Implications of Celebrity Endorsement on Brand Equity: A Study in The Telecommunications Sector of Cameroon

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Research Article

Abstract

Purpose: *The increasing reliance on celebrity endorsements in Cameroon's telecommunications sector has raised critical questions about their effectiveness in strengthening brand equity.* *This study examines the implications of celebrity endorsement (Celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity popularity) for consumer brand equity among leading telecommunications companies in Cameroon.*
Methods: *This study used a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Using a causal research approach, 602 questionnaires were administered both in person and online (via Google Forms) to telecoms subscribers. The multiple correspondence analysis was used to construct indices for celebrity trustworthiness, attractiveness, and popularity. The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and the Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) were used to test the hypotheses.*
Results: *The overall results indicate a positive and significant effect of celebrity endorsement on brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. All three constructs of celebrity endorsement were positive and significant at the 1% level. Celebrity popularity had the most tremendous impact on Brand equity, followed by celebrity trustworthiness. Celebrity attractiveness had the least impact on brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry.*
Implications: *The study found that improving celebrity endorsement deals within a company increases consumer brand equity. Managers and Marketers should therefore focus more on getting celebrity endorsers who are popular and credible. Celebrity attractiveness is important, but should not be the main criterion in choosing an endorser. Decision-makers can rely on these insights to make strategic decisions within their companies.*

Keywords: Brand Equity, Celebrity Endorsement, Telecommunication Sector.

1. Introduction

The world today is changing rapidly. New businesses are booming daily, while existing businesses are seeking new ways to maintain and grow their market share. The value of a brand, as seen by current and potential customers, is crucial to a company's survival. The realization of this fact has led companies to develop many ways to present their enterprises in a more positive light. Different companies now use endorsers to increase their brand equity—the use of celebrities as spokespersons is becoming an increasingly common strategy in the advertising industry. According to Erdogan et al. (2001), in the United

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States, approximately 25% of all television advertisements feature one or more celebrities, and almost 10% of all advertising dollars go to celebrities across advertisements.

Celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy in which a brand leverages the influence of a famous person to promote a product or service, aiming to shape consumer perception and boost sales. Celebrity endorsements have expanded over the years to include a variety of endorsement formats, ranging from traditional print and television commercials to social media collaborations and influencer marketing (Biswas et al., 2017). The rise of digital media and social networking platforms has further intensified the influence of celebrity endorsements, allowing brands to reach global audiences instantaneously (Kaur & Gupta, 2016).

While international superstars can have a significant impact in Africa, local and regional celebrities often have a deeper cultural resonance and greater familiarity with customers. Local celebrities are more likely to comprehend market intricacies, utilize local languages and references, and represent their fellow countrymen's aspirations. Because of this localization, celebrity endorsements are highly effective at establishing deep emotional connections with customers (Ismail, 2015). By aligning with celebrities who resonate with their brand identity and target audience, local entrepreneurs and enterprises can gain a competitive advantage (Okonkwo, 2018). Celebrities from many fields, including music, sports, movies, and social media, wield enormous power over their fan bases in Cameroon (Nkengfack, 2017). The power exerted over their fans is crucial to brands seeking to increase their brand equity when a celebrity endorses them. Cameroon is a multicultural country with numerous ethnic groups and languages. Celebrity endorsements allow firms to reach different audiences by leveraging local celebrities who can use regional languages and allusions to connect with consumers, thereby improving brand image (Ndifor, 2018).

Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model emphasized the importance of consumer knowledge and attitudes towards a brand, proposing that substantial brand equity arises from positive consumer experiences and associations (Rabino, 2017). As Cameroon's economy develops and consumer spending rises, brand equity has become a growing focus. Consumers' rising purchasing power makes brand equity increasingly crucial for businesses to differentiate their products and build enduring customer relationships. (Nguetsop et al., 2016).

According to Biel (1993), brand equity is the set of associations and beliefs that consumers have about a brand, and which adds or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service. Keller (1993) defined brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.

The telecommunications industry in Cameroon has experienced significant growth and development in recent years. The presence of several network operators, internet service providers, and other telecommunications services characterizes it. The leading players are MTN Cameroon, Orange Cameroon, and Camtel, a government-owned company. Aaker (1996) discussed how brand equity can lead to increased customer loyalty and repeated purchases. These players, therefore, leverage celebrities to increase loyalty and encourage repeat purchases. According to Hung et al. (2011), the presence of a celebrity endorser significantly influenced consumers' perceptions of the endorsed brand.

