



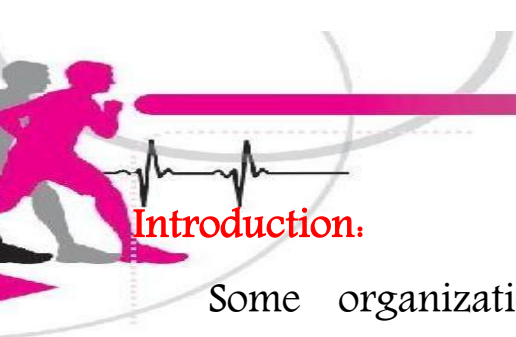
The Driving Power in Consumer Purchasing

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Abstract :

Brand, traditional celebrity, and social media influences consumer choice behavior. However, it is not clear which among the three factors has the highest influence. Therefore, this study aims at establishing which factor among the three has the greatest power to influence the consumer purchasing decision. In this quantitative study, 800 participants who were shoe consumers from the United States completed a formulated survey questionnaire in order to measure their demographic characteristics as well as the study variables that included consumer choice behavior as the dependent variable and traditional celebrities, social media, and brand as the independent variables. The findings indicated that brand is the strongest influencer of consumer choice behavior among the three factors.

key words: Driving Power. Consumer. Purchasing



Introduction.

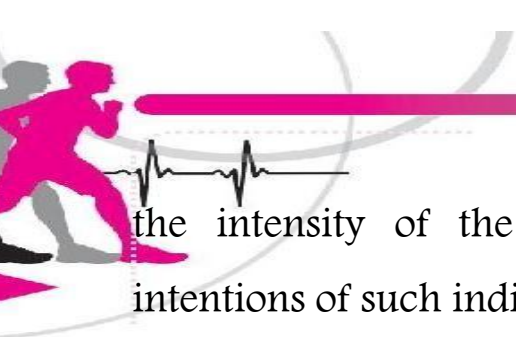
Some organizations are allocating more of their marketing expenditures to celebrity advertising while others on brand popularity in driving consumer purchases in the new social media era. The success of the client-brand relationship lies in the fact that clients develop fulfillment over higher affection to the brands and the organizations that better apprehend and react to the client needs benefit from higher brand allegiance as well as profitability. To accomplish these objectives necessitates more interactions and connections between the brands and clients in order to strengthen their relationships (Leung et al., 2015). Therefore, researchers have gained interest in studying the extent to which brand influences consumer purchasing decisions.

Aside from branding, companies also utilize traditional celebrities' endorsements to influence consumer choice behavior for their products. Organizations determine the popularity and influence of certain celebrities and utilize them in advertising their products. Celebrated and well-known individuals are instantaneously recognized and attract different clients' interests, bringing attention to the brand in a manner that no other kind of advertising could. This is based on the fact that a good number of customers believe that if certain merchandise is noble for the celebrity, it is also good for them. According to Leung et al. (2015), whenever celebrities sign endorsement deals with companies for particular products, a component of legitimacy is observed in the firm due to the celebrity's influence. Guesalaga (2016) explains that a brand



that signs an endorsement contract with a celebrity could experience a significant rise in their stock by 0.25%. Michael Jordan is a clear example to other business organizations that showcase the relationship that exists between athletic success and the sales of sports products in the markets. . Uchihira et al. (2017) argue that Michael Jordan accomplished several achievements and ensured that his team won on several occasions; this was the new face of Nike Company as it has strived to beat their key competitors.

Social media create essential platforms that can be used by companies to influence consumer choice behavior. For instance, companies use Facebook and Twitter to highlight features of their products and the benefits of those features as a marketing strategy to influence consumer choice behavior. Sung (2011) argues that a good social media strategy should understand the audience and the target group. For instance, in trying to use Facebook as an advertisement platform, the company mainly targets youths since they are the most active in this social media platform. Aside from creating a platform of interaction between companies and their clients, social media unite groups of people with common interests and can influence each other in their purchasing decisions. Witt (1969) indicated that when people interact in small social groups, they tend to have similar opinions of brand choice. The author highlighted that product purchase decisions among individuals vary in their susceptibility to group influences. This study suggests that when people interact in various social media groups,

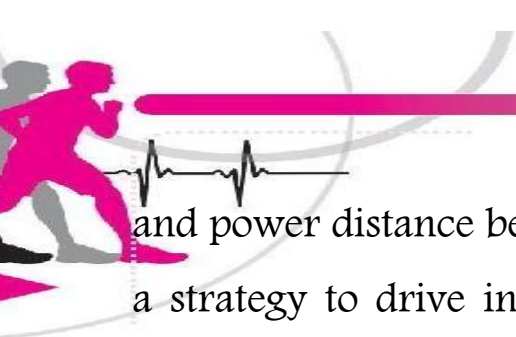


the intensity of the interactions determines the level of purchase intentions of such individuals and thus consumer behavior (Witt, 1969).

