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Original Article

### The Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Customer Loyalty: A Case of Econet Wireless Company

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#### Date Published: ABSTRACT

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#### Keywords:

*Brand Loyalty,  
Celebrity Endorsement,  
Customer Satisfaction*

This research investigates the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer loyalty, using the case of Econet Company. Most literature sources are available on developed countries, with a few on developing countries. A pragmatic philosophical approach involving the use of the exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research design was adopted to fully understand the research questions. Quantitative results were complemented by qualitative data obtained from interviews. In conducting the survey, a sample of 130 respondents was selected using the Krejice and Morgan (1970) sample estimation tables. The targeted respondents included the Econet Company customers. A Likert scale structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Spearman coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse data with the aid of the Social Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The Cronbach Alpha test was performed, and all the values were greater than 0.7, which was therefore accepted (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). It was revealed that independent variables (celebrity reliability, celebrity expertise) and the mediating variables (customer satisfaction and customer trustworthiness) have a positive influence on customer loyalty according to the Spearman Correlation test, which yielded a minimum correlation coefficient of 0.58 and a maximum of 0.78 leading to the rejection of the proposed null hypothesis. The study recommended that Econet Company select celebrity endorsers based on the celebrity's reliability, attractiveness, and expertise, as this contributes significantly to customer satisfaction and trustworthiness, which will result in customer loyalty. Furthermore, Econet Company must perform a well-thought screening and choose wisely the celebrity endorsers who align correctly with the image and values of the company's brands or products. It must also avoid using celebrities with any kind of negative publicity. The study contributed not only to the literature on celebrity endorsements but also to filling the gap in the literature, providing immense usage for these techniques. Finally, the conclusion suggests that further research be carried out on a larger sample size and done on another.

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## INTRODUCTION

Celebrity endorsement is considered to be one of the most powerful and effective marketing strategies in the modern world of business, and it can be used as a tool to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. It is considered a winning strategy to build and enhance brand loyalty. The use of advertisement has gone through major phases of changes over the past decades, from classical to modern (Gwagwa, 2018). Since then, modern marketers have developed strategies using various appeals (Belch and Belch, 2001). The motive behind formulating such strategies is to gain high brand exposure, attention, interest, desire and action (Belch and Belch, 2001). In order to do this, modern marketers employ celebrities to promote brands and gain sustainable competitive advantage. According to McCracken (1989), a celebrity endorser is an individual who enjoys public recognition and uses his recognition on behalf of consumer goods by appearing with it in an advertisement.

The image of the celebrity is used to push the products in the mind of the consumer and thus helps an organisation to sell its products. A careful selection of celebrities is made to associate with a particular brand. The success of the endorsement depends on the strength of the match between the celebrity and the brand; the strength of the match

depends on four factors, namely trustworthiness, likeability, similarity between the celebrity and the target audience and expertise of the celebrity in the subject matter of the product (Baniya, 2017).

Brand association through celebrities has become very popular in today's marketing world. Globally, marketers spend huge amounts of money on celebrity contracts annually (Katyal, 2007). In America, about 25% of all advertisements feature an endorser, which is a celebrity (Rehman and Shabbir, 2010; Dash and Sabat, 2012). This is due to the power associated with celebrity endorsers. This shows that there is a direct relationship between the use of celebrities in advertisements and an improvement in company profits. Thus, marketers use celebrity endorsements to make advertisements believable and to enhance consumer recognition of the brand. (McCracken, 1989) Likewise, celebrity endorsements are now prevalent in Ireland and the United Kingdom (Pomerantz, 2013; Tirtiroglu and Elbeck, 2008). For instance, the famous footballer Lionel Messi endorses Lay, Korean actress Soon Hyekyo endorses the cosmetic brand Laigene, American singer P. Diddy endorses Ciroc, American actress Nicole Kidman endorses Omega watches and many more (Nicolau and Santa-Maria, 2013; Rodriguez., 2010). Consumers are quicker to recall a product in

which a celebrity is involved with. If one is a fan, then they are most likely to show interest in the product the celebrity is endorsing. For example, according to Louis (2010), in America in 1984, Nike launched what would become the most successful athlete endorsement campaign in history. In 2008, Michael Jordan was paid large sums of money to endorse sports shoes and the brand created an estimated of over USD1 billion (Dix et al., 2010).

