

EFFECT OF CELEBRITY ATTRACTIVENESS AND CELEBRITY CONGRUENCE ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF CONSUMERS OF BETTING INDUSTRY IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract

Celebrity attractiveness and congruence affect the purchasing intentions of young consumers, particularly in the betting industry amidst the dynamic socio-cultural landscape of Nigeria. The need for this research becomes more pronounced when considering the unique blend of cultural influences, socioeconomic conditions, and exposure to digital media that characterize the lives of consumers in Niger State. The research aims to investigate the effect of celebrity attractiveness and congruence on the purchase intention of consumers of betting industry in Niger State. The study employs a descriptive research design, the population of the study consists of consumers of betting products in Niger state. A sample of 388 respondents was selected using a purposive sampling technique, based on their experience and exposure to celebrity endorsements in the betting industry. The primary instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The data collected was analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. Results reveal that Celebrity attractiveness and congruence have a significant impact on consumers' purchase intention. Based on the results of this study, it was recommended that betting companies carefully select celebrities who possess high levels of attractiveness and congruence with the endorsed product, as this can significantly impact consumers' purchase intention. Additionally, companies should continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their celebrity endorsement strategies to maximize their return on investment.

Keywords: Celebrity Attractiveness, Celebrity Congruence, Structural equation modelling, Purchasing intentions, Betting industry.

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive marketplace, businesses are constantly seeking innovative strategies to influence consumer behavior and increase purchase intention. One notable aspect that has gained significant attention in recent years is the use of celebrities in marketing campaigns. Celebrities are individuals who are well-known and have a high level of influence on society, especially on the younger generation (Jia, et., al., 2019).

Celebrities have the unique ability to captivate audiences and evoke strong emotional responses, making them powerful influencers in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors towards a product or service. The influence of celebrities in marketing has long been recognized as a powerful tool to drive consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Celebrity endorsements have become a common strategy used by companies to promote their products and services.

In recent years, the betting industry has seen a significant rise in celebrity endorsements, with well-known personalities endorsing various products and services within this sector. The selection of celebrities to endorse products is a common practice in the marketing industry, and it is believed to enhance brand visibility, credibility, and appeal to target consumers. A blend of celebrity appeal and product attributes can create a compelling advertising narrative that seeks to enhance purchase intention (Nepomuceno & Laroche, 2018). Various studies have shown that the use of celebrities in advertising can significantly impact consumer perceptions and purchase decisions across various regions and product categories, particularly when there is congruency between the celebrity's image and the product being endorsed (Amran, et., al., 2020). This phenomenon has been termed as the "Halo Effect", where the positive attributes of a celebrity are transferred to the product they endorse, thereby influencing their perception of the endorsed product (Asatryan et al., 2020).

Moreover, the context of Niger state presents a unique demographic for studying consumer behavior towards betting products. The behavior of these consumers is of a great interest to marketers and researchers due to their high level of disposable income and their influence on the wider population.

The marketing landscape is continuously evolving, with personal endorsements playing a critical role in consumer decision-making processes. Two particularly influential factors in these endorsements is celebrity attractiveness and celebrity congruence, which has been shown to significantly affect consumer attitudes and behaviors (Balakrishnan, & Reema, 2020). In the context of the betting industry, where brand loyalty and purchase intention are vital for market share, the relevance of perceived attractiveness and congruence of celebrity endorsers becomes particularly pronounced. This phenomenon is further compounded by the unique socio-cultural dynamics present in Nigeria, a nation characterized by a robust youth population and a rapidly expanding betting market (Ndukwe, 2012; Owolabi & Adebayo, 2020) and it was discovered that firms in the betting industry in Nigeria suffered low patronage because customers failed to get the benefits showcased as seen in the adverts (Maylafiya, 2014).

These betting companies are devoting huge amount of money on celebrity endorsement yearly, despite this spending, the mortality rate of betting companies in Nigeria remains very high and affects both startups and older established ones (D'Avino et. al., 2015) and there is also a gap of empirical literature evidence regarding the specific influence of them on the purchase intention of consumers of betting house products, especially among consumers in Niger State. This study becomes imperative because betting companies' providers in Nigeria need to understand how to increase consumer's purchase intention using celebrity endorsement. Hence, this study is undertaken to examine the effect of attractiveness and celebrity congruence on the purchase intention of consumers of betting industry in Niger State.