Celebrity Endorsements: Power of the Celebrity:

The power of the celebrity in influencing consumer behavior is mostly observed through celebrity endorsements. Celebrity endorsement refers to a form of advertising strategy used by established and upcoming brands where a famous or well-known person utilizes their social status to promote products, services, or ideas (Winterich et al., 2018). Celebrity status arises from an individual's talent and skills in a particular area such as music, acting, presenting, and sports. Alternatively, it can arise from self-generated media attention or individuals associating themselves with other famous celebrities such as the Kardashians (Winterich et al., 2018). Celebrity endorsers have been considered to have the power of positively influencing sales (Derdenger, et al., 2018). Consumers typically replicate the styles of their favorite celebrities and would want to taste what the celebrities endorse. This justifies their reasons for buying what celebrities are endorsing. As such a lot of companies globally have embraced the power of the celebrity in influencing consumer purchase behavior through celebrity endorsements. Winterich et al. (2018) illustrate that the power of the celebrity increases the firm's values through stocks returns.

However, the power of the celebrity in contributing to organization sales and profits is considered to be affected by various factors. For instance, Winterich et al. (2018) who investigated celebrity endorsement



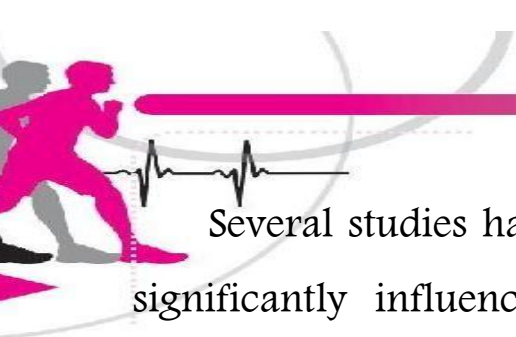
and power distance beliefs found that the use of celebrity endorsement as a strategy to drive increased consumer purchase of company products varies across the country. In the United States, celebrity endorsement has been established to be highly effective. But this is not the same in many other countries (Winterich et al., 2018). Winterich et al. (2018) investigated whether the impact and effectiveness of celebrity endorsement vary across different cultures as it does across countries. The researchers based their study on respondents in different countries and different cultures and found that power distance beliefs determine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement on attitudes towards the brand and advertisement. The authors demonstrated that the power of the celebrity has a greater effect on advertising and brand evaluations among individuals with higher power distance beliefs. Consumers in such countries perceive celebrities as credible, genuine, and legitimate (Winterich et al., 2018). Consequently, the role of fit between the product and the celebrity is less critical in higher power distance belief countries.

Brand Image: Power of the Brand:

The power of the brand as a construct has been considered to be characterized by the awareness level and the brand image level which stems from the consumer needs and wants, leading to their purchase intentions (Shah et al., 2012). The awareness level of the brand is measured by the consumer recognition and recall of the brand. The brand image refers to the consumer perception of the values and benefits attained from using the brand, perception of a good impression of the



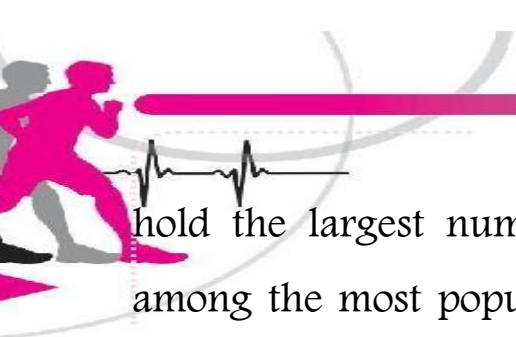
brand. A good impression can arise from the brand's unique advantage, trustworthiness, good reputation, and popularity as well as the willingness to provide the best service (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Fianto et al. (2014) perceive the brand image as consumer confidence in the quality of products and services produced and offered by organizations as well as the organization's honesty in the products and services offered to the consumer. A higher value of the brand by consumers is perceived to create a higher power of the brand which is considered to drive their purchase intentions among other factors (Fianto et al., 2014). Therefore, brands have been more relevant in today's society as they enable consumers to differentiate among competitors and drive their purchase behaviors and intentions. Organizations strive to have an excellent and influential brand image to influence sales and profits. Strong brands allow the creation of a wide range of benefits to the organizations. Some of these benefits include the competitive advantage of the firm, reduced risk, greater profits, and the opportunity for brand extension through collaborations and cooperation with other parties and brands (Fianto et al., 2014). However, the question of what may enhance the power of the brand to experience the benefits it brings to the organization has been a fundamental problem and a major observation in the past two decades of the study of the brand (Fianto et al., 2014). The creation of unique brands has been considered to strengthen the brand image of the organization hence enhancing the power of the brand (Fianto et al., 2014).



