

Review Article

# Celebrity Endorsement: Is it Still Useful as a Strategic Marketing Tool? A Focus on Medium and Large-size Enterprises

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**Abstract** - The 21st century has seen a vast revolution, characterized by the development of better management and operation techniques. Business organizations have come up with better marketing techniques to widen their market share and customer base. Celebrity endorsement has emerged to be an effective marketing strategy that has widely been used by different business organizations. Endorsement entails the use of names and personalities of the celebrities in advertisements for company products and services that such individuals might not be necessarily experts. With due regard to the increase in celebrity endorsement practices in advertising, the purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact and usefulness of celebrity endorsement in communication management, brand management and analyze the correlating factors that are critical to the success or failure of the celebrity endorsements deal. It was equally important for the study to evaluate the impact of celebrity endorsement and its influence on consumer behaviour as far as it pertains to brand preferences. The study entailed the use of a quantitative approach that was carried out through a fully structured questionnaire; one for the customers and the other for medium and large-size business enterprises managers. The study was carried out in Kenya and, therefore, targeted customers and organizations in Kenya as well. An ordinal weighted scale was used in coding the data obtained from the questionnaire. The findings clearly show that celebrity endorsement remains a useful and strategic marketing tool.

**Keywords** - Marketing, celebrity endorsement, marketing research, Endorsement as a Marketing Strategy, celebrity endorsement models

## I. INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a vast revolution, characterized by the development of better management and operation techniques. Business organizations have come up with better marketing techniques to widen their market share and customer base. Celebrity endorsement has emerged to be an

effective marketing strategy that has widely been used by different business organizations. Hemar-Nicolas et al. explain that endorsement entails the use of names and personalities of the celebrities in advertisements for company products and services that such individuals might not be necessarily experts [16]. Celebrities and iconic personalities have become a major advertisement tool used by business enterprises to pass their promotional messages to their targeted consumers. The need to create a brand association among consumers has been hinged on the use of familiar faces that receive widespread recognition by the general public [34]. Essentially, the use of widely loved actors or sportspeople can be the fundamental means through which organizations can use to gain immediate credibility [4]. Owing to this, Celebrity marketing is based on the use of famous persons to endorse a product, thereby making it more appealing to the targeted customers. Among the famous persons that can be utilized include musicians, actors, athletes, cartoon characters, and ex-politicians. Therefore, the targeted consumers must be a significant part of the celebrity's fan base if the organization is to realize a significant increase in market share. Among the factors to base for an organization when making the choice of the celebrity to endorse the product is how familiar the celebrity is with the audience [18].

The current business world is characterized by high levels of competition at all fronts, and the marketing function of a firm has become critical [20]. The field of mass communications that can be regarded as one of the oldest branding tools is continuously growing, and hence, the use of celebrities in marketing is expected to increase steadily [34]. Business organizations have confirmed that celebrity endorsement has different advantages, and this has been equally proved on a global scope. The majority of the companies are continuously using celebrities in brand endorsement practices.



The celebrity endorsement criteria chosen by a firm can range from explicit to implicit. Some of the companies have mentioned that the celebrity personally uses the product in question and enjoy it. Some of the companies alternatively use celebrity image only bearing in mind the reputation of the celebrity and with a target on the fan base [18]. Celebrity endorsement has been used across all mediums. Film, television, radio, print and other forms of modern media have equally employed the use of celebrity endorsement in branding.

Businesses have always made use of celebrities to advertise and market their services and products throughout the world. It is understood, that the incorporation of the technique of using celebrity endorsement in advertising is popular in the world of marketing. Over time, the use of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool has snowballed into a prevalent aspect of communication management and advertising as well [1],[13]. In a society where the fascination with celebrities is rife, marketers have found reasons for incorporating the technique of celebrity endorsements in their marketing strategies. As such, advertisers have capitalized on celebrity endorsements as a means of seizing the opportunity of; not only growing their business operations but also create awareness of their products or services. Colossal amounts of money are most of the time pumped as an investment on celebrity endorsement deals [22]. The celebrity endorsement deal is a contract whose agreements are established on the celebrity endorser's quality of physical attractiveness, trustworthiness or credibility, expertise, respect, similarity to mention but a few [2]. It is a belief that these qualities when effectively and efficiently transferred, can generate and help create brand and image awareness among other desirable campaign results such as an increase in sales and revenues.

While the endorsement of celebrities for marketing is seen as the key or rather the winning formula for adding glamour to businesses and most importantly brand building, it is also worth bearing in mind that celebrity endorsements are a high-risk, high-reward marketing technique [12]. Therefore, there are times that celebrity endorsement lacks relevance and appropriateness leading to undesired outcomes. The challenge then is: how can organizations pick the right celebrity among the many celebrities whilst maintaining and managing this particular resource while mitigating the high risk of potential loss from the celebrity endorsement deal.

Recent surveys indicate that a negative celebrity endorser profile can be extremely destructive and damage a marketing campaign. For these reasons, organizations dedicate significant amounts of effort, time and resources to finding the right choice of celebrity endorser for their product or services [28]. Yet again, finding the right celebrity is one thing challenge and creating a powerful connection between the product and the celebrity endorser is another.

There being unforeseen human elements in celebrity endorsement deals that leave such endorsement in the purview of scrutiny, the efforts of this paper are aimed at investigating the variables of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool by delving into various literature and drawing from them.

The fundamental means through which organizations can arrange for such endorsements include getting the correct match between the celebrity to be used and the type of product the celebrity is to endorse [23]. The right match can make it possible for the organization to get the highest profit margins. The public perception towards a company is also greatly influenced. Improperly endorsed products can ruin the image of the company within a very short time, while the correct endorsement strategy can result in increased market share and size [4]. Markets all over the world have been affected by the Celebrity endorsement bombardment. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the importance of celebrity endorsements as a marketing tool with a clear focus on the Kenyan market

#### **A. Research Problem**

Businesses have for a period now devised methods to distract while attracting the consumers in the world. These methods have been realized because the dynamic market characterized by commercial bombardment is easily changing the mindsets of the consumers. Consumers are now more exposed and available to thousands of voices every day from all sources including the media, both written and social, the televisions to even the internet. In other countries, celebrity marketing is at its epitome and is has been widely adopted by a majority of companies. While popular people are more preferred in creating brand names and representing brands in the market, it is very vital to realize and note that famous individuals may not be very effective in some markets as endorsers of certain brands. Medium and large-size business enterprises usually invest large sums of money in celebrity endorsement deals that are targeted to drive the marketing strategy of the company. While the belief those celebrities endorsements are meant to bring forth positive results, there exists more than just selecting an individual or a popular celebrity to endorse a specific brand. Therefore, this study seeks to dig deeper into the Kenyan market to try and understand the sole importance of celebrity endorsements as a marketing tool and how it affects the customer perception and attitude towards a given product and/or service, specifically in the context of medium and large-size enterprises.

#### **B. Research Question**

Is celebrity endorsement important and useful as a marketing tool for medium and large-size businesses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The concept of celebrity endorsement*

There have been constant innovations in the field of marketing in previous years. The innovations have led to the emergence of celebrity endorsers as brand ambassadors. Different researchers have given different definitions for celebrity endorsement and celebrities. Törn defined celebrities as names that do not make it necessary for further identification [35]. Such celebrities are recognized with both awe and excitement and the activities that such celebrities are involved with, have value towards the public [4]. Such celebrities play an important role in both the communication and entertainment world for a considerable period. With elapsing of time, such individuals will be remembered for their great actions, and that entails who a celebrity is in society.