Empirical reviews of celebrity endorsement and brand equity remain vague in Cameroon. This study aims to advance these concepts in Cameroon by investigating dimensions of brand equity and celebrity endorsement that many studies have not yet explored in depth. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the brand equity literature by investigating the relationships between celebrity endorsement (celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity popularity) and brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. The main research question is, consequently, how does celebrity endorsement impact brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry? The study answers the following specific research questions:

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a. To what extent does celebrity trustworthiness influence brand equity in the telecommunications industry of Cameroon?
b. How does celebrity attractiveness affect brand equity in the telecommunications industry of Cameroon?
c. Does celebrity popularity impact brand equity in the telecommunications industry of Cameroon?

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

This section looks at literature on celebrity endorsement and brand equity. It further develops the study's hypotheses. Besides these, there is a framework for the study.

2.1.Conceptual Literature Review

This section will include a review of the literature on celebrity endorsement and brand equity, as well as the development of hypotheses; the research framework for the study will be discussed at the end of the section.

2.1.1. Celebrity Endorsement

According to Nelson and Deborah (2017), celebrity endorsement is a persuasive tactic that involves customers identifying with the person depicted in an advertisement. Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) describe celebrity endorsement as a celebrity promoting a product for which they may or may not have knowledge or experience. According to Nielsen (2015), celebrity endorsements can increase brand awareness and purchase intent. Nielsen's study found that 51% of consumers are more likely to buy a product if it is endorsed by a celebrity they like. Some studies found that consumers are becoming skeptical of celebrity endorsements and are more likely to trust brands recommended by family members and friends. (Brown & Hayes, 2008; Khamis et al., 2017). Erdogan (1999), on the other hand, proposed four key dimensions of celebrity endorsements: attractiveness, credibility, expertise, and trustworthiness. In this study, we adopted celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity popularity as key constructs, since they best suit this field of study.

2.1.2. Brand Equity

In today's world, with brands facing intense competition and other challenges, brand equity can be a significant strength that helps them stay above water. Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand name and symbols that add to, or subtract from, the value provided by a product or service to a firm's customers. This definition highlights the importance of the brand name and symbol in shaping a product or service's overall value. Keller (1993) defined brand equity as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. This definition emphasizes the role of consumer perception and knowledge in shaping brand equity. According to Keller (1993), the power of a brand lies in what the customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about it through time; in other words, it lies in customers' minds. Kapferer (2012), on the other hand, defined brand equity as the sum of all impressions and experiences consumers have had with the brand over time. Brand equity is unlikely if a buyer purchases based on product attributes, price, and comfort rather than on brand interest. If a customer chooses a brand above other high-quality, similar-priced, and feature-rich options, it has equity value (Almaida et al., 2019b)

Aaker (1991) identified five key dimensions or constructs of brand equity: brand equity, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and proprietary assets (patents, trademarks, and copyrights). The constructs adapted in this study are brand awareness, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

2.2.Hypotheses Development

Some authors have previously written on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and brand equity. In this section, we shall review some of what has already been written in this light. Our hypotheses will be developed from the reviews.

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2.2.1. Celebrity Trustworthiness and Brand Equity

Hussain et al. (2020) studied the concept of celebrity trust across both cognitive and affective dimensions. They examined its effects on advertising credibility, advertising image, brand credibility, brand image, corporate credibility, and corporate image. According to the research, celebrity trust is based on a celebrity's positive qualities and/or goodwill toward consumers. They also contend that celebrity trust positively affects advertising credibility, advertising image, brand credibility, brand image, corporate credibility, and corporate image. A study by Sari et al. (n.d.) examined the impact of trust, attractiveness, expertise, and the popularity of celebrity endorsements on purchasing decisions for the Korean skincare brand "Some by Mi" in Indonesia. The results indicate that the trustworthiness, attractiveness, expertise, and popularity of celebrity endorsers significantly and positively influence the public's purchasing decisions for the Korean skincare brand. We, hence, hypothesize as follows: *H_{01}: Celebrity trustworthiness does not significantly influence brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry.*

