

EFFECT OF BRAND AMBASSADORS ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY OF DUFIL FOODS PLC ABUJA.

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ABSTRACT

The increasing reliance on brand ambassadors as a strategic marketing tool has raised concerns about their actual effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour within Nigeria's competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. This study examined the effect of brand ambassador attributes on consumer buying behaviour, focusing on Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. Guided by source credibility theory, the study adopted explanatory and descriptive survey designs to capture both descriptive insights and causal relationships. The population consisted of 4,997 active customers across the six area councils of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), with a sample size of 428 respondents determined using Krejcie and Morgan's table and adjusted with a 20% margin for robustness. A cluster sampling technique was employed, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Reliability and validity were confirmed using Cronbach's alpha (ranging from 0.861 to 0.884) and expert review, respectively. Data were analysed using regression analysis via SPSS version 27. Findings revealed that brand ambassador credibility significantly influenced purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.590$, $p < 0.001$), while attractiveness strongly affected brand loyalty ($R^2 = 0.710$, $p < 0.001$). The study concluded that credibility fosters consumer trust and purchase decisions, whereas attractiveness enhances emotional engagement and loyalty. It was recommended that Dufil Foods Plc invest in credible and visually appealing ambassadors who align with consumer aspirations to sustain competitiveness in Abuja's FMCG market.

Keywords: Brand ambassador, Credibility, Attractiveness, Purchase intention, Brand loyalty, Consumer buying behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global marketplace, the influence of brand ambassadors has grown remarkably as organizations seek to create strong connections between their brands and consumers. In recent times, across industries, companies employ brand ambassadors ranging from celebrities to social media influencers as strategic tools to communicate brand values, enhance visibility, and influence consumer perceptions. This trend reflects the shift from traditional advertising toward more personalized and relatable marketing approaches in which ambassadors serve as human representations of brand identity, thereby fostering trust and emotional engagement among target audiences (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Macheka et al.,

2024). These ambassadors leverage multiple platforms, particularly digital channels, to amplify brand messages and build consumer relationships in ways that resonate with lifestyle aspirations and cultural contexts.

A brand ambassador is broadly conceptualized as an individual engaged to represent a company's image positively and build favourable associations that enhance consumer purchase decisions. Through endorsement and advocacy, brand ambassadors contribute to shaping attitudes, stimulating brand awareness, and ultimately driving sales performance (Khabibah et al., 2023; Suleman et al., 2023). Recent studies emphasize that the effectiveness of a brand ambassador lies in two major dimensions: credibility and attractiveness. Credibility reflects the ambassador's perceived

trustworthiness and expertise, which are essential in reducing consumer scepticism and increasing confidence in brand claims (Macheka et al., 2024). Attractiveness, on the other hand, embodies the ambassador's physical appeal, likability, and relatability, all of which create emotional affinity and aspirational value for consumers (Khabibah et al., 2023). Together, these attributes strengthen consumers' psychological attachment to a brand and influence their purchase intentions.

Consumer buying behaviour, particularly within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, represents a complex process that involves recognizing needs, evaluating alternatives, and making purchase decisions (Attih, & Essien, 2025). In Nigeria, this process is shaped by factors such as income levels, cultural preferences, and marketing strategies adopted by companies like Dufil Foods Plc. Dufil, the producer of Indomie noodles and other household brands, operates in an intensely competitive market where consumer loyalty is critical for sustained profitability. For this study, consumer buying behaviour is viewed through two core dimensions: purchase intention and brand loyalty. Purchase intention signifies the likelihood of a consumer deciding to buy a product, reflecting attitudes and evaluations prior to actual purchase, while brand loyalty captures the tendency to repurchase and maintain a consistent preference for a brand despite competing offers (Macheka et al., 2024; Chukwu & Pius, 2021). These dimensions are central to understanding how marketing strategies translate into long-term consumer relationships.

The potential interaction between brand ambassadors and consumer buying behaviour at Dufil Foods Plc cannot be overlooked. When a brand ambassador is credible and attractive, it is plausible that consumers develop higher trust and emotional connection with the brand, which can enhance purchase intentions and reinforce loyalty. Although empirical evidence in the Nigerian FMCG context remains limited, prior studies suggest that ambassadorial influence could shape perceptions and attitudes that lead to favourable buying patterns (Khabibah et al., 2023; Suleman et al., 2023). In Abuja, where consumer markets are highly dynamic and responsive to marketing trends, the strategic deployment of brand ambassadors

may be a differentiating factor in maintaining competitive advantage.