Escalas and Bettman perceive a celebrity as any individual who is widely recognized by the public; such an individual utilizes the wide influence to the advantage of company goods and consumer goods [11]. Widely used means is through appearing on the company adverts. The majority of the definitions that have been offered from the sixties and eighties have changed less. According to Du et al., an individual who enjoys majority recognition from a certain group of individuals due to having certain traits that might include extraordinary lifestyles and attractiveness can be referred to as a celebrity [8]. The set of traits cannot be easily identified among people, and such individuals differ from the common social norm in society. The latest definition of a celebrity offered by White and Dahl takes a celebrity as an individual who gets attention from the public and is in a position to generate profits by using such public attention [30]. The use of celebrity is usually used among those individuals that have a high profile and they are usually in the public eye. Such individuals are used in endorsing central ideas, consumer services and products.

An interesting perspective is offered by Escalas and Bettman who hold it that celebrities are household names that use their reputation in joining the producers and consumers using the products with which they are associated [12]. On the same note, White and Dahl argue that with fame and popularity, the need arises for someone to appear in an advertisement [30]. An ideal celebrity for endorsement should have ideals such as trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, likeability and specific associations that appeal to the target market [30].

### B. *Celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy*

The celebrity endorsement phenomenon was an idea that developed over time globally. According to Edson and Escalas, celebrity endorsement has been one of the most widely used mechanisms by companies in building a brand between an organization and consumers [9]. The common analogy has been marketers will usually rely on a single

celebrity to endorse a product. Multiple celebrity endorsements mean that two or more celebrities can be used in endorsing the product an approach that has been arrived at by some marketers.

Hackley posits that a celebrity endorser can be regarded as an individual who is not necessarily known for achievements to do with the company product or service [15]. The individual is known to the public members for different achievements. According to Bhat and Reddy literature, there exist three types of endorsers who include experts, 'regular' consumer and celebrities [3]. There are distinguishing characteristics that underline the differences between the above two types of endorsers. Regular customers do not need knowledge about the product that is being advertised, and they usually have the characteristic of 'similarity.' The only knowledge that they have about the product is that obtained through the general use of the product [4].

Experts have credibility as an added element, and they have a high degree of expertise. The superior knowledge about the product that experts have distinguishes them from other groups. The use of experts in advertisement calls for the additional mentioning of their profession apart from names. The ones that are highly placed on 'familiarity' are the celebrities. The endorsers are well known for an additional advantage apart from the field of advertisement. The different types of celebrity types include TV stars, sportsmen, and women, pop, writers, scientists and politicians.

Making the appropriate choice for a celebrity is based on the level of attention to the brand and product [3]. The case where a company chooses celebrity endorsement as an advertisement strategy makes it possible that the company narrows down to choosing the celebrity [9]. The positive effect that is posed by the celebrity is a necessary condition but not sufficient. It is also mandatory that the organization narrows down on the appropriateness of the celebrity. Athletes are the majorly used group in advertisement mostly for the products that are sport related.

The main worry among the marketers is on if the extra costs incurred to pay the advertisers shall be covered by the increase in revenues. It, therefore, remains fundamental that organizations carry out a cost-benefit analysis before making a choice of the most appropriate celebrity to be used in the advertisement [34]. Caution need also is taken to ensure that a single celebrity is not used at the same time to advertise a variety of products. The morality perspective need also to be factored in when choosing a celebrity as scandals a brand endorser might be involved with can greatly affect the brand repute [3].

The time-tested idea of using celebrities for endorsements has been found out to be effective among the top brands in the world that include Pepsi and Nike. Gary Lineker has been used by Walker's crisps in the U.K. There are some benefits that marketers have seen in the use of celebrities to

carry out marketing that includes increasing the brand credibility. Trust levels that consumers have towards the products shall be substantially increased and the attention consumers have in the product will be increased. The net effect will be an increase in the profitability levels and hence an increase in profit levels [9].

The choice of a celebrity to be put in an ad is based on the type of audience targeted as well as the promotion message being conveyed. Edson and Escalas agree by stating that most of the professionals in advertising will recommend the use of celebrity endorsements in cases that are justified [9]. There are circumstances in which a company will need a celebrity to give the company an edge over the other players in the market. The credibility of the company can also be built through the use of celebrity endorsement. The use of celebrities can either be improved through the excellent use of experts in carrying out the advertisements. According to Park and Grow, there is a need to intelligently use celebrities in tailoring the adverts [18].

It is crucial for organizations to try and appeal to the range of customers available to them [14]. Convincing customers to buy your service or product is one of the strategies that can be used to increase the level of sales made. It is, therefore, appropriate for organizations to use individuals that shall tailor information to users that the product under concern is appropriate for consumer use [34]. Getting a celebrity to endorse your products endears the customers to the product and equally increases consumer awareness about the product. The awareness concepts that are improved include educational value, quality and the image [18].

Available studies either indicate that for a business enterprise to increase public awareness about its products, there is the need to use celebrities in its marketing models. The practice is not only memorable but also captures the attention of the consumers [18]. Firms target high-profile athletes and celebrities. Organizations will be strategizing towards gaining an edge in operations as well as gain space in the massive field [32]. Research findings indicate that majority of the companies have had success in using celebrities in advertising. Research findings indicate that more consumers are willing to choose a product or service that has been endorsed by a celebrity than where it is not used. Effective endorsements need to find a balance between celebrities and the brand. The brand is given a face and it one of the strategies that can be used in show-casing the nature of activities implemented by an organization. Decisions being made by an organization about advertisement using celebrities can change the brand forever [3].

Celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool is an occurrence in advertising whose explanation is yet to be fully understood. The use of celebrities can be traced back to the 1800s and since then the strategy of using celebrity endorsements in marketing practice has attracted the

attention of academics, business professional, and even entrepreneurs. Erdogan and Tagg state that celebrities can be described as individuals who are well known to the masses for their impeccable and extraordinary achievements in their respective whether as athletes, actors, musicians or politicians to mention but a few [10]. To put it differently, celebrities are individuals who do not need much or even any introduction to the public. Wherever they are, celebrities are easily recognized by the public since they are known to more people than they know and as such the public with some fascination and excitement from the masses always recognizes celebrities. According to Batra and Homer celebrity endorsement refers to the situation whereby celebrities grant out or loan out their image to business brands [2]. Therefore, celebrity endorsers refer to people who have and enjoy recognition and acknowledgement from the masses and use their recognition to market and advertise a particular product in the market. At this point, it is worth bearing in mind that a product endorsement is a form of approval from a well-known individual, expressing his or her like and belief in the product; it is more like a testimonial.