2.2.2. Celebrity Attractiveness and Brand Equity

Onu et al. (2019) investigated the effects of celebrity physical appeal and trustworthiness on consumers' purchase intentions for selected Nigerian telecommunications companies. It was found that Celebrity trustworthiness has a favorable, significant impact on consumer purchase intentions for selected Nigerian telecommunications firms. According to the report, telecommunications businesses should prioritize recruiting physically attractive, trustworthy celebrities whose images align with the brand's image for endorsement purposes. Lili et al. (2022) examined the effects of celebrity attractiveness, celebrity trustworthiness, and celebrity cause fit on attitudes toward green cosmetics. It was found that celebrity attractiveness, celebrity trustworthiness, and celebrity cause-fit significantly affected views toward green cosmetics. We therefore formulated the following hypothesis.

H_{02}: Celebrity attractiveness does not significantly affect brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry.

2.2.3. Celebrity Popularity and Brand Equity

Zahmati et al. (2023) ascertained the influence of endorsers' popularity, gender, and the level of attention given to various aspects of advertising. The results of the study revealed that the popularity of the endorsers had a substantially positive impact on the number and duration of fixes on advertising materials. These findings imply that while the endorser's fame plays a significant role in advertisements, the endorser's gender has minimal bearing. Tani et al. (2025) investigated the relationship between celebrity endorsement (celebrity similarity, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity popularity) and brand loyalty in Bamenda, Cameroon. According to this study, consumer brand loyalty is strongly positively affected by celebrity popularity. Celebrity popularity increases emotional involvement, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. This led to a third hypothesis;

H_{03}: *Celebrity popularity does not significantly affect brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry.*

3. Research Framework

The research framework below was developed from our hypotheses. It illustrates the relationship between the independent variable (celebrity endorsement) and the dependent variable (Brand equity), the control variables are longevity and income level.

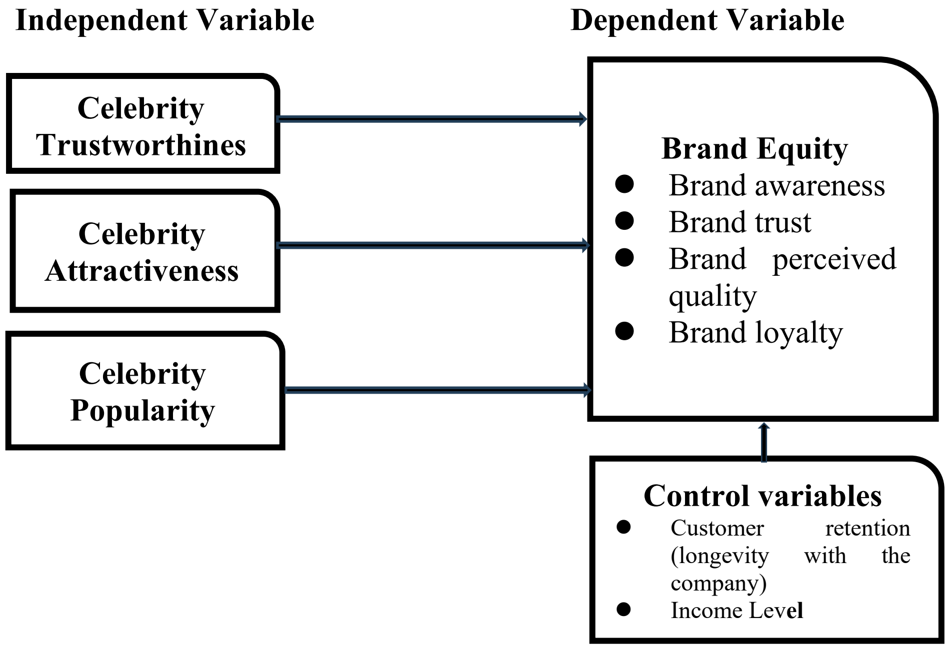

Fig. 1: Research Framework

4. Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design. The study used the snowball sampling technique to administer 602 questionnaires using Google Forms. The selection of the initial population was crucial for obtaining relevant insights. The process began by identifying small groups of individuals who are well-informed about telecom brands and their celebrity endorsements. This initial group was essential because their familiarity with the subject provided valuable context and depth to the responses. Once the Google Form was shared with these participants, they were encouraged to distribute the survey link within their networks, effectively leveraging personal connections to recruit additional respondents. However, it was important to monitor for diversity in the sample. Therefore, referrals from diverse demographics were sought to capture a wide range of perspectives on the impact of celebrity endorsements on brand equity. One significant advantage of snowball sampling is its ability to build trust among participants, and individuals are more likely to engage when referred by someone they know, enhancing the richness of the data collected.