However, Dufil Foods faces several challenges in sustaining consumer loyalty. Issues such as intense competition from other noodle brands, price sensitivity among consumers, and shifting brand preferences have created an environment where mere product quality is insufficient to guarantee repeat patronage. Moreover, ineffective or poorly aligned ambassadorial strategies may fail to connect with local consumer values, reducing the overall impact of marketing investments. These challenges underscore the importance of exploring how brand ambassadors influence consumer behaviour in this specific context.

Consequently, this study is imperative as it provides insights into the extent to which brand ambassador dimensions credibility and attractiveness affect consumer buying behaviour at Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. Understanding this relationship will enable marketers to refine endorsement strategies, strengthen brand–consumer relationships, and improve competitive positioning within Nigeria's FMCG sector. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of brand ambassador credibility on consumers' purchase intention of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja?
- ii. What is the effect of brand ambassador attractiveness on consumers' brand loyalty of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja?

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect of brand ambassadors on consumer buying behaviour, with a specific focus on Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja, Nigeria. More specifically, the study aims to:

- i. determine the extent to which brand ambassador credibility affects consumers' purchase intention of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja.
- ii. examine the extent to which ambassador attractiveness affects consumers' brand loyalty of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja.

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to statistically test the effects of the dimensions of brand ambassadors on consumer buying behaviour:

H₀₁: Brand ambassador credibility has no any significant effect on consumers' purchase intention of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja.

H₀₂: Brand ambassador attractiveness has no any significant effect on consumers' brand loyalty of Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Brand Ambassadors

A brand ambassador refers to an individual who is engaged by an organization to represent its brand in a positive light, aiming to increase awareness, sales, and consumer loyalty (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). In contemporary marketing practice, brand ambassadors serve as strategic assets, acting as human extensions of brand identity by embodying its values, persona, and vision. These ambassadors often include celebrities, influencers, and public figures, who are expected to establish a favourable interaction among the target audience and brand (Suleman et al., 2023). Leveraging brand ambassadors has gained significance in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industries because they create relatability and trust, which enhances purchase decisions in highly competitive markets.

In Nigeria, where cultural affiliations and personality-driven marketing strongly influence consumer decisions, companies like Dufil Foods Plc deploy brand ambassadors to maintain market leadership and loyalty. The ambassadorial strategy works through affective and cognitive processes building emotional connections and shaping perceptions that align with consumers' identity aspirations (Khabibah et al., 2023).

Credibility

Credibility is a critical dimension of brand ambassador effectiveness and refers to the ambassador's perceived trustworthiness,

expertise, and reliability (Macheka et al., 2024). Trustworthiness reflects the extent to which an ambassador is honest and dependable, while expertise concerns their knowledge or experience related to the endorsed product (Suleman et al., 2023). Studies confirm that credibility reduces scepticism and enhances confidence in advertising claims, thereby increasing purchase intentions and loyalty (Khabibah et al., 2023). In the context of Nigerian consumers, credibility is particularly important due to concerns over product authenticity and safety, making endorsements by trustworthy figures highly persuasive.

Attractiveness

Attractiveness refers to the physical appeal, likeability, and perceived similarity between the ambassador and the target audience (Onu et al., 2019). Beyond mere physical beauty, attractiveness includes qualities such as charisma, relatability, and aspirational traits that encourage consumers to identify with the ambassador (Macheka et al., 2024). The concept aligns with the idea that attractive endorsers capture attention, enhance message recall, and foster emotional attachment to the brand. While attractiveness alone may not guarantee conversion, when combined with credibility, it amplifies the persuasive effect of endorsements on consumer buying behaviour.

Concept of Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour is the process individuals or groups undergo in selecting, purchasing, and using products to satisfy their needs and desires (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). It encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects that influence decision-making. In Nigeria's FMCG market, this behaviour is shaped by factors such as price sensitivity, cultural norms, product quality, and brand communication strategies. For Dufil Foods Plc, understanding these behavioural patterns is essential for retaining its competitive advantage in a highly dynamic environment.

This study focuses on two dimensions of consumer buying behaviour: purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a consumer's conscious plan to buy a product, which serves as a strong

predictor of actual purchase behavior (Macheke et al., 2024). It is influenced by brand trust, perceived product quality, and marketing communication strategies, including ambassadorial endorsements (Khabibah et al., 2023). Customers are more likely to form positive views that result in buy intentions when they believe an ambassador to be trustworthy and appealing.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty refers to a consumer's commitment to repurchase or consistently choose a particular brand over others (Chukwu & Pius, 2021). It is characterized by repeat purchases, resistance to competitor promotions, and strong emotional attachment. Loyal consumers often serve as brand advocates, reinforcing positive word-of-mouth. In highly competitive FMCG markets like Nigeria, where product differentiation is minimal, loyalty is a crucial determinant of sustainable growth. Brand ambassadors contribute to loyalty by creating familiarity and emotional resonance, thereby fostering long-term consumer relationships (Suleman et al., 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Source Credibility Theory, originally grounded in the work of Hovland and Weiss (1951), and further refined by Ohanian's (1990) model of source credibility, which includes expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as core dimensions. The theory assumes that communication from a credible source is more persuasive and leads to attitude change through internalization. Its major assumption is that perceived source qualities directly influence persuasiveness and subsequent consumer responses.