For instance, in Europe, product endorsement is an ancient marketing practice. Ainsworth argues that a good case in point of the use of product endorsement is how some UK based companies have for hundreds of years used the phrase “by appointment to the Queen” in their product marketing pointing to the fact that they savour backing of the British Royal family [1]. Due to their recognition, appeal to the masses and huge influences on the public, celebrities can act as spokespersons for products and services. The scopes of most academic studies on celebrity endorsement marketing have establishments in the context of source credibility and attractive models respectively. Both models are inclined to the suggestion that endorsed celebrities add value to the brand through the elements of their trustworthiness, expertise, likeability, attractiveness and familiarity [13]. The match-up hypothesis is another model that forms the context upon which studies have been based. While the source credibility and attractiveness models are built on the grounds of celebrities exerting value on the brand through the perceived elements, the match-up hypothesis suggests that the effectiveness and efficiency lie in the characteristics and image of the celebrity being in harmony and compatible with the endorsed product or service, states [22]. In the same vein, studies also recommend the selection of the most appropriate and relevant celebrities, with characteristics to best represent the product and are the face of the brand.

This recommendation goes a long way in emphasizing the importance of picking the right celebrity during the process of endorsement. Sonwalkar and Pathak point out that, as the celebrities become linked to the products that they are endorsing, the meaning attached to the products are also transferred to the buyers as consumers of the product or

service as the endorsed celebrities are carriers of cultural values and symbols [23]. Thus, it is prudent for organizations to select celebrities who are culturally relevant to the associated products. Till and Shimp assert that, while the selection of a suitable celebrity endorser is a critical, and challenging task, advertisers in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), cite trustworthiness, familiarity, image, as well as congruence between the celebrity and the product as key consideration factors when choosing the suitable celebrity endorser [26]. Other key factors taken into account when selecting the appropriate celebrity endorser include the cost of securing the celebrity for the endorsement, congruence between the celebrity and the target audience and the risk of controversy by the celebrity. Even so, the procedure for choosing celebrity endorsers is diverse; hence, it varies from one culture to the other.

**III. METHODS**

Various strategies have been outlined by various scholars and researchers. Survey questionnaires have become the most preferred research strategies in obtaining data and information about the general practices, viewpoints of the subjects and the situations at hand. The study involved the use of a quantitative. This approach was achieved by administering a closed-ended survey questionnaire to both the consumers and the retailers to ascertain the use of the celebrity endorsement concept.

Precisely, the targeted population by the study are the Kenyan medium and large-size business enterprises, since they are the common types that use celebrity endorsement. The researcher purposively and randomly selected approximately 200 participants; 100 occupying sales and/or marketing management positions in Kenyan-based medium and large-size business enterprise and the other 100 being average Kenyan consumers for different products and services. The samples participants were afterwards enlisted in the survey. Necessary precautions were taken to ensure that for the manager-based questionnaire, not more than one participants was selected in any given organization.

The researcher ensured that only the relevant questions pertaining to the usefulness of celebrity endorsements as a marketing tool in the Kenyan market were administered to the respondents in a simple and understandable language. Generalization of the research findings would then be possible based on that the right procedures and questions are administered.

Throughout the study, the researcher ensured professionalism, honesty, integrity and ensuring the confidentiality of the information gathered for the purpose of the study. The researcher sought permission from the relevant organizations and stakeholders and also assured the respondents that the information gathered is only for study purposes.

**IV. RESULTS**

**A. Overview**

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the data that was collected during the study. The data was collected through two survey questionnaires; a consumer-based questionnaire and a manager based questionnaire. The main aim of the study was to assess the usefulness of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool. Graphs and tables have been used to bring forth a visual presentation of the data collected.

The table below represents the ordinal scale that was used in coding the participants' responses to key questions of the two questionnaires

**Table 1. Ordinal scale that was used in coding the participants' response**

Option	Weight
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither Agrees Nor Disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

**B. The manager-based questionnaire**

The questionnaire was distributed to 100 sampled participants within Kenya, and who were believed to hold managerial, and most preferably marketing positions in medium and large-size business enterprises. However, 26 of the respondents did not respond, making the total number of the questionnaires that were duly completed and returned 74 (n=74). As a result, a response rate of 74% was recorded. Owing to the nature of the participants sampled for the study, and who entailed organizational managers, the response rate was relatively reliable and hence generalization of the study findings was deemed possible, it is essential to note that the questionnaires were designed and administered electronically to the participants. During the survey design, all the answers were made to "require" an answer before a respondent submitted the questionnaire. Such an aspect ensured that all the returned questionnaires were fully completed and therefore, useful for the analysis.

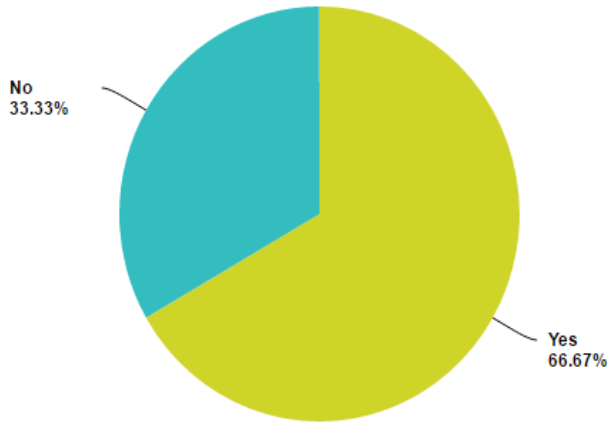
The first question was made to enlist whether the participants were well acquainted with the theme of celebrity endorsement. Essentially, in the 21st century, organization managers in general and marketing managers in specific are expected to understand celebrity endorsement and what it entails. All the respondents in this question claimed to be well acquainted with the theme of celebrity endorsement. Therefore, it can be deduced that the Kenyan business executives are well conversant with celebrity endorsement.

The second question was one of the most critical questions in the questionnaire and played a crucial part in answering the research questions regarding celebrity endorsement in Kenya. Table 2 below summarizes the statements presented in the question. With reference to consideration of the marketing approach, a manager would employ, given adequate resource, personnel and time, 55.56% of the respondents agreed that they would prioritize celebrity endorsement; 22.22% strongly agreed to embrace celebrity endorsement while the remaining 22.22% neither agreed nor disagreed to first considering celebrity endorsement. The second statement enquired on whether the managers considered celebrity endorsement to be a strategic marketing tool. 44.44% strongly agreed to it being a strategic tool; 22.22% agreed and the remaining 33.33% neither agreed nor disagreed. Further, a weighted average of 4.11, with a standard deviation of 0.87, characterised by a minimum value of 3 and a maximum value of 5 was recorded. The third statement enquired on whether the managers have observed any increment in the market share and size as a result of celebrity endorsement. In this statement, 33.33% strongly agreed, 44.44% agreed while the remaining 22.22% took a neither agree nor disagree position. A weighted average of 4.11 was also recorded in this statement, characterized by a minimum value of 3, a maximum value of 5, and a standard deviation of 0.74.

The fourth statement enquired in whether the respondents would consider recommending celebrity endorsement to the marketing function of other businesses. 66.67 of the respondents took the agree position, 22.22% the strongly agree position and the remaining 11.11% neither agreed nor disagreed. A standard deviation of 0.57 and a weighted average of 4.22 was recorded in this statement. The final statement enquired on the respondents' preference of celebrity endorsement, relative to other marketing approaches. It was established that 44.44% of the respondents would strongly prefer the latter to other marketing approaches, 22.22% agreed to prefer celebrity endorsement while the remaining 33.33% neither agreed nor disagreed. The minimum score recorded on this statement was 3.0 while the maximum was 5.0; a standard deviation of 0.87 was also recorded.

