

EFFECT OF POWER AND ATTRACTION OF BRAND AMBASSADORS ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION OF 9MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of power and attraction on consumer buying decision of 9mobile telecommunication services in F.C.T. The study adopted descriptive research design whereby questionnaires were administered to a sample of three hundred and fifty (350) respondents. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the two (2) hypotheses formulated. The study found that brand ambassadors' attractiveness and power have positive and significant effect on consumer buying decisions of 9Mobile telecommunication services. Based on the foregoing, the study recommends that 9Mobile should enhance their ambassador's attractiveness by focusing on authenticity, confidence, and relatability while providing styling, grooming, and communication training to refine their presence. Also, 9Mobile should train their ambassadors on their brand values, leverage their unique strengths, and encourage authentic engagements. They should encourage their ambassadors to optimize their digital presence with quality content and strategic guidance while incentivizing efforts through rewards and recognition.

Keywords: Power, Attraction, Consumer Buying Decision.

INTRODUCTION

Today's consumers are pickier, shaped by a confluence of technical developments, cultural quirks, worldwide trends, and individual tastes. Purchase decisions have changed as a result of the expansion of product options and cross-cultural effects brought about by the globalization of economies and information (Venter et al., 2019). Businesses must comprehend these intricate relationships as well as the socioeconomic and cultural factors at work in order to successfully meet the demands of both domestic and international markets, claim Prihandono et al. (2020). In a world that is becoming more networked, researchers and businesses need to create strategies that accommodate a wide range of consumer preferences.

Traditional values, socioeconomic circumstances, and the expanding importance of technology all have an impact on Nigerian consumers, therefore firms must develop strategies that balance traditional tastes with contemporary trends. Customer purchase decisions are influenced by a variety of factors, according to Chetoui et al. (2020); hence, it is crucial to look into these aspects in order to understand how they affect decisions. According to Bu et al. (2022), brand ambassadorship/endorsement and influencer marketing are linked to consumer decisions. According to research that link influencer marketing to consumer purchasing decisions, brand ambassadors/endorsers have a big impact on customer decisions by increasing brand appeal and trust (Faradasya & Trianasari, 2021). Utilizing endorsers effectively entails using their reputation, knowledge, and beauty to impart favorable qualities to items, enhancing brand perception and increasing sales. But choosing the right celebrity endorsement is important because they can have both positive and negative effects on branding, so careful planning is required.

The Nigerian telecommunications industry is highly competitive, with companies like 9mobile leveraging brand ambassadors as a key marketing strategy to influence consumer perceptions and preferences. Despite substantial investments, the effectiveness of these endorsements on buying decisions remains uncertain due to limited empirical evidence, creating a critical knowledge gap. Understanding this impact is essential for optimizing marketing strategies, especially in a digital age where social media plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. As consumers face an overwhelming influx of marketing messages, assessing whether brand ambassadors can effectively stand out and drive purchases is increasingly important for maintaining a competitive edge.

The study explored the effect of power and attraction of endorser on consumer buying decision of 9mobile telecommunication services in F.C.T. The following hypotheses stated in null form guided the study:

H₀₁: Power has no significant effect on consumer buying decision of 9mobile telecommunication services in F.C.T., Abuja.

H₀₂: Attraction has no significant effect on consumer buying decision of 9mobile telecommunication services in F.C.T., Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Buying Decision

According to Wibowo and Karimah (2012), consumers base their purchasing decisions on their needs analysis, information seeking, information assessment, purchase, and choice evaluation. The following four factors were identified by Kotler and Armstrong (2014) as influencing factors when making purchases: The quality, value, and price of a product or service influence consumers to buy it; purchase patterns, which include both product and service purchases, impact the decision to buy; customers who believe that using the product will benefit them also recommend it; and making a buyback increases the likelihood that a customer will repurchase a product after they are satisfied with it. These factors all contribute to the stability of a product or service. According to this study, a consumer's decision to purchase a good or service is influenced by the factors they take into account.

Power

Yoon and Kim (2015) emphasize that power in the realm of brand ambassadors goes beyond mere renown and attractiveness. For a brand ambassador to wield purchasing power, they must be idolized by the audience. This idolization translates into the ability to influence the audience's purchasing decisions, making them more likely to buy the promoted products. Similarly, Dewa (2018) discusses the concept of power, emphasizing it as the magnitude of influence that an endorser holds over the community. The greater this influence, the more trust the society places in the endorsed products or services. In essence, a highly influential endorser can significantly boost the credibility and desirability of the products or services they promote. Dewi et al. (2020) describe power as the authority obtained by an individual to perform an action or influence others. This highlights the role of influencers in leveraging their authority to sway their audience's decisions and behaviors, particularly in the context of promoting products or services. This study adopts the definition of power by Yoon and Kim (2015).