In view of the research problem, the following research objectives and hypotheses stated were formulated and tested empirically in the study.

- i. To examine the effect of celebrity's attractiveness on the purchasing intentions of consumers of betting industry in Niger State?
- ii. To examine the effect of celebrity's congruence on the purchasing intentions of consumers of betting industry in Niger State?

H₁: Celebrity's attractiveness does not affect the purchasing intentions of consumers of betting industry in Niger State.

H₂: Celebrity's congruence does not affect the purchasing intentions of consumers of betting industry in Niger State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity Attractiveness

Celebrity attractiveness refers to the perceived appeal or allure of individuals who have gained fame and popularity in the public eye, often characterized by a combination of physical appearance, charisma, lifestyle, and social influence. According to Bittman et al. (2022), "Celebrity attractiveness is a complex construct that encompasses aesthetic appeal, perceived success, likability, and the ability to connect with audiences". This definition underlines that celebrity attractiveness extends beyond mere physical beauty to include elements like personality, talent, and the social persona that celebrities project. It is further defined as the degree to which a celebrity is perceived to possess appealing qualities that engender admiration, desire, or identification from the public. According to a recent study by McCutcheon et al. (2023), celebrity attractiveness incorporates multiple dimensions, including physical appearance, charisma, relatability, lifestyle and social influence. This multifaceted understanding recognizes that attractiveness is not solely based on physical beauty but encompasses emotional and social connections that a celebrity establishes with their audience.

Celebrity Congruence

Balakrishnan, and Reema, (2020) defined celebrity congruence as the degree of alignment, consistency, and perceived fit between a celebrity endorser and the product or brand being promoted. It involves the match between the celebrity's image, values, expertise, and characteristics, and the attributes and positioning of the endorsed product or brand, influencing consumer perceptions and attitudes towards the endorsement. It was further defined as the perceived harmony, relevance, and appropriateness of the match between a celebrity endorser and the endorsed product or brand. It involves the consistency of

the celebrity's image, values, and expertise with the brand image, target audience, and marketing objectives, impacting consumer attitudes, perceptions, and purchase behavior (Laroche, et al., 2019). Advertisers recruit endorsers they believe has a fit with their customers and products to ensure the success of their advertising campaign. When a celebrity is seen as a fit the behaviour of the target market would align with that of the celebrity. Advertisers select celebrities to maintain market relevance and ensure the success of their marketing campaign.

Consumer Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood of a consumer to purchase a product or service in the future, (O'Malley, et. al., 2021). Several factors influence consumers' purchase intention, including brand image, product quality, price, and endorsement by celebrities. Research has shown that celebrity endorsements can positively influence consumers' purchase intention, as they perceive the product to be of higher quality and desirability when endorsed by a celebrity.

Empirical Review

Jia et. al., 2019 investigated the impact of celebrity attractiveness on brand attitude and purchase intention in China, focusing on the Chinese market proposing a moderated mediation model to understand the underlying mechanisms of consumer behavior. The study used a sample of 400 participants from the general population in China, the moderated mediation analysis was employed to analyze data collected. The findings suggest that celebrity attractiveness directly influences brand attitude and purchase intention, highlighting the significance of celebrity attractiveness in shaping consumer perceptions and purchase decisions and it was recommended that marketers carefully consider the level of consumer involvement when selecting celebrities for endorsement deals.

Priyankara (2017) empirical study investigates the influence of celebrity endorsement on consumer buying intention specifically within the context of television advertisements for perfumes in Sri Lanka. The research addresses a critical gap in understanding how celebrity endorsements in the fragrance industry affect consumer purchase decisions, particularly in the South Asian market context. The study employs a quantitative research methodology. Regression analysis was utilized to test the hypotheses and determine the statistical significance of relationships between variables. The research found out that celebrity endorsement positively and significantly affects consumer buying intention. The study reveals that celebrity endorsements in television advertisements create a measurable impact on consumers' purchase decisions, suggesting that the aspirational and credibility factors associated with celebrity endorsers translate into concrete behavioral intentions.

Amran et. al., 2020 examined the mediating role of brand image perception in the relationship between celebrity congruence and consumer purchase intention. The study highlights the importance of how consumers perceive the brand image when endorsed by a celebrity, emphasizing the need for marketers to strategically align celebrity endorsements with brand image to influence consumer behavior.