In summation, in all the five statements presented in this question, the minimum score recorded was 3.0, which represents the "neutral" position while the maximum value recorded was 5.0, which literarily implies "strongly agree" positions. Essentially, not a single score was recorded for strongly disagree and disagree. The statements were designed to a positive tone, and therefore, any score towards the disagreement extreme would have indicated refutation towards celebrity endorsement embracement. Positive scores were recorded in all statements, thereby indicating that almost all the Kenyan managers of medium and large-size business enterprise clearly understand celebrity endorsement and usually support it.

Question three was made to gauge the manager's attitudes and perceptions towards celebrities in general. This question, therefore aimed at establishing whether the respondents were fans of any specific celebrity. As observed in *figure 1* below, 66.67% of the participants took a yes position; implying that they do uphold a certain celebrity while the remaining 33.33% claimed not to be a fan of any celebrity.

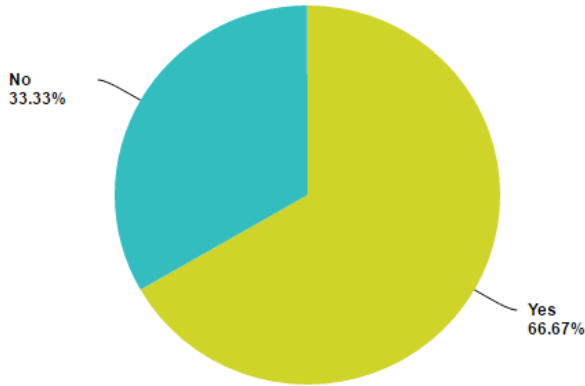


**Fig. 1 Percentage of managers who are a fan of a specific celebrity**

Essentially, if an individual is a fan of a certain celebrity, then it is logically possible to draw the attention of such individuals by engaging them through their preferred celebrity. If a manager is a fan of a given celebrity, then there is a high possibility that they would support celebrity endorsement since they uphold such figures. With such a high percentage of managers who are fans of given celebrities, it is no doubt that the Kenyan business landscape is filled with competitive advertisement and marketing strategies, with celebrity endorsement becoming a major approach.

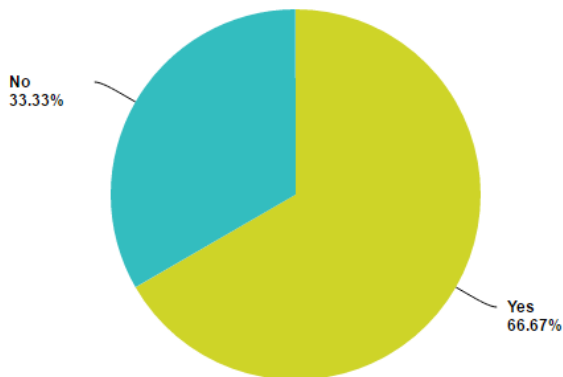
Question four aimed at establishing whether the respondents' companies had previously used celebrity endorsement to market their brand, products or services. As it can be observed in *figure 2* below 66.67% of the respondents confirmed that their firms had once or severally used celebrity endorsement to advertise their offerings. This clearly implies that lots of firms not only in Kenya but also across the globe have readjusted their marketing strategies and are presently employing celebrity endorsement as a strategic marketing and advertisement tool. However, it is crucial to note that the use of celebrity endorsement does not guarantee increased market share and size. It is crucial to note that just like other marketing and advertisement techniques, celebrity endorsement as an advertisement strategy calls for proper planning and careful execution. The fact that a celebrity is endorsing a given product does not warrant the appealingness of the product to the customers. A business organisation must, therefore,

tailor the product features to match the needs of the targeted consumer segment, and also make sure the product is well-linked with the campaign message that is being passed across by the celebrity.



**Fig. 2 Firms that have used celebrity endorsement strategy before**

As asserted by Dholakia, it is crucial for the researcher to ensure that the sample being surveyed holds the necessary competency, capacity, and knowledge to effectively, efficiently and satisfactorily answer the presented question relative to the research domain [7]. Owing to this redirection, this question was made to enlist the respondents' expertise relative to business management in general and marketing in particular.

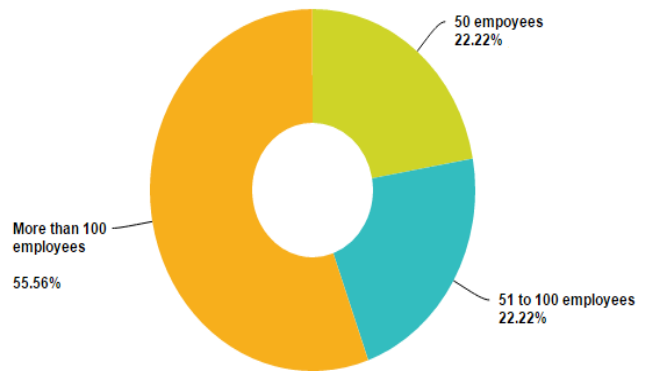


**Fig. 3 Respondents holding sales and or marketing manager position or have held the before**

66.67% of the respondents in this question claimed to currently hold a sales and/or marketing position or having held the same in the last couple of years. However, the remaining 33.33% did not hold the position previously nor were they holding it presently. Nevertheless, this does not hide the idea that a significant percentage of the research sample was well acquainted with the marketing function of a firm. Such an aspect made the findings of the study more reliable and viable, hence making it safe and reasonable to generalise to the entire population studied. This is in line with Taylor and Knibb, who claims that the researcher must ensure that valid and reliable data is collected, in order to warrant the generalizability of the study findings [25]. In line

with this, it is critical to enact measures and metrics that are oriented towards eliminating ambiguity, unreliability, and irrelevance in the data collected. To achieve this, the researcher ensured that the sampled respondents were highly knowledgeable in the marketing domain and hence better positioned to understand various concepts, most significantly, celebrity endorsement.

Question six was mainly made to enlist the size of the firms from which the respondents represented. Essentially, celebrity endorsement is a concept that applies to affirms of all sizes, ranging from small and medium enterprises to Multinational Corporation. In combination with other questions presented earlier on, this question was mainly made to show the size of companies that are commonly adopting celebrity endorsement in Kenya. As it can be observed in *figure 4* below, 55.56% of the respondents hailed from companies with more than 100 employees, 22.22% from companies with 51 to 100 employee, and lastly 22.22% from companies with less than 50 employees.

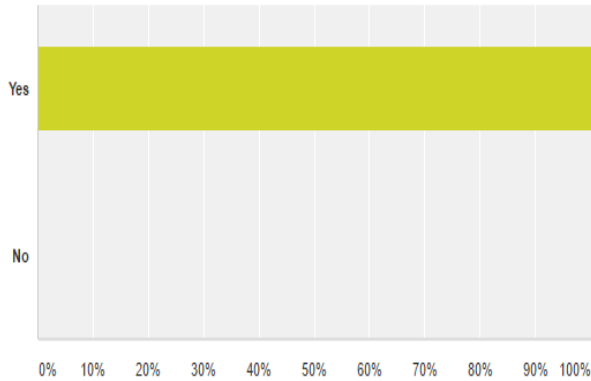


**Fig. 4 Size of the respondents' firms**

Reflecting on data presented in question two and three, the majority of the respondents highly support celebrity endorsement and would relatively prioritize it over other marketing and adverting strategies, given the necessary resources. Linking this finding with the present question, it is clear that the majority of these responses were managers hailing from companies with a significant establishment in the industry, precisely having more than 100 employees. As observed, out of the total sample, only 22.22% were from companies with less than 50 employees. This clearly shows that celebrity endorsement is a shared ideology by marketing executives of business organizations.