The target population was telecommunications subscribers in Cameroon. This study used Yamane's (1967) sample size formula since the sample size was known. Calculations using this formula gave us a sample size of 400 respondents. We, however, administered 602 questionnaires in this study. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed, ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly. Such a data collection instrument was developed to gather extensive data and avoid pressure on respondents (Creswell, 2003). Part of the questionnaires were administered via Google Forms, where links were generated and shared with participants. The other part was physically administered. The researcher ensured that participation in the study was voluntary and that the responses were.

This study adopted a model with three indicators of Celebrity Endorsement: celebrity trustworthiness, attractiveness, and popularity. Brand equity was captured by brand awareness, brand trust, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The study draws on the source credibility theory, as shaped by Ohanian (1990). According to this theory, people are more likely to be persuaded by a message when they perceive the source as credible.

To examine the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand equity, we made use of a modified version of Fadeyi et al.'s (2019) model as follows:

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$$BEQ_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CEE_i + \alpha_2 LONG_i + \alpha_3 INC_i + \varepsilon_{1i}$$

Where: BEQ is the brand equity composite index obtained with the aid of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) from brand awareness index, brand trust index, perceived quality index, and brand loyalty index.
CEE is the celebrity endorsement composite index constructed with the help of PCA from celebrity trustworthiness index, celebrity attractiveness index, and celebrity popularity index.
LONG is the longevity of the relationship (purchase) with the company
INC is customer income measured as a series of binary variables representing different income levels.
Later, we disaggregate the celebrity endorsement into its components to examine the effect of celebrity trustworthiness, attractiveness, and popularity on brand equity:

$$BEQ_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CET_i + \beta_2 CEA_i + \beta_3 CEP_i + \beta_4 LONG_i + \beta_5 INC_i + \varepsilon_{2i}$$

Where: CET refers to the celebrity trustworthiness index constructed with Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and normalised.
CEA refers to the celebrity attractiveness index constructed with Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and normalised

CEP refers to the celebrity popularity index constructed with Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) and normalised.
Reliability and validity tests were conducted to ensure that the data collection and model instruments were reliable and valid. The scale's reliability was quantified using Cronbach's alpha. The field-collected data were coded in SPSS version 23.0 and analysed in STATA 15. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were used to analyse the data. The present study employed Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) to estimate the model's parameters. To investigate the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand equity components in Cameroon's telecommunications industry, the study employs Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR). There are two primary motivations for using SUR. The first one is to gain efficiency in estimation by combining information from different equations. The second motivation is to impose and /or test restrictions that involve parameters in different equations (Moon et al., 2006).
To determine the internal consistency of the model's constructs, a reliability test was used. In this attempt, Cronbach’s Alpha was used, with an accepted threshold of 0.6 or higher. The internal consistency of the participants was not violated for any of the variables, as Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.6192 to 0.7390. These exceeded Chua (2006)'s recommended threshold of 0.60. Thus, the instruments and constructs were valid and reliable for the study.

5. Results

According to Table 1, the mean of the brand equity index is 0.0809846, and the standard deviation is 0.1636095, indicating moderate dispersion in the sample, with values ranging from 0 to 1. The Brand awareness index, Brand trust index, and Perceived quality index have mean values of 0.0894114, 0.069191, and 0.0512823, respectively, and standard deviations of 0.1558185, 0.1434191, and 0.1182152, indicating moderate dispersion in the sample, with values ranging from 0 to 1.
Celebrity endorsement index, Celebrity trustworthiness index, Celebrity attractiveness index, and Celebrity popularity index all have an average of 0.0682684, 0.0641933, 0.0647278, and 0.039183, respectively, with a standard deviation of 0.1376757, 0.1388994, 0.1219382, and 0.1024631, revealing that there is a moderate dispersion in the sample, which ranges between 0 and 1. The average value of Longevity is 14 years, with a standard deviation of 8 years, indicating moderate dispersion around the mean. Some subscribers have been using their leading telecoms brand for 2 years, while others have been subscribed for up to 31 years.