Attraction

Attractiveness is not only physical but also lifestyle, personality, skills, etc (Chinmi et al., 2020). According to Dewi et al. (2020), attractiveness is a person's ability both physically and non-physically to be able to attract attention. Setiawan (2018) classified attraction into two characteristics, namely likability and similarity. Likability evaluates the physical appearance and personality of the endorser. The expectation is that with their charm, the endorser can have a positive influence on the advertised brand. Similarity is the emotional image match in advertising which can be very helpful in achieving the desired advertising goals. Sterie et al. (2019) opined that attractiveness not only means physical attractiveness, but includes a number of characteristics that can be seen by the audience in the endorser: like intelligence, personality traits, lifestyle, body athleticism, and so on. This study adopts the definition of attraction as opined by Dewi et al. (2020).

Power and Consumer Buying Decision

Batu et al. (2023) looked at how power and e-service quality affected BTS Indonesia fans' decisions to buy on Tokopedia. Questionnaires were distributed via social media to BTS fans, and 192 samples of the research design were employed. The sample strategy used was stratified random sampling. Data obtained from structural equation modeling (SEM) was analyzed using the AMOS software. The results showed that, at least in part, power influence had a notable and positive effect on BTS purchasing decisions.

Purchasing decisions for BTS are significantly and favorably influenced by the caliber of e-services. Concurrently, the effectiveness of power and the caliber of e-services positively and significantly impact consumers' purchasing decisions. The study's narrow focus on Tokopedia users may have limited the findings' applicability to other contexts.

Using the Ruangguru app, Nuryanti et al. (2023) evaluated how celebrity endorsers affected consumers' decisions to buy. Quantitative research was the term for that kind of inquiry. All 636 enrolled students of SMA Negeri 15 Jakarta made up the school's population during the 2021–2022 academic year. The Slovin formula was used to calculate the study's sample size. 86 respondents made up the study's sample size. A questionnaire, documentation, and a literature review were used to collect data. Purposive sampling was the sample strategy that was employed. The study's data analysis technique was basic linear regression analysis. The results showed that celebrity endorsers' power had a negative impact on consumers' decisions to buy. However, because of the small sample size, the study's conclusions are not as robust.

Arifianti and Untarini (2023) investigated the influence of viral marketing and brand ambassador power on MS Glow buying decisions using consumer trust as a mediating variable. The study's research design was quantitative. The sample was created using 176 respondents and a purposeful sampling technique. Data was gathered using an online survey using a 5-point Likert scale that was distributed to respondents. The statistical analysis of the study was conducted using Warp PLS software version 8.0 and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results showed how brand ambassadors and viral marketing significantly and favorably affect consumer trust. Brand ambassadors barely have an impact on consumers' decisions to buy. While purchasing decisions are strongly and favorably influenced by viral marketing and customer trust. Nevertheless, customers who do not use MS Glow care not captured in the study, hence, the results are not broadly applicable.

Attraction and Consumer Buying Decision

Using the VisCAP model, Raja and Shahrel employed an initial approach in their 2024 study to determine which marketing endorsers' attractiveness on the TikTok platform effects consumers' decision to buy. It provided an integrated VisCAP Model that takes into account the availability of advertising services that consumers value and can influence their purchase intentions, such as competence, attraction, and dependability. The study looked at previous research from the internet, journals, and publications on the topic in order to investigate stimulation from various angles that have previously been investigated by academics. According to the study, a brand ambassador or endorser's attraction may influence individuals to buy a product. However, the study used secondary data to draw its conclusions while this current study used primary data gotten directly from consumers and employed a scientific tool to analyze the data.

Dewi and Gunanto (2023) carried out an examination of the factors impacting customers' choices to purchase packaged food items that are imported. In the study, structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis approaches were used. Using SmartPLS 3.0, a sample of 200 Muslims living in Jakarta who were over eighteen and had bought or eaten packaged foreign food items were examined. Data was collected online using Google Forms surveys and reviews of related literature. The results showed that halal awareness, e-WOM, influencer marketing (VisCAP), and lifestyle variables all positively influence customers' decisions to purchase imported packaged foods. Additionally, it was found that customers' purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by the attractiveness of influencers. According to the research, all factors predicted to influence consumers' decisions to buy imported packaged food goods have been demonstrated to have a positive and significant impact, with lifestyle being the most significant factor.