Econet is Zimbabwe's leading network service provider, offering a range of affordable, high-quality managed communication solutions and network connectivity to customers in Zimbabwe. It also makes use of celebrities to endorse its brand. One of its endorsers is a well-known musician and socialite named Rocqui. Also, its competitors use celebrity endorsers for their brands. This research, therefore, intends to show consumer values of celebrity brand association in the context of the telecommunications industry. A plethora of research on celebrity endorsements, such as the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer value, the effects of celebrity endorsement on consumer purchasing intention, and the influence of celebrity on consumer behaviour, have been carried out. However, no research has been carried out on the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand loyalty, especially in less developed countries like Zimbabwe. This research, therefore, seeks to find out the influence of celebrity endorsement on brand loyalty in the context of the telecommunication industry.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Worldwide, large companies are facing difficulties in attracting customers in order to boost sales, profits and cash-flows due to various reasons ranging from internal factors such as lack of an appropriate viable marketing strategy or external factors such as competitor activity. The main thrust is that of achieving a strategic and sustainable marketing base, enabling large corporations to become self-sufficient and some

of the marketing strategies that are being used by large corporates such as Econet Wireless include advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing, publicity, public relations and celebrity endorsement. Similarly, Econet Wireless, after witnessing numerous gaps in marketing decided to embark on the use of celebrity endorsement in promoting its products and services. Using this strategy, Econet Wireless came up with popular celebrities that advertise its products and services and their popularity being associated with Econet Wireless. However, few studies have focused on the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer loyalty, making reference to Econet Wireless. This study, therefore, intends to investigate the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer loyalty in the Zimbabwean context, using a case study of Econet Wireless.

### HYPOTHESES

H<sub>1</sub> - There is a positive relationship between celebrity expertise and customer satisfaction at Econet.

H<sub>2</sub> - A positive relationship exists between celebrity reliability and customer trustworthiness at Econet.

H<sub>3</sub> - Customer satisfaction positively influences customer loyalty at Econet.

H<sub>4</sub> - There is a positive relationship between customer trustworthiness and customer loyalty.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer loyalty in the case of Econet Company. In this section, the research focuses on the following models: The source credibility model, the Source attractiveness model, the Meaning transfer model and the match-up hypothesis model. This, therefore, forms the theoretical framework of the study.

**Table 1: Summary of main theories used in this study**

Author	Theory	Main Concept	Year
Hovland and Weiss	Source Credibility	• Endorsement is based on trust, attractiveness and expertise	1951
McGuire	Source Attractiveness Model	• Attractiveness of the celebrity influences the consumer	1985
McCracken	Meaning Transfer Model	• Transfer of meaning from culture and society to brands and to the consumer	1989
Forkan	Match up Hypothesis	• For the endorsement to be effective, there should be a match-up between the celebrity and the product/brand	1980

**Source: Credibility Model**

The source Credibility model was propounded by Hovland and Weiss (1951). The main thrust of the theory is that positive characteristics of communicators influence the receiver's perception and the degree of message acceptance. This implies that the receiver is more likely to be convinced. Mathur (1997) highlights that the use of a credible person highly improves the persuasiveness of the message. Hovland (1989) highlights that the level of effect that an influencer's message has on users rests on three dimensions, namely trust, attractiveness and expertise.

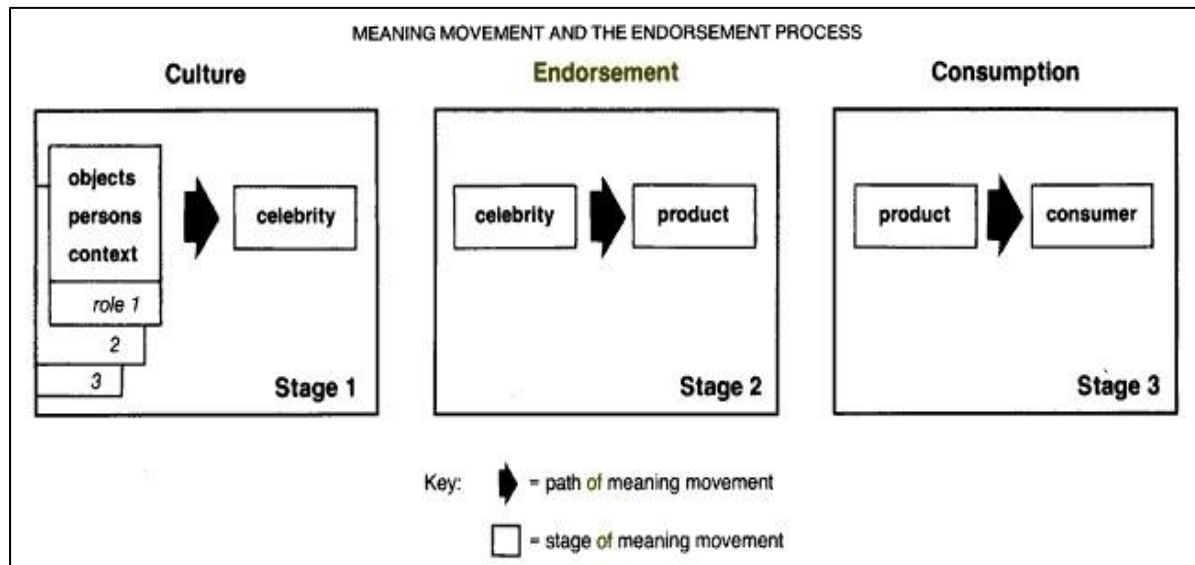
**Source: Attractiveness Model**

The attractiveness model of the source is an element of the valence of the source (McGuire, 1968). This demonstrates that a message's efficacy depends on the consumer's similarity and familiarity. Baker and Churchill (1977) observe that, because of their emotional reactions, the use of attractive celebrities has a positive effect on consumers. Advertisers pick endorsers to benefit from the double impact of their reputation and physical appeal based on their beauty and attractiveness (Singer, 1983). The audience tends to form positive standards about such individuals, and research has shown attractive communicators to be more effective in changing opinions (Chaiken, 1979) and in creating buying intentions (Petty and Cacioppo, 1980) than comparatively unattractive ones. Similarity' is described in relation to this model as a fictional similarity between the source and the recipient of the message, while familiarity' refers to the source's