Theoretical Framework

In exploring this relationship, the study will draw upon established theory in marketing and consumer behavior, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) which posits that source attractiveness can significantly affect the level of processing of persuasive messages. By evaluating how attractiveness of celebrities in telecommunications advertisements resonates with young consumers situated within the backdrop of higher education, we can better understand their purchasing propensities. The underlying psychological mechanisms relate closely to social conformity and the social identity theory, where individuals align themselves with figures who resonate with their aspirations and ideals. This phenomenon is articulated through the mere exposure effect, where repeated exposure to attractive stimuli can elicit favorable responses. Consequently, celebrities not only serve as a representation of brands but also provide aspirational values that consumers, particularly students, may wish to emulate.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design, using a cross-sectional survey design to collect and analyze data on the effect of celebrity attractiveness and congruence on the purchase intention of consumers of betting industry in Niger State.

The population of the study comprises of individuals who engaged in betting activities in Niger state. A sample size of 388 using the Cochran formula due to the unknown size of the population (Sugiyono, 2017), it ensured a representative sample for the study. A convenience technique was used to select the respondents from the different LGA in Niger State. The benefit of using the convenience sampling is that the researcher has the chance of receiving a higher number of filled questionnaire with high response rate (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Primary data were collected from respondents through a questionnaire in the form of google forms distributed to consumers in the state.

The study employed five items each under two of the independent constructs given by Ohanian – attractiveness and celebrity congruence. Each of these items was evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1: “Strongly Disagree” to 5: “Strongly Agree”. The second part of the questionnaire included six questions evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1: “Strongly Disagree” to 5: “Strongly Agree”. These intended to measure the dependent construct, consumers’ purchase intention in response to celebrity endorsements.

The data collected is analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to measure the correlation between observation variables and latent variables through a reflective measurement model. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is an analysis technique for detecting or constructing predictive models. Especially for the causal model analysis between latent variables, it is better than the general linear structural relationship model, which is very suitable for exploratory research (Pavlou, & Fygenson, 2016; Melchor & Julián, 2018)

The PLS-SEM is conducted in two models, the measurement model and the structural model.

First, the measurement model would be assessed to determine the reliability and validity of the measures used in the study.

Next, the structural model would be assessed to test the relationships between the constructs in the model. The path coefficients were estimated using bootstrapping to assess the significance of the relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of respondents were summarized in table 4.1:

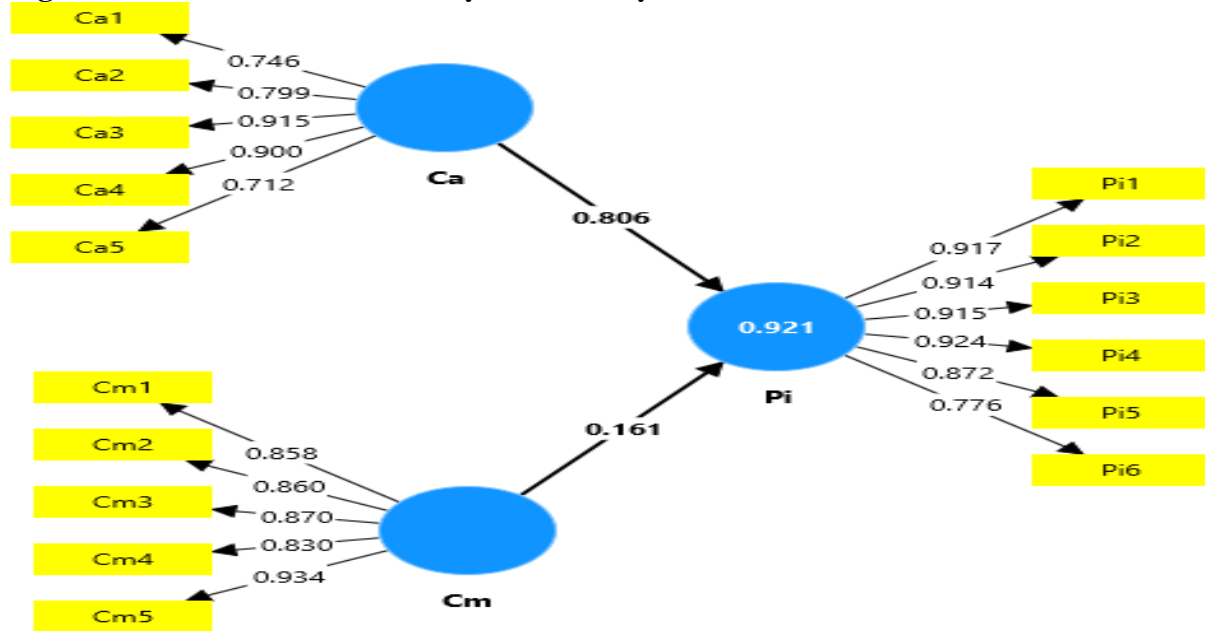
Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Gender	Male	220	56.7	57	-
	Female	168	43.2	43	57
	Total	388	100	100	100
Marital Status	Single	236	60.8	61	-
	Married	143	36.8	37	61
	Separated/Divorced	9	2.3	2	98
	Total	388	100	100	100
Age bracket	Below 20	168	43.3	43	-
	21-30 years	103	26.5	27	43
	31-40 years	65	16.8	17	70
	41- 50	20	5.2	5	87
	50 Above	32	8.2	8	92
	Total	388	100	100	100