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The average value of Income in the level 50,001 – 100,000 is 0.0847176, with a standard deviation of 0.2786926, which is very close to the mean, indicating moderate dispersion. Income levels 100,001–200,000 and Above 200,000 have means of 0.4435216 and 0.4418605, respectively, with standard deviations of 0.4972131 and 0.4970213, which are very close to the means, indicating clustered dispersion ranging from 0 to 1.

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Brand equity index	602	0.0809846	0.1636095	0	1
Brand awareness index	602	0.0894114	0.1558185	0	1
Brand trust index	602	0.069191	0.1434191	0	1
Perceived quality index	602	0.0512823	0.1182152	0	1
Brand loyalty index	602	0.0477975	0.1388867	0	1
Celebrity endorsement index	602	0.0682684	0.1376757	0	1
Celebrity trustworthiness index	602	0.0641933	0.1388994	0	1
Celebrity attractiveness index	602	0.0647278	0.1219382	0	1
Celebrity popularity index	602	0.039183	0.1024631	0	1
Longevity	602	14.06478	7.616917	2	31
Income level					
50,001 – 100,000	602	0.0847176	0.2786926	0	1
100,001 – 200,000	602	0.4435216	0.4972131	0	1
Above 200,000	602	0.4418605	0.4970213	0	1

Source: Authors' computation, 2025

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha reliability test results

Variables	No of items	Coefficient	Decision
Celebrity endorsement			
Celebrity trustworthiness	9	0.7390	Good
Celebrity attractiveness	7	0.6986	Acceptable
Celebrity popularity	5	0.6207	Acceptable
Brand equity			
Brand awareness	5	0.6493	Acceptable
Brand trust	8	0.7284	Good
Perceived quality	6	0.6221	Acceptable
Brand loyalty	5	0.6192	Acceptable

Source: Authors' computation, 2025

According to the results of the Cronbach's alpha reliability test (Table 2), all items related to the study's main variables were reliable, with all coefficients exceeding 0.6. Thus, implying that the items in the questionnaire were consistent with what they intended to measure.

As expected, the coefficients on the leading diagonal of the pairwise correlation matrix are 1, indicating perfect correlation between each variable and itself. Most importantly, most correlation coefficients were either low or moderate, with most below 0.6. However, results from Table 3 reveal significantly strong correlations among the independent variables, which may indicate multicollinearity in the models. According to Gujarati (2004), multicollinearity is severe if the mean VIF exceeds 2.5 and any individual VIF exceeds 10. In our case, the mean VIF is 4.51, and no individual VIF exceeds 10, indicating that multicollinearity is not severe (Table 4).

Results from column 1 of Table 5 indicate that the coefficient for celebrity endorsement is positive (1.039), suggesting that celebrity endorsement is positively associated with brand equity in the telecommunications sector. Specifically, a unit increase in the celebrity endorsement index will result in about a 1.039-point increase in the brand equity of telecommunications customers. This result is statistically significant at 1% level. Thus, there is a significant positive multiplier effect of celebrity endorsement on brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry.

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Table 3: Pairwise correlation matrix

	bai	bti	pqi	bli	ceti	ceai	cepi	exp	inc2	inc3	inc4
bai	1.0000										
bti	0.7383	1.0000									
	0.0000										
pqi	0.7404	0.7298	1.0000								
	0.0000	0.0000									
bli	0.6568	0.7197	0.6720	1.0000							
	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000								
ceti	0.7355	0.8193	0.6719	0.6595	1.0000						
	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000							
ceai	0.6921	0.7857	0.6995	0.6432	0.7610	1.0000					
	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000						
cepi	0.5928	0.7578	0.7279	0.6825	0.7222	0.7216	1.0000				
	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000					
exp	0.0637	-0.0323	-0.0430	-0.0423	-0.003	0.0034	-0.042	1.0000			
	0.1182	0.4295	0.2923	0.3007	0.9334	0.9339	0.3019				
inc2	-0.0378	0.0231	-0.0017	0.0183	0.0433	0.0077	0.0035	0.0154	1.0000		
	0.3540	0.5718	0.9668	0.6546	0.2885	0.8506	0.9317	0.7054			
inc3	-0.0197	-0.0319	-0.0259	-0.0450	-0.055	-0.049	-0.047	-0.029	-0.272	1.0000	
	0.6293	0.4350	0.5256	0.2702	0.1810	0.2311	0.2460	0.4756	0.0000		
inc4	-0.0312	-0.0435	-0.0289	0.0033	-0.046	0.006	0.0060	0.0337	-0.271	-0.794	1.0000
	0.4448	0.2865	0.4796	0.9359	0.2612	0.8935	0.8834	0.4086	0.0000	0.0000	