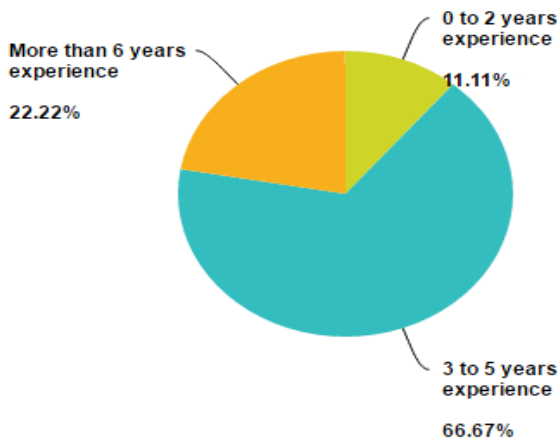
Question seven questioned the profitability of the enterprises from which the respondents came from. Logically, it would not make any sense to practice celebrity endorsement, if a firm does not stand any potential to increase its market size and share. Therefore, it is as well crucial to look into the profitability of the latter, and see why it stands out to be a preferred marketing model by business organisations. As observed in the figure below, all the respondents claimed that their firms had been profitable for

the last couple of years. With 66.67% of the respondents in question five stating that their firms have once or severally y used celebrity endorsement, it is literally agreeable that to a greater extent, the increased profitability and performance can be attributed to the celebrity endorsement approach.



**Fig. 5 Profitability of the respondents' firms over the last couple of years**

Finally, the last question of this survey questionnaire aimed at establishing the expense of the respondents surveyed. According to Dholakia, it is crucial for the researcher to establish the expertise and how knowledgeable the individuals he or she is engaging are [7]. To achieve this, the researcher aimed at outsetting the managerial experience held by the respondents. With respect to this, 11.11% had 0 to 2 years of managerial experience; 22.22% had 3 and above years of experience while the remaining 66.67% had 3 to 5 years of experience. This clearly implies that at least 88.89% of the respondents had three years and above regarding managerial experience. This is well presented in figure 6 below.



**Fig. 6 Respondents' managerial experience**

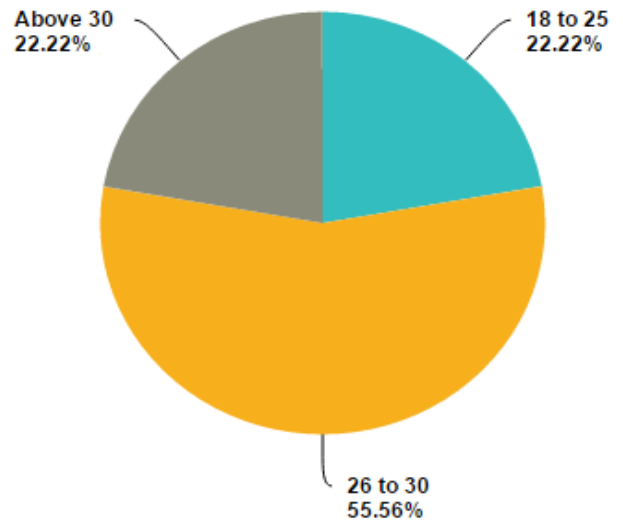
Realistically, three years and above is a significant period in the industry, sufficient enough for any serious and focused manager to learn the industry dynamics, design managerial and operational strategies to improve

performance and realign corporate objectives with individual and departmental goals of the organization.

**C. The consumer-based questionnaire**

The questionnaires were distributed to 100 consumers in Kenya. as earlier mentioned, every single individual is always a potential or prospective customer to a given company. 16 of the questionnaires were not returned. The remaining 84 were returned; fully completed and therefore deemed useful for the study. This resulted in an 84% response rate. There were no particular reasons given by the 16 participants who did not turn in their papers, and, therefore further research may be needed to ascertain the reasons that may have contributed to the lack of motivation for the study. Nevertheless, the response rate attained is significantly high and therefore warranting the generalization of the study findings. It is crucial to note that the entire questionnaire was purely qualitative, and an ordinal scale was used to code the respondents' responses I different questions.

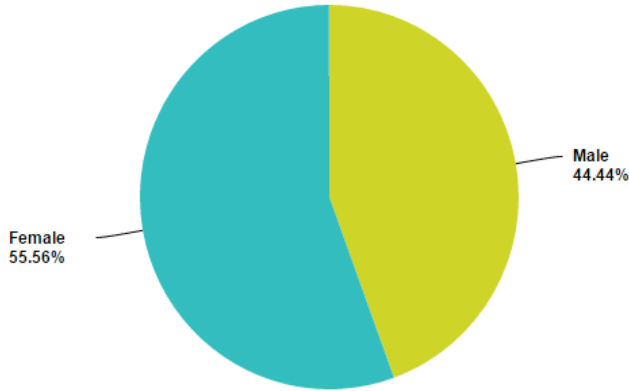
The first three questions of the questionnaire focussed on the demographics of the participants. As it can be observed from figure 7 below, 22.22% of the respondents were between the age of 22 and 25; 55.56 of the participants were between the age of 26 to 30 years and final, the remaining 22.22% were above 30 years old.



**Fig. 7 Demographics-respondents' age**

It is crucial to note that none of the participants was recorded to have an age below 18 years old. On the same note, of all the participants who turned in their duly filled questionnaires, 44.44% were male, while 55.56% were female. This is clearly presented in figure 8 below.

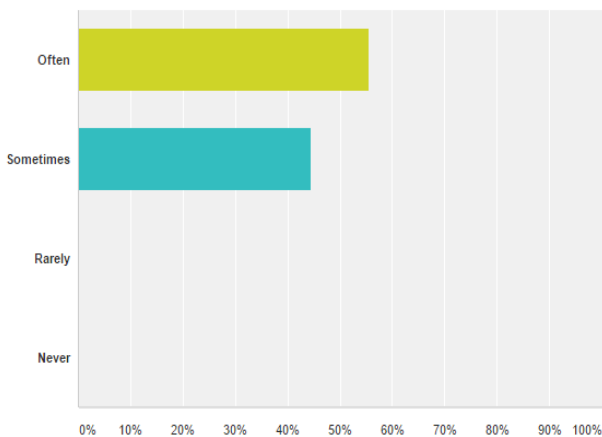




**Fig. 8 Respondents' gender**

Finally, the third question on demographics focussed on the income levels of the respondents. It was unveiled that 11.11% had income levels below \$10,000; 22.22% between \$11,000 and \$20,000; another 11.11% between \$21,000 and \$30,000; 44.44% between \$31,000 and \$40,000 and finally, 11.11% above \$40,000. It can clearly be observed that the majority of the respondents had an income between \$31,000 and \$40,000, followed closely by a segment that had at least 22.22% of the participants having income between \$11,000 and \$20,000.

