer Product Knowledge Through Targeted Education:** Despite the non-significant direct effect of product knowledge on purchasing behaviour, organizations should invest in consumer education programs that foster product familiarity. These programs can help create a deeper understanding of products and encourage indirect benefits such as brand loyalty and advocacy.
- ii. **Leveraging Product Experience in Marketing Strategies:** Although product experience did not show a significant direct effect on purchasing behaviour, companies can focus on creating immersive product trials, demonstrations, and hands-on experiences. These can positively impact consumer perceptions and indirectly influence purchasing decisions.
- iii. **Strategic Use of Celebrity Endorsements:** Given the inverse relationship between celebrity endorsements and purchasing behaviour, brands should carefully evaluate the relevance and alignment of celebrity endorsers with their target audience. Selecting celebrities with a credible and relatable image can mitigate the negative effects.
- iv. **Prioritizing Celebrity Credibility in Endorsements:** The significant positive impact of perceived credibility of celebrity endorsers on purchasing behaviour underscores the importance of selecting endorsers known for authenticity and trustworthiness. Brands should focus on celebrities with a consistent and credible public image to maximize influence.
- v. **Integrating Credibility as a Moderating Factor:** Since the perceived credibility of celebrity endorsers moderates the relationship between product knowledge and celebrity endorsements, brands should emphasize credible endorsers to strengthen the effectiveness of their campaigns, particularly for knowledge-driven products.
- vi. **Strengthening the Mediating Role of Celebrity Endorsement:** The findings highlight the mediation role of celebrity endorsement in linking product experience and purchasing behaviour. Organizations should design campaigns where celebrity endorsements emphasize the benefits and usability of their products to convert consumer experiences into purchase actions.
- vii. **Adopting a Context-Specific Approach to Celebrity Endorsements:** Given the mixed results regarding the moderating effects of perceived credibility and the direct effects of celebrity endorsements, companies should tailor their endorsement strategies based on the target demographic, cultural context, and product type to optimize impact and consumer connection.

These recommendations provide actionable insights for businesses to refine their marketing strategies, enhance consumer engagement, and drive better purchasing outcomes.

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