Source: Authors' computation, 2025

Table 4: Variance inflation index

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
ceti	2.94	0.340204
ceai	2.80	0.356509
cepi	2.47	0.405101
exp	1.01	0.992581
inc		
2	3.63	0.275438
3	9.35	0.106916
4	9.38	0.106631
Mean VIF	4.51	

Results from column 2 of Table 5. reveal that the coefficient of the celebrity trustworthiness index is positive (0.433), which shows that there is a positive effect of celebrity trustworthiness on brand equity. The more trustworthy the celebrity endorsed by telecommunications companies, the more loyal customers are, and the better they perceive the quality of the services offered. This result is significant at 1% level.

Similarly, celebrity attractiveness positively affects brand equity, as evidenced by the positive coefficient (0.408). In effect, a 1-point increase in the celebrity attractiveness index will lead to about a 0.408-point increase in brand equity. This result is statistically significant at 1% level. In like manner, celebrity popularity has a positive effect on brand equity, with a coefficient of 0.467. Thus, a unit increase in the celebrity popularity index will result in about a 0.467-point increase in the brand equity index, everything else equal. This result is significant at 1% level. Looking at the results of all three indicators of celebrity

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endorsement, it can be concluded that celebrity popularity plays the most important role in enhancing brand equity, followed by celebrity trustworthiness and attractiveness.

Table 5: Robust OLS and SUR results of the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand equity

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
VARIABLES	Equity	Equity	Awareness	Trust	Quality	Loyalty	Awareness	Trust	Quality	Loyalty
Celebrity endorsement	1.039***		0.827***	0.898***	0.657***	0.740***				
	(0.0647)		(0.0307)	(0.0213)	(0.0225)	(0.0285)				
Celebrity Trustworthiness		0.433***					0.526***	0.428***	0.126***	0.266***
		(0.104)					(0.0499)	(0.0354)	(0.0373)	(0.0475)
Celebrity Attractiveness		0.408***					0.394***	0.342***	0.279***	0.211***
		(0.111)					(0.0555)	(0.0393)	(0.0415)	(0.0528)
Celebrity Popularity		0.467***					0.0421	0.343***	0.469***	0.487***
		(0.124)					(0.0619)	(0.0439)	(0.0464)	(0.0590)
Longevity	1.23e-05	-9.67e-06	0.00164***	-0.000318	-0.000453	-0.000594	0.00142***	-0.000371	-0.000366	-0.000518
	(0.000409)	(0.000377)	(0.000548)	(0.000379)	(0.000402)	(0.000508)	(0.000532)	(0.000377)	(0.000398)	(0.000507)
Income levels										
50,001 – 100,000	-0.0450	-0.0413	-0.109***	-0.0285	-0.0296	0.0265	-0.0941***	-0.0217	-0.0374*	0.0263
	(0.0446)	(0.0471)	(0.0283)	(0.0196)	(0.0208)	(0.0262)	(0.0276)	(0.0196)	(0.0207)	(0.0263)
100,001 – 200,000	-0.0332	-0.0286	-0.0777***	-0.0289*	-0.0210	0.0238	-0.0583**	-0.0202	-0.0310*	0.0234
	(0.0444)	(0.0475)	(0.0253)	(0.0175)	(0.0185)	(0.0234)	(0.0248)	(0.0176)	(0.0186)	(0.0237)
Above 200,000	-0.0390	-0.0340	-0.0860***	-0.0365**	-0.0255	0.0268	-0.0650***	-0.0271	-0.0364*	0.0263
	(0.0444)	(0.0474)	(0.0253)	(0.0175)	(0.0185)	(0.0234)	(0.0249)	(0.0176)	(0.0186)	(0.0237)
Constant	0.0456	0.0399	0.0917***	0.0437**	0.0359*	-0.0190	0.0710***	0.0341*	0.0449**	-0.0190
	(0.0448)	(0.0479)	(0.0258)	(0.0178)	(0.0189)	(0.0239)	(0.0253)	(0.0179)	(0.0189)	(0.0241)
Observations	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**	**602**
R-squared	**0.776**	**0.777**	**0.569**	**0.756**	**0.597**	**0.534**	**0.596**	**0.760**	**0.606**	**0.538**
Overall p-value	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**	**0.0000**
Breusch Pagan p-value	**0.0000**	**0.0000**		**0.0000**				**0.0000**		