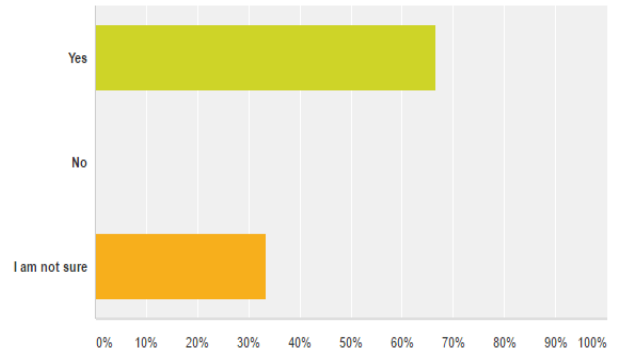
The fourth question was made to enlist on the frequency of celebrity-endorsement based advertisements. From figure 9 below, 55.56% of the participants claimed to often come across celebrity endorsement adverts, while 44.44% claimed to sometimes come across them. It is pertinent to note that no scores were recorded for rarely and never categories. By “often,” it means that the participants frequently come across such adverts and are significantly noticeable to them. By “sometimes,” it means that the participants come across the adverts once in a while, and while there is no specific time interval between the appearances of the adverts, they are not very frequent.



**Fig. 9 Frequency of how the respondents come across celebrity-endorsed advertisements**

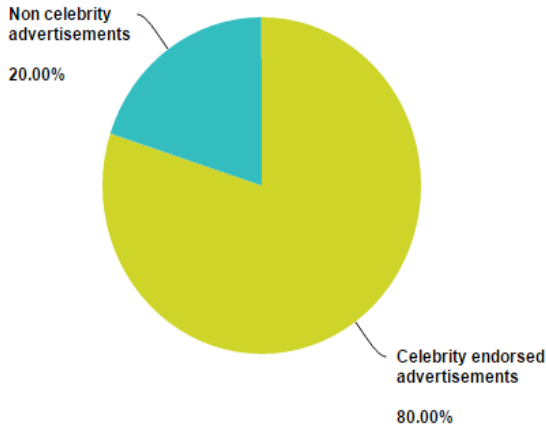
A clear analysis of this finding indicates that almost all Kenyan consumers usually come across celebrity endorsement advertisements at various instances, though the frequency of the adverts may differ. Such an aspect makes the alert a strategic advertisement avenue since consumers seem to have gotten used to the letter.

Question five enquired on whether the respondent was more likely to purchase a given product or service if it was being endorsed by a given celebrity. Among other aspects, this question was made to measure the impact of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchase decisions. 66.67% of the participants agreed that they were likely to purchase a product that was endorsed by a celebrity, while the remaining 33.33% of the respondents held a “not sure position.” No scores were recorded for “No.” This implies that the purchasing decision of the Kenyan consumers is significantly affected by celebrity endorsement, though a section of the consumers does not feel the effect. This is well presented in figure 10 below



**Fig. 10 Respondents' possibility of purchasing a product/service if it is celebrity endorsed**

Question 6 of the questionnaire was aimed at eliciting the preference of the customers to celebrity-endorsed products and non-celebrity endorsed products. Logically, if a customer is highly attracted by celebrity-endorsed products, then they can highly be influenced by such advertisements, making them potential customers of a given commonly. In this question, 80% of the respondents accepted to be highly attract acted by celebrity-endorsed products while the remaining 20% were not attracted to celebrity-endorsed products. This is well presented by figure 11 below. From an analytical perspective, it is clear that the U. consumers are more attracted to different celebrities, an aspect that makes celebrity advertisement as a marketing strategy more useful and significantly reliable by marketing functions of different firms.



**Fig. 11 Appealingness of celebrity-endorsed Vs. Non-celebrity endorsed ads to consumers**

Question seven was one of the key questions that played a crucial role in answering the research question regarding the importance of celebrity endorsement in Kenya. This question was based on a set of nine statements that the respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement, based on the ordinal scale given. The main aim of each of the statements was to establish how Kenyan consumers perceive celebrity endorsement and how they are impacted by advertisements entailing the same. The first statement was made to enlist whether the presence of a celebrity in the brand advertisement aided the customers in recognizing a given brand, product or service. 80.00% of the participants in this question neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement, while the remaining 20.00% agreed. A standard deviation of 0.40 was recorded in this question as well as a weighted average of 3.20, a maximum score of 4.00 and a minimum score of 3.00.

Clearly, the weighted average shows that majority of the Kenyan consumers are neutral on whether the presence of a celebrity during a product advertisement increases the level of attraction that the brand in question bears towards them. This indicates that celebrity endorsement has an average impact on the targeted customers. The second statement in this question was made to enquire about the impact of bad publicity about the endorser on consumer purchasing behaviour. As per the findings, 10.00% of the respondents strongly agreed that bad publicity would negatively impact their purchasing behaviour regarding the production question, 40.00% agreed that they would be impacted negatively by the latter, while the remaining 50.00% neither agreed nor disagreed on endorser's bad publicity having an impact on their purchasing patterns.

Essentially, there are no scores that were recorded for the negative extreme, entailing strong disagreement or disagreement that bad publicity has a negative effect on the purchasing behaviour of the targeted customers. A minimum score of 3.00 was recorded, a maximum of 5.00 was also recorded, a standard deviation of 0.66 was unveiled, and a

weighted average of 3.60 was also obtained. A clear analysis of these findings clearly indicates that the consumers are significantly impacted by the bad publicity of the celebrity. Just like the previous statement, the third statement was made to enlist the degree of influence of celebrity endorsement act on consumer purchasing decisions. In this statement, 20.00% of the respondents disagreed, 50.00% neither agreed nor disagreed, while the remaining 30.00% of the respondents agreed. A weighted average of 3.20 was obtained, coupled with a 0.70 standard deviation. Additionally, no scores were recorded for the strongly disagree and strongly agree position. It is crucial to note that the average score indicates that the majority of Kenyan consumers are neutral with regard to the influence of their purchasing decision, following celebrity endorsement of a particular product. Such an average score clearly indicates that the consumers are sometimes impacted by celebrity encasement, while in other times they are not.

The fourth statement was likewise very crucial to realizing the main objectives of the study. This statement enquired on the degree of impact that the endorser expertise has on the consumer purchasing decision. As unveiled in the literature review, in various instances the endorser is not necessarily a user of the product they endorse and also are not necessarily an expert in the product or services that they endorse. Owing to this, it is very crucial to establish whether the consumers usually factor in the endorser expertise in the product or services they advertise before following the endorser recommendations to use the specified brand. In this statement, 20.00% of the respondents disagreed, 60.00% neither agreed nor disagreed, and the remaining 20.00% agreed. It is crucial to note that no scores were recorded for the strongly agree position or strongly disagree position. A weighted average of 3.00 was obtained as well as a 0.63 standard deviation.

From this data, it is crucial to note that the expertise held by an endorser regarding the product or services in question bears an average impact on Kenyan consumers. This, therefore, makes it necessary to ensure that in choosing a specific celebrity to endorse a given product in an advertisement, the celebrity is an expert in that area or is offered the necessary training. Such an aspect guarantees professional presentation of the brand, product or service to the targeted customers because not only will the endorser present the product in question as a celebrity with a wide fan base, he or she will also present it as a professional or an expert user. Such an approach in celebrity endorsement advertisement can greatly make a change.