Several studies have provided evidence that the power of the brand significantly influences consumer behavior and purchase intentions (Fianto et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2012). Fianto et al. (2014) who examined the influence that brand image has on consumer purchase intention and behavior based on a sample of 286 students from 13 Islamic universities in East Java province established that the brand image has a significant role in influencing purchase behavior. Brand trust was found to have a mediating role in the relationship between brand image and students' consumer purchasing behavior. The study suggests the power of the brand based on how students' value and trust the brand is influential on their purchase behavior (Fianto et al., 2014). Additionally, in a study by Schivinski and Dabrowski (2014), the authors found that the power of the brand through brand equity and brand attitude has a positive influence on the purchase intentions of consumers. Shah et al. (2012) investigated the power of the brand on consumer purchase intentions as well as the role of environmental consequences as a factor of consideration by consumers when making purchase intention decisions.

Social Media. Power of the Social Media.

Organization managers and marketing practitioners constantly seek strategies of gaining profits systematically from social media through increased products sales (Kupfer et al., 2018). Marketers often use social media platforms such as Facebook as marketing tools for communication with consumers and potential customers regarding their products and brand (Wright, et al., 2017). Social media such as Facebook and YouTube



hold the largest number of individual accounts with Facebook being among the most popular with over 1.8 billion accounts while YouTube has over a billion accounts (Nouri, 2018). The influential power of social media is attributed to its ability to create an interpersonal relationship between social media influencers and social media users (Nouri, 2018). Facebook has been considered the most popular social media platform and has emerged as an important marketing mix platform by the organization to capture customer base and influence the purchase of company products by consumers. This makes Facebook a master in influencing consumer behavior among the social media platforms (Wright, et al., 2017; Nouri, 2018).

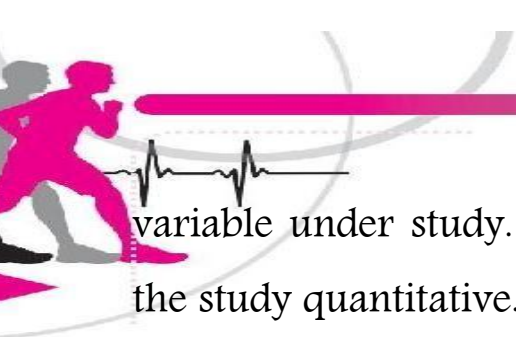
Several researchers have linked social media to consumer purchase intention and consumer behavior (Keller et al., 2011; Phan, 2011; Hutter et al., 2013). For example, a recent study by Keller et al. (2011) suggested that social media platforms have a positive impact on the purchase intention of consumers hence influencing consumer behavior. Moreover, Phan (2011) in his study found a positive relationship between consumers on social media liking luxury brands and their purchase intentions. Additionally, Hutter et al. (2013) who investigated the influence of a brand's social media activities found that interaction of consumers on social media has a positive effect on the consumers' purchase intentions. In other words, when users interact on social media platforms regarding a particular brand it creates brand awareness influencing purchase intentions among the consumers.



Methodology:

The study utilized a quantitative research method to investigate which factor among brand, traditional celebrity, and social media has the most significant impact on consumer choice behavior in purchasing shoes. The design for the study is quantitative in nature because the variables under study will be measured through item scoring. The sampled participants in the study constituted both male and female shoe consumers from the United States. The researcher obtained a sample of 800 participants to participate in providing relevant information for the research through Qualtrics. Participants below the age of 18 years were excluded from the study. The Qualtrics platform also uses participation frequency as an exclusion criterion to exclude certain respondents from the study as a way of ensuring the validity of the survey results.

