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Addis Ababa University

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, ARTS & HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of  
Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc

A THESIS PAPER SUBMITTED TO ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR MA DEGREE

By

Hilina Meskelu

STUDENT ID GSE/7113/15

JUNE 2025 GC

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SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled "The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc" is my original work. It has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of any degree or diploma, and all sources of material used in the study have been duly acknowledged through appropriate referencing.

HILINA MESKELU HABTE

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**Signature**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
April 2025

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This is to certify that the thesis is prepared by Hilina Meskelu Habte entitled The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc, which is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication. It complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## Acronyms

CBE Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

CBBE Customer-Based Brand Equity

CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

FGD Focus Group Discussion

GC Gregorian Calendar

KPI Key Performance Indicator

RQ Research Question

TVC Television Commercial

## **Abstract**

This study explores the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity, with a specific focus on Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc in Ethiopia, a pioneer company known for its early and consistent use of brand ambassadors in the local market. The research aims to assess how brand ambassadors contribute to the company's identity, vision, and values while enhancing brand visibility and consumer trust. A qualitative case study approach was employed, incorporating in-depth interviews with marketing professionals and brand ambassadors, a focus group discussion with consumers, and content analysis of promotional content and advertisements.

The findings indicate that brand ambassadors play a vital role in building public trust and emotional connection by embodying the brand's image and values. However, the study also highlights challenges including lack of regulation, potential misalignment between ambassador identity and brand values, and the risk of reputational damage. Despite these concerns, the strategic use of brand ambassadors presents significant opportunities for differentiation, consumer engagement, and long-term brand loyalty.

The study concludes that effective brand ambassadorship, when aligned with corporate vision and values, strengthens a company's identity and market presence. It recommends the development of national branding guidelines and ethical standards to regulate ambassadorial roles in Ethiopia's marketing sector.

**Key Words:** Brand, Brand Ambassadors, Corporate Identity, Ethiopia, Branding Strategy

# **CHAPTER One: Introduction to the study**

## **1 Introduction**

Brand ambassadors are well-known people, influential people, and devoted consumers who represent a business and shape consumer attitudes and behavior by reflecting its values and image (Kapferer, 2012). Utilizing brand ambassadors has gotten to be increasingly vital as a strategy to raise brand esteem and corporate awareness. Branding is significant for recognizing companies and guaranteeing enduring victory within the in vogue, competitive corporate environment. A solid brand isn't as it were a key instrument for passing on a company's identity, values, and objective to stakeholders; it moreover makes a difference clients to be faithful (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Corporate identity is a synthesis of visual components, including logos and color palettes, alongside an organization's core values, culture, and reputation (Balmer & Greyser, 2003). In this regard, brand ambassadors are indispensable for the establishment and preservation of this identity. Brand ambassadors use their power to assist close the gap between businesses and consumers, therefore fostering involvement, loyalty, and trust (Aaker, 1996). despite the fact that the advantages of brand ambassadors are mostly acknowledged, issues include wrong alignment, cultural diversity, and the consequences of scandals are not much understood, especially in underdeveloped nations like Ethiopia.

This research examines the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity, utilizing Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc as a case study. The objective is to examine how one Ethiopian firm employs brand ambassadors to shape its corporate identity and to draw insights that may inform branding practices across other local companies. discern opportunities and challenges, and juxtapose regional practices with global standards. This study addresses a gap in the literature by putting light on the strategic role of brand ambassadors in developing corporate identity in a rapidly changing commercial landscape.

## **1.1 Background of the study**

A successful brand serves as a key element in distinguishing a company's offerings in a competitive market. Doyle (1992) characterizes a successful brand as "a name, symbol, design, or a combination thereof, that distinguishes the 'product' of a specific organization as possessing a sustainable competitive advantage." The American Marketing Association (AMA, 1960) defines a brand as a distinctive amalgamation of elements name, word, symbol, or design employed to identify a seller's products and services and to distinguish them from competitors.

The concept of brand identity has evolved from static definitions, such as Aaker's (1996), to more dynamic interpretations. Gioia et al. (2010) and Scott and Lane (2002) argue that stakeholders play an important role in co-creating brand meaning, and that brand identity emerges from dynamic interactions in a social setting. Communicating via dialect and visual elements defines this development, and influences the reputation and identity of the brand. To set a product or service apart from its rivals, branding requires the basis of a one of a unique identity, value, and discernment.

Brand value, defined as a brand's intrinsic worth from the consumer's perspective, significantly influences customer loyalty and market share. The brand identity consists of several visual and symbolic components, such as the name, logo, color palette, typography, and design, which together form its basis.

A company's visual appearance and interesting qualities are what deliver it its corporate identity and offer assistance to set it separated from competitors and impact stakeholder perceptions. Images, color theory, and plan are all portion of the visual components; communication strategies, company culture, and core values circular out the composition. Melewar and Jenkins (2002) state that a company's corporate personality comprises of both the inside and outside components that affect the public's discernment of the company's brand. Corporate personality is characterized by Balmer and Greyser (2003) as the reliable introduction of a company's ethos, objectives, and values to stakeholders by means of its communication and behavior.

Brand ambassadors serve a crucial function in linking branding initiatives to corporate identities. These individuals embody and advocate for the brand, serving as intermediaries between the

corporation and its target audience. According to Kapitan and Silvera (2016), brand ambassadors are individuals who leverage their influence to foster a favorable perception of a company among consumers. Their work is to speak to the brand's values and identity, in this manner influencing open recognition and buyer behavior through different limited time endeavors. McCracken (1989) states that a brand ambassador transmits their image and notoriety to the brand, helping the organization in communicating its interesting values and qualities to the target audience.

The research investigates the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity, analyzing their responsibilities in shaping consumer perception and the consistency of a company's brand image. This focuses on how branding, company identity, and the smart use of brand ambassadors can work together to create and keep a competitive edge.

Although numerous international studies have investigated the role of brand ambassadors in influencing consumer behavior, most of these focus on short-term marketing impact, celebrity endorsements, or Western markets. In the context of developing countries like Ethiopia, limited empirical research exists on how brand ambassadors influence corporate identity. This gap in local research underscores the need to explore how Ethiopian firms strategically use brand ambassadors to strengthen their identity, values, and consumer trust.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The repercussions of brand ambassadors on corporate identity has been a hot topic in branding literature, with a lot of emphasis on conventional ambassadors like celebrities and athletes. These studies including Erdogan (1999), Roy & Banerjee (2014), and Jin & Muqaddam (2019) frequently highlight the impact on consumer behavior and brand impression. However, little is known about how such roles contribute to long-term corporate identity formation, especially in non-Western or developing contexts like Ethiopia. Corporate branding now faces both new opportunities and challenges as a result of social media influencers' quick rise to prominence as brand ambassadors. Although social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are becoming an essential component of marketing campaigns, little attention has been paid to how they affect business branding. For instance, Jin and Muqaddam (2019) explain how

social media influencers increase customer engagement, but it is unclear how this would affect a company's branding in the long run.

The vast bulk of current research focuses on quick benefits, such as increased sales and client reactions. While the short-term benefits are well proven, Schimmel pfennig and Hunt (2020) argue that the role of brand ambassadors in developing and preserving long-term firm identity is underappreciated. In a similar vein, Roy and Banerjee (2014) stress the significance of researching cultural elements that impact the interactions between brand ambassadors and corporate identity in various markets.

Brand champions' personal scandals are another important but little-researched topic. Even though there is a lot of study on the positive relationships that ambassadors have with companies, scandals or ambassador errors can seriously damage a company's reputation and brand identity. According to Thomson et al. (2017), this situation is known as "radiation shock," which characterizes the detrimental impact that an ambassador's public disputes have on the reputation of the brand. Research on how companies handle these kinds of crises is still lacking, despite its importance.

Research concerns pertain to the discrepancies between the ambassador's personal perspectives or image and the desired brand identity. Misalignment between a company and its ambassadors can lead to customer confusion, ultimately undermining loyalty and trust.

Till and Busler (2000) highlight the importance of aligning brand values with those of its ambassadors, yet the impact of any mismatch on corporate identity remains largely unexplored. In Ethiopia, the adoption of brand ambassadorship strategies has increased alongside the growth of social media and digital marketing.

Most branding research has predominantly concentrated on Western countries, resulting in insufficient understanding of the cultural and market-specific factors that affect brand ambassador performance in Ethiopia. Despite limited information regarding the characteristics of the Ethiopian market, such as social media trends, economic conditions, and cultural expectations, local companies are increasingly utilizing brand ambassadors to enhance their brand identity.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To explore how brand ambassadors influence corporate identity in an Ethiopian context, using Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc as a case study.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To identify the specific ways brand ambassadors, contribute to the creation and communication of corporate identity in the selected case.
2. To examine the challenges and opportunities Ethiopian firms face when selecting and managing brand ambassadors.
3. To analyze how practices in Ethiopia align or differ from global standards in brand ambassadorship.
4. To assess how brand ambassadors reinforce or represent the company's vision and values through their public role.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How do brand ambassadors influence the corporate identity of Ethiopian companies?
2. What challenges and opportunities do Ethiopian firms encounter when selecting and managing brand ambassadors?
3. In what ways do Ethiopian brand ambassadorship practices align with or diverge from international standards in expressing corporate identity?
4. How do brand ambassadors support and communicate the company's vision and core values?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study offers insights that may inform strategic decisions on ambassador selection and alignment with corporate identity, particularly for Ethiopian businesses. Although it does not provide formal guidelines, the findings highlight key considerations and best practices. In addition,

by analyzing consumer perceptions, the research helps companies understand how brand ambassadors influence consumer trust and awareness indirectly encouraging consumers to think more critically about how brands present their identity. It lays the groundwork for future research on the long-term impact of brand ambassadorship on firm identity. These findings may provide important insights for legislators and regulators involved in advertising and brand representation, resulting in improved legislation to ensure transparency and responsibility in corporate communications.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The research, particularly focuses on Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc's activities in Ethiopia, investigates the way brand ambassadors influence company identity in the Ethiopian market's distinct cultural and economic setting. Although global trends and practices may be referenced for comparative purposes, the primary emphasis is on the unique qualities, difficulties, and opportunities of the local market.

The research paper, particularly is based on branding, corporate identity, and consumer behavior theories, seeks to assess how brand ambassadors contribute to brand equity, trust, and customer loyalty. It also looks at the global context of brand ambassadorship, contrasting Ethiopian practices and standards with those from other nations. The purpose of this research is to identify best practices, gaps, and possibilities for directing the local strategic use of brand ambassadors.