In Jombang Regency, Indonesia, Bidari and Kurniawan (2023) investigated the effect of a brand ambassador's attractiveness and brand image on consumers' inclinations to buy Somethinc items. In this

study, descriptive quantitative research approaches were used. As part of the survey procedure, prospective customers of Somethinc's products were immediately provided a questionnaire, which was used to gather data. The sample consisted of 100 responders in total, and the technique used was purposeful sampling. The data analysis technique used was multiple linear regression analysis. The study's findings demonstrated that consumers' desire to make purchases is considerably and favorably influenced by brand ambassadors. The study found that a brand ambassador's attractiveness affects customers' propensity to buy. Nevertheless, the study is limited from general applicability due to geographical constraint.

Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory (SIT), developed by Kelman (1953) in the 1950s, examines how social influence leads to attitude or behavior changes. It draws on foundational research in conformity and social dynamics (Asch, 1961), cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962), and functional attitudes (Katz, 1960). Kelman (1974) proposed that attitudes are shaped by social conventions, norms, and personal predispositions, with the acceptance of social influence influenced by power dynamics, the characteristics of the influencer, and the communicated message. SIT highlights that social influence operates differently across individuals, depending on the social and psychological context.

Kelman (1958) identified three modes of social influence acceptance: compliance, identification, and internalization. These modes reflect different responses to social influence, shaped by interactions with influencing agents in informational and motivational contexts. SIT outlines a three-step process defining the situation, presenting the influencer, and specifying the response that determines the effectiveness of influence. Responses such as exposure, positive orientation, and induced behavior pave the way for influence acceptance, illustrating the nuanced dynamics of social interaction.

Over time, SIT has been applied to fields such as marketing and information systems (Cheung et al., 2022), offering insights into consumer behavior and interpersonal communication (Binyamin, 2020). However, the theory has faced criticism for its limited consideration of contextual factors, power dynamics, and the intentionality behind influences (Wang et al., 2022). Researchers have called for more exploration of situational differences and their impact on social influence, arguing that SIT needs refinement to address these complexities and enhance its applicability across diverse scenarios. To that end, some critics argued that Kelman's theory may not be adequate to address the role of situational factors in social influence processes (Dong et al., 2021).

This study adopted the Social Influence Theory because it provides a robust explanation for how others (brand ambassadors in this case) affect behavior, offering insights into the mechanisms of social conformity, peer pressure, and the impact of influential figures. Its applicability to various real-life situations, particularly in consumer behavior, makes it a valuable framework for understanding and leveraging social influence in marketing strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine the nature of relationship between consumer buying decisions (dependent variable) and attraction and power (independent variables). In this study, the target population comprised of 9mobile users. The Cochran sample size determination formula which calculates sample size for an infinite population was used to obtain the sample size for the study. The formula is presented below:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

where:

e = the desired level of precision (margin of error = 5%)

p = estimated proportion of the population which has the attribute in question (assuming 0.65)

q = 1-p (1-0.65 = 0.35)

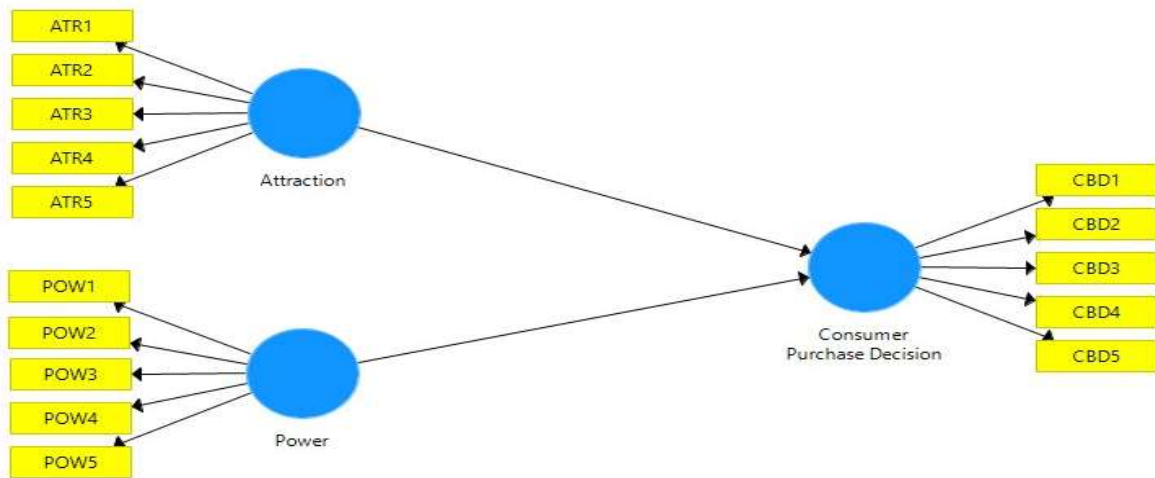
Z = z-value (found in the Z table = 1.96 at 95% confidence level)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.65) (0.35)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(3.84) (0.65) (0.35)}{0.05^2}$$