knowledge through disclosure, and liability as warmth to the source due to the source's looks (Erdogan, 1999). The role promoted by the source is better acknowledged when the endorser and the recipient are thought to have similar goals and needs (Kelman, 1961).

**The Meaning Transfer Models**

A celebrity includes a large number of different definitions. Celebrity fans are better suited to promote brands, as they give customers a range of features that help them judge their brands (Martin, 2006). The aim of advertisers to endorse brands with celebrity users is because they idolise and want the identity of popular personalities and marketers that customers would want celebrity-related products only (Fowles, 2006). Celebrity permissions are examples of the broader transition system (McCracken 1989). According to him, there is a course for shifting the cultural significance, which consists of three phases: creating the identity of celebrities, transmitting value from celebrity to brand and, ultimately, from product to customers. It is the customers who understand and consider a similitude between the two, passing value to a brand from the star. Levy (1959) suggests that viewers who can understand the symbolic meaning in an advertisement and then pass the symbolic meaning to themselves take the next step. Batra et al. (1996) also found that people see the buying of their products as an expansion of their own, reinforcing their personalities.

**Figure 1: The meaning transfer model**

Source: McCracken (1989)

In the first stage, meaning is associated with the famous person migrating from the product or brand. In the consumers' minds, the brand is linked to the meaning attributed to it. In the second stage, the Consumer acquires brand meaning. Transfer occurs when a celebrity is seen with a product in an advertisement. It is, therefore, imperative to make the correct choice of celebrity in order for the product to contain appropriate meaning. In the last stage, this means further transfer to the consumer. As celebrities become endorsers, they will make meaning in physical form for the consumer.

### The Match-up Hypothesis

Spokesperson-brand match-up means that the spokesperson's highly relevant features are compatible with the brand's highly relevant characteristics (Misra and Beatty, 1990). There is a need for a meaningful relationship between the celebrity, the viewer and the service (Kamins, 1990). Evans (1988) postulates that "celebrities suck the lifeblood of the dry product" in the absence of a distinct and unique relationship between the consumer and the celebrities, thereby highlighting the danger of the vampire effect.

The match-up hypothesis of endorser choice fits well with the theory of social adaptation, which means that the adaptive sense of the knowledge would decide the effect (Kahle1985). Kamins

(2004) highlighted that marketing a brand by a celebrity contributes to greater popularity for celebrities and marketers compared to commercials featuring a less suitable picture of the spokesperson of the company. Till et al. (2008) clarified that although Michael Jordan is an attractive endorser, his effectiveness as a celebrity endorser is likely to be greater when endorsing sports goods such as Gatorade or Adidas than items unrelated to his athletic performance such as WorldCom Communications.

The widespread and continuous use of celebrities in advertisements indicates the costs of recruiting them are worthwhile (Agrawal et al., 2005). If the fit is right, the approval stamp of a celebrity could build an emotional bond between the endorser and the customer (Bradley, 1996). One can always pair a celebrity with the brand's desired image, but if the target audience does not interpret the combination, it will not be effective (Temperley et al., 2006). Newsom et al. (2000) agree that there should be no discrepancy between a celebrity's prior marketing campaign and the desired image.

During their careers, successful individuals are elevated to the status of celebrity, and thus, their gained notoriety and popularity without regard for their actual physical appearance makes them look appealing to customers. The success and



popularity of these celebrities turn in the eye of the public into legitimacy and influence (Choi, 2007). Solomon et al. (2009) refer to the 'legitimacy gap' where the lack of credibility is compounded by events where celebrities promote

items they don't necessarily use or sometimes don't believe in.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

### Celebrity Endorsement

**Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of celebrity endorsement**

Advantage	Disadvantage
Increased attention	Overshadow the brand
Image polishing	Public Controversy
Brand Introduction	Image change and over-exposure
Brand repositioning	Loss of public recognition
Underpin global campaign	Expensive

Source: Kotler (2012)

### Types of Brand Celebrity Deals

#### Once-Off Celebrity Deals

In a one-off celebrity deal, the celebrity is expected only to use or wear the brand's product for a single event, especially at public events or when the celebrity is appearing on social media.

#### Long-Term Celebrity Deals

In the long term, celebrity deals, the celebrity uses or wears the brand most of the time to create awareness. In this way, the celebrity becomes associated with the brand in such a way that consumers will relate the celebrity to the brand. For example, when Michael Jordan was endorsing the Nike sneakers in every basketball match, he used to put on the Nike Sneakers throughout to the extent that nearly all the basketball fans were attached to the Nike sneakers.