## **1.7 Background of the Case Company: Clean Material & Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc**

Clean Material & Child Health Supplies Plc was first invested 62.4 million in 2010, making it a Chinese-owned company. In order to reduce dependency on outside suppliers, the firm was established to meet the need for locally produced sanitary pads and baby diapers. Operations commenced in Sebeta, Oromia Region, with two diaper brands (Good Baby and ABC) along with a range of sanitary napkins. Since its establishment, the firm has expanded its product range to include various infant care products and health supplies for children.

At present, Clean Material & Child Health Supplies Plc produces more than 10 brands, including baby diapers, wipes, soft tissue, soap, and sanitary napkins. The firm has expanded considerably and now caters to consumers throughout the country. It has established a robust reputation for manufacturing superior goods, enhancing the local economy and generating employment, with approximately 500 personnel engaged on both permanent and temporary contracts.

The group includes two additional affiliated companies in addition to Clean Material & Child Health Supplies Plc.

1. Linfewa: This company manufactures detergent ingredients and a variety of soap products, comprising body care soap, skin care soap, and antibacterial soap, amounting to approximately 11 different soap types.

2. Shoby: This company manufactures paper products, such as soft tissues and napkins, thereby enhancing its range of essential household items.

Clean Material manages the marketing, sales, and branding activities for all three firms. Clean Material, functioning as the marketing and branding division of the organization, oversees the sales, resale, and branding strategies for Clean Material & Child Health Supplies Plc, Linfewa, and Shoby. Hairya Ahmed, the founder and managing director of Clean Material, leads these initiatives, positioning the companies as leading brands in the Ethiopian market. The company has pioneered the use of brand ambassadors in its marketing strategy in Ethiopia

Clean Material was selected for this study because it is one of the first companies in Ethiopia to implement brand ambassador strategies systematically across multiple product lines. With over nine brand ambassadors from various industries, the company offers a rich case to examine how brand representation influences corporate identity in the Ethiopian context.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This study has several limitations. First, there is limited academic research on how brand ambassadors influence corporate identity in the Ethiopian context, making it challenging to compare findings with prior local studies. Second, as a single-case study focused on Clean Material, the results cannot be generalized to all Ethiopian companies. Third, practical constraints such as limited time, budget, and access to some high-profile ambassadors or documents may have affected the depth of data collection. Despite these limitations, the study offers rich insights into branding practices in a developing market.

# **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed examination of the theoretical and empirical literature regarding the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity. This examination delves into the intricacies of global and local branding, corporate identity, and the concepts, theories, and frameworks surrounding brand ambassadors. Additionally, it explores the Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing sector and its relevance to corporate identity strategies. This chapter also identifies research gaps and offers a theoretical foundation for the study.

The review first discusses corporate identity and branding, tracing their development and essential elements. It then examines the strategic role of brand ambassadors and their impact on corporate identity. Finally, the chapter analyzes the Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing sector, focusing on the role of branding and ambassadors within this industry. The analysis underscores the significance of a strong corporate identity in differentiating companies within this sector and fostering consumer trust. By addressing branding challenges and opportunities specific to clean material and child health supplies manufacturing, businesses can craft effective strategies to strengthen their market position and enhance their reputation.

## **2.2 Branding and Corporate Identity**

### **2.2.1 The Concept of Branding**

Branding is a powerful approach for building consumer loyalty, enhancing value, and fostering differentiation. A brand, according to the American Marketing Association (1960), is a name, word, sign, symbol, or design that identifies a product or service from its competitors. Branding extends beyond mere visual identification; it fosters significant emotional connections with consumers, thereby establishing lasting relationships and loyalty (Gobe, 2001). Prominent

companies such as Disney and Nike have effectively utilized emotional branding to establish robust consumer connections and maintain market leadership (Keller, 2013).

A strong brand identity increases organizational credibility and trust, which leads to more consumer preference and supports corporate expansion (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to De Chernatony and McDonald (2003), a brand is made up of several dimensions combining emotional and functional aspects, therefore creating a particular market presence. This comprehensive branding strategy guarantees that consumers not only identify a brand but also cultivate profound associations that affect their buying decisions.

Aaker (1996) asserts that effective branding requires the creation of a cohesive identity throughout every interaction. By consistently delivering on their brand promise, organizations can nurture a devoted consumer base and achieve lasting success. In today's vibrant competitive landscape, companies are thrilled to adopt branding strategies that align with customer expectations and the dynamic shifts in market trends to maintain their relevance and edge over competitors (Aaker, 2011).

In this part, the context and foundations of corporate identity and branding are examined. According to this study, brand ambassadors have a significant effect on the reputation of businesses. Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing focuses on ambassadors and branding to conclude the chapter. Research indicates that a robust company brand is crucial for differentiation in this sector and for gaining clients' trust. Developing products that ensure children's health safety involves various branding opportunities and challenges. Organizations can significantly improve their market position and reputation by addressing these challenges and developing effective solutions.

### **2.2.2 Key Theoretical Models in Branding**

Several theoretical models can be used to understand and improve brand equity. These models show businesses how to build, run, and keep strong names in markets that are always changing.

1. According to Aaker's Brand Equity Model (1996), brand equity is made up of four things: brand recognition, perceived quality, brand connections, and brand loyalty. Aaker says that these

things make the brand stand out and build trust with customers, which gives it an edge over its competitors.

2. Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model (Keller, 1993, 2001): This model sees brand equity as a pyramid that goes from just being aware of the brand to having a strong emotional link with it. Keller stresses that emotional involvement and meaningful consumer encounters build brand equity.

3. Kapferer's 2008 Brand Identity Prism: This framework covers brand identity characteristics including body, personality, culture, self-image, reflection, and relationships. Kapferer believes a brand's identity must be consistent and authentic across these dimensions.

4. Holt's Cultural Branding Theory (Holt, 2004): Brands evolve into cultural icons by harmonizing with societal values and aspirations. Brands have the incredible opportunity to create meaningful bonds by engaging with cultural issues and honoring common values.

5. Aaker (2011) Brand Relevance Model: Aaker highlights the importance of brands embracing innovation to sustain their importance. He emphasizes innovation, brand storytelling, and emotional connections to gain a competitive edge.

Thriving businesses flourish through strategic brand management, cultural alignment, and enthusiastic consumer involvement, as highlighted by these models. Companies should harness this information to create captivating brand narratives that resonate with their audiences.

### **2.2.3 Corporate Identity**

Corporate identity includes the visual, cultural, behavioral, and strategic components that characterize a company's image and distinguish it from its rivals (Balmer & Greyser, 2003). A robust corporate identity improves brand perception, cultivates consumer trust, and boosts organizational efficacy. The fundamental components of corporate identity consist of:

- Visual Identity: Logos, typography, and design elements that create a unique brand image (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002).

- Corporate Culture: The aggregate values, objectives, and behaviors of employees that shape both internal and external impressions of the firm (Hatch & Schultz, 2008).
- According to Melewar (2003), corporate communication refers to strategies in public relations, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and advertising that have an effect on the engagement of potential stakeholders.
- According to Balmer (1999), leadership and conduct refer to the process of aligning internal principles with outward brand communication in order to guarantee authenticity and gain trust.

In her book "Building a Brand Story: Navigating the Complexities of Corporate Identity," published in 2015, Jane Smith emphasizes the role of storytelling as a potent instrument in the process of forming corporate identity. Forging emotional connections with customers is made possible for businesses through the utilization of storylines that are genuine and compelling. This, in turn, promotes trust and loyalty among customers.

Continuous evaluation and modification are elements that are necessary for effective management of company identity. In order for businesses to continue to be relevant and competitive, they need to ensure that their corporate identities are in line with the ever-changing trends in the market and the expectations of their customers.

#### **2.2.4 Corporate Identity in the Ethiopian Context**

A more regionally focused approach to branding and corporate communication is essential, given the considerable influence of Ethiopian culture and socioeconomic factors on corporate identity. Ethiopian enterprises often integrate cultural values, community involvement, and trust-building initiatives into their branding strategy to foster strong relationships with their clients (Melewar and Jenkins, 2002).

A study conducted by Tesfaye and Mekonnen (2020) indicates that Ethiopian businesses place a significant emphasis on family values and social responsibility as integral components of their

corporate brand. This indicated a significant correspondence with the expectations of local consumers.

Nonetheless, the volume of research examining the translation of these branding methods into success across various cultural contexts remains relatively limited. Examining Ethiopian corporate identity alongside global branding techniques may uncover the efficacy of localized branding strategies in international markets.

Ethiopian companies must consistently assess their corporate identities and branding strategies to uphold their competitive edge. Improving engagement and visibility via digital branding, developing narratives to create emotional connections with customers, and ensuring that messaging and visual identity adapt to changing consumer preferences are all critical elements of this process. Ethiopian enterprises have the potential to cultivate robust corporate identities that set them apart from competitors and foster enduring success through the alignment with cultural values and the adoption of innovative practices. Branding and corporate identity shape consumer perceptions and influence market positioning, which are essential factors for a company's success. The techniques associated with brand creation are clarified by a diverse array of theoretical frameworks. These models include Keller's CBBE Model, Aaker's Brand Equity Model, and Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism. The establishment of brand authenticity and the cultivation of stakeholder trust are significantly influenced by the elements of corporate identity, which comprise visual, cultural, and behavioral dimensions. Ethiopia's corporate identity is deeply rooted in its cultural values and community involvement, underscoring the importance of localized branding strategies. Ethiopian enterprises have successfully implemented cultural alignment; nevertheless, additional research is necessary to customize these strategies for global markets. Effective branding and corporate identity management necessitates a strategic approach that is intelligent, flexible, and centered on consumer needs. Businesses can differentiate themselves in the marketplace and nurture consumer loyalty by establishing robust, enduring brands that capitalize on cultural values and theoretical insights.

## **2.3 Brand Ambassadors and Their Role in Corporate Identity**

### **2.3.1 Defining Brand Ambassadors**

Brand ambassadors represent and promote a company's identity, values, and products. Kapitan and Silvera (2016) characterize them as intermediaries that utilize their influence to mold brand perceptions. McCracken (1989) emphasizes the transfer of personal image and reputation to the brand, which enhances its appeal. Brand ambassadors significantly influence brand perception and foster customer loyalty by embodying the brand's values and forming personal connections with consumers (Freire, Quevedo-Silva, & Scrivano, 2018). Their role is essential in establishing a robust corporate identity that aligns with target audiences and distinguishes businesses in competitive markets such as Ethiopia (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Brand ambassadors enhance trust and credibility with consumers, resulting in heightened brand awareness and loyalty. The representation of the brand's values and messaging aids in differentiating the company from its rivals and in building enthusiastic bonds with the audience. Forbes claims that 92% of individuals believe recommendations from companions and family more than other promoting techniques, hence highlighting the significance of brand ministers in leveraging individual connections to move forward dependability and deals (Erdogan, 1999). Furthermore, they enhance brand relatability and promote enduring customer relationships (Keller, 2008).