The study used a semi-structured research questionnaire formulated by the researcher to obtain primary data from the sampled participants in the study. The researcher developed the questionnaire in 2019 to obtain relevant information from consumers regarding traditional celebrities, social media influencers, and the brand. All the sampled participants were required to complete the formulated survey questionnaire in order to measure their demographic characteristics as well as the study variables that included consumer choice behavior as the dependent variable and traditional celebrities, social media influencers, and the brand as the independent variables of the study. Different items included in the survey instrument were used to measure the construct of each



variable under study. The scores for each item were numerals, making the study quantitative. The items for both the dependent and independent variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For positive stated items the scores will be assigned as; "Strongly Disagree" = 1, "Disagree" = 2, "Neutral" = 3, "Agree" = 4 and "Strongly Agree" = 5. For negatively stated items the coding was reversed. The researcher computed the total score for all the study variables from the different items measuring each study variable.

Results.

Results were presented in form of descriptive analysis of the respondents' opinions. The objective was to establish which factor among brand, traditional celebrity endorsement, and social media has the greatest influence on consumer behavior.

Descriptive Analysis for the Respondents' Opinions.

Analysis of the responses on the Brand.

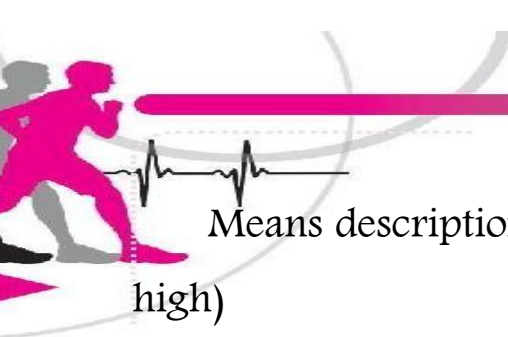
Table 5.1 indicates the values of means and standard deviation for the brand variables' items. Item 1, which states, "I consider the brand of a particular product when making my purchase decision," was the item that ranked first with a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.87). Item 11, which states, "While in college I valued my most favorite shoe brand more than I did while in high school," was the least item rated by the respondents with a mean of 3.08 (SD = 1.47). The overall degree representing the brand was



rated by a mean of 3.67 (SD = 0.81), where the mean value expresses a moderate level of agreement among the study sample.

Table 5.1 Means and standard deviations for the Brands' items

Item code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Means order
B1	I consider the brand of a particular product when making my purchase decision	4.26	0.87	1
B2	The popularity of a particular brand influences my decision to purchase one of their products	3.60	1.17	6
B3	My most favorite shoe brand has a good brand image	4.19	0.95	2
B4	The brand image influences my purchase decisions	3.89	1.02	4
B5	I consider the brand of the shoe product I like more than I consider its price	3.55	1.26	7
B6	I consider the brand of the shoe product I like more than I consider other competitor brands prices	3.78	1.11	5
B7	I would recommend the shoe product I like most to my friends because of its brand image	3.09	1.52	10
B8	I follow my most favorite shoe brand social media platform/account	3.27	1.41	9
B9	I believe to be part of the community of my favorite shoe brand	4.16	0.98	3
B10	I feel that my most favorite shoe brand produces quality products	3.49	1.22	8
B11	While in college I valued my most favorite shoe brand more than I did while in high school	3.08	1.47	11
	Brand total	3.67	0.81	



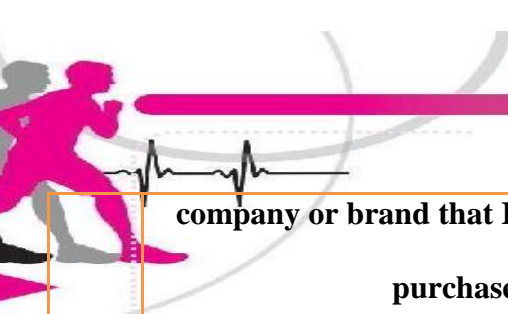
Means description (1 – 2.33 low, 2-34 – 3.67 moderate, 3.68 – 5.00 high)

Analysis of the responses on the traditional celebrity:

Table 5.2 indicates the values of means and standard deviation for the traditional celebrity variables' items. Item 7, which states, "A celebrity endorsing a product through a TV advertisement is more influential than a celebrity endorsing a product through social media," was the most rated item as it ranked the first by a mean of 3.51 (SD = 1.25). Item 2, which states, "I would more likely purchase a particular brand shoe because a celebrity is endorsing it," was the least rated item with a mean of 2.86 (SD = 1.49). The overall degree representing the traditional celebrity was rated by a mean of 3.25 (SD = 1.08), where this value expresses a moderate level of agreement among the study sample.