The fifth statement in this question was more focused on celebrity trustworthiness and its impact on the consumers. To begin with, a rational consumer would only purchase a given product, if they believe that it will satisfy their needs. This implies that it is crucial to first win the consumer trust and confidence before presenting the product or services in question to them. To the consumers, any individual who

endorses or vouches for the products or services of a specific brand is perceived to be an agent of that particular brand. Owing to their role in advertisements, celebrities are therefore viewed by the public as crucial brand ambassadors, who are supposed to earn consumer respect and recognition. In this statement, 20.00% of the respondents disagreed with being impacted by the celebrity trustworthiness, 50.00% neither agreed nor disagreed and the remaining 30.00% agreed. Again, no scores were recorded for strongly agree and strongly disagree positions. A 3.10 weighted average was obtained in this question, as well as a standard deviation of 0.70. From an analytical perspective, the responses in this question oscillated from disagreed to agree, giving an average that falls within “neither agree nor disagree.”

The sixth statement was made to enlist whether the consumers usually compare themselves with the endorser before making any purchase decision. Essentially, there may be a positive impact on the consumer purchasing patterns, for instances whether the consumer tries to establish a similarity between him/her and the endorser. This is because whenever consumers feel that they do not resemble the endorser, may it be in general body look, financial stability. Lifestyle and other aspects, they may be tempted to work hard and use the products or services recommended by the endorser in an effort to look alike. Nevertheless, the success of this strategy greatly relies on the hand of the advertisers, and therefore, the need to carefully design the image and message that the endorser should pass when advertising the product. This is because if the targeted consumers may lose their motivation to purchase a product or services in question if they feel the endorser has nothing special to offer or worth considering in the advertisement. In this statement, 10.00% of the respondents disagreed that the similarity between them and the celebrity may have an impact on their purchasing behaviour, 50.00% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, while the remaining 40.00% agreed. On the same, a standard deviation of 0.63 and a weighted average of 3.30 was obtained. Just like the previous example, approximately half of the Kenyan consumers usually compare themselves with the celebrity endorsing a given product, and actually, may purchase the product recommended by the endorser, just to improve their lives and be like the celebrity.

On the same note, familiar a celebrity is may also have an impact on the targeted consumer behaviour. In most cases, the more a celebrity is familiar to the people, the higher the chances of a successful promotion campaign and advertisements. In any case, different celebrities have different popularity, and hence the need to ascertain the impact of such on consumer behaviour. In this statement, 30.00% of the participants disagreed with being impacted by the celebrity familiarity; 50% neither agreed nor disagreed and the remaining 10.00% agreed. A weighted average of 3.8 and a standard deviation was obtained in this question. The scores on this statement clearly depict that celebrity popularity has an average impact on consumer decision

making regarding the product in question. This clearly implies that a lesser growth in sales, market share and market size may be realized in cases whereby a celebrity with limited popularity is used.

It is hence necessary for a business enterprise to select the most favourable celebrity to advertise the given product, so as to ensure the high possibility of increased profit margins resulting from the increased revenues, market share and customer base. This can be greatly improved by enhancing the connection between the celebrity and the product. Owing to this, a consumer is highly likely to consider the physical appearance and likeability of the celebrity whenever an advert featuring the celebrity appears. This implies that if the celebrity is less attractive and less likeable, very few consumers would be interested in the advert and the campaign message would not be well communicated. While there is no exact metric to measure what entails attractive, likeable and nice physical appearance, it is crucial for the marketing function of the firm to select a public figure; a celebrity who has won the loyalty of many people and has the ability to command a commendable fan base. This is well confirmed by Milisavljevic, who suggests that celebrity endorsement is more than using a celebrity to advertise a brand, product or services [17]. The author describes the latter as a strategic tool that should be executed with optimal care, by ensuring the correct celebrity is selected to endorse the right product to the right consumer segment.

## V. DISCUSSION

In the literature review section, the study identifies three main strategies for selecting a celebrity to endorse a certain product. These strategies include Source Attractiveness and Source Credibility Model, Product Match-Up Model and The Meaning Transfer Model. According to Yilmaz et al., the three strategies must collaborate for the product to achieve marketing objectives in entirety [33]. It implies that the customer wants a variety of aspects from the endorsement such as credibility, acceptability, regional appeal factors, popularity, attractiveness, image, belief system, and factors that make the celebrity seem to “fit” the product [27]. With all these factors put into consideration by the three marketing models, the organization may proceed to choose a celebrity to market its product. However, the main question was whether choosing a celebrity as a marketing tool would be the best option in the European market. The study would also identify the relationship between celebrity endorsement and the three marketing strategies identified above. Henceforth, a multifaceted field study was conducted targeting both the consumer and the seller. The main reason for choosing the two types of respondents was based on celebrity endorsement strategies identified above which assert that a celebrity must fully understand the influence and the image reflected on the brand that he endorses.

It should also be noted that the managers were from different industries picked randomly. Significantly, consistency in the responses was identified with most of them giving an affirmative response. It was noted that all the managers were aware of celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool. Similarly, at least 55.56% of the consumers claimed to often come across celebrity endorsement adverts, while 44.44% claimed to sometimes come across them. This means that both organizations and their clients are familiar with the issue of celebrity branding. Awareness is of utmost importance as it guarantees accuracy in the identified results. Tripp et al. assert that creating awareness should be the first move a firm makes in introducing celebrity awareness as a marketing tool [27]. For this case, both parties are quite relevant with celebrity endorsement. Moving on, it was identified that more than half of the managers would prefer celebrity endorsement to other marketing tools. They were also confident in recommending the strategy to other organizations.

Actually, the weighted average on the Lickert scale was 4 on all the questions regarding the celebrity endorsement preference among managers. More than 60% of the managers said they were pleased or could prefer a specific celebrity. Based on the product match-up model, this implies that every manager has a celebrity in mind that he would prefer endorsing his brand depending on how his character or image depicts the product [31]. Even though this is not conclusive, even the managerial attitude towards a celebrity would contribute to the endorser being chosen by the organization.

The results of this study also indicate that consumer attitude towards a celebrity plays a role in choosing celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy. Spry et al. define consumer attitude as the sundry of consumer's behavioural pattern influenced by their beliefs, feelings regarding something, and the intention to consume [21]. Beliefs hold a special position in determining what a customer will buy and the type of marketing strategy that will attract his attention. According to the Fishbein model, each belief holds a certain weight that contributes to the consumer's attitude [21]. As observed in this study, the belief that a celebrity has negative publicity may put off some consumers. In fact, Forty per cent of the consumer respondents agreed that negative publicity about a celebrity influences their perception regarding a particular brand. Similarly, consumers may be motivated to changing their consumption behaviour affecting their consumption attitude [27]. For instance, a consumer may feel morally wrong if they are leading an unhealthy behaviour that may result in lifestyle disease. Therefore, if a brand is endorsed by a celebrity who is also determined in changing his eating behaviour, the consumer will be much comfortable in purchasing the product.