Source: authors’ computation (2025)

On gender, 220(57%) of the respondents are male while the remaining 168(43%) are female. On marital status, 236(61%) are singles, 143(37%) are married, while 9(2%) are either divorced or separated. On age bracket, 168(43%) are below 20 years, 103(27%) are within 21-30 years, while 65(17%) are within the age bracket of 31-40 years. The implication of this is that majority of our respondents are very young people who are more exposed to celebrity endorsement in adverts than old people and are therefore disposed to give valid and usable information needed for the study.

Figure 4.1: Construct Reliability and Validity



Source: authors' computation (2025) using SmartPls2.

Table 4.2 Measurement Model (Reliability and Validity Test)

S/N	Dimensions	Question Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
1.	Celebrity Attractiveness (CA)	CA1 CA2 CA3 CA4 CA5	0.746 0.799 0.915 0.900 0.712	0.758	0.846	0.579
2.	Celebrity Match-fit (CM)	CM1 CM2 CM3 CM4 CM5	0.858 0.860 0.870 0.830 0.934	0.776	0.869	0.598
3.	Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1 PI2 PI3 PI4 PI5 PI6	0.917 0.914 0.915 0.924 0.872 0.776	0.799	0.856	0.624

Source: authors' computation (2025) using SmartPls2

For this study, the reliability of the research instrument was determined using factor loading, composite reliability and Cronbach's test. The result in Table 4.2 indicated that the factor loading, composite reliability and Cronbach's test are all above 0.7 recommended by Hair, et. al., (2014). Specifically, the composite reliabilities are 0.846, 0.856, and 0.869 for Celebrity Attractiveness, Celebrity Congruence, and Purchase Intention respectively. It shows an internal consistency and that all constructs are within acceptable levels and reliability. Additionally, convergent validity is shown in Table 4.2. It is clear that

the average variance extracted for each measure exceeded 0.50. This suggests that the construct, on average, explains greater than half of the variance of its indicators (Chin, 2010; Hair et al. 2014).