According to Simon Mainwaring (2011), brand success is contingent upon self-definition, transparency, authenticity, and accountability. This highlights the significance of authentic relationships with ambassadors capable of effectively conveying brand values to a broader audience. Brand ambassadors act as reliable representatives, contributing to the development of a genuine and engaging brand image (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016).

## 2.3.2 Functions of Brand Ambassadors

Brand ambassadors enhance company brand in many ways:

- When they reflect the values of the brand, it becomes more accessible to customers (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005).
- Endorsements from credible people increase brand confidence (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).
- Social media helps micro-influencers to be more powerful for consumers (Jin & Ryu, 2020).
- They provide consumer insights to assist brands adjust to market trends (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins, & Wiertz, 2013).

In addition to these roles, brand ambassadors foster genuine relationships with consumers, thereby enhancing customer loyalty and the brand's reputation. They utilize media influence to engage various audiences, thereby ensuring an expanded reach and enhanced consumer relationships. Traditional celebrities, social media influencers, and industry experts enhance credibility and broaden market presence (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

## 2.3.3 Types of Brand Ambassadors

A variety of brand ambassadors are available to cater to various areas of brand promotion, including the following:

(Erdogan, Baker, & Tagg, 2001) Celebrity ambassadors are high-profile celebrities such as sportsmen and artists who help to increase brand recognition. Some examples of such individuals include Nike and Michael Jordan.

- Influencers on social media: According to Jin and Muqaddam (2019), digital platforms make it possible to promote a business in a targeted manner.
- Ambassadors of the Company: Employees have the ability to shape the reputation of the company through direct encounters with customers (Men & Yue, 2019).

- Consumer Ambassadors: Faithful clients, according to Dessart, Veloutsou, and Morgan-Thomas (2015), are those who most actively promote natural branding.

When organizations have a shifted blend of brand ambassadors, they are able to reach a more extensive extend of socioeconomics and create a brand image that's more receptive to customers. According to Zhang, Moe, and Schweidel (2017), this multi-faceted strategy promotes inclusivity, which in turn encourages increased brand trust and loyalty while simultaneously ensuring a wider market reach.

### **2.3.4 Theoretical Models Explaining Brand Ambassadors' Influence**

The influence of brand ambassadors can be elucidated through the examination of several theoretical models:

- McCracken's Meaning Transfer Model (1989): McCracken (1989) asserts that brand ambassadors has the ability to confer cultural value upon items.
- Influence is based on information, unwavering quality, and physical magnificence, concurring to the Source Validity Hypothesis (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990).
- The three main mechanisms by which an individual can exert influence over another are identification, internalization, and compliance (Kelman, 1958).

These theories suggest that brand ambassadors significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Companies may intentionally improve their brand image and customer engagement through the utilization of credibility and social influence (Choi & Rifon, 2012).

### **2.3.5 The Impact of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity**

Brand ambassadors significantly enhance brand visibility, cultivate emotional connections, influence perceptions, and maintain cultural relevance. Perils include inconsistency, negative publicity, increased costs, and problems with authenticity (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020).

Businesses should identify ambassadors who share their values and engage their target audience, set clear criteria, and evaluate their performance to reduce these risks (Arai, Ko, & Kaplanidou,

2013). Engaging in open dialogue and fostering mutual respect are essential for maintaining the authenticity and credibility of ambassador campaigns (Chung & Cho, 2017).

To empower brand ambassadors to excel, Smith (2019) highlights the importance of continuous training and support. This proactive approach fosters the development of enduring relationships with customers through ongoing communication and the prevention of errors (Goh, Heng, & Lin, 2013).

## **2.4 Corporate Environment in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia has strong business activity, business growth, increased foreign direct investment, and industrial growth in specific sectors like telecommunications, retail, and hospitality. In this realm of competitiveness, brand ambassadors have become essential tools for companies to differentiate themselves and capture diverse consumer groups.

Local companies frequently look in well-known open figures who reflect Ethiopian social values and reverberate with local customers, counting artists, sportsmen, and performing artists. Then again, worldwide stars may well be chosen by multinational companies to fit their around the world brand personality. The victory of these techniques will be decided by the degree to which the chosen ambassadors relate to Ethiopian customers and reflect the elemental social values of the advertise (Fantu, 2021).

The impact of brand ambassadors has increased with the growth of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. By permitting ambassadors to associated straightforwardly with audiences through advanced media, brands and clients can create more profound passionate bonds. The ambassadors' work in shaping corporate identity is encourage improved by these stages, which too empower more extensive presentation, particularly among tech-savvy and urban populaces (Mekonnen, 2019).

## **2.4.1 Cultural Influences on Brand Ambassador Selection**

Selecting and evaluating brand ambassadors in Ethiopia requires careful consideration of the social surroundings. Ethiopian consumers' values of genuineness, believe, and community joins have shaped business and ambassador recognitions. In arrange to make a reliable and approachable brand image, companies have to be make beyond any doubt that their brand ambassadors speak to these social values. Beyene (2020) claims that by speaking to the many different ethnic and linguistic groupings in Ethiopia, brand ambassadors could help extend a company's reach.

Religion, social mores, and dialect all collaboration shape customer preferences and the level of brand respect. Choosing brand ministers who reflect these social viewpoints will offer assistance companies construct solid connections and boost brand believe among Ethiopian clients.

Considering Ethiopia's sociocultural and commercial setting, one may superiorly get a handle on how brand ambassadors shape corporate character. Businesses have several chances as well as challenges when it comes to applying around the world branding arrangements considering nearby societies as well. The assessment of these flow by this considers, which uncovers the effect of brand ambassadors on corporate personality in Ethiopia, can be of extraordinary utilize to companies in Ethiopia as well as other creating countries comparable to Ethiopia.

## **2.5 International Case Studies of Brand Ambassadors**

Effective brand ambassador campaigns necessitate a robust alignment between the ambassador's principles and the brand's identity. According to Jones (2020), authenticity attracts consumers, hence enhancing trust and loyalty. The victory of the promotional campaign depends on the incorporation of brand ministers and compelling communication.

### **Notable case considers incorporate:**

1. Nike & Michael Jordan: The Air Jordan brand improved Nike's worldwide image and changed sports marketing (Kahle & Homer, 1985).
2. By addressing the unthinkable influence of Beyoncé's brand, Pepsi linked with young people and modern culture (Keel & Natarajan, 2012).

3. Till & Busler, 2000) say that Taylor Swift's relationship with Coca-Cola practically enhanced the dynamic and young image of the company.

These corporations acknowledged social significance with brand loyalty and contract cancellation. Rihanna's Jaguar and Selena Gomez's Coach partnerships demonstrate how celebrity may boost brand engagement (McCormick, 2016).

### **2.5.2 Controversial Brand Ambassador Cases**

Controversial selections for brand ambassadors may result in public dissent and reputational hazards. Inadequate alignment between the ambassador and the brand might undermine consumer trust and necessitate crisis management methods (Carrillat, d'Astous, & Lazure, 2013).

1. Nike's backing of Colin Kaepernick incited political controversy while enhancing loyalty among younger, socially aware consumers (Miller & Laczniak, 2020).
2. Pepsi's advertisement featuring Kendall Jenner encountered criticism for trivializing social justice movements, adversely affecting the brand's reputation (Hsu, 2018).
3. Tiger Woods with Various Brands: In the aftermath of personal problems, companies such as Gatorade and Accenture terminated their associations with Woods, highlighting the perils of celebrity sponsorships (Louie, Kulik, & Jacobson, 2001).

Careful selection and crisis management are essential to maintaining a positive brand image. Companies must align ambassadors with their values and anticipate potential repercussions to prevent negative associations (Knoll & Matthes, 2017).

## **2.6 The Sector of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing**

The industry that makes clean materials and child health supplies is very important for public health, so it needs a strong corporate identity and a trusted brand representation. Businesses in this field have to follow strict rules and high standards. In order to build a reputation for dependability and excellence in offering important goods for children's health, this needs to be done. Branding in this field is based on things like safe products, doing the right thing by society, and being honest in marketing. These are all important for getting people to trust you.

Trust and integrity constitute the foundational elements of Ethiopian branding initiatives. Enterprises in this area are compelled to adopt sustainable manufacturing and buying practices by environmentally aware and ethical consumers. Establish trust with parents concerned about their children's health and enhance your business's reputation by partnering with physicians and other healthcare professionals.

## **2.7 Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc**

This Ethiopian company has a sister organization, Clean Material, tasked with overseeing branding, marketing, and sales initiatives. The company produces more than ten distinct brands of products, such as diaper pads, wipes, sanitary pads, napkins, and detergent materials. Exciting brands in the Ethiopian market include Bravo Soft, Flavor napkins, Rose sanitary napkins, Good Baby Diaper, Yoyo diapers, KoNo soap, and Molly softs.

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining high quality and safety standards in industrial operations, this sector is vital to the pleasure of families and children. The corporate branding approach of the corporation stresses social responsibility and consumer confidence building. Increasing product credibility and spreading a health-conscious message depend much on brand ambassadors. Brand ambassadors are very important for spreading a health-conscious message and making a product seem more trustworthy. The company is one of the first in Ethiopia to widely employ brand ambassadors, with nine ambassadors, including the highly influential actress Selam Tesfaye, who has three product ambassadorship agreements with the company.

Since this company uses brand ambassadors, it is possible to study how they affect Ethiopian customers' buying choices. Analyzing how these ambassadors affect customers' buying decisions might help improve branding tactics.

## **2.8 Empirical Studies Review**

A range of studies has examined the impact of brand ambassadors on corporate identity (Roy & Banerjee, 2014). The current research landscape concerning Ethiopian enterprises, especially in relation to child health and sanitary products, is limited. Studies in similar developing economies

underscore the significance of cultural relevance, local consumer involvement, and authenticity in enhancing the effectiveness of brand ambassadors.

Analyzing Ethiopian enterprises and their branding strategies reveals intriguing concepts applicable in both scholarly and practical contexts. This company's employment of brand ambassadors provides an excellent opportunity to study their impact on consumer behavior in Ethiopia. It is possible to enhance branding strategies by studying the impact of these brand ambassadors on consumers' perceptions and purchases of the product.

Empirical research highlights the importance of deeply understanding Ethiopian consumers' cultural backgrounds when selecting brand ambassadors who can effectively engage with the target market. This study enables businesses to develop culturally relevant and effective ambassador programs, thereby enhancing consumer engagement and brand loyalty (Barrett, 2018; Gebremariam & Belay, 2020).

Corporate identity constitutes a dynamic framework that includes visual, cultural, and strategic components. Brand ambassadors are essential in shaping corporate identity through the reinforcement of brand values and consumer engagement. The Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing sector in Ethiopia necessitates branding strategies that highlight trust, ethical responsibility, and social accountability. This study seeks to address existing research gaps by examining the impact of brand ambassadors on corporate identity in Ethiopia's child health and sanitary ware sectors.