Table 5.2 Means and standard deviations for the traditional celebrity's' items

Item code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Means order
TC1	Traditional celebrity influences my decisions to purchase a certain product.	2.93	1.46	8
TC2	I would more likely purchase a particular brand shoe because a celebrity is endorsing it.	2.86	1.49	9
TC3	I would more likely purchase a traditional celebrity endorsed brand shoe worth \$200 than I would purchase a similar shoe from a different brand worth 150\$.	3.22	1.34	6
TC4	When a traditional celebrity is endorsing a product from a	3.36	1.34	4

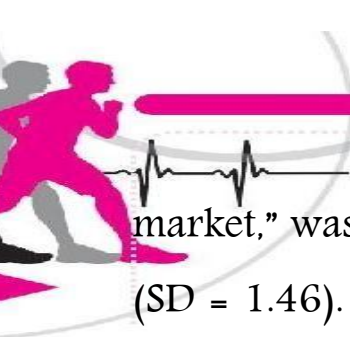


	company or brand that I highly value, it adds to my intentions to purchase that particular product			
TC5	Table 4.13 continued The presence of a celebrity in a TV advertisement captures my attention of the advertisement.	3.39	1.30	3
TC6	The presence of a celebrity in a TV advertisement more likely to make me complete viewing the advertisement.	3.34	1.25	5
TC7	A celebrity endorsing a product through a TV advertisement is more influential than a celebrity endorsing a product through social media.	3.51	1.25	1
TC8	A traditional celebrity adds to the brand image of a particular company through their product endorsement campaigns.	3.50	1.26	2
TC9	I am more likely to remember a particular brand if a celebrity endorses it.	3.12	1.46	7
	Traditional Celebrity total	3.25	1.08	

Means description (1 – 2.33 low, 2-34 – 3.67 moderate, 3.68 – 5.00 high)

Analysis of the responses on the social media influencer:

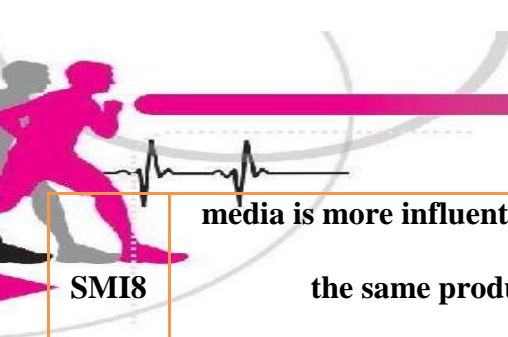
Table 5.3 indicates the values of means and standard deviation for the Social Media Influencer variables' items. Item 10, which states, "I am more likely to remember a particular brand if a social media influencer endorses it," was the most highly rated item as it ranked the first by a mean of 3.49 (SD = 1.05). Item 3, which states, "The products endorsed by new social media influencer are more likely the best products in the



market,” was the least rated item by the respondents with a mean of 2.82 (SD = 1.46). The overall degree representing the social media influencer was rated by a mean of 3.18 (SD = 3.18); this value expresses a moderate level of agreement among the study sample.

Table 5.3 Means and standard deviations for the social media influencer’s items

Item code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Means order
SMI1	I consider the views of social media influencers when deciding to purchase a certain product	3.01	1.44	11
SMI2	I would more likely purchase a particular brand shoe because a social media influencer is endorsing it.	3.02	1.41	10
SMI3	The products endorsed by new social media influencer are more likely the best products in the market.	2.82	1.46	12
SMI4	I would more likely purchase a social media influencer endorsed brand shoe worth \$200 than I would purchase a similar shoe from a different brand worth 150\$.	3.16	1.38	9
SMI5	When a social media influencer is endorsing a product from a company or brand that I highly value, it adds to my intentions to purchase that product	3.21	1.41	6
SMI6	The presence of a social media influencer in an advertisement captures my attention of the advertisement.	3.18	1.39	7
SMI7	The presence of a social media influencer in an advertisement is more likely to make me complete viewing the advertisement.	3.23	1.38	5
	A social media influencer endorsing a product through social	3.28	1.34	3