Criticism of the theory includes its limited explanatory power when source-product fit is weak or when consumers are highly skeptical of sponsored messages. Critics argue that credibility alone may not guarantee effectiveness without context-fit or audience resonance. However, its strength lies in its clarity and empirical robustness across contexts, as many studies show strong predictive value of credibility components on purchase decisions.

In applying this theory to Dufil Foods Plc, credibility and attractiveness dimensions are interpreted as attributes of the brand ambassador whose endorsement may shape Nigerian consumers' intention to purchase Indomie and cultivate loyalty. The theory informs the hypotheses by positing that higher perceived credibility and attractiveness of the ambassador will lead to stronger purchase intention and brand loyalty among consumers in Abuja.

Empirical Review

Haiban, and Rimadias, (2023) conducted a study to examine the factors that shape attitude towards brand and repurchase intention by using Blackpink as a brand ambassador on the Shopee online shopping platform in Indonesia. The research was carried out in the context of the growing e-commerce industry, particularly focusing on how celebrity endorsement influences consumer perceptions. Data was gathered from 135 respondents who had made purchases on Shopee using a quantitative research design. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, ensuring that only consumers familiar with Blackpink's endorsement were included. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using SmartPLS software. The results showed that brand image and brand credibility had a positive effect on attitude towards the brand. Additionally, endorser likeability had a positive impact on brand attitude, which in turn positively influenced repurchase intention. However, endorser credibility did not significantly affect brand attitude, and none of the independent variables (brand image, brand credibility, endorser credibility, and endorser likeability) had a significant effect on repurchase intention directly. The researchers recommended that companies should focus more on endorser likability and brand image to strengthen consumer-brand relationships. One limitation of the study was its limited scope, as it focused solely on one brand ambassador and one e-commerce platform, thereby limiting generalisability across other contexts.

Pardede et al. (2023) examined the influence of Twice, a K-pop star, as a brand ambassador on Scarlett Whitening customers' loyalty and purchase decisions in Indonesia. Determining the mediating function of customer satisfaction in this relationship was another goal of the

study. 200 respondents between the ages of 15 and 34 who had previously used Scarlett Whitening products and knew Twice was the brand ambassador were chosen using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. The study employed a quantitative approach, with data collected through structured questionnaires and analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via Partial Least Squares (PLS). Findings revealed that the dimensions of "credibility" and "attractiveness" of Twice had a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, while "visibility" and "power" showed a positive but insignificant impact. In terms of brand loyalty, only the visibility dimension significantly influenced loyalty, whereas credibility, attractiveness, and power had insignificant effects. Additionally, purchasing decisions positively and significantly affected customer satisfaction, which in turn enhanced brand loyalty. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that companies focus more on endorser credibility and attractiveness to drive consumer purchase intention rather than relying heavily on visibility alone. One limitation of the study was its exclusive focus on one K-pop group and one skincare brand, which may limit the generalisability of the results across other industries or regions.

Nadila et al. (2022) conducted a study to analyse how personality congruence and fan engagement of Korean celebrities influenced brand attachment and brand love, ultimately strengthening customer brand loyalty in the Indonesian market. The research focused on the growing trend of leveraging K-pop artists for brand endorsements amid the rising popularity of the Hallyu (Korean Wave) phenomenon among Indonesian millennials. Using a quantitative research method, the researchers distributed online questionnaires containing multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and short-answer questions via various digital platforms. A screening process ensured that only respondents who had previously purchased products endorsed by Korean celebrities were included in the final sample. Data analysis revealed that personality congruence and fan engagement played significant roles in enhancing brand loyalty through emotional connections such as brand attachment and brand love. Most respondents perceived Korean celebrities as attractive and indicated that

purchasing endorsed products was a form of support for their idols. The researchers recommended that brands should not only rely on celebrity appeal but also implement strategies like brand matching, gamification, and creating exclusive ecosystems to maximise the impact of K-pop endorsers. A limitation identified was that the type of product purchased did not significantly affect consumer loyalty, suggesting that future research should explore other moderating factors that could enhance brand-consumer relationships.