The research will also investigate how well different branding techniques foster ethical responsibility and trust. Organizations pointing to set up a strong and valid market nearness must get the impact of brand ambassadors on customer recognitions and dependability. Analyzing these factors will empower the research to supply a comprehensive investigation of how branding methodologies can be custom fitted to suit Ethiopia's developing customer market.

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used to investigate the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity. It describes the research design, justification for the chosen methods, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and the procedures used to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

## 3.2 Research Approach and Design

A **qualitative case study design** was used to explore how brand ambassadors shape corporate identity. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research sought to understand **perceptions, meanings, and experiences** of marketing professionals, brand ambassadors, and consumers which are best captured through in-depth, interpretive methods.

The case study design allowed the researcher to examine the phenomenon within a real-life context focusing on Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc as a **bounded system** (Yin, 2009). This design was appropriate for generating **rich, contextualized data** and offering **insights** that could inform both academic understanding and practical strategies.

## 3.3 Research Setting

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where Clean Material and its affiliated marketing team operate. Interviews and discussions took place at the company's headquarters, in partner agencies, and via virtual platforms where needed.

## **3.4 Target Population and Sampling Strategy**

### **3.4.1 Target Population**

The target population included:

- Marketing and branding professionals involved in brand strategy at Clean Material,
- Brand ambassadors currently working with the company,
- Consumers who have interacted with campaigns led by these brand ambassadors.

### **3.4.2 Sampling Strategy**

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants who had direct knowledge and involvement with branding and ambassadorial activities. This strategy was selected to ensure that participants could offer rich, relevant, and experience-based insights.

Specifically:

- Four marketing professionals were selected based on their active roles in campaign design and execution.
- Two brand ambassadors were selected due to their ongoing affiliation with the company's promotional campaigns.
- Seven consumers were selected for the focus group based on their familiarity with the brand's advertisements and ambassador appearances.

This non-random sampling approach was suitable for qualitative inquiry where depth, not breadth, is prioritized.

## **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

The research used three primary qualitative data collection methods:

### **3.5.1 In depth Interviews**

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with four marketing professionals and three brand ambassadors. These interviews allowed participants to elaborate on their personal experiences, views on corporate identity, ambassador selection, and public reception.

- Interviews were guided by a flexible question list.
- Each session lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.
- Interviews were recorded (with consent) and transcribed for analysis.

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion**

A focus group discussion was held with seven consumers who had knowledge of Clean Material's products and ambassador campaigns. The discussion helped explore public perception, trust, and credibility associated with brand ambassadors.

- The FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes.
- Participants were selected across diverse gender and age backgrounds.
- Audio recordings were transcribed for thematic analysis.

### **3.5.3 Document and Content Analysis**

To support interview and FGD findings, the researcher conducted a **content analysis of advertising materials**, including

- Television commercials,
- Social media content,
- Product packaging featuring brand ambassadors.

## **3.6 Data Collection Process**

The approach to data gathering for the study is methodical, ensuring adherence to ethical research standards and the reliability of the results.

### **3.6.1 Recruitment of Participants**

Participants were selected using a combination of purposive and snowball techniques:

- Marketing professionals were identified through company referrals.
- Brand ambassadors were approached through the Agency
- Focus group participants were recruited via social media outreach and customer referrals.

### **3.6.2 Informed Consent**

All participants received an information sheet and signed consent forms. Confidentiality and voluntary participation were assured.

### **3.6.3 Timing and Mode of Collection**

- Interviews and the focus group were conducted in March 2025.
- Most sessions were conducted face-to-face; one focus group participant joined by phone.

### **3.6.4 Data Management and Security**

Digital recordings and transcripts were stored securely with password protection. All names were anonymized using codes during transcription and analysis.

### **3.6.5 Data Analysis**

**Thematic analysis** was used following Braun & Clarke (2006). The steps included:

Steps in Analysis:

1. Data Familiarization: Reviewing transcripts and notes.
2. Generating Initial Codes: Identifying meaningful segments.
3. Searching for Themes: Grouping related codes into broader themes.
4. Reviewing Themes: Ensuring coherence and alignment with research questions.
5. Defining and Naming Themes: Refining categories.
6. Producing the Report: Integrating themes with participant quotes for contextual understanding.

The data were analyzed manually and organized according to the four research questions.

### **3.6.6 Trustworthiness of the Research**

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher applied the following strategies commonly used in qualitative research:

- **Credibility:** Multiple data sources were used including interviews, focus group discussion, and content analysis to triangulate findings and strengthen the accuracy of the results.
- **Dependability:** A clear documentation of data collection procedures, interview guides, and thematic coding steps was maintained throughout the research process to ensure consistency and transparency.
- **Confirmability:** All interviews and discussions were audio-recorded with consent. The recordings were transcribed carefully to minimize bias and ensure that the data accurately reflected participants' perspectives.
- **Transferability:** Detailed descriptions of the study setting, participants, and context were provided, allowing readers to determine the applicability of findings to other contexts.

### **3.6.7 The Researcher's Role**

The researcher acted as facilitator, observer, and data analyst. Reflexivity was maintained through a field journal, acknowledging personal biases and ensuring objectivity during interpretation.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Following ethical research principles is crucial for safeguarding participants and maintaining the study's integrity.

Fundamental Ethical Principles:

1. **Informed Consent:** Participants will be provided with comprehensive information about the research prior to their involvement.
2. **Voluntary Participation:** Participants have the right to withdraw at any point.
3. **Minimizing Harm:** Ensuring a respectful and non-intrusive research methodology.
4. **Data Security:** Implementation of encrypted data storage with restricted access.
5. **Transparency:** Clear articulation of the study's objective.
6. **Ethical Approval:** Adherence to institutional review board regulations.

### **3.8 Limitations of the Methodology**

Despite its useful findings, the study does have many limitations:

- Researchers may not have been able to generalize the results due to the small sample size.
- Inclination may still happen in spite of endeavors to form understanding actualities less subjective.
- Contextual limitations: The findings are exclusive to Ethiopian companies.
- The amount of time and resources available constrained the scope of the inquiry.
- Focus groups have several drawbacks, such as the fact that the dynamics of the group may alter participants' reactions.

### **3.10 Summary**

The methodology approach for examining brand ambassador influence on company identity has been described in this chapter. Multi-method data collecting and the qualitative research strategy

are meant to guarantee a thorough investigation of the subject. Maintaining study credibility and dependability has been ethical issues, constraints, and researcher duties addressed. The approach offers a strong basis for guiding branding strategies and responding to the study questions.

# **Chapter 4 : DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study, following Qualitative methodology described in Chapter Three. This study utilized in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion to investigate the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity in Ethiopia.

The personnel involved in the research study at Clean Material & Child Health Supplies Plc had several roles including consumer engagement, marketing, and branding of the company's goods and services.

A total of five branding and marketing specialists were interviewed to explore the influence of brand ambassadors and how branding strategies can enhance organizational visibility.

Additionally, three brand ambassadors shared their personal experiences and perspectives on contributing to corporate identity formation. To complement these insights, seven consumers participated in a focus group discussion aimed at capturing public perceptions of brand ambassadors. Of the nine individuals invited to the focus group, six attended in person while one joined via phone call. The demographic composition of the respondents was as follows:

- Gender: 40% male (six participants) and 60% female (nine participants).
- Age Range: Between 25 and 38 years old.
- Professional Experience: Between five and ten years in fields such as marketing, public relations, digital media, and brand management.

The data collecting procedure was designed to fit participants' schedules and provide rich, genuine insights. Except for one distant focus group member, all interviews and conversations were held face-to-face.

The interviews were semi-structured, thus enabling participants to expand on important topics outside the set study questions, thereby preserving a natural flow of discussion. Irrelevant responses have been omitted, and the analysis is presented thematically in alignment with the study's four research questions:

1. How do brand ambassadors influence Ethiopian companies' corporate identities?
2. What challenges and opportunities do Ethiopian firms face when selecting brand ambassadors?
3. How do Ethiopian enterprises align their brand ambassadorship practices with international standards?
4. How do brand ambassadors help strengthen the corporate identity, vision, and values of Ethiopian companies?

The following sections provide a detailed examination of the collected data, offering insights into the role and effectiveness of brand ambassadors in the Ethiopian corporate landscape.

## **4.2 Theoretical Framework Guiding the Analysis**

This study's data analysis and interpretation were framed using five major theoretical frameworks reviewed in Chapter Two. These models helped organize, code, and interpret qualitative findings by providing concepts for understanding how brand ambassadors influence corporate identity in the Ethiopian context.

**1. Aaker's Brand Equity Model (1996)** was used to assess how brand ambassadors contribute to brand awareness, perceived quality, loyalty, and brand associations. These elements were especially relevant in analyzing how ambassadors helped Clean Material increase visibility and customer trust.

**2. Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model (1993, 2001)** guided the understanding of how consumers move through a pyramid of brand engagement — from awareness, to meaning, to response, and finally to brand resonance. In the case of Clean Material, ambassadors like Selam Tesfaye were found to strengthen emotional connection and long-term loyalty, which aligns with Keller's highest level of brand equity.

**3. McCracken's Meaning Transfer Model (1989)** provided the foundation for analyzing how ambassadors' personal identity and public symbolism transfer to the brand. This was central in

interpreting the cultural and emotional meaning attached to ambassadors and how they represent the company's values to the public.

**4. Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990)** emphasized how trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise affect how the audience receives and accepts ambassadors. These attributes helped explain why some ambassadors resonate more strongly with the Ethiopian public than others, as revealed in the focus group and interviews.

**5. Corporate Identity Theory (Balmer & Greyser, 2003; Melewar & Jenkins, 2002)** framed the ambassador's role in expressing and maintaining corporate identity. Corporate identity was understood as a combination of visual design, brand culture, behavior, and communication. Ambassadors were seen as tools to project and protect the company's identity through strategic public engagement.

These frameworks not only shaped the thematic organization of findings (Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.4) but also guided the interpretation of participant responses in relation to identity, perception, emotional connection, and brand loyalty. As discussed in Section 4.6, these theories were essential in drawing connections between the company's strategies and their perceived impact on the audience.

### **4.3 Data Analysis Based on Research Questions**

Following the interviews and engaging in focus group discussions, this section showcases a thorough analysis of the gathered data. An exhilarating analysis of the replies is conducted in connection with the vibrant ideas and literature explored in Chapter 2. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the role that brand ambassadors play in determining the identity of a company, the extent to which they have an effect on how consumers perceive a brand, and the strategies that companies use in order to evaluate the impact of these factors. For the purpose of ensuring a comprehensive and evidence-based approach, this investigation makes use of direct statements from other participants.