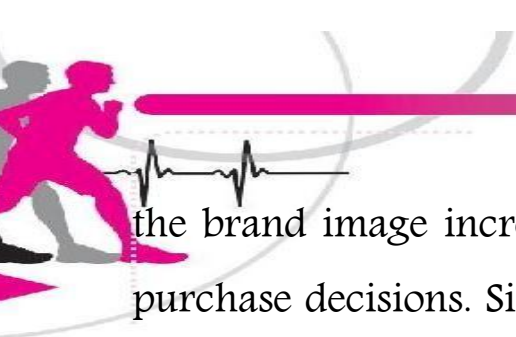


SMI8	media is more influential than a traditional celebrity endorsing the same product through a TV advertisement.			
SMI9	A social media influencer adds to the brand image of a particular company through their product endorsement campaigns.	3.18	1.42	7
SMI10	I am more likely to remember a particular brand if a social media influencer endorses it.	3.49	1.05	1
SMI11	Companies should choose social media influencers to endorse their products.	3.36	1.29	2
SMI12	I followed social media influencer's lifestyles more in collage that I did in high school.	3.27	1.40	4
	Social Media Influencer's total	3.18	1.12	

Means description (1 – 2.33 low, 2-34 – 3.67 moderate, 3.68 – 5.00 high)

Discussion :

The research provided clear evidence on whether it is significant for companies to invest in their branding, traditional celebrities, or social media platforms. It was established that the brand, traditional celebrity, and social media influencer have a combined statistically significant effect on consumer choice behavior. However, the three variables differed significantly in their level of impact on consumer choice behavior. The brand was found to have the most significant impact on consumer behavior. The results support the finding by Ashram et al. (2017) who established that the brand has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. The authors suggested advertising improves



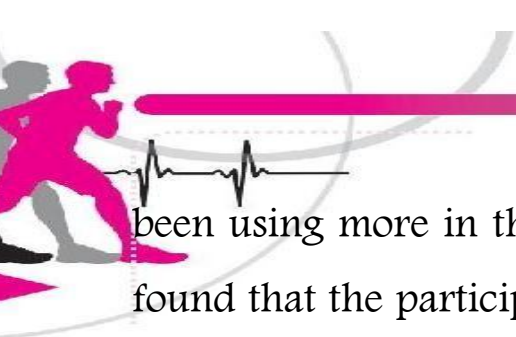
the brand image increasing the intention of consumer purchase during purchase decisions. Since the study found traditional celebrity and social media influence to have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Companies can use both traditional celebrities and social media influencers to improve the brand image among consumers. Improving the brand image and having a strong brand is a sustainable strategy for influencing the consumer behavior for online buyers to purchase company products. The findings of this study are also similar to those established by Sarwar et al. (2014) who found that branding significantly impacts consumer behavior. Based on the review of extant studies, Zhang (2015) whose findings concurred with the study findings also highlighted that the brand has been described in the study as an important and vital contributor in influencing consumer behavior. The study findings are also in line with Bairrada et al. (2019) who sampled 478 Portuguese clothing brand buyers found that the brand as characterized by brand personality, brand love, brand image, and brand loyalty significantly impact consumer behavior.

These findings are consistent with Thagamani's (2019) argument that the brand holds an integral role in a consumer's life, especially in the fashion industry. Thagamani (2019) highlighted that consumers consider the brand and trust them the same way they trust their family members and friends to avoid quality-related issues and uncertainties. The findings however are inconsistent with Lambert-Pandraud et al.'s (2017) findings that, for long-established brands such as the brand considered in this



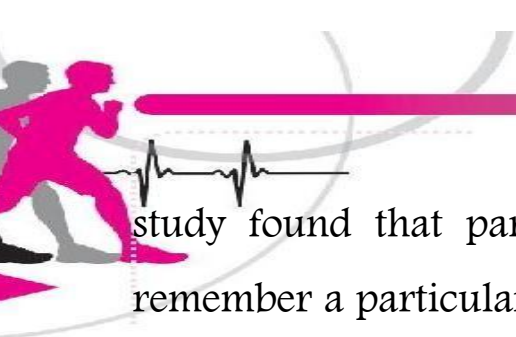
research, the age of a consumer at a particular time before 60 years has a direct positive impact on the consumer awareness and consideration of a particular brand.