#### Unofficial Deals (Aka Celebrity Placements)

In this deal, brands are sent for free to a bunch of different celebrities, who rely on P.R. agencies with celebrity contacts to perform the outreach. Unofficial deals are good options to get a brand out there without having to pay money for an official endorsement.

#### The Risk of Celebrity Endorsement

##### Image Change

Celebrities are also humans. They make mistakes, and when they make mistakes, they affect the brands they endorse. This means that the brand

equity of the brand they endorse will fall significantly, which results in losses to the company, and it will be difficult to bring back the brand to its original position. For example, in 2009, Tiger Woods crumbled due to infidelity with a number of women, Nike brand, which Tiger Woods endorsed, dropped significantly.

##### Consumers Can Overshadow Brands

There is a tendency for consumers to focus more on the celebrity, not the product or brand. This happens usually when the celebrity endorses a series of products at a time. For example, David Beckham endorses a series of brands which feature him prominently in print media. In this way, consumers concentrate more on the celebrity rather than the brand. This implies that the image of the celebrity as the focal point of advertising devalues many products.

##### Endorsements Are Expensive

The cost of acquiring a celebrity to endorse a product or brand might be too high to the extent that it might not be commensurate with the profits that will be obtained from the endorsement. This means that instead of getting profits from the endorsement, the company might end up incurring losses. For example, the contract between Pepsi and Beyoncé, which amounted to USD\$50 million, was too high as the probability of returning the money was low.

##### Celebrity Brand Association

It is not a modern phenomenon to use celebrities in advertisements. This dates back to the eighteenth century, when Josiah Wedgwood, the founder of the pottery brand Wedgwood, used kingly endorsements for his company that created an aura greater than the actual product and brand characteristics. Trade cards popularised celebrity endorsements in the late nineteenth century. Such cards had celebrity pictures along with the summary of the product and were either provided along with the product or put into the product’s packaging.

Such cards included actors such as Lily Langtry and Sarah Bernhardt, as well as sportsmen such as Ty Cobb. On three brands, Mark Twain Cigars, Mark Twain Flours, and Great Mark Cigars, Author Mark Twain was featured. In the early 19th century, cigarette companies such as Murad Cigarettes used comedians such as Harry Bulger in advertising (Ibscdc.org, 2014). The Queen’s partnership with Cadbury’s Cocoa (Sherman, 2004) is another great example of celebrity endorsements in the earlier days. This technique was then expanded due to the growing emergence of film, although it owes its success more to the growth of radios as a communication medium in the 1930s and television in the 1950s (McDonough, 2006).

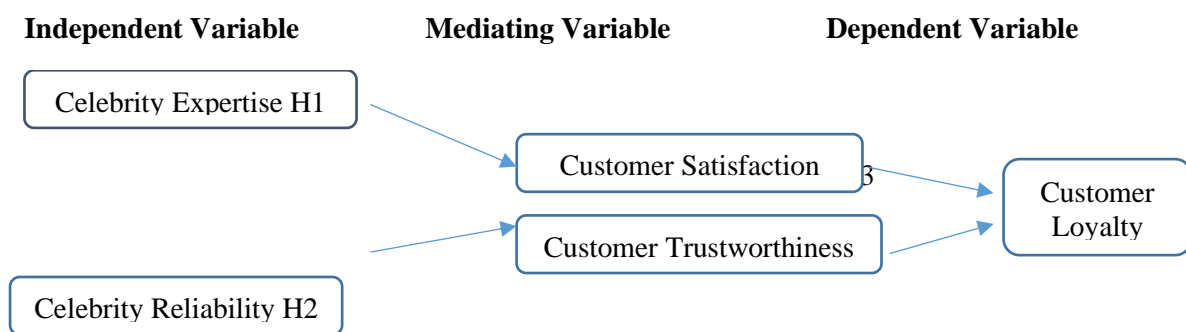
### The Effect of Celebrity Maturity on Consumer Loyalty

Ullman (2018) defines maturity as the ability to speak, think and act on your feelings within the bounds of dignity. Liebman (2018) states that “maturity is achieved when a person postpones immediate pleasures for long-term values”. Consumer loyalty has been declared to be a definitive objective of marketing. Banasiewicz (2005) asserts that loyalty comprises a buyer’s dedication to repurchasing a product or a service. Therefore, celebrity maturity has a positive effect on consumer loyalty if the celebrity being used is able to speak out when advertising a brand and if the celebrity does not behave in a way that proves that he or she is not focused.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the study focused on three main variables (independent, mediating and dependent variables). The framework epitomises the conceived idea of how constructs in the study interrelate. The above framework depicts the relationship between celebrity expertise and reliability as independent variables and customer satisfaction, consumer trustworthiness, and customer loyalty.