n = 350

Hence, the sample size for this study was 350. The 350 sample was selected based on the criteria that the respondent has purchased/used or still buys/uses 9mobile telecommunication services. Primary source of data was explored in getting important and useful information for the study. The data was gathered from respondents through questionnaire instrument structured on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire used for this study was adapted from previous studies of Putri and Agus (2023), Asty et al. (2019) and Wahyoedi et al. (2022). The data collected was analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-AEM) with the aid of SmartPLS software on responses from the data collected through the administered questionnaire to 9mobile users in F.C.T.



Source: Researcher's computation, (2024) via SmartPLS

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Out of the four hundred and thirty-eight (438) distributed questionnaires, 401 were properly filled and returned giving a response rate of 91%. Subsequently, all further analyses were done using 401 responses data.

Assessment of Measurement Model

In assessing the measurement model, the researcher began by assessing the item outer loadings. As a rule, loadings above 0.708 are recommended, as they indicate that the construct explains more than 50 percent of the indicator's variance, thus providing acceptable item reliability (Hair, et al., 2019). However, Hair, et al., (2019) posited that low but significant indicator loading of 0.50 can be included hence justifying why indicators with loadings less than 0.708 and above 0.50 were not deleted from the model as seen in figure 2 below.

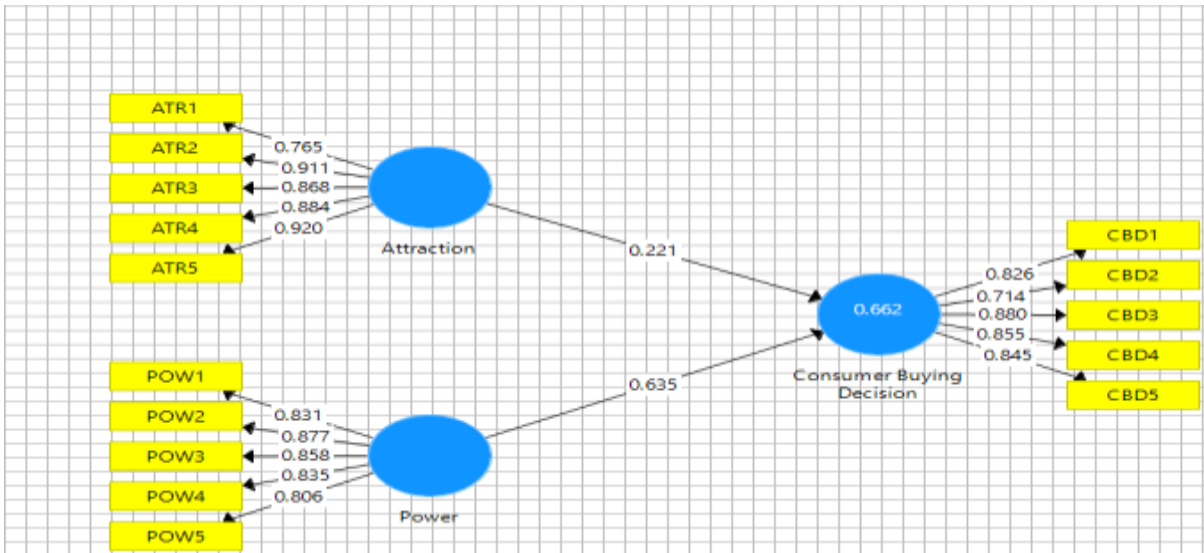


Fig 2: Indicator Loadings.