### **4.3.1 Research Question 1: How do brand ambassadors influence the corporate identity of Ethiopian companies ?**

This part looks at the present practices along with the influence of brand ambassadors on the corporate identity of Ethiopian businesses. It investigates the difficulties and hazards connected with these roles as well as the roles that ambassadors provide in increasing brand awareness, building trust, and creating credibility. Several important themes surfaced from the data provided by the respondents.

#### **Theme 1: Enhancing Brand Recognition and Market Penetration**

Participants emphasized that brand ambassadors are crucial in enhancing brand recognition and speeding up market penetration. Brand ambassadors can help Ethiopian businesses with limited resources to accelerate the visibility of their brand.

Respondent 1 stated that in the absence of ambassadors, it may take years for their company to gain recognition (February 25/2025). This emphasizes the significant role that brand ambassadors play in facilitating rapid growth in awareness and visibility for companies. Marketing theory aligns with the idea that brand ambassadors serve as catalysts for enhancing brand recognition and aiding in market penetration (McCracken, 1989).

Respondent 5 illustrated the impact of Ruta Mengsteab's support by noting that within a year, her endorsement of Maleda Foam made it one of the most competitive brands (March 29/2025). This highlights the potential of an ambassador's endorsement to accelerate a company's positioning in a competitive market. Celebrity endorsements often enhance a brand's credibility and prestige (Erdogan, 1999).

#### **Theme 2: Credibility and Positive Brand Associations**

The credibility of brand ambassadors is critical in fostering positive associations with the brand. Respondents emphasized that when **ambassadors** are seen as **valid** figures, they emphatically affect the brand's notoriety.

Respondent 2 explained that using people with positive images supports the brand because their personal identity enhances the company (February 25/2025). This finding aligns with Keller's

(1993) argument that strong associations between credible ambassadors and the brand enhance brand equity and trust. Similarly, Erdogan (1999) emphasized that the credibility of the source is a key factor in effective endorsement.

Nonetheless, Respondent 4 recognized that there are instances when brands suffer due to the actions of the brand ambassador (February 25/2025). This highlights the importance of thoughtful selection, as adverse publicity can influence brand perception (Till & Shimp, 1998).

### **Theme 3: Measuring the Impact of Brand Ambassadors**

Ethiopian companies face challenges in measuring the exact impact of brand ambassadors. While some respondents rely on sales figures and social media engagement to gauge success, others acknowledge the difficulty in directly attributing outcomes to the ambassador's efforts.

Sales numbers and social media audience interaction statistics, according to Respondent 2, are vital indicators (February 25/2025), therefore complementing the emphasis on performance measures described by Kotler & Keller (2016).

Respondent 4 added that while it is very difficult to measure accurately, they observe trends within specific market segments (February 25/2025). This infers utilizing roundabout signals to evaluate impact (Erdogan, 1999).

### **Theme 4: Public Perception and Brand Ambassadors' Influence**

Public opinion of brand ambassadors is fundamental in forming corporate identity. While some customers consider ambassadors to be a reflection of the values of the business, others see them mostly as financial assets.

Respondent 6 conveyed the opinion that their role contributes to attracting customer attention and enhancing the company's image (March 29, 2025), thereby aligning with McCracken's (1989) perspective on ambassadors shaping consumer perceptions.

According to the focus group discussion, some participants expressed skepticism, stating that the first thing that comes to mind is money, while others emphasized that a brand ambassador is the face of the company (FGD1, March 27/2025). The contrasting perspectives outline the complex recognition of ambassadors inside open discourses.

## **Theme 5: Risks and Negative Impact of Brand Ambassadors**

While their personal conduct and public scandals can harm the brand, brand ambassadors can help to strengthen corporate identity.

During the focus group discussion, one example raised was that M-Birr's reputation declined due to their ambassador's scandal (FGD1, March 27/2025). This supports prior studies cautioning about the risk of reputational damage from celebrity endorsements (Till & Shimp, 1998).

The choice of brand ambassadors has to be deliberate, obviously emphasising their capacity to relate to the intended audience. A close relationship between the ambassador and their audience helps to effectively communicate the fundamental values of the brand. Moreover, companies need to grasp the changing dynamics of social media platforms, which serve as an essential means for ambassadors to engage directly with customers, as highlighted by multiple respondents. Brand ambassadors have the potential to enhance their influence and foster trust with their audience through this engaging digital interaction.

### **4.3.2 Research Question 2: What challenges and opportunities do Ethiopian firms encounter when selecting and managing brand ambassadors?**

The challenges and opportunities faced by Ethiopian firms when selecting brand ambassadors are examined in this section. The findings illuminate the strategic options available to businesses and the impact of social, economic, and cultural factors on the decision process.

**Theme 1:** Limited Celebrity Pool and Societal Acceptance Ethiopian companies struggle greatly with the limited access to well-known stars. Moreover, society's acceptance of an ambassador might vary by area and demographic considerations.

Respondent 1 explained that “as Ethiopians, we don't have a universally accepted celebrity. There are very few figures who are admired by millions at the same time” (February 25/2025). This reflects the difficulty of identifying a widely popular figure who resonates with all segments of the population.

Respondent 3 also noted that “societal acceptance is critical. One ambassador was well received in certain districts but totally rejected in others, driving us to update packaging without their image” (February 25/2025). This highlights the territorial varieties in open supposition and the down to earth suggestions of these contrasts on branding procedure.

**Theme 2:** Strategic Alignment and Brand Identity Strategic arrangement between the brand and ambassador is imperative. Companies must guarantee that the ambassador's individual image adjusts with the corporate values.

According to Respondent 5, “many businesses approach us with a name in mind rather than considering who truly fits their brand” (March 29/2025). This shows an oversight when companies put fame over suitability, which could make their brand message weaker. Erdogan (1999) makes a similar point that recommendations work best when the celebrity's image fits with the brand's.

Respondent 4 added that “in the past, all ambassadors were entertainers, but now we see figures from different fields being considered” (February 25/2025). This suggests a move towards more diversity and opens doors to new kinds of ambassadors outside entertainment, therefore providing more rich brand stories.

**Theme 3:** Cultural and Economic Considerations Respondents said that good ambassador choice calls for a thorough knowledge of the local economy and culture.

Respondent 2 affirmed that “yes, we consider cultural, sociological, and economic factors in selection” (February 25/2025). This approach helps ensure relevance to the local consumer base.

Respondent 4 a issue with current methods, in spite of the fact that: "In reality, numerous companies fair see at an ambassador's social media taking after instead of more profound social pertinence" (February 25/2025). In spite of the fact that advanced affect is critical, a branding arrange may be undermined by a need of social coinciding

**Theme 4:** Opportunities for Expanding Ambassador Selection Notwithstanding the constraints, there are chances for more inclusive and varied ambassador choice.

Respondent 4 reiterated, “in the past, all ambassadors were entertainers, but now we see figures from different fields being considered” (February 25/2025). Participants in focus group discussions underlined the need of ambassadors who provide social credibility and knowledge outside beyond just celebrity, therefore echoing this feeling (FGD1, March 27/2025).

These responses have consistently underlined the need of being extremely legitimate and kind.. When it comes to choosing brand ambassadors, it is more beneficial for companies to focus on the beliefs and image of individuals who are consistent with the essential characteristics of the company rather than focusing on celebrity status. Measurement of the ambassador's public involvement and resonance with the brand's values not only contributes to the enhancement of the brand's credibility but also helps to establish long-term trust and loyalty among customers.

### **4.3.3 Research Question 3: In what ways do Ethiopian brand ambassadorship practices align with or diverge from international standards in expressing corporate identity?**

This area points to analyze how certain Ethiopian companies make beyond any doubt their brand ambassador programs take after worldwide benchmarks and how they make beyond any doubt their ambassadors pass on the company's values and objectives well.

#### **Theme 1: Aligning with International Marketing and Branding Standards**

Ethiopian businesses are making efforts to align their brand ambassador strategies with international standards, but challenges remain due to resource constraints and cultural differences.

Respondent 1 articulated: “With the resources at our disposal, we endeavor to achieve alignment; however, we cannot assert that it is entirely congruent, particularly in the selection of suitable influencers and similar considerations.” February 25, 2025. This indicates that although Ethiopian enterprises endeavor to conform to international standards, constraints such as resource availability and cultural norms impede complete alignment.

Respondent 2 noted: “No, it is not in line with the global marketing and branding strategies. For example, there is one ambassadorship in the USA that Cardi B is working on for food products, and she was having long nails that were controversial and was grateful for the product.

Regarding Ethiopia, you cannot employ an ambassador like her because of cultural and social acceptance variances. ” (February 25/2025) This highlights the cultural barriers that prevent full alignment with international standards.

## Theme 2: Creating Brand Narratives Through Ambassadors

Ethiopian businesses are increasingly using brand ambassadors to create compelling narratives that resonate with their target audiences, similar to international brands.

Respondent 3 asserted: “We utilize our ambassador to convey our brand narrative, fostering a more profound connection with the audience.” (February 25, 2025) This underscores the increasing acknowledgment of storytelling's significance, a tactic used by multinational corporations to forge emotional bonds with customers.

## **Theme 3: Cultural Adaptations in International Campaigns**

Ethiopian companies as often as possible adjust worldwide promoting methods to align more closely with local social standards, in spite of endeavors to follow to worldwide measures.

Respondent 5 remarked: “When we see international campaigns, we adapt them by considering cultural nuances that fit the Ethiopian market.” (March 29/2025) This adaptation reflects the importance of localizing global strategies to ensure that campaigns resonate with Ethiopian consumers.

Companies seem move forward their brand ambassador technique by putting more accentuation on a more organized and proficient determination prepare. It's imperative to know the brand's reason, its target audience, and the ambassador's identity interior and out. Cautious arranging is required to form beyond any doubt that the representative accurately speaks to the brand of the

company. The brand should also take the initiative to keep tabs on its ambassadors to make sure they're living up to the company's ideals.

#### **4.3.4 Research Question 4: How do brand ambassadors support and communicate the company's vision and core values?**

##### **Theme 1: Adapting to Changing Trends and Enhancing Brand Identity**

A critical element identified in the data is the evolving nature of brand ambassador roles, particularly how they help companies remain relevant in a changing market. The proactive involvement of ambassadors, particularly on digital platforms, is crucial for sustaining a company's brand. Respondent 1 stated: "Trends are evolving, and it is crucial for brand ambassadors to adjust accordingly to reinforce the company's identity, vision, and values should we require any crisis management solutions, we will utilize their channels." (February 25, 2025). This underscores how ambassadors use social media platforms to navigate crises and maintain the brand's exposure. Focus group members examined instances of personal connection to brand ambassadors, reflecting on memories from their upbringing that shaped their purchase choices. One participant expressed admiration for artist Groum Ermiyas, which influenced them to convince their father to get a suit sponsored by him (FGD1, March 27/2025).