**Figure 3: Conceptual Framework**



### The Influence of Celebrity Expertise on Customer Satisfaction

The term expertise is defined as the degree to which a communicator is regarded as a source of valid assertions (Hovland et al., 2000). Expertise also refers to a high level of knowledge and skill (Gupta, 2009). Celebrity expertise has a

significant effect on the satisfaction of consumers because a knowledgeable celebrity is familiar with the product they are endorsing and hence can advertise a brand positively. On the other hand, customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which a company’s products or services meet the expectations of a customer. In other words, how happy a customer is after doing business with a

company is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction tests not only how satisfied a consumer is with their business transactions but also their overall business experience.

This, therefore, implies that celebrity expertise varies directly proportional to consumer satisfaction. As celebrity expertise increases, consumer satisfaction also increases. This is in line with a study carried out in Sweden by Dewar et al. (2022) on the influence of celebrity expertise on consumer satisfaction; research results review that a strong positive relationship exists between celebrity expertise and consumer satisfaction. These results are also reinforced by a study carried out in India by Mohammad (2015) on the effect of celebrity expertise on consumer satisfaction, who found that a positive relationship exists between celebrity expertise and consumer satisfaction. Therefore, from the above discussion, the following hypotheses were postulated.

*H<sub>1</sub> – There is a positive relationship between celebrity expertise and customer satisfaction at Econet*

### **The Influence of Celebrity Reliability on Customer Trustworthiness**

Reliability is the quality of being trustworthy or of performing consistently well (Fitch, 2004). A celebrity who is reliable is said to be credible or trustworthy and hence can be used to endorse products of any brand. Due to the attachment of consumers valuing celebrity reliability in advertising, it can be depicted that celebrity reliability has an effect on consumer trustworthiness. If by any chance the celebrity is not reliable, it therefore entails that consumers will not trust the brand, meaning that there will be a negative effect on consumer trustworthiness. Erdogan (2011) then defines trustworthiness as the believability, integrity and honesty of an endorser. This implies that the more reliable a celebrity is the more consumers will believe him or her.

Celebrities who did not commit any crime and had no “skeletons in their closets” are the most reliable endorsers and have a positive effect on consumer

trustworthiness. This, therefore, means that celebrities who are not well known and criminals are not reliable and can lead to consumers not trusting the brand that they endorse. Similarly, even though a celebrity is reliable and committed something bad, the brand he/ she was endorsing will be affected; hence organisations need to quickly change the celebrity endorsers so that brand equity will not be affected. This implies that celebrity reliability affects consumer trustworthiness. Khan (2018) carried out a study on the impact of celebrity on consumer trustworthiness; the research results showed that celebrity reliability has a positive impact on consumer trustworthiness.

In line with this discussion, the following hypotheses were postulated.

*H<sub>2-A</sub> positive relationship exists between celebrity reliability and customer trustworthiness at Econet*

### **The Influence of Customer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty**

Kotler (2012) postulates that customer satisfaction refers to the degree to which a company’s products or services meet the expectations of a customer. Customer satisfaction is a result of the product or service not only meeting the customer’s expectations but the product or service exceeding the expectations of the customer. McCracken (1989) highlighted that customer satisfaction is achieved when the celebrity endorser is attractive, expert and reliable. That is, they need to scout for suitable celebrities with the required characteristics so as to make the endorsement meaningful. On the other hand, brand loyalty refers to the extent to which customers continue to purchase from the same brand over and over again despite competitors offering similar products or services. A loyal customer, therefore, becomes an asset to the company as he/she constantly buys products from the company and at the same time spreads good word of mouth about the brand (Keller, 2008). McCracken (1989) noted that consumer satisfaction results in brand loyalty. This is



because the consumer might be seeing celebrities using the product; for instance, when Michael Jordan was endorsing Nike sneakers, during basketball matches, Michael Jordan used to put on the Nike sneakers, which resulted in customer satisfaction and contributing to brand loyalty; hence, Nike became a strong brand with many followers. In research carried out by Al-Msallam (2015) on the influence of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty in the Hotel Industry, research results indicated that a positive relationship existed between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. From the above discussion, the following hypotheses were postulated.

*H<sub>3</sub>-Customer satisfaction positively influences customer loyalty at Econet.*

### **The Influence of Customer Trustworthiness on Customer Loyalty**

Erdogan (2011) then defines trustworthiness as the believability, integrity and honesty of an endorser. If a company uses a celebrity who is reliable to endorse their product or service, the endorsement is likely to result in customer trustworthiness as the consumers will have confidence in the endorser, meaning that they will buy the product or service without fear or doubt. For example, Adidas uses Lionel Messi as their celebrity endorser, and it has resulted in customer trustworthiness as Messi is mature, disciplined and reliable. This has enabled the Adidas brand to be stronger, having more brand followers, meaning that the consumers are now brand loyal, the loyalty emanating from trustworthiness, which the consumers acquired from the celebrity endorser Lionel Messi. This, therefore, signifies that customer trustworthiness has an effect on brand loyalty. This is supported by McCracken (1989), who noted that positive endorsement contributes to customer trustworthiness, which will result in endorsement in brand loyalty. Utami (2015) carried out research on the influence of customer trustworthiness on customer loyalty; research results showed that a strong positive

relationship existed between the two variables. Similarly, research carried out by Freddy (2016) on the effect of customer trust on customer loyalty, research results indicated that a positive relationship existed between customer trust and customer loyalty. From the above discussion, the following hypotheses were postulated.