Table 4.2: Reliability of study scale

S/N	Variables		Factor Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	No of Items
1	Attraction (ATR)	ATR1	0.765	0.920	0.940	0.760	5
		ATR2	0.911				
		ATR3	0.868				
		ATR4	0.884				
		ATR5	0.920				
2	Power (POW)	POW1	0.831	0.897	0.924	0.708	5
		POW2	0.877				
		POW3	0.858				
		POW4	0.835				
		POW5	0.806				
3	Consumer Buying Decision (CBD)	CBD1	0.826	0.883	0.915	0.683	5
		CBD2	0.714				
		CBD3	0.880				
		CBD4	0.855				
		CBD5	0.845				

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

Composite reliability of Jöreskog's (1971) was applied to test for internal consistency of the study. All the values fall within the Hair et al. (2019) rating of good consistency. The Cronbach alpha value were above 0.60 which is the minimum threshold as recommended by Sekaran (2010). To test for the convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was used. All the latent variables showed values greater than 0.50 which indicates that the constructs explain at least 50 percent of the variance of its items. According to Henseler, et al., (2015) the Fornell-Larcker criterion does not perform well when explaining discriminant validity, particularly when the indicator loadings on a construct differ only slightly. As a replacement, they proposed the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of the correlations which is the mean value of the item correlations across constructs relative to the (geometric) mean of the average correlations for the items measuring the same construct (Voorhees et al., 2016). Discriminant validity problems are present when HTMT values are high than 0.90 for structural models (Henseler, et al., 2015).

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	ATR	POW	CBD
ATR	1.000		
POW	0.815	1.000	
CBD	0.758	0.890	1.000

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to evaluate collinearity of the formative indicators. All the VIF values were less than 5 indicate the absence of critical collinearity issues among the indicators of formatively measured constructs (Hair, et al., 2019).

Model Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Sequel to the need to validate the PLS model, there is a need to assess the goodness of fit of the model as Hair, et al. (2017) suggested. This study used the standardised root mean square residual's (SRMR). The choice of this index was based on the fact that the SRMR provides the absolute fit measure where a value of zero indicates a perfect fit. The study adopted Hu and Bentler (1998) suggestion that a value of less than 0.08 represents a good fit while applying SRMR for model goodness of fit. The study result indicates an SRMR value of 0.064. This indicates the model is fit.

Assessing the Structural Model

Having satisfied the measurement model assessment, the next step in evaluating PLS-SEM results is to assess the structural model. Standard assessment criteria, which was considered include the path coefficient, t-values, p-values and coefficient of determination (R^2). The bootstrapping procedure was conducted using a resample of 5000.

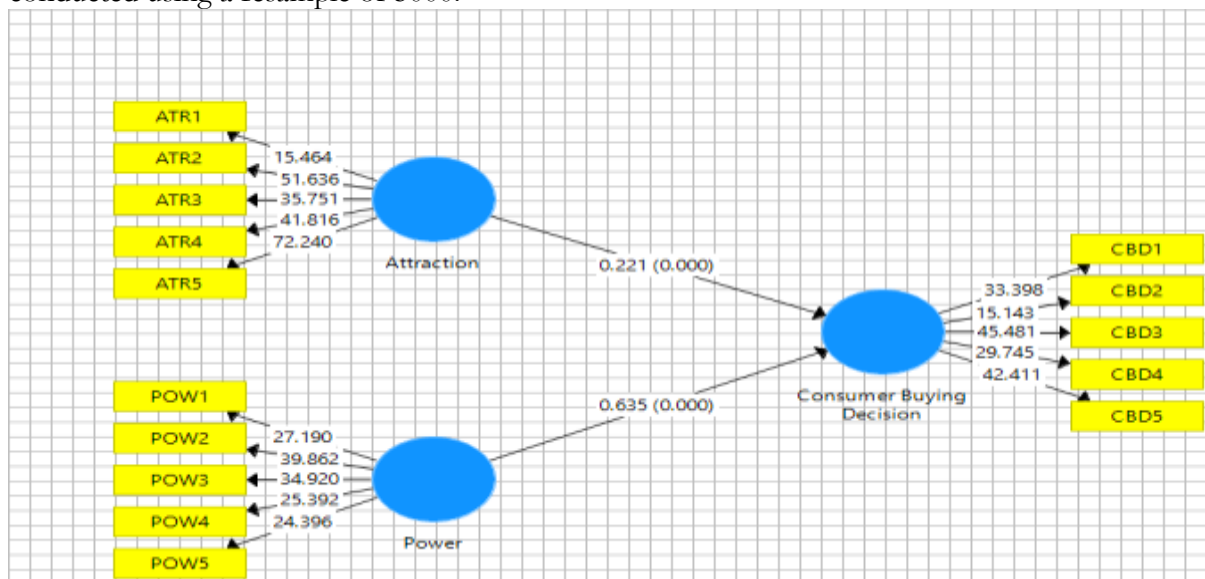


Fig. 3: Path Coefficients of the Regression Model.