The study indicated that a traditional celebrity significantly impacts consumer behavior. The findings relate to the results by Chaubey et al. (2013) who also found out that traditional celebrity endorsement significantly impacts consumer behavior and is a useful promotional technique that organizations can use to their advantage. For a traditional celebrity to be an effective marketing tool, there has to be a significant congruence between the company profile and celebrity personality (Chaubey et al., 2013). However, the finding established on traditional celebrity impact does not concur with Hani et al. (2018) who investigated the Lebanese jewelry industry and found that traditional celebrity endorsement negatively influences consumer behavior. Considering the traditional celebrity construct items, they established that participants were in high agreement that a celebrity endorsing a product through a TV advertisement is more influential than a celebrity endorsing a product through social media. This means that participants were more influenced by traditional celebrities than social media celebrities. The finding can be attributed to individuals in the society evaluating traditional celebrities more favorably and having more confidence in them, as the content in traditional media has more quality and regulation than the content on social media (Gräve, 2017). Besides, social media which is a new media is an extension of the traditional media which most of the consumers have



been using more in their lifetime (Ogidi & Utulu, 2016). This study also found that the participants least agreed that they are likely to purchase a particular brand shoe because a celebrity is endorsing it. The finding may be attributed to other factors such as the price and brand image playing a greater role in people's consumption behavior. However, the finding does not concur with Sarwar et al.'s (2014) argument that when consumers like a certain celebrity as their favorite they will buy products that the celebrity is endorsing to without considering other factors.

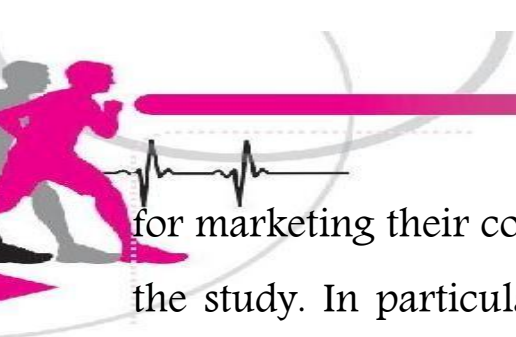
Additionally, the study found that social media influencers have a significant impact on consumer behavior in their shoe purchase process. The researcher believes that this is attributed to the fact that social media platforms where influencers operate have grown tremendously in recent years and have seen billions of users join various platform. This has made it easy for influencers to grow on these platforms, creating user-generated content that inspires and encourages other users to follow them. As such, most companies have used the platforms as a marketing tool for endorsing their products. Due to the huge number of followers that social media influencers have, especially in younger markets, they contribute significantly to consumer behavior when they endorse products (Lim et al., 2017). The finding established concerning social media influencers supports the findings by some authors that social media influencers play an important role in influencing online buyers and contributing to their consumption behavior (Lim et al., 2017). Among the items that measured social media influencer construct, the



study found that participants strongly agreed that they would likely remember a particular brand if a social media influencer endorsed it and least agreed that the products endorsed by new social media influencers are more likely the best in the market. This may be attributed to the consumers doubting the credibility of the information provided by the social media influencers (Guruge, 2018). In a study by Lim et al. (2017), the authors found that the source credibility of social media influencers had an insignificant relation with consumer purchase intentions. The participants in their study believed that social media influencer lack credibility regarding the product they are endorsing (Lim et al., 2017). Social media influencers shape their audience attitudes through statuses, tweets, posts, and lifestyle (Guruge, 2018). I believe that this fact would makes it likely for the consumers to remember a particular product due to the exposure they receive when they follow a social media influencer across various platforms.

Recommendations.

The current research study is an addition of knowledge to the literature concerning the impact of the brand, traditional celebrity, and social media influencers on consumer behavior as well as consumer purchase intentions. Information provided by this research adds to the understanding of consumer behavior for companies to best manipulate the construct to ensure the firm profitability, growth, and goal attainment. Firm marketers, management, and leaders can use the information provided by the research study to determine the best strategy

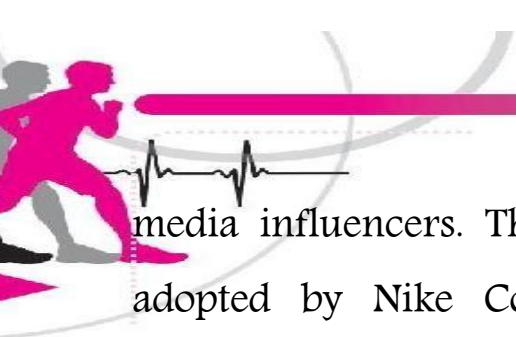


for marketing their company products based on the findings presented in the study. In particular, organizations need to consider brand as it has shown to have the most significant impact on consumer behavior.