*H<sub>4</sub>-A positive relationship exists between customer trustworthiness and customer loyalty.*

### **Research Methodology**

This research was conducted using the pragmatic research philosophy, which uses both qualitative and quantitative methods; hence, it is called a mixed approach. The pragmatic philosophy was chosen because it covers the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research. Moreover, it helps generalise data and enables the researcher to develop a holistic approach to incorporate numerous factors into the study fully. Research approaches refer to the systematic and structured ways that researchers use to conduct research, and they differ in terms of their underlying logic and methods of inquiry (Creswell, 2001). A Likert scale structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Spearman coefficient and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse data with the aid of the Social Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A mixed approach was used as it allows the researcher to use a diversity of methods, combining inductive and deductive thinking and offsetting limitations of quantitative and qualitative research through a complementary approach. In carrying out the research, a sample size of 130 was chosen using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample estimation tables at 5% confidence interval with 95% confidence level. In this study, the researcher chose 130 respondents from a sampling pool of 1500. The stratified sampling technique was used to select the different types of customers according to customer preference. The data was analysed using SPSS, decoding the information into meaningful information for decision-making.

**Table 3: Sampling Size**

	Sampling Pool	Sample Size
Customers	1500	130
Total	1500	130

Descriptive research enabled the researcher to use research instruments such as interviews and questionnaires, as well as a representative sample, making it easy to analyse data.

**FINDINGS**

**Reliability Tests**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument, the researcher performed reliability tests using the IBM SPSS of Cronbach’s Alpha test against the variables, which include celebrity reliability and celebrity expertise. Consumer trustworthiness, consumer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Below is a table with the values.

**Table 4: Reliability test statistics**

Scales	Cronbach Alpha	No. of items
Celebrity reliability	0.7	2
Celebrity expertise	0.832	2
Consumer trustworthiness	0.741	2
Consumer satisfaction	0.834	2
Customer loyalty	0.719	2

**Source:** Questionnaire

According to Cohen (1988), if the value of Cronbach is above, it is said that *Table 4* indicates a coefficient value on the Cronbach Alpha test performed on celebrity reliability, which had 8 aspects being measured. The alpha coefficient value was greater than the minimum of 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951). This showed the reliability of the aspects measuring the aspects is positive, thus allowing the researcher to make valid and credible conclusions

**The Influence of Celebrity Expertise On Customer Satisfaction**

*Table 5* reviews that the respondents were in support of the questionnaire about the relation to celebrity expertise on consumer satisfaction. The average total celebrity expertise was 3.8000 and 3.9257 for consumer trustworthiness. This data shows that respondents were in agreement with the information given by the researcher.

**Table 5: The influence of celebrity expertise on customer satisfaction**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Average Total Celebrity Expertise	3.8000	.84511	70
Average Total consumer satisfaction	3.9257	.95594	70

In addition, *Table 5* reviews that celebrity expertise has a strong positive effect on consumer satisfaction, as shown in the table above. The results indicate a significant positive effect of

celebrity expertise as an independent variable on consumer satisfaction, a dependent variable; hence, a positive relationship exists between celebrity expertise and consumer satisfaction.

**Table 6: Pearson correlations**

		Celebrity Expertise	Consumer Satisfaction
Celebrity Expertise	Pearson Correlation	1	.789**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Consumer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

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

Table 6 above shows a positive relationship between celebrity expertise and consumer satisfaction. Pearson’s model was used, and a two-tailed test was used, and the results showed a significant relationship between the two variables. Celebrity expertise has a significant effect on the satisfaction of consumers because a

knowledgeable celebrity is familiar with the product they are endorsing and hence can advertise a brand positively (Gupta, 2009). Therefore, if a celebrity has knowledge about the brand he is endorsing, the consumers are satisfied in the sense that they are also given to know what the brand is all about.

**Table 7: The Regression analysis**

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	.428	.247	.419	1.736	.087
Dependent Variable R	.892	.084		10.576	.000
R square	0.789 <sup>a</sup>				
Adjusted R-squared	.622				
Stud error of the estimate	.616				
F statistics	.59210				
Sig.	111.856				
	.000 <sup>b</sup>				

Table 7 above signifies that there is a strong positive relationship between celebrity expertise and consumer satisfaction as the p-values are less than 0.05 (5%). This indicates that celebrity expertise has a direct influence on customer satisfaction. These results are in line with McCracken (1989), who highlighted that celebrity expertise has a positive effect on consumer satisfaction.

**The Influence of Celebrity Reliability on Customer Trustworthiness**

Table 8 shows that the respondents were in agreement with the questionnaire about the relationship between celebrity reliability on consumer trustworthiness. The average celebrity reliability was 3.7643 and 3.8143 for consumer trustworthiness. This data clearly signifies that the respondents were in agreement with the information given by the researcher.