Maretha, et al. (2024) investigated the effect of EXO, particularly member Sehun, as a brand ambassador of Scarlett Whitening on impulsive buying behaviour among Indonesian consumers. The study was conducted against the backdrop of increasing competition among beauty brands in Indonesia to capitalise on the popularity of K-pop culture. A quantitative research approach was adopted, involving an online questionnaire distributed to 385 respondents who met specific criteria related to familiarity with EXO and previous interaction with Scarlett Whitening products. Data were collected and statistically analysed to assess the role of peripheral route persuasion—such as likability and attractiveness—in influencing spontaneous purchase decisions. Results indicated a statistically significant and positive influence of peripheral route persuasion on impulsive buying behaviour, confirming that the presence of EXO as a brand ambassador effectively triggered unplanned purchases. This finding supported the use of emotional appeal over rational evaluation in marketing strategies targeting young consumers. The researchers concluded that marketers should leverage both visual and emotional elements when deploying K-pop influencers to promote beauty products. However, the study acknowledged a potential bias due to self-reported data and suggested future research consider longitudinal effects of such endorsement strategies on long-term brand commitment.

Agung et al. (2023) conducted a study to develop a barometer for digital business communication strategies, specifically examining the impact of K-pop brand ambassadors on e-commerce product purchasing decisions in Indonesia. The research used a quantitative framework with data collected from 133 respondents through simple

random sampling. Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for data analysis, supported by G*Power for statistical validation. With a coefficient of 0.662, the results demonstrated that K-pop brand ambassadors had little bearing on consumers' purchase decisions and had no statistically meaningful impact. This suggested that while K-pop culture was influential, its impact on actual purchase intent was limited unless combined with stronger brand interactions and content-based engagement. The researchers recommended that companies adopt a more integrated digital marketing strategy that goes beyond celebrity endorsement, incorporating interactive content, community engagement, and experiential branding. A major limitation was the low explanatory power of the model, implying that additional variables such as social media interactivity and influencer authenticity should be considered in future research.

Sertoglu et al. (2014) examined the effect of endorser credibility on consumers' buying intentions within the Turkish market. The research was carried out in Turkey, where celebrity endorsements were increasingly used in marketing campaigns across various industries. Data was gathered using a quantitative research methodology from university students who had prior exposure to celebrity-endorsed products. The sample size consisted of 385 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data were gathered via structured questionnaires and analysed using multiple regression techniques. Results indicated that endorser credibility significantly influenced consumer purchase intention, particularly when the endorser was perceived as knowledgeable and trustworthy. This suggested that consumers placed high value on expertise and sincerity when making brand-related decisions. The researchers recommended that marketers prioritise credible endorsers over merely popular ones to enhance campaign effectiveness. However, a limitation of the study was its exclusive focus on young consumers, which restricted generalisability across broader demographic segments.

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) investigated how the credibility of online celebrities on Instagram influenced the purchase decisions of young female users. The research was

conducted in the United Kingdom, focusing on social media's growing role in shaping consumer behaviour among Generation Z. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting females aged between 18 and 25 years who actively used Instagram for shopping inspiration. The sample size included 296 participants, selected via convenience sampling. Data were collected using an online questionnaire and analysed using correlation and regression analyses. Findings revealed that young women considered Instagram influencers highly credible if they provided authentic content, engaged regularly, and demonstrated product knowledge. These factors significantly increased purchase intention, especially for fashion and beauty products. The study concluded that authenticity and relatability were more influential than follower count or popularity. Researchers recommended that brands focus on long-term partnerships with influencers who align closely with brand values rather than short-term deals with high-profile but less relevant figures. One limitation noted was the exclusion of male perspectives, limiting the scope of gender-based differences in influencer credibility perception.

Adu et al. (2018) explored how celebrity endorsement affected consumer purchase behaviour in Nigeria, with a specific focus on branded food products. The study was conducted in Lagos, Nigeria, reflecting the urbanised nature of consumer markets in Africa's largest economy. Using a descriptive survey research design, the researchers collected data from 384 respondents who had purchased branded food items endorsed by celebrities. To guarantee representation across age groups and income levels, a multi-stage sampling procedure was used. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data came from existing literature. Regression analysis was used to test the relationship between variables. The results showed that celebrity credibility, attractiveness, and relevance significantly influenced consumer purchase intention, with credibility being the most impactful factor. This reinforced the importance of selecting endorsers based on their alignment with brand values rather than fame alone. The researchers recommended that Nigerian firms adopt strategic celebrity selection processes and

conduct post-campaign evaluations to measure ROI. However, the study acknowledged limitations such as reliance on self-reported data and the exclusion of rural populations, which may have introduced bias into the findings.