Since the current study only utilized a quantitative method, future studies on the topic might consider integrating both quantitative and qualitative method in understanding which factor among brand, traditional celebrity, or social media influencer drives more purchasing power among the consumers of a particular company product. Additionally, the current study was only based on a target population of individual consumers of Nike products, future research on the topic can expand on the target population to include other entities such as company marketers and decision-makers to have a broadened understanding of the best marketing strategy to adopt. Besides, future researchers can replicate the study on other companies in different industries and companies for generalization of the findings from this empirical research. Moreover, the current research established a significant difference in the level of impact that the brand, traditional celebrity, and social media influencer have on consumer choice behavior. More research is needed to verify which among the three variables have the most impact on consumer behavior in related companies as well as different industries.

Conclusion:

The study aimed to establish the consumer pattern of products in general as influenced by the power of the brand, celebrities, and social

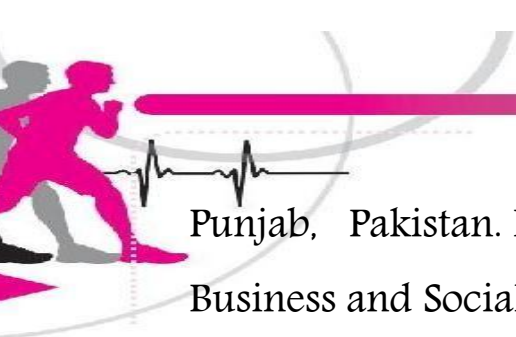


media influencers. The study investigated the best marketing strategy adopted by Nike Company and whether such a strategy impacts consumer behavior in a way that an average company can adopt for significant investment returns. The study assessed individual sports shoe consumers from the United States on whether they relate with the brand, traditional celebrity, or social media influencers in making their purchase decisions. A representative sample of 800 individual consumers was obtained to provide primary quantitative data to be analyzed in the study. The data was obtained through an online survey on the Qualtrics survey platform where participants completed a semi-structured survey questionnaire designed on the platform. The findings are useful in establishing which between the powers of the celebrity and brand popularity (power of the product brand) drive more effect on consumers in purchasing certain types of products.

The study concluded that the brand is the most suitable strategy for marketing as it has the greatest impact on consumer behavior. Based on the combined effect results, one unit increase in brand, celebrity endorsement, and social media level would increase consumer purchasing decision by 0.4, 0.223, and 0.162 respectively. Therefore, the study is important in identifying consumer behavior, attitude, habits in purchasing specific products, and company practices.

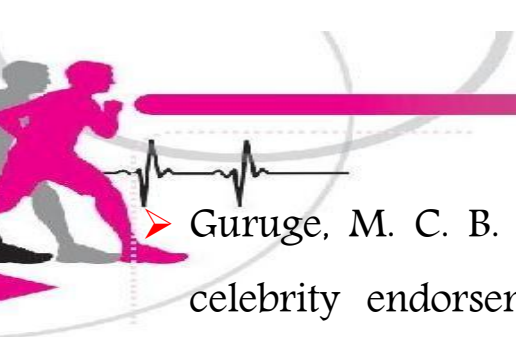
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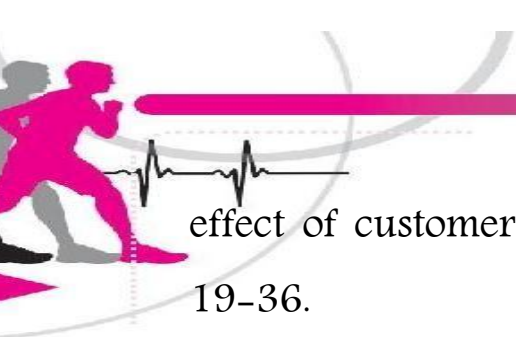


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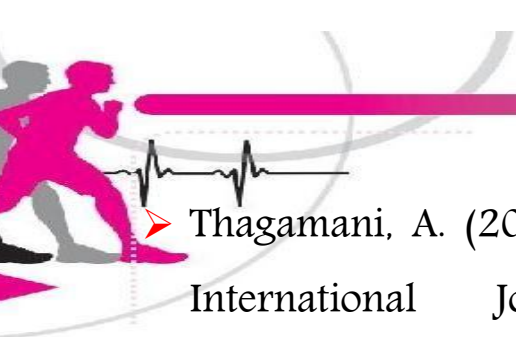


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