##### **Theme 2: Strategic Alignment with Brand Values and Market Segmentation**

The findings indicated that choosing brand ambassadors who agree with the company's values and comprehend the target market is essential for sustained brand coherence. Respondent 3 asserted: "Selecting an individual who aligns with the brand, understands the target audience, and is socially accepted will yield optimal results." (February 25, 2025). Respondent 4 stated, "The contract must clearly define values and vision." February 25, 2025. Members of the focus group discussed the necessity of credibility in certain businesses that goes beyond brand ambassadorship. It was suggested that endorsement by inventors or developers of electrical or technological items may be more effective than endorsement by celebrities (FGD1, March 27/2025).

**Theme 3: Strengthening Trust and Loyalty Utilizing an Ambassador Strategy:** An effective brand ambassadorship strategy can markedly improve consumer trust and loyalty. Participants

emphasized that choosing appropriate ambassadors enhances consumer confidence and fortifies the brand's connection with its audience. Respondent 1 stated: “The ambassador is chosen for her media engagement, not for her parenting skills...” We are collaborating with prominent TikTokers and YouTubers known for their daily vlogs as a couple with three children, providing a realistic platform for promoting our brand and products to their followers. (February 25, 2025). Respondent 4 demonstrated that it would apply critical impact on the off chance that executed suitably. The nonappearance of a standard comes about in changeability based on the information had by each advertiser. ( February 25, 2025).Participants in the focus group discussion examined the influence of established experts, including an educator who is also a fashion model and entrepreneur, on purchasing behavior through brand alignment (FGD1, March 27, 2025).

**Theme 4: Ensuring Brand Ambassadors Truly Represent the Company:** A repeating subject is the require for companies to effectively screen and guarantee that their brand ambassadors are adjusted with the company's standards. This involves regular checks on their engagement and representation of the brand. Respondent 2 emphasized: “We do check on them regularly to ensure they are representing our company well.” (February 25/2025). Respondent 4 shared: “How many events did they really attend? How many digital media counters and engagements are done, about TVC?They often provide several justifications for not attending events.” (February 25, 2025). Focus group members affirmed that consumers are significantly swayed by the promotions of ambassadors, indicating a strong correlation between ambassador conduct and customer engagement (FGD1, March 27/2025).

**Theme 5: Long-Term Brand Loyalty through Ambassador Initiatives:** The role of brand ambassadors in ensuring long-term brand loyalty is emphasized, with several respondents suggesting that ambassadors who grow with the brand contribute to a sustained relationship with consumers. • Respondent 1 shared: “For example, our ambassador Selam Tesfaye, we had her on our first product, Good Baby... she has our other 3 products... she does workouts and maintains everything, so now we have a long-term alignment.” (February 25/2025). • Respondent 5 suggested: “It’s not all about brand ambassadors; only the company should know after the brand ambassador comes what they do. The content is the biggest thing.” (March 29/2025).

**Theme 6: Brand Ambassador Agreements and Ethical Considerations:** Several respondents added insights on the importance of formal agreements between the company and brand ambassadors. This ensures alignment and commitment, while also addressing potential ethical concerns. • Respondent 5 emphasized: “You didn't ask me, but for the ambassadors, be sure to say the agreement with the company. Please know about the company in detail because if you see this week on social media, one company is facing an allegation, so the brand ambassadors are saying on the platform we are no longer with them and giving the money back.” (March 29/2025). • Respondent 7 added: “You didn't ask me this, but this is the most important point: What I observe is that most of the time you become more brand-based for the company. Let's say when the company makes or does a mistake trying to save yourself, you immediately blame the company and run away... This thing is a lot in Ethiopia.” (March 29/2025).

**Theme 7: Embodying the Brand's Principles and Values:** Ensuring that brand ambassadors truly represent the company's principles is essential. While some respondents saw strong alignment, others questioned whether ambassadors truly embody the brand's core values. • Respondent 6 stated: “Not only the product or the brand, but I am also very conscious of what I do... I have my own principle to match everything that comes out from me.” (March 29/2025). • Respondent 2 observed: “I do see some brand ambassadors that they are brand ambassadors for, like Tacneo, but they use iPhones on their social media... I don't think they do embody their principles.” (February 25/2025). FGD participants commented that most campaigns lack proper evaluation mechanisms to assess ambassador alignment with company values. Only a few companies implement assessment strategies, and even those are not always effective (FGD1, March 27/2025).

Companies can strengthen their brand identity through strategic brand ambassador partnerships by selecting individuals who resonate with their brand's vision and values. The right ambassador can help convey the company's mission effectively and increase brand visibility. However, the ambassador's engagement must be consistent and based on mutual trust, with clear agreements outlining expectations for both parties. Adopting a structured selection process and continuously monitoring the ambassador's fit with the brand can ensure long-term success.

By focusing on these key areas authenticity, strategic alignment, and engagement Ethiopian businesses can enhance the effectiveness of their brand ambassador programs, leading to stronger brand loyalty and a more robust brand identity.

The advice and thoughts provided by the respondents offer valuable insights for Ethiopian businesses looking to enhance their brand ambassador strategies. Here are the key recommendations:

**1. Listen to the Audience and Know Your Customer**

Respondent 1 (February 25/2025) stressed that businesses must listen to their audience and ensure the brand ambassador resonates with the target demographic. This is vital for effective communication of the brand message. The right alignment between ambassador and audience helps reinforce the brand's image and ensures the effectiveness of marketing efforts.

**2. Know Your Product and Ambassador's Story**

Respondent 2 (February 25/2025) emphasized the importance of understanding the product, the customer, and the background and future trajectory of the brand ambassador. Knowing these aspects helps create a stronger bond between the brand and the ambassador's audience, ensuring that the partnership is authentic and meaningful.

**3. Follow a Structured Selection Process**

Respondent 4 (February 25/2025) advised that businesses need to move beyond personal preferences or friendships when selecting brand ambassadors. It's important to adhere to clear guidelines and select ambassadors based on their alignment with the brand's values and message.

**4. Leverage Social Media and Digital Trends**

Respondent 6 (March 29/2025) highlighted the importance of social media in building a successful brand ambassador career. Social media provides a platform for ambassadors to engage with their audience and create meaningful content.

**5. Choose Ambassadors Carefully and Ensure the Fit with the Brand**

Respondent 7 (March 29/2025) noted that it's not just about the money; it's about

ensuring that the ambassador's personality and values align with the brand. This authenticity is essential for building trust and credibility with their audience.

#### **6. Select Ambassadors Based on Product Relevance**

FGD participants (FGD1, March 27/2025) advised that brand ambassadors should be role models within the community and respect cultural values. The ambassador's suitability should be considered, such as ensuring that a brand ambassador for baby products is a mother or has direct experience with the product. Additionally, they noted that sometimes ordinary customers can be more effective ambassadors than celebrities, especially for certain products.

#### **7. Emphasize Long-Term Vision**

FGD participants (FGD1, March 27/2025) stressed the need for businesses to focus on the product, manufacturer, and services when selecting an ambassador. The selection process should not only look at short-term benefits but also consider the long-term alignment with the brand's values and future goals.

In conclusion, Ethiopian businesses aiming to improve their brand ambassador strategies should prioritize selecting ambassadors who align with their brand's identity and resonate with the target audience. Clear agreements, authenticity, and a structured selection process will help businesses build strong, lasting partnerships with their ambassadors. Moreover, businesses should embrace modern digital trends while remaining mindful of cultural values, ensuring a seamless and genuine connection between the brand and its ambassadors.

### **4.4 Profile of Brand Ambassadors Used by Clean Material**

In this section, the profiles of Clean Material's key brand ambassadors are discussed in detail. These ambassadors play a critical role in shaping the company's corporate identity, contributing significantly to the branding and marketing strategies of the company

The inclusion of ambassador images serves as a visual representation of the company's branding strategies and public identity construction. These visuals help illustrate the diversity of ambassadors (in gender, profession, audience appeal), their alignment with specific product

categories (e.g., baby care vs sanitary products), and their media presence across platforms. For instance, using athletes like Genzebe Dibaba signals trust, health, and discipline — which reflects the company’s desired identity for specific product lines. These images also support McCracken’s (1989) theory of meaning transfer by showing how cultural symbols are transferred through visual associations.

Clean Material collaborates with brand ambassadors primarily from the entertainment industry. This strategy is based on Respondent 1's insight that the company focuses on engaging figures from entertainment rather than diversifying into multiple sectors. The company’s brand ambassadors are from various fields within the entertainment world, including acting, music, sports, and social media influencing.

### Actress Selam Tesfaye

Selam Tesfaye is an iconic Ethiopian actress who has represented multiple brands, , ZTE, Wegagen Bank, Keste Damena, and Infinix Mobile. including Clean Material. Her involvement with the company began with promoting Good Baby Diaper, and due to her strong engagement, she later endorsed products such as KONO Soap and Flower Soft Napkins. Tesfaye’s long-standing relationship with Clean Material highlights the trust and brand loyalty she helps build among consumers.



Figure 0.1 Brand ambassador selam tesfaye representing several brands source :selam tesfaye Instagram Account (2024-2025 )



*Figure 0.2 Brand ambassador Selam tesfaye representing Good Baby Diaper, Kono and flower  
Source: Clean materials Marketing campaign*

### **Actress Ruta Mengesteab**

Ruta Mengesteab, a well-respected movie actress, , has been a brand ambassador for over four years. She has endorsed companies such as Rube Consultancy, Maleda Foam, Deluxe Properties, and Orbit Electronics ,has endorsed YES Baby Diaper for Clean Material. She has been involved with Clean Material for over four years, and her long-term association demonstrates her strong influence in the entertainment industry. Mengesteab’s endorsement solidifies the trust consumers place in Clean Material, leveraging her established credibility.



Figure 0.3 Actress Ruta Mengsteab Promoting several brands Source : Instagram post from (2024 )



Figure 0.4 Actress Ruta Mengsteab promoting Yes Baby Diaper source : Clean Material Marketing campaign

**Danayit Mekbib**

Danayit Mekbib is a well-known TV host, advertising model, and fashion influencer. over eight years of experience. She has been a brand ambassador for TECNO Mobile Ethiopia, EB YES Furniture, Tanqueray Africa, London Catering, NHY Ethiopia, and Marriott for Brunch

Euphoria, among others. She represents NIGIST Sanitary Pads (formerly GODDESS Sanitary Pads) for Clean Material. Her strong social media presence and influence make her an essential ambassador for Clean Material’s target demographic. Mekbib’s role exemplifies how influencers, in addition to traditional entertainers, can have a positive impact on a company’s brand identity.