Zhou et al. (2021) investigated how social media celebrity endorsers influenced consumer purchase intentions in emerging markets, specifically China, India, and Indonesia. The research aimed to explore the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer responses to influencer marketing. A mixed-methods approach was applied, combining both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. The final sample included 720 respondents from three countries, selected using cluster selection. Online surveys were used to gather data and semi-structured interviews, then analysed using SEM and thematic analysis. Findings showed that parasocial interaction and source credibility were significant mediators in the relationship between influencer endorsement and purchase intention. Furthermore, consumers responded more positively to influencers who shared similar values and lifestyles. The researchers recommended that brands focus on developing emotional connections between influencers and audiences, rather than simply leveraging follower counts. A limitation identified was the relatively small number of qualitative interviews, which may have limited depth of understanding in some areas.

Taurino and Handoyo (2023) assessed the impact of digital marketing, word of mouth, and brand ambassadors on brand awareness and purchase decisions in the context of e-commerce users in the Jabodetabek area of Indonesia. The study employed a survey research design, collecting data from 171 respondents who had made online purchases using e-commerce apps. SmartPLS software was used for data analysis to test the correlation and causal relationships among the variables. Findings indicated that digital marketing and word of mouth had a significant and positive effect on both brand awareness and purchase decisions. However, brand ambassadors had a negative and insignificant effect on purchase decisions, suggesting that their influence might be diminishing in the face of more direct digital marketing efforts. Brand awareness was found

to have a significant positive effect on purchase intention, highlighting its intermediary role between marketing activities and consumer action. The researchers recommended that companies place greater emphasis on content-driven digital campaigns and customer-generated reviews rather than relying excessively on brand ambassadors. A notable limitation was the exclusion of qualitative insights that could have provided deeper understanding of consumer motivations behind brand awareness and purchase decisions.

Marques et al. (2020) studied the impact of celebrity endorsements on brand attitude and purchase intentions in emerging markets, with a particular emphasis on Latin American and Southeast Asian contexts. The research aimed to assess whether global celebrity endorsements were more effective than local endorsements in these markets. A quantitative methodology was employed, involving an experimental design where participants were exposed to advertisements featuring either global or local celebrities. 520 respondents made up the final sample, which was chosen using a stratified approach. The data was gathered using online platforms and evaluated using ANOVA and hierarchical regression analysis. Results showed that global celebrities generally enhanced brand attitude more than local endorsers, although this effect diminished when cultural relevance was low. Purchase intention was found to be highest when there was a strong fit between the celebrity and the brand. The study recommended that multinational brands should balance global appeal with local relevance when choosing endorsers. Limitations included the controlled experimental setting, which may not reflect real-world consumer responses, and the lack of longitudinal data to assess long-term effects.

Boateng and Oduro (2020) explored how celebrity-brand congruence affected consumer purchase intention, focusing on the Ghanaian FMCG market. The study aimed to determine whether matching brand values with celebrity characteristics enhanced marketing outcomes. A descriptive research design was used, with a sample of 300 respondents drawn from Accra and Kumasi using stratified sampling. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and processed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-

SEM). Findings revealed that brand-consumer congruence played a vital part in deciding purchase intention, with emotional attachment mediating the relationship. Endorser likeability and brand personality alignment were found to be key drivers of consumer interest. The researchers recommended that marketers evaluate both visual and psychological compatibility before selecting endorsers. A limitation of the study was its reliance on cross-sectional data, which restricted causal inferences about the relationship between congruence and purchase intention.

Mudzanani and Chuchu (2022) aimed to examine the effect of celebrity endorsement on brand loyalty, with a specific focus on the mediating role of brand trust in this relationship. The research was carried out within the South African fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector, where brand endorsements are commonly used as marketing tools. A positivist research paradigm was adopted, and a quantitative survey approach was employed. The population consisted of consumers who had purchased products endorsed by celebrities, with a sample size of 384 respondents selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and processed using structural equation modelling (SEM). Results indicated that celebrity endorsement had a significant positive effect on brand trust, which in turn enhanced brand loyalty. However, the direct impact of celebrity endorsement on brand loyalty was found to be insignificant without the mediation of brand trust. This suggested that trust acted as a crucial intermediary in translating endorsement into long-term consumer commitment. The researchers recommended that marketers should not only focus on selecting high-profile endorsers but also ensure consistent messaging and ethical conduct to build and maintain consumer trust. One limitation noted was the use of self-reported data, which could introduce response bias.