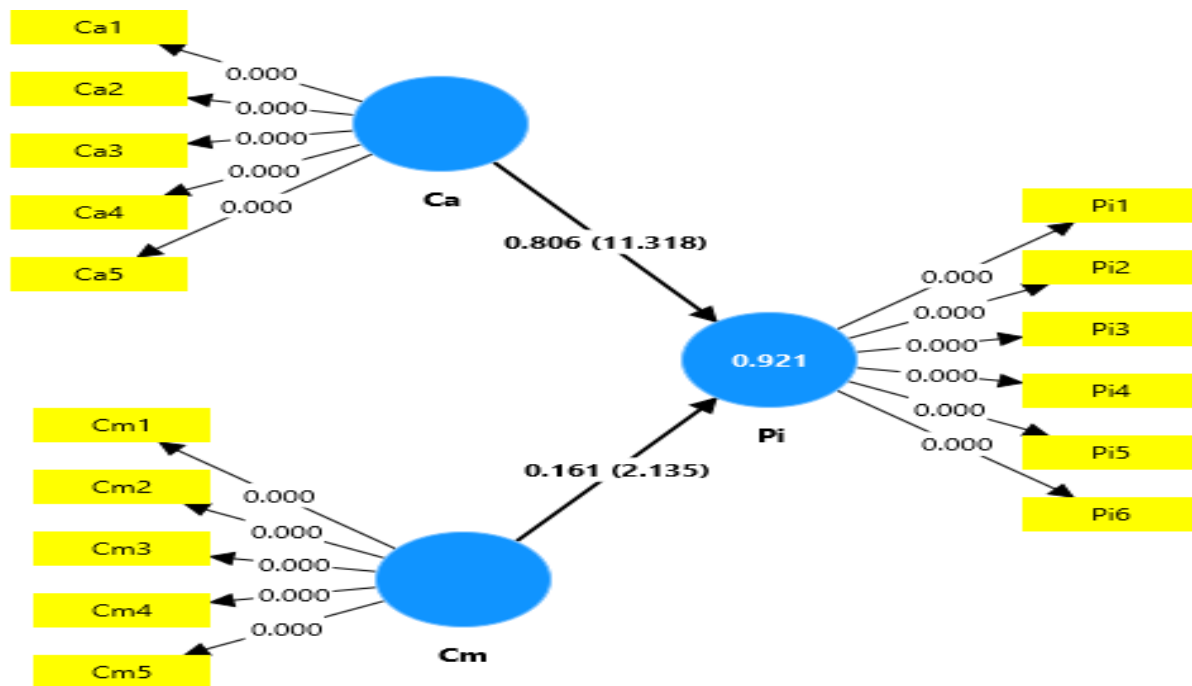
Table 4.3 HTMT Ratio Analysis (Discriminant Validity Test)

Construct	Celebrity Attractiveness	Celebrity Congruence	Purchase Intention
Celebrity Attractiveness (CA)	-		
Celebrity Congruence (CC)	0.761	-	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.668	0.734	-

Source: authors' computation (2025) using SmartPls2

From table 4.3 above, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio analysis shows that all HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.90, indicating good discriminant validity between constructs. The highest HTMT value (0.761) is between Celebrity Attractiveness and celebrity Congruence, Celebrity Congruence and Purchase Intention (0.734) is the second-highest correlation which indicates strong conceptual association, and the lowest HTMT value (0.668) is between Celebrity Attractiveness and Purchase Intention, all suggesting these constructs share substantial variance. These results confirm that while there are correlations between these three constructs, they are empirically distinct from each other, enough to warrant their classification as separate entities and supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model. This finding is crucial for ensuring that each construct contributes unique insights into consumer behavior regarding celebrity endorsements.

Figure 4.2 Structural Model (Bootstrapping)



Source: authors' computation (2025) using SmartPls2.

Table 4.4: Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	B Value	T Statistics	P Value	R ²	Q ²	f ²	VIF	Decision
C A > P I	0.330	11.318	0.000***	0.921	0.554	0.928	2.444	Rejected
C M > P I	0.480	2.135	0.000***			0.376	2.328	Rejected

Value*** < 0.01, P value**< 0.05, P value*< 0.10

Source: author's computation (2025) using SmartPls2.

As shown in table 4.4 above, celebrity attractiveness and celebrity congruence both has a positive significant effect on purchase intentions as indicated by ($t = 11.318, 2.135, p\text{-value } 0.000$) at 0.05 level of significance with a beta value of 0.330 and 0.480, thereby providing a basis not to accept the hypotheses which stated that celebrity's attractiveness and celebrity congruence does not have effect on the purchasing intentions of consumers of betting industry in Niger State. Hence, a unit change in celebrity expertise will lead to 0.330-unit change in purchase intention, likewise a unit change in celebrity trustworthiness will lead to 0.480-unit change in purchase intention. This result implies that celebrity attractiveness and celebrity congruence play an important role in boosting the purchase intention of consumers of betting industry in Niger State.

As indicated in Figure 4.4, R^2 is 0.921, implying that 92.1% variance in purchase intention is accounted for by celebrity attractiveness and celebrity congruence, while 7.9% is accounted for by other variables that equally influence purchase intention that were not captured in this study.

The Predictive Relevance (Q^2) value of 0.554 is substantially above zero, indicating strong predictive relevance of the model. This suggests the model has good capability to predict Purchase Intention.