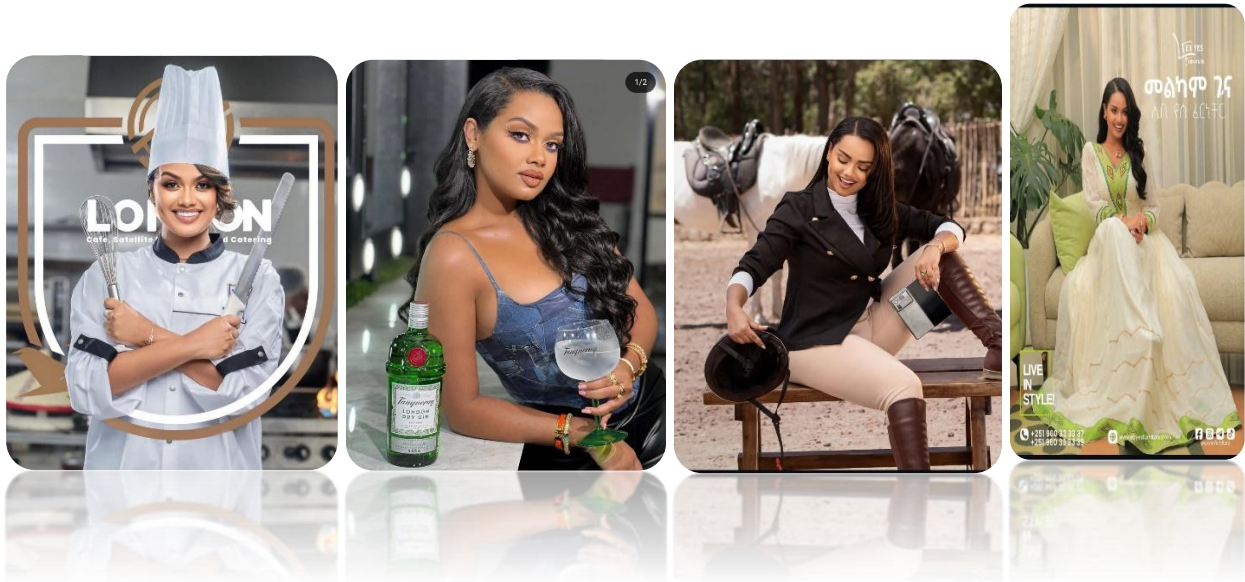


Figure 0.5 Danayit Mekbib endorsing TECNO Mobile Ethiopia, EB YES furniture ,Tanqueray Africa , London Catering , NHY Ethiopia source :Danayit Mekbib Instagram post (2022-2025 )



Figure 0.6 Danayit Mekbib endorsing NIGIST sanitary pad source: clean Material Marketing campaign

### **Actress Etsehiwot Abebe**

Etsehiwot Abebe is an actress and top model who is the face of Clean Material's Wawa Baby Diapers. Her influence in the entertainment industry further strengthens the connection between Clean Material and its target consumers, reinforcing the company's brand values of quality and reliability.



*Figure 0.7 Etsehiwot Abebe endorsing Wawa Baby Diapers Source : Clean Material Marketing Campaign*

### **Athlete Genzebe Dibaba**

Genzebe Dibaba, an internationally recognized Ethiopian runner, partnered with both international and Ethiopian brands. She is an ambassador for NN Running Team, Nike (with her sisters), serves as an ambassador for Bravo Soft Napkins. Her athletic success and public visibility have allowed Clean Material to align with a global standard of excellence and athleticism, enhancing the brand's image of reliability and trustworthiness.



*Figure 0.8 Athlete Genzebe Dibaba endorsing NN Running Team , Nike source her Instagram account ( 2024 )*

For Clean Material, where she endorses Bravo Soft Napkins.



*Figure 0.9 Athlete Genzebe Dibaba Promoting Bravo Soft Napkins Source : clean Material Marketing Campaign*

### **Footballer Abubeker Nasir**

Abubeker Nasir, a rising star in Ethiopian football, represents **YoYo Baby Diapers**. His strong following among young Ethiopians helps Clean Material tap into a younger demographic, aligning the brand with both youth and vitality.



*Figure 0.10 Abubaker Nasir promoting Yoyo Baby Dipper source :Clean Material Marketing Campaign*

### **Halima Abdulshakur & Nebiyat Mekonen**

Both Halima Abdulashkur, a popular model and influencer, and Nbiyat Mekonen, an actress and model, represent Rose Sanitary Pads for Clean Material. Their roles emphasize Clean Material’s commitment to quality hygiene products, specifically targeting female consumers



*Figure 0.11 Halima Abdulashkur promoting Rose sanitary pad source : Clean Material Marketing Campaign*



Figure 0.12 Nebiyat Mekonen Promoting Rose Sanitary pad source: Clean Material Marketing campaign

**Helen Teklay**

Helen Teklay, a prominent social media influencer, represents **Band B Baby Diapers** and **Zoom Detergent**. Her entrepreneurial influence and content creation on platforms like Instagram further expand Clean Material’s reach and marketability.



Figure 0.13 Helen Teklay Promoting B and B Baby Diapers and Zoom Detergent source: Clean Material Marketing Campaign

**Singer Rahel Getu**

Rahel Getu, a famous Ethiopian singer, promotes **Molly Soap** for Clean Material. Her extensive

following as a musical actress adds a layer of cultural relevance to Clean Material’s branding strategy, reinforcing its position in the Ethiopian market.

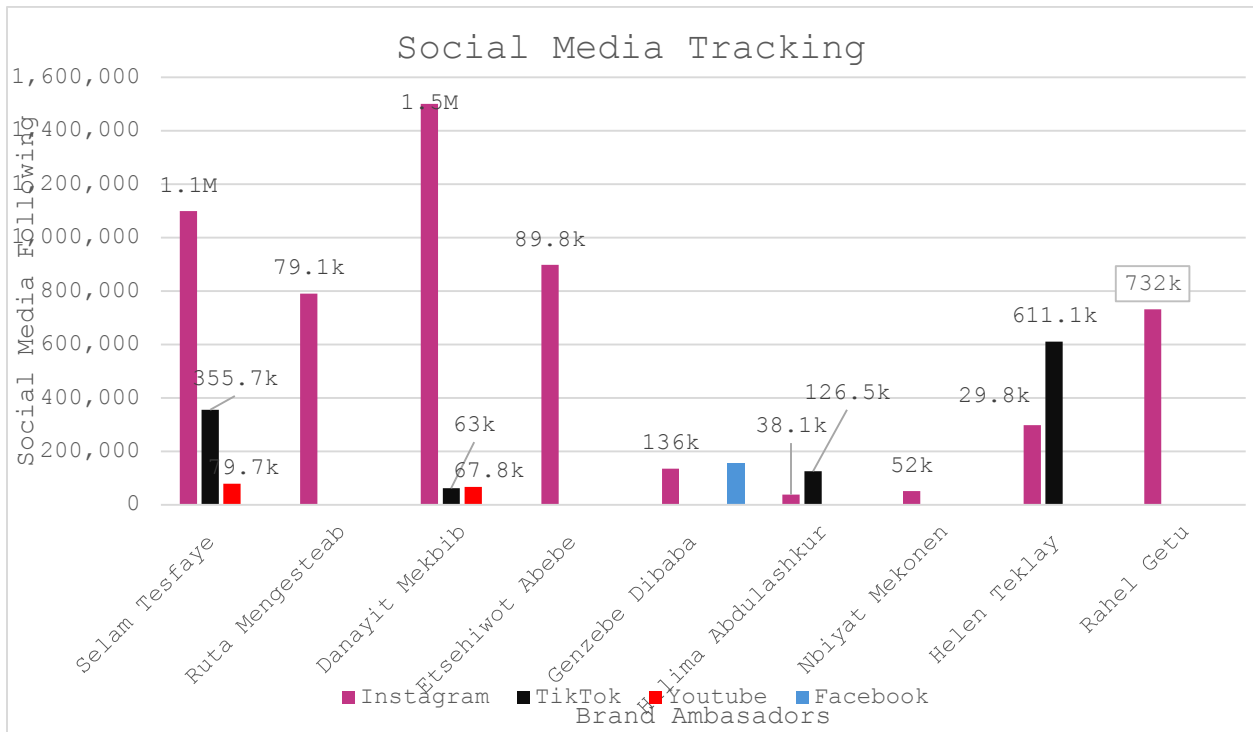


Figure 0.14 Singer Rahel Getu promoting Molly Soap Source : Clean Material Marketing Campaign

### 4.3.1 Impact on Corporate Identity

Clean Material’s brand ambassadors are pivotal in shaping the company’s corporate identity. By associating itself with influential figures in the entertainment industry, Clean Material has successfully enhanced its credibility and trust among consumers. The selection of brand ambassadors from the entertainment and sports sectors has been a strategic move to reach diverse consumer segments, ensuring the company’s brand is viewed as both aspirational and relatable.

## Social Media Influence Analysis



The social media presence of Clean Material’s brand ambassadors plays a significant role in enhancing the visibility and reach of the company’s products. The following analysis provides an overview of the social media following of each ambassador, highlighting their influence across various platforms.

### 1. Actress Selam Tesfaye

With **1.1 million followers** on Instagram, **355.7k followers** on TikTok, and **79.7k subscribers** on YouTube, Selam Tesfaye's vast reach on multiple platforms strengthens Clean Material's connection with a diverse audience. Her broad social media presence enhances brand recognition and consumer trust.

### 2. Actress Ruta Mengesteab

Ruta Mengesteab has **791k followers** on Instagram, demonstrating a strong and growing social media influence. Her active presence helps Clean Material target a wide range of demographics, particularly in the entertainment sector.

3. **Danayit Mekbib**

Danayit Mekbib's social media influence is significant, with **1.5 million followers** on Instagram, **630k followers** on TikTok, and **67.8k subscribers** on YouTube. Her substantial following across multiple platforms allows Clean Material to tap into various consumer groups, especially younger audiences.

4. **Actress Etsehiwot Abebe**

With **892k followers** on Instagram, Etsehiwot Abebe has a considerable online presence, aiding in Clean Material's marketing strategies, especially in targeting female consumers.

5. **Athlete Genzebe Dibaba**

Genzebe Dibaba has **136k followers** on Instagram and **156k followers** on Facebook. While her following is smaller compared to other ambassadors, her association with Clean Material helps position the brand as diverse and inclusive, especially by connecting with sports enthusiasts and athletes.

6. **Footballer Abubekr Nasir**

As a rising football talent, Abubekr Nasir's following among young Ethiopian football fans is growing. His association with Clean Material helps attract the attention of the younger demographic, especially in the sports community.