Veer et al. argue that celebrities manipulate public opinion, and they are judged by the masses [29]. How the consumer thinks about the celebrity contributes towards their acceptance of celebrity endorsement. Therefore, there is a

relationship between the celebrity's characters with the consumer attitude towards them [31]. Veer further asserts that there has been little research focussing on consumer attitudes towards brands that are celebrity endorsed [29]. However, various investigative studies have indicated that celebrity endorsement is dependent on certain traits by the consumer. The positive rapport between the consumer and the celebrity plays a greater role. Promotional situations involve social risks; hence, the consumer has to be aware of the impression created by the celeb while addressing social matters.

It is convenient to conclude that celebrity endorsement increases the market share of Kenyan medium and large-sized corporations. This shows that celebrity endorsement is not a new tool in their marketing strategies. Marketers have to identify whether the benefits outweigh the risks before engaging in celebrity endorsement. In this regard, most of the managers who participated in this study had 3 to 5 years of experience in their current firms. They indicated that with the time that they have spent in the firm, they had prioritized celebrity endorsement based on the profits it yields. Actually, 66.67% of the manager respondents' confirmed that their firms had once or repeatedly used celebrity endorsement to advertise their offerings. For a firm to choose a marketing strategy for more than one instance, it means that the strategy was beneficial to the firm. The sample in this study reflects the use of celebrity endorsement in the marketing field of the Kenyan middle and large-size business organizations. It relates to a report by Perner that observed 40% of UK firms or more were actively engaged in celebrity endorsement [19].

Additionally, managers who held sales and marketing positions indicated that it was quite simple to promote sales of a brand that is endorsed by a celebrity. The main reason was that consumers quickly identified a product or service that is endorsed. In most cases, consumers associate the brand with the celebrity, and they find it challenging to create a veil between the brand and the endorser. According to Veer et al., the mention of a certain brand creates an image of the celebrity [29]. Actually, a celebrity endorsement works perfectly when introducing a new product in the market [27]. Surprisingly, the consumer may forget the name of the product, but he or she will relate the product with the person endorsing it. That is why consumer respondents in this study indicated that celebrity endorsement is highly influential to their purchase decisions. They also reported that they find the sense of similarity between the consumer and the endorser influential when making a purchase decision. The respondents acknowledged that the presence of a celebrity helped them recognize a brand.

Another thing that was noted in this study is that the age and income level of the consumer influences decisions regarding celebrity endorsement [33]. Most of the participants were aged between 20 and 30 years and earned between 11,000 dollars and 40,000 million dollars. The participants who were in the low age bracket were also

characterized by low-income levels. Their consumption behaviour was low as compared to those who earned 30,000 dollars to 40,000 dollars. Celebrity endorsement appeared to be more appealing to people aged between 26 to 30 years. The main reason is that people in that age bracket have the income to spend and at the same time they are not too old to relate with celebrities. In general, the study finds that brands that are endorsed by a celebrity are more appealing to the consumer with 80% agreeing with this factor. The study finds that the use of celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy in Kenya is quite extensive. This is attributed to the benefits associated with this marketing tool. Celebrity endorsement makes the brand more recognizable, it promotes sales and also increases market share [31].

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study is multi-faceted as it aimed at understanding celebrity endorsement in marketing, and its relationship with consumer attitudes and market share. The business of celebrity endorsement involves three major parties as observed in this study. These parties include the consumer, the celebrity, and the brand to be endorsed or the endorsee. Each entity has an integral role to play in order to enhance efficiency in this business. The celebrity endorsee represents the marketer or the firm that decides to use celebrity endorsement as a promotional tool. The marketer may not make any decision on the celebrity to choose without having to consider the consumer. This is an important aspect when applying celebrity endorsement as a marketing tool as the marketer has to engage in background research. The main purpose of having background research is to select a celebrity who reverberates with consumer attitudes.

As mentioned in the introductory part, the study aimed at answering the research question regarding the relationship between consumer attitude and celebrity endorsement. Clearly, there is a crux of a relationship as attitude influences the decisions made in selecting an endorser. In the first stage of the research, it was observed that individuals had positive perceptions about the brands which had celebrities they liked. This can be interpreted further to the aspect of consumer attitude; the belief that a certain character is better than the other. Actually, the consumer always wants the best out of the rest. Similarly, the consumer prefers a celebrity that they can identify with. For example, young children may be more appalled by brands endorsed by the character “*Ben 10*” as opposed to David Beckham. In this context, consumer attitude towards a brand differs with the age of the consumer. It was noted in this study that the older generation was sceptical towards celebrity endorsement as compared to the younger generation. Some marketers are forced to use celebrities targeting the children so that they may influence the decisions made by their parents. It is discernable that the older generation has had more time to deal with different persuasive attempts from advertising and marketing practitioners.

Positive consumer attitudes yielded by the consumer on brands resulted in purchasing intention and trials. This means that when celebrities are likeable, the consumer will be motivated to trial a product even though it is new in the market. The tendency to purchase a product that is endorsed is on the upper hand as compared to the non-endorsed product. Surprisingly, consumers have more faith in a product that they have watched on TV being advertised by their favourite celebrity. Automatically, they create an impression that the product on TV is better than the others. In fact, when trying a product for the first time, they would rather choose the one that was being used by their favourite celebrity. It is noticeable that celebrity endorsement creates an impression that the product they are endorsing is of higher value and quality than the other. Consumers often think that the celebrity actually uses the product in his real-life; this is referred to as celebrity-product congruence.

Correlational analysis of this study also showed that consumer attitude towards celebrity endorsement is affected by credibility. Source credibility is critical to the success of celebrity endorsement. Data analyses indicated that most consumers had a phobia to endorsers with negative publicity. This means that the image created by the celebrity has to earn the consumer’s trust before he or she is accepted in the field. This factor is crucial for effective celebrity endorsement campaigns as highly trustworthy celebrities are believed to exert a more positive attitude from consumers than celebrities that consumers deem to be untrustworthy. Trust and credibility have the same effect on attitude based on the correlational analysis of the data and the findings of the literature review. Celebrities who wish to be contacted for promotional activity need to understand the factor of credibility. It is important for them to note that the public follows their lives keenly even when the information is not supposed to be in the public domain.

Moving on, the issue of celebrity endorsement and increase in market share is identifiable in the Kenyan market. With the massive evolution of technological advancement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, every institution is motivated to making its presence felt in the market field. This is why marketers are employing various tools and strategies in order to increase their market share. There is no doubt that celebrity endorsement is one of the successful tools employed by marketers in Kenyan middle and large-size corporations. Most of the managers interviewed elicited express confidence in celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy, and they acknowledged that they could recommend it to other firms. Celebrity endorsement enables firms to get a global audience and increase their markets share to the consumers abroad. For instance, the English Premier League is popular around the globe, and when a firm is endorsed by a player or a team from the league, it gets a chance to be noticed around the globe; for example, Nissan is endorsed by Yaya Toure. This implicates that the product will not only be

sold in a specific country but also will gain a global recognition.

Generally, celebrities appear in commercials to draw attention to the advertisement and helping the brand to be noticed. However, the choice of a celebrity enhances the consumer perceptions about the brand. Celebrities who are liked and followed closely will ultimately influence public opinion, and the brand might perform successfully. Endorsers who have demographic characteristics similar to those of the target audience are viewed as more viable and persuasive. It is also important for marketers to conduct intensive background research before reaching the endorser for their brand.

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