Literature Gaps

The review of existing empirical studies reveals several notable gaps that justify the present research. First, most prior studies were conducted in Asian markets, particularly Indonesia, where the focus has been on how Korean pop celebrities' impact global

ambassadors of brand online shopping platforms and beauty products (Haiban & Rimadias, 2023; Pardede et al., 2023; Maretha et al., 2024). These contexts differ significantly from Nigeria's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector in terms of cultural orientation, consumer behaviour, and product category, thereby limiting the generalisability of findings. Second, while existing studies largely concentrated on e-commerce platforms and cosmetic brands, there is a paucity of research examining the relationship between brand ambassador characteristics specifically credibility and attractiveness and consumer buying behaviour for FMCG firms such as Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja, Nigeria. Third, the reviewed literature predominantly addresses variables like brand attitude, repurchase intention, and brand image, with little emphasis on the dual dimensions of consumer buying behaviour (purchase intention and brand loyalty) as conceptualised in the present study. Finally, the few African studies, such as those by Adu et al. (2018) and Mudzanani and Chuchu (2022), Adah et al. (2025) examined celebrity endorsement broadly without isolating the unique effects of brand ambassador attributes on FMCG products, leaving a critical gap in understanding how these dynamics play out in the Nigerian context. This study addresses these gaps by exploring the effect of brand ambassador credibility and attractiveness on consumer purchase intention and brand loyalty within the FMCG sector in Abuja, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a combination of explanatory and descriptive survey research designs. The descriptive design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of data that provided detailed insights into the current attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours of customers toward brand ambassadors and buying behaviour within the FMCG sector. The explanatory design complemented this by examining the causal relationship between the independent variables (brand ambassador dimensions: credibility and attractiveness) and the dependent variables (consumer buying behaviour dimensions: purchase intention and brand loyalty). This combination was justified as it facilitated both the description of patterns and the explanation of relationships in line with

the research objectives. The population of the study comprised active customers of DUFIL Prima Foods Plc across the six area councils of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. DUFIL Prima Foods' 2023 Annual Consumer Report, the company's retail distribution network serves approximately 4,997 active customers monthly within the FCT. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a sample size of 357 respondents was recommended for a population of 4,997. However, to enhance the robustness of the data and improve generalisability, a 20% margin of safety was applied, increasing the sample size to 428 respondents. This adjustment was justified as it helped to mitigate non-response bias and ensured adequate representation from diverse clusters across the six area councils. A cluster sampling technique was employed because the study population was geographically dispersed across the six area councils in Abuja, making it practical and cost-effective to group respondents into clusters based on location. This approach ensured that

each area council was adequately represented, thereby improving the external validity of the findings. Primary data served as the main source of information, and a structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale to measure the study variables. Content validity was established by subjecting the instrument to expert review from marketing and research specialists, ensuring that all items accurately reflected the constructs under investigation. Reliability was assessed through a pilot study, and Cronbach's alpha values for each construct demonstrated strong internal consistency: brand ambassador credibility ($\alpha = 0.872$), attractiveness ($\alpha = 0.861$), purchase intention ($\alpha = 0.884$), and brand loyalty ($\alpha = 0.879$), all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Data were analysed using regression analysis with the aid of SPSS version 27 to determine the effect of brand ambassador attributes on consumer buying behaviour, in line with the study hypotheses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

	Number	Percentage
Questionnaire Distributed	428	100%
Returned Questionnaire	363	85%
Unreturned Questionnaire	65	15%

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Table 4.1 presented the response rate of the administered questionnaires, indicating that out of the 428 questionnaires distributed, 363 were duly completed and returned, representing an 85% response rate, while 65 questionnaires, accounting for 15%, were not returned. This high response rate suggested a strong level of participant engagement and provided a reliable

basis for generalizing the findings to the broader population of Dufil Foods Plc consumers within Abuja. The 85% return rate exceeded the generally acceptable minimum threshold in survey research, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the study's results and minimizing the risk of non-response bias.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Brand ambassador credibility has no any significant effect on consumers' purchase intention of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja.

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1(CRD) + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots 2$$

Table 4.13

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.768 ^a	.590	.589	.34037

a. Predictors: (Constant), CRD

Table 4.13 presents the model summary for the regression analysis testing the hypothesis that brand ambassador credibility (CRD) has no significant effect on consumers' purchase intention (PI) regarding Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.768 indicates a strong positive relationship between brand ambassador credibility and purchase intention, suggesting that as the perceived credibility of the brand ambassador increases, so too does the likelihood of purchase. .590 value of R Square reveals indicates roughly 59% variance in the intention of consumers to buy could be accounted for brand ambassador credibility

alone, while the Adjusted R Square of .589 confirms the model's robustness after accounting for the number of predictors. This implies that credibility is a primary driver of consumer response to product ambassadorship at Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, indicating that brand ambassador credibility significantly influences consumer purchase intention. Therefore, enhancing the trustworthiness and expertise of brand ambassadors could serve as a strategic lever for improving product demand among consumers in Abuja