**Table 8: The influence of celebrity reliability on customer trustworthiness**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Average total celebrity reliability	3.7643	1.19032	70
Average total consumer trustworthiness	3.8143	1.20485	70

Furthermore, Table 9 shows that celebrity reliability has a positive effect on consumer trustworthiness. The results indicate a significant positive effect of celebrity reliability as an

independent variable on consumer trustworthiness as a dependent variable. This signifies that a positive relationship exists between celebrity reliability and consumer trustworthiness. A study

by Aziz (2013) shows that one cannot talk about celebrity reliability without considering consumer’s trustworthiness, therefore meaning that these variables correlate.

**Table 9: Pearson Correlation**

		Celebrity Reliability	Consumer Trustworthiness
Celebrity Reliability	Pearson Correlation	1	0.348**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	70	70
Consumer Trustworthiness	Pearson Correlation	0.348**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	70	70

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

Table 10 reviews a strong positive relationship between celebrity reliability and consumer trustworthiness. This is because after performing a two-tailed test there was the results were 0.01 and according to Pearson, if P is less than 0.05 there is a significant relationship between the variables.

**Table 10: Regression Analysis**

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.685	.298	-.348	12.358	.000
Dependent Variable	-.315			-3.066	.003
R	0.348 <sup>a</sup>				
R square	.121				
Adjusted r squared	0.109				
Std error of the estimate	0.75992				
F statistics	9.400				
Sig.	.003 <sup>b</sup>				

Table 10 above shows that there is a significant relationship between customer trustworthiness and celebrity reliability; this is according to Cohen (1988), who states that if P is less than 0.05, the relationship is significant. Such tests indicate a correlation between the recipient’s readiness to give the knowledge validity and meaning (Holland et al., 2003).

**The Influence of Consumer Satisfaction on Customer Loyalty**

**Table 11: The influence of consumer satisfaction on Customer loyalty**

Average Total Consumer Satisfaction Maturity	3.9714	1.98821	70
Average Total Customer Loyalty	3.8250	1.04807	70

Table 11 above shows that the average total consumer satisfaction was 3.9714 and 3.8250 for customer loyalty. This data shows that the respondents were in agreement about the relation of consumer satisfaction to customer loyalty. These results indicate that a positive relationship exists between the two variables, that is, there is a positive relationship between consumer satisfaction and customer loyalty. These results are in agreement with Hovland et al (2003), who asserted that customer satisfaction contributes to customer loyalty.

**Table 12: Pearson Correlations**

		Consumer Satisfaction	Customer Loyalty
Consumer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.582**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.582**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

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

The results above (Table 12) show that there is a positive effect of consumer satisfaction on customer loyalty. The table above shows that a significant relationship existed between both the independent and dependent variables, as the

Pearson correlation was less than 0.05. This implies that consumer satisfaction contributes directly to customer loyalty, as a satisfied customer will continuously buy the company's product or brand.

**Table 13: The regression analysis**

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	.991	.327	.582	3.027	.003
Dependent Variable	.617	.105		5.903	.000
R	0.582 <sup>a</sup>				
R square	.339				
Adjusted R r squared	.329				
Std error of the estimate	0.85845				
F statistics	34.851				
Sig.	.000 <sup>b</sup>				

Table 13 above shows the regression analysis of consumer satisfaction against customer loyalty. Cohen (1988) states that if your value is from 0.1 to 0.29, it is weak, 0.3-0.49 moderate and from 0.5 to 1 strong. The standardised value is 0.582 in this instance, meaning there is a strong relationship between consumer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This implies that increasing customer satisfaction results in customer loyalty; hence, marketers need to use reliable, attractive and expert celebrities who will instil confidence and satisfy customers.

Table 14 reviews that the respondents were in agreement on the relationship between consumer trustworthiness and customer loyalty. The average total consumer trustworthiness was 3.7160 and 3.8120 for customer loyalty. This data signifies that respondents were in support of the information given by the researcher. Moreover, the results indicate a significant positive effect of consumer trustworthiness as an independent variable on customer loyalty, a dependent variable; hence, a positive relationship exists between consumer trustworthiness and customer loyalty.

**The Nexus Between Customer Trustworthiness and Customer Loyalty**

**Table 14: The nexus between customer trustworthiness and customer loyalty**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Average total customer trustworthiness	3.7160	1.19032	70
Average total customer loyalty	3.8120	1.20485	70



**Table 15: The Regression Analysis**

	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.685	.298	-.348	12.358	.000
Dependent Variable	-.315			-3.066	.003
R	0.348 <sup>a</sup>				
R square	.121				
Adjusted r squared	0.109				
Std error of the estimate	0.75992				
F statistics	9.400				
Sig.	.003 <sup>b</sup>				

Table 15 shows that the p-values are less than 0.05, which signifies that there is a strong positive relationship between consumer trustworthiness and customer loyalty. This indicates that consumer trustworthiness has an influence on customer loyalty. That is, in order to increase customer loyalty, marketers need to tailor-make

strategies to increase consumer trustworthiness, as anchored by McCracken (1989), who postulated that there is a need to select attractive and reliable celebrity who enhances consumer trustworthiness, which will result in customer loyalty.