While the effect Size (f^2) for each predictor variable, Celebrity attractiveness shows a strong effect size ($f^2 = 0.928$), Celebrity congruence shows the least effect size ($f^2 = 0.376$). Both effect sizes are considered substantial according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines. All predictors show large effect sizes ($f^2 > 0.35$).

All VIF Analysis (Multicollinearity Assessment) values are below 3.0, from 2.444 to 2.328. This indicates no problematic multicollinearity issues according to the acceptable range, $VIF < 5.0$ (Hair et al., 2011).

Discussion of findings

The outcomes of the analysis and hypotheses tested affirm that the independent variable celebrity attractiveness exact significant positive effect on purchase intention. The result support the a-priori expectation and the findings of the study corroborates with the study of Priyankara, et al. (2017) which support the fact that consumers expect products and service endorsers to be beautiful or handsome in order to boost their intentions to buy goods and services.

The study also revealed that celebrity congruence has significant positive effect on purchase intention consumers of betting industry in Niger State. The result is however in consistence with the study of Jia et. al., (2019) and notably, the findings contrast sharply with Ohanian's (1991) seminal study, which indicated that only celebrity credibility (primarily expertise) significantly influenced purchase intention in American contexts. This suggests important cultural differences in how celebrity endorsements are processed and evaluated.

Thus, the findings of the current study disclose that celebrity endorsements can be an effective marketing tool available to the marketers as it is expected to have a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. These positive purchase intentions can be transformed to purchase if other factors in the marketing mix are carefully planned. Thus, the strategy of using celebrity endorsements may contribute towards a positive financial return for the companies (Farrell, et al., 2000, Erdogan, 2001).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has explored the relationship between celebrity attractiveness, celebrity congruence and consumer purchase intentions of consumers of betting industry in Niger state. Based on the above analysis and discussion, a number of important conclusions can be drawn from the study.

Findings from the study revealed that celebrity physical attractiveness has a positive significant effect on consumer purchase intention of consumers of betting industry in Niger state. This means that physical attractiveness has positive effect on consumer purchase intentions.

The study also found that the effect of celebrity congruence on consumer purchase intentions showed a significant and positive relationship between the two variables. This means that there is a positive effect of celebrity congruence on consumer purchase intention of consumers of betting industry in Niger state. The result showed that as celebrity congruence increases so do consumers purchase intentions of betting industry.

The research paper recommends that before choosing any celebrity to use, analysis of the target group they want to communicate to should be done, the product being advertised and the message being put across so as to make the right choice of a celebrity to match the product. The attractiveness of the celebrity should be matched with the right product and customers. This way, the company's products would have been projected effectively and the return on investment boasted through increased purchase. It was also recommended that the betting companies should carefully select celebrities with high levels of attractiveness.

The study recommends that betting companies should always monitor and evaluate effectiveness of celebrity endorsement strategies.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION B: Dimensions of celebrity Endorsement

S/no.	CELEBRITY ATTRACTIVENESS		SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	Attractive	The celebrity endorser has an attractive appearance					
2.	Classy	The celebrity endorser has a classy appearance					
3.	Handsome/Beautiful	The celebrity endorser has a beautiful appearance					
4.	Elegant Sexy	The celebrity endorser has an elegant appearance					
5.	Likeability	I like the celebrity endorser.					
S/no.	CELEBRITY CONGRUENCE		SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	Similarity	I perceive myself similar (in terms of values, styles) with the celebrity endorser.					
2.	Conformity	The celebrity endorser lifestyle fits with the product.					
3.	Compatibility	I easily relate the celebrity endorser with the brand (think of Betting House when thinking about the celebrity)					
4.	Align	The celebrity endorser personality aligns with the bet house.					
5.	Appropriateness	The celebrity endorser is an appropriate endorser for the bet-house.					
S/no.	PURCHASE INTENTION		SA	A	UD	D	SD
1.	Interest	I am interested in buying the products in the future.					
2.	Recommendation	I would recommend betting products and services to others.					
3.	Desire	My desire to buy the products is very high.					
4.	Purchase Probability	The probability that I would buy the betting products is very high.					
5.	Intention	I have a strong intention to buy betting products in the future.					
6.	Purchase	I would consider buying betting products if the opportunity arises.					