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Source: Authors' computation, 2025

6. Discussion

The analysis indicates a positive, significant effect of celebrity trustworthiness on customers' brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. The findings align with a priori expectations and permit us to reject the study's first hypothesis, which posits that Celebrity trustworthiness does not significantly influence brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. These results align with those of Hussain et al. (2020), who found that celebrity trust is based on a celebrity's positive qualities and/or goodwill toward consumers. They also contend that celebrity trust positively affects advertising credibility, advertising image, brand credibility, brand image, corporate credibility, and corporate image.

The study further indicates that celebrity attractiveness has a positive and significant effect on customers' brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. The findings align with prior expectations and allow us to reject the second hypothesis, which posits that Celebrity attractiveness does not significantly influence brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. The results align with Lili et al. (2022), who examined the effects of celebrity attractiveness, celebrity trustworthiness, and celebrity cause fit on attitudes toward green cosmetics. They discovered that celebrity attractiveness, celebrity trustworthiness, and celebrity cause-fit significantly affected views toward green cosmetics.

The findings further show that celebrity popularity has a positive and significant effect on brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. The analysis shows that celebrity popularity has the most significant impact on brand equity. The findings align with prior expectations and allow us to reject the third hypothesis, which states that Celebrity popularity does not significantly affect brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. The findings align with Tani et al. (2025), who investigated the relationship between celebrity endorsement (celebrity similarity, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity popularity) and brand loyalty in Bamenda, Cameroon. According to this study, consumer brand loyalty is

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strongly influenced by celebrity popularity. Celebrity popularity increases emotional involvement, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty.

7. Conclusion and policy implications

The main objective of this work is to investigate the relationship between celebrity endorsement (celebrity trustworthiness, celebrity attractiveness, and celebrity popularity) and brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. This was achieved through a quantitative cross-sectional research design. The overall results show a positive and significant effect of celebrity endorsement on brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. Specifically, celebrity trustworthiness, attractiveness, and popularity enhance brand equity in Cameroon's telecommunications industry. These three constructs play a vital role in improving brand awareness, brand trust, brand quality perception, and brand loyalty, which together make up brand equity.

Brands should assess potential endorsers' public images and past behaviors to ensure alignment with the brand's values. This alignment can enhance credibility and foster stronger emotional connections with consumers. Telecom companies should prioritize partnering with celebrities who are highly popular within their target market. Conducting market research to identify trending figures that resonate with the target demography can maximize brand visibility and engagement. While focusing on popular, trustworthy celebrities, brands should also diversify their endorsements to include emerging talent or local influencers. This approach can attract niche markets and enhance relatability, particularly in specific cultural contexts. Given that attractiveness had the lowest coefficient, brands should reconsider the emphasis placed on physical appearance in their selection criteria for celebrity endorsements. Instead, they should focus on qualities that resonate more deeply with the audience, such as relatability, authenticity, and shared values.

This study has significant practical and theoretical implications for celebrity endorsement and brand equity in developing countries such as Cameroon. This study is a significant improvement in the literature on celebrity endorsement and brand equity. It thus tests the applicability of the celebrity endorsement model in an African context, given both societal similarities and cultural differences.

8. Limitations and direction for Future Research

This study used a cross-sectional design, which captures celebrity endorsement and brand equity at a single point in time. Though this approach provides a snapshot of the variables' relationship, it restricts the ability to observe it over extended periods. To address this limitation, future research should adopt longitudinal designs, such as panel studies or repeated surveys, to examine how celebrity endorsement influences brand equity over time. Moreover, other dimensions of celebrity endorsement, such as celebrity expertise and celebrity similarity, should be considered.

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