R Square Table

	R^2	Q^2
Consumer Buying Decision	0.662	0.651

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

The R-square value stood at 0.662 indicating that brand ambassador proxied by visibility and credibility account for 66.2% variation in consumer buying decisions. The remaining 33.8% variation could be explained by other factors not included in the study. Based on Hair, et al., (2019), the r-square is considered moderate. The result of the path analysis is presented in the table below:

Table 4.4: Path Coefficients

Hypotheses	Variable	B	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
Ho ₁	Attraction -> Consumer Buying Decision	0.221	3.911	0.000	Rejected
Ho ₂	Power -> Consumer Buying Decision	0.635	11.150	0.000	Rejected

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2025

The result from the analysis indicates that brand ambassador attraction has positive and significant effect on consumer buying decision of 9Mobile telecommunication services in FCT. The decision was reached based on the t-value of 3.911 which is greater than 1.964 and a beta value of 0.221 with a p-value of 0.000. This finding implies that ambassadors employed by 9Mobile are both physically and non-physically to be able to attract attention to the brand. This finding is in agreement with that of Dewi and Gunanto (2023) and Bidari and Kurniawan (2023) who found positive and significant effect of visibility on buying decision.

The result from the analysis indicates that brand ambassador power has positive and significant effect on consumer buying decision of 9Mobile telecommunication services in FCT. The decision was reached based on the t-value of 11.150 which is greater than 1.964 and a beta value of 0.635 with a p-value of 0.000. This finding implies that ambassadors employed by 9Mobile hold significant power in inviting and persuading people to purchase the brand which could be primarily due to their widespread recognition and the trust that consumers place in them. This finding is in agreement with that of Batu et al. (2023) who found positive and significant effect of power on consumer buying decisions. However, it disagrees with the finding of Nuryanti et al. (2023) who found negative effect of power on consumer buying decisions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the brand ambassador's attractiveness and power influences buying decisions among customers towards a brand. Therefore, based on the study's findings, it is recommended that:

- i. 9Mobile should enhance their ambassador's attractiveness by focusing on authenticity, confidence, and relatability while providing styling, grooming, and communication training to refine their presence. They should optimize their ambassadors' social media with high-quality content, engaging storytelling, among others while ensuring that they embody the lifestyle and values of the brand.
- ii. Also, it is recommended that 9Mobile should train their ambassadors on their brand values, leverage their unique strengths, and encourage authentic engagements. They should encourage their ambassadors to optimize their digital presence with quality content and strategic guidance while incentivizing efforts through rewards and recognition. In addition, 9Mobile should measure their ambassadors' performance using tracking tools, gather feedback, and refine strategies based on data insights.

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APPENDIX

Research Questionnaire

Keywords: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

Total gotten: ***

S/N	Attraction (ATR)	SA	A	U	D	SD
ATR1	The brand ambassador is likable and engaging.					
ATR2	I find the brand ambassador's personality attractive.					
ATR3	I relate to the brand ambassador due to some similarities we share.					
ATR4	The brand ambassador's charm affects my perception of the brand.					
ATR5	I find the brand ambassador appealing.					
	Power (POW)					
POW1	The brand ambassador's association with the brand enhances its prestige.					
POW2	A brand ambassador can persuade me to switch brands.					
POW3	The brand ambassador's support can lead to increased loyalty to the brand.					
POW4	The brand ambassador has the power to shape public opinion about the brand.					
POW5	The brand ambassador enhances the brand's overall appeal and influence.					
	Consumer Buying Decision (CBD)					
CBD1	I am more likely to repurchase from the brand due to the brand ambassador.					
CBD2	The brand ambassador's association with the brand motivates me to choose it over competitors.					
CBD3	The brand ambassador's endorsements increase my knowledge of the brand's offerings.					
CBD4	I trust products/services more when they are promoted by the brand ambassador.					
CBD5	I consider products endorsed by the brand ambassador to be superior to non-endorsed products.					