**Summary of hypothesis testing using Spearman correlation coefficient.**

Hypotheses	Test	Significant	Results
H1	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	Positive	Accepted
H2	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	Positive	Accepted
H3	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	Positive	Accepted
H4	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	Positive	Accepted

**DISCUSSION**

**Celebrity Expertise and Customer Satisfaction**

Research Findings from Table 5 reveal that celebrity expertise has a strong positive relationship with consumer satisfaction. This signifies that celebrity expertise varies directly proportional to consumer satisfaction; these results are in agreement with McCracken (1989), who postulated that celebrity expertise influences consumer satisfaction.

**Celebrity Reliability and Customer Trustworthiness**

Research results (Table 5) reveal that celebrity reliability has a positive effect on consumer trustworthiness. This implies that a strong positive relationship exists between celebrity reliability and customer trustworthiness. This was supported by Tirtiroglu and Elbeck (2008) who posit that

there is a positive relationship between credit reliabilities and customer trustworthiness.

**Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty**

Findings from the research (Table 11) show that the Pearson correlation was less than 0.05. This implies that consumer satisfaction contributes directly to customer loyalty; hence, a strong positive relationship exists between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Dash and Sabat, (2012) assert that a company with appropriate marketing strategies has a higher probability of satisfying customers which results in improved customer loyalty.

**Customer Trustworthiness and Customer Loyalty**

Research findings (Table 14) show that they are a positive relationship between customer trustworthiness and customer loyalty. This

implies that customer trustworthiness has a direct influence on customer loyalty. Rodriguez (2010) postulates that the increase in the level of creditworthiness will eventually result in an increase in the company image.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research focused on the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer loyalty, a case study of Econet Company. Research findings reveal that celebrity expertise, celebrity reliability, customer satisfaction and customer trustworthiness contribute to customer loyalty, implying that the dependent, mediating and independent variables vary directly proportional to each other. The results from the study reveal that celebrity expertise has an influence on customer satisfaction. These results are in line with research carried out by Meriden (2018), who found that celebrity expertise has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. When consumers are exposed to an expert, they become more confident and satisfied with the product or brand than those consumers exposed to an inexperienced one, as supported by Martin (2006), who postulated that celebrity expertise positively influences customer satisfaction. From the research, it was found that celebrity reliability has a strong positive relationship with customer trustworthiness. This implies that celebrity reliability varies directly proportionally with customer trustworthiness. These results are in agreement with McCracken (1989) and Simpson (2015), who both highlighted that celebrity reliability has a direct positive impact on customer trustworthiness. This is further reinforced by Shimp (2000), who stated that celebrity reliability influences customer trustworthiness. The study also reviews that customer satisfaction has a strong positive influence on customer loyalty. This implies that customer satisfaction varies directly proportional to customer loyalty. These results are in line with research carried out by Strake (2019), who found that customer satisfaction positively influences customer loyalty.

Results from the study also show that customer trustworthiness has a direct strong relationship

with customer loyalty, which implies that if customer trustworthiness increases, customer loyalty also increases; hence, customer trustworthiness varies directly proportional to customer loyalty. These research results are in agreement with research carried by Griggs (2020), whose research results found out that a strong positive relationship exists between customer trustworthiness and customer loyalty. The study examined the influence of celebrity endorsement on customer loyalty, using the case of Econet Company. The study reveals that a positive relationship existed between the independent, mediating and dependent variables.

From the research findings, the following recommendations could be made: Research findings revealed that celebrity expertise has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. This signifies that a direct relationship exists between celebrity expertise and customer satisfaction. This implies that it is of paramount importance that companies use expert celebrities to endorse products or brands. It was also established that celebrity reliability has a direct positive relationship with customer trustworthiness. This means that celebrity reliability influences customer trustworthiness; hence, celebrity reliability varies directly proportional to customer trustworthiness.

Research results also clearly indicate that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on customer loyalty. This signifies that customer satisfaction contributes to customer loyalty, enabling a company to gain more customers. This shows that customer satisfaction varies proportionally to customer loyalty. The research shows that customer trustworthiness has a positive influence on customer loyalty, implying that a direct relationship exists between customer trustworthiness and customer loyalty.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations can be made: the marketers of Econet must select celebrity endorsers based on the celebrity's reliability, attractiveness and

expertise, as this contributes significantly to customer satisfaction and customer trustworthiness, which will result in customer loyalty. Econet Company must perform a well-thought screening and choose wisely the celebrity endorsers who align correctly with the image and values of the company's brands or products based on the match-up hypotheses. Celebrities with any kind of negative publicity should not be used to endorse products as celebrities who have bad reputation decreases customer loyalty; hence, marketers need to carefully scrutinise the moral behaviour of the potential endorsers. Econet Company should choose a well-known celebrity endorser from the area where the products are intended to be promoted.

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