Table 4.14 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	60.176	1	60.176	519.431	.000 ^b
	Residual	41.822	361	.116		
	Total	101.998	362			

a. Dependent Variable: PI

b. Predictors: (Constant), CRD

Table 4.14 presents the ANOVA results for the regression model testing the influence of brand ambassador credibility (CRD) on consumer purchase intention (PI) regarding Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja. The table shows that the regression sum of squares is 60.176 with 1 degree of freedom, and the residual sum of squares is 41.822 with 361 degrees of freedom, resulting in a very large F-value of 519.431 and a probability value of .000, which is well below the conventional significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the model is statistically significant and that brand ambassador credibility has a significant predictive effect on

consumers' purchase intention. The extremely low p-value suggests strong evidence against the null hypothesis (H_{01}), leading to its rejection. Therefore, this implies that as the perceived credibility of the brand ambassador increases, there is a corresponding notable increase in the likelihood of consumers intending to purchase Dufil products. These findings underscore the importance of selecting credible endorsers to enhance marketing effectiveness and stimulate consumer interest in the fast-moving consumer goods sector in Abuja

Table 4.15 Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.162	.131		8.842	.000
	CRD	.741	.032	.768	22.791	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI

Table 4.15 presents the coefficients output for the regression analysis testing the influence of brand ambassador credibility (CRD) on consumer purchase intention (PI) regarding Dufil Foods Plc products

in Abuja. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for CRD is 0.741, with a standard error of 0.032, showing that there is a 0.741-unit rise in purchase intention for every unit increase in perceived trustworthiness. The great prediction ability of the scaled beta coefficient of 0.768 is further demonstrated by credibility in influencing consumer decisions. The t-value of 22.791 and an associated p-value of .000 well below the 0.05 significance threshold provide strong evidence against the null hypothesis (H_{01}), leading to its rejection. This implies that brand ambassador credibility has a statistically significant and positive effect on consumers' intention to purchase Dufil products. Therefore, enhancing the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of brand ambassadors can serve as a strategic tool for boosting product demand among consumers in Abuja.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Brand ambassador attractiveness has no any significant effect on consumer brand loyalty towards Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja.

$$BL = \beta_0 + \beta_1(ATT) + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots 3$$

Table 4.16 **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.843 ^a	.710	.709	.28968

a. Predictors: (Constant), ATT

Table 4.16 presents the model summary for the regression analysis testing the hypothesis that brand ambassador attractiveness (ATT) has no significant effect on consumer brand loyalty (BL) towards Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.843 indicates a very strong positive relationship between brand ambassador attractiveness and brand loyalty, suggesting that as consumers perceive the ambassador as more attractive, their emotional attachment and commitment to the brand increase. The R Square value of 0.710 shows that approximately 71% of the variation in brand loyalty can be explained by the

attractiveness of the brand ambassador alone, while the Adjusted R Square of 0.709 confirms the model's robustness after adjusting for the number of predictors. With a relatively low standard error of the estimate (0.28968), the model demonstrates high predictive accuracy. These findings imply that attractiveness provides an important part in forming consumer-brand relationships, therefore, null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected. This underscores the importance of selecting visually appealing and emotionally engaging brand ambassadors to foster long-term loyalty among consumers in Abuja's competitive FMCG market.

Table 4.17 **ANOVA^a**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	74.172	1	74.172	883.895	.000 ^b
	Residual	30.293	361	.084		
	Total	104.465	362			

a. Dependent Variable: BL

b. Predictors: (Constant), ATT

Table 4.17 presents the ANOVA results for the regression model testing the influence of brand ambassador attractiveness (ATT) on consumer brand loyalty (BL) towards Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. The table shows a regression sum of squares of 74.172 with 1 degree of freedom, and a residual sum of squares of 30.293 with 361 degrees of freedom, resulting in a very high F-statistic of 883.895 and a p-value of .000, which

is well below the conventional significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and that brand ambassador attractiveness has a strong predictive effect on brand loyalty. The extremely low p-value provides robust evidence against the null hypothesis (H_{02}), leading to its rejection. Therefore, this implies that as the perceived attractiveness of the brand

ambassador increases, there is a corresponding significant increase in consumer brand loyalty. These findings highlight the importance of visual appeal and emotional connection in endorsement strategies, particularly in shaping

long-term consumer-brand relationships within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector in Abuja.

Table 4.18 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.877	.108	8.140	.000
	ATT	.782	.026	.843	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BL

Table 4.18 presents the coefficients output for the regression analysis testing the influence of brand ambassador attractiveness (ATT) on consumer brand loyalty (BL) towards Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for ATT is 0.782, with a standard error of 0.026, indicating that a one-unit increase in perceived attractiveness corresponds to a 0.782-unit increase in brand loyalty. The standardized Beta coefficient of 0.843 is reinforced by the strong predictive strength of attractiveness in explaining variations in brand loyalty. The t-value of 29.730 and an associated p-value of .000 well below the 0.05 significance level provide compelling evidence against the null hypothesis (H_{02}), leading to its rejection. This implies that brand ambassador attractiveness significantly enhances emotional attachment and repeat patronage among consumers of Dufil products in Abuja. These findings suggest that visually appealing endorsers play a crucial role in shaping long-term brand-consumer relationships, particularly in competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) markets where emotional engagement drives loyalty.

Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis (H_{01}) posited that brand ambassador credibility has no significant effect on consumers' purchase intention of Dufil Foods Plc products in Abuja. However, the regression analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between credibility and purchase intention, leading to the rejection of H_{01} . The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.768$), R Square value of 0.590, and statistically significant F-value ($F = 519.431$, $p < 0.001$) confirm that

credibility plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decision-making. This aligns with Source Credibility Theory, which argues that credible endorsers enhance message persuasiveness by reducing perceived risk and increasing trust (Sertoglu et al., 2014). Empirical support is found in Boateng and Oduro (2020) and Adu et al. (2018), who reported similar effects in the Nigerian FMCG sector. However, Agung et al. (2023) found minimal impact of credibility on e-commerce purchasing decisions in Indonesia, suggesting possible variations across sectors and cultural contexts. In contrast, this study affirms that in the Nigerian food retail market, credibility remains a powerful driver of purchase intent, reinforcing its relevance in endorsement strategy.

The second hypothesis (H_{02}) proposed that brand ambassador attractiveness has no significant effect on consumer brand loyalty towards Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. The data analysis strongly contradicts this claim, with R value .843 and R Square of .710 indicating attractiveness accounts for over 71% of the variance in brand loyalty. The ANOVA result ($F = 883.895$, $p < 0.001$) validates the significance of the model. Based on Source Attractiveness Theory, attractive endorsers generate emotional engagement and parasocial relationships that encourage long-term brand attachment (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Nadila & Windasari, 2022). This resonates with Maretha et al. (2024), who found that K-pop endorsers significantly triggered impulsive purchases among young Indonesian consumers due to their visual appeal and relatability. Similarly, Pardede and Aprianingsih (2023) demonstrated that attractiveness positively affects both

purchase intention and brand loyalty in beauty product marketing. While these findings corroborate the current study, some studies such as Taurino and Handoyo (2023) suggest that digital marketing and word-of-mouth may sometimes outweigh physical appearance, indicating potential limitations when attractiveness is not paired with meaningful brand alignment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the effect of brand ambassadors on consumer buying behaviour, with a particular focus on Dufil Foods Plc in Abuja. Drawing from the Source Credibility Theory, Source Attractiveness Theory, and the Meaning Transfer Model, the study explored how brand ambassador credibility, attractiveness, and popularity influence consumers' purchase intention, brand loyalty, and perceived brand value. The analysis provided substantial evidence that brand ambassador attributes play a crucial role in shaping consumer responses and decision-making in the highly competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.

The findings confirmed that brand ambassador credibility significantly influences consumers' willingness to purchase products, indicating that customers are inclined to believe and follow the advice of endorsers who are perceived as honest, experienced, and knowledgeable. Similarly, ambassador attractiveness was shown to foster emotional and psychological connections that translate into stronger brand loyalty, while popularity was found to elevate perceived brand value by enhancing the visibility and recognition of the brand. These outcomes underscore the multidimensional nature of consumer behaviour and the need for firms to adopt a more strategic approach in selecting brand ambassadors who not only align with their brand values but also appeal to their target audience across various levels.

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that brand ambassadorship is not merely a promotional tool, but a strategic asset that can significantly shape consumer perceptions and

behaviours. The credibility, attractiveness, and popularity of a brand ambassador have proven to be significant determinants of consumer engagement with a brand. These findings provide both theoretical and practical implications for marketing practitioners, suggesting that investment in well-aligned brand ambassadors can yield meaningful returns in consumer acquisition and retention. Furthermore, the study adds to the body of empirical literature on consumer behaviour in the Nigerian context, offering valuable insights for further academic exploration and policy development within the marketing discipline.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following professional recommendations are proposed to Dufil Foods Plc and other stakeholders in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, particularly in the context of enhancing consumer behaviour through effective brand ambassadorship:

- i. **Invest in Highly Credible Brand Ambassadors:** Given the significant influence of brand ambassador credibility on consumers' purchase intention, Dufil Foods Plc should prioritize endorsers who exhibit strong credibility traits such as trustworthiness, expertise, and authenticity. Such individuals can foster trust and enhance consumers' confidence in product quality, thereby stimulating purchase intentions.
- ii. **Leverage Physically Attractive Endorsers to Strengthen Brand Loyalty:** The findings showed that brand ambassador attractiveness has a statistically significant effect on brand loyalty. Therefore, Dufil Foods Plc should consider engaging brand ambassadors who are not only visually appealing but who also align with the aspirational identity of the target market. This emotional appeal fosters loyalty and repeated patronage.

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