7. **Halima Abdulashkur & Nbiyat Mekonen**

Halima Abdulashkur has **38.1k followers** on Instagram and **126.5k followers** on TikTok, while Nbiyat Mekonen has **52k followers** on Instagram. Their social media reach, though smaller, still helps Clean Material connect with specific target groups, particularly in the Oromo community.

8. **Helen Teklay**

With **298k followers** on Instagram and **611.1k followers** on TikTok, Helen Teklay's strong social media presence amplifies Clean Material's marketing messages. She effectively reaches the younger, trend-focused demographic, making her a valuable asset for promoting products like Baby Diapers and Zoom Detergent.

## 9. **Singer Rahel Getu**

Singer Rahel Getu boasts **732k followers** on Instagram, showcasing her appeal to the music and entertainment community. Her social media presence contributes to Clean Material's ability to reach a wide audience with a focus on both entertainment and lifestyle.

The combined social media following of Clean Material's brand ambassadors reaches a broad and diverse audience, enabling the brand to build significant visibility across various demographics. The ambassadors' online influence plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and driving engagement with Clean Material's products

## **4.5 Content Analysis of Advertisements and Media**

This section provides a detailed content analysis of Clean Material's advertisements across various media, including TV, posters, and social media platforms. By examining the techniques employed in these advertisements, the emotional appeal, and the visual elements, we gain insight into how Clean Material maintains a strong corporate identity and appeals to its target audience.

### **Advertisement Techniques**

Clean Material utilizes a combination of TV advertisements, posters, and banners to reach a broad audience. These advertisements are carefully designed to create an emotional connection with consumers while promoting product quality and trust.

For example, the recent Good Baby Diaper ad featured a baby imitating its mother's gym routine. This lighthearted and relatable portrayal taps into family dynamics, creating a sense of humor and connection. The advertisement emphasizes the product's reliability, as the baby confidently displays the diaper in a stress-free environment. Similarly, the Flower Soft Napkin advertisement uses simplicity and catchiness to attract attention, reinforcing the brand's values of quality and comfort.

Social media ads, such as those on Instagram, offer real-time engagement with consumers, allowing the company to maintain an ongoing connection with its audience. These platforms

enable Clean Material to showcase its ambassadors in relatable settings, making the brand more accessible to consumers.

### **Emotional Appeal**

Clean Material's advertisements effectively use emotional appeals to establish a deeper connection with consumers. The emotional impact is achieved through relatable family-oriented themes, humor, and situations where consumers can see themselves in similar scenarios. For instance, the Good Baby Diaper ad leverages humor by depicting the baby mimicking the mother, which resonates with viewers and strengthens the emotional bond with the product.

### **Visual Alignment with Corporate Identity**

Clean Material's advertisements use colors, typography, and design elements to reinforce the company's corporate identity. Bright and vibrant colors are commonly used, creating a sense of freshness and cleanliness, which is key to the company's brand image. The font choices, while generally modern, can sometimes appear inconsistent. For example, in some ads, the font size and color combinations seem unbalanced, which may detract from the visual impact.

### **Challenges and Areas for Improvement**

While the advertisements are visually appealing, some inconsistencies in design can be observed. For instance, in Figure 4.4.12, the use of two contrasting colors in the font is visually unattractive and may hinder brand recognition. Furthermore, in Figure 4.4.9, the oversized font competing with the images of Abubeker and the child detracts from the focal point of the ad. These inconsistencies suggest a need for standardization in design elements to create a more cohesive and recognizable brand image.

Despite these minor issues, Clean Material's advertisements successfully capture the essence of its corporate values—quality, reliability, and trust. The use of emotional appeal, humor, and engaging visual techniques help solidify the company's presence in the market.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

For future advertisements, Clean Material should focus on standardizing font sizes, color schemes, and design elements to maintain a more cohesive visual identity. Additionally, improving consistency across various platforms (TV, posters, social media) will enhance the overall impact of the brand's marketing strategy.

## **4.6 Discussion of Findings**

This section presents a synthesized discussion of the study's main findings, structured around the four research questions and interpreted in light of relevant theoretical frameworks. The data reveal significant insights into how brand ambassadors influence corporate identity in Ethiopia, using Clean Material as a case study. These findings are discussed in relation to Aaker's (1996) Brand Equity Model, McCracken's (1989) Meaning Transfer Model, and Kapferer's (2008) Brand Identity Prism.

### **Influence on Corporate Identity**

The findings under Research Question 1 reveal that brand ambassadors contribute significantly to brand recognition, trust, and market visibility. Marketing professionals indicated that without ambassadors, it would take much longer to reach the same level of consumer awareness. This reflects Aaker's (1996) concept of brand awareness and perceived quality, as ambassadors transfer their personal credibility to the brand. McCracken's Meaning Transfer Model is also evident, as the symbolic values of the ambassadors (e.g., health, beauty, success) are transferred to Clean Material products through association.

Furthermore, consumer focus group participants noted that brand ambassadors are "the face of the brand," reinforcing the importance of consistent public messaging. However, the mixed reactions some expressing admiration, others skepticism highlight the need for precise alignment between ambassador identity and company values. This supports Kapferer's (2008) argument that all brand identity dimensions (e.g., personality, reflection, culture) must be cohesive and authentic.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in Ambassador Selection**

Findings from Research Question 2 suggest that Ethiopian firms face both structural and cultural barriers in ambassador selection. A limited pool of universally accepted celebrities and strong regional variation in audience acceptance complicate selection strategies. Respondents noted that an ambassador who resonates in one region may be rejected in another, forcing rebranding or campaign adjustments.

This aligns with Roy & Banerjee (2014), who argue that local cultural context must guide ambassador selection in emerging markets. Respondents also emphasized the tendency for companies to prioritize fame over strategic alignment, which can result in brand misrepresentation. This finding emphasizes the importance of Kapferer's (2008) brand self-image and personality dimensions, which must be shared by the ambassador.

Yet, the study also found growing diversity in ambassador types — not limited to entertainers, but expanding to athletes, influencers, and lifestyle figures. This diversification presents opportunities for broader representation and targeted marketing across consumer segments.

### **Alignment with International Standards**

Under Research Question 3, most respondents acknowledged that while Ethiopian companies are becoming more intentional in using brand ambassadors, full alignment with international standards remains limited. Cultural appropriateness, budget constraints, and lack of formal evaluation mechanisms prevent full adaptation of global practices.

For instance, companies do not typically perform detailed alignment analysis between ambassador image and corporate values before selection. In contrast, global campaigns often include contract clauses that strictly define ambassador behavior, messaging consistency, and content approval rights. However, local firms do localize international trends — for example, storytelling via TikTok influencers mirrors techniques used in global campaigns.

This partial alignment supports Keller's (2001) CBBE Model, which stresses emotional resonance and cultural context as vital to brand equity. Ethiopian firms are applying this in practice, though less formally.

### **Reinforcing Vision, Values, and Long-Term Loyalty**

Findings related to Research Question 4 emphasize that long-term ambassador relationships can deepen brand consistency and consumer trust. The case of Selam Tesfaye representing multiple Clean Material brands over time illustrates continuity and alignment. Respondents also noted that ambassadors who are personally invested in the brand (e.g., parents promoting baby products) are more effective.

Consumers in the focus group reinforced this by recalling personal experiences influenced by ambassadors from their youth, indicating lasting emotional bonds. This supports the long-term brand loyalty pillar in Aaker's (1996) framework and demonstrates the psychological power of consistent ambassador-brand alignment.

However, challenges such as scandal risks and lack of monitoring were also noted. One respondent emphasized the need for clear contracts and regular performance checks, citing cases where ambassadors publicly distanced themselves from companies after controversies. This echoes findings by Schimmelpfennig & Hunt (2020), who warn of reputational damage when ambassador relationships are poorly managed.

### **Cross-Cutting Insight**

A key insight across all findings is the tension between **branding professionalism** and **emerging practice** in Ethiopia. While companies like Clean Material are pioneering ambassador-based branding, there remains a gap in evaluation tools, strategic frameworks, and regulatory oversight. Nonetheless, the firm demonstrates an evolving understanding of branding that integrates both local cultural relevance and selected global branding models.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of the main research results and describes the recommendations that can be used based on data analysis. The study has discovered the role of brand ambassadors in training the business identity of Ethiopia companies, focusing on special materials. He reviewed how brand ambassadors affecting the brand's vision, emotional connection and enhancing confidence with consumers. The results also emphasized the challenges and opportunities that Ethiopia companies face in selecting the appropriate brand ambassadors.

on the basis of this information, this chapter ends by making recommendations to improve brand strategies for Ethiopian companies. These recommendations aim to improve the use of brand ambassadors, improve marketing practices and set guidelines corresponding to local and international standards.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

This study set out to examine the influence of brand ambassadors on corporate identity in the Ethiopian context, with a specific focus on Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc. Through qualitative data collection methods including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and content analysis, the research explored how brand ambassadors shape consumer perceptions and align with branding strategies. The analysis underscored the pivotal role of ambassadors in enhancing brand visibility, consumer trust, and emotional engagement.

The study also highlighted how Clean Material effectively leverages figures from the entertainment and sports sectors as brand ambassadors. These individuals serve as symbolic representatives of the brand, strengthening its identity through their media presence and influence. Despite the strategic use of brand ambassadors, some inconsistencies in advertisement design and a lack of standardization were identified, which could potentially affect the overall branding message.

In response to the first research question How do brand ambassadors influence Ethiopian companies' corporate identities? the study concluded that brand ambassadors play a central role in building public trust and credibility. They amplify brand recognition and shape consumer attitudes by acting as relatable, influential figures. Their alignment with the brand's image and values helps companies foster emotional connections with target audiences, thereby enhancing their corporate identity.

Regarding the second research question What challenges and opportunities do Ethiopian firms face when selecting brand ambassadors? the findings revealed both structural and cultural barriers. A limited pool of widely accepted public figures, varying regional acceptance, and misaligned selection criteria were noted as challenges. On the other hand, there is an emerging opportunity for companies to diversify their brand ambassador selection by incorporating figures from different professional backgrounds, including those with strong cultural and social influence.

For the third research question How do Ethiopian enterprises align brand ambassadorship with international standards in expressing corporate vision and values? the research found partial alignment. While efforts are being made to adopt global best practices such as storytelling and digital engagement, cultural nuances and limited resources pose obstacles to full standardization. Companies often adapt international models to fit the local context, which, while practical, may limit the reach and effectiveness of the campaigns on a global scale.

Finally, in addressing the fourth research question How do brand ambassadors help strengthen the company vision, and values? it became evident that brand ambassadors function as extensions of the brand itself. When carefully selected, they reflect and reinforce the company's mission and values. Long-term partnerships with ambassadors contribute to consistent branding, increased loyalty, and sustained visibility. However, ensuring continued alignment and engagement through clear agreements and active monitoring remains essential.

In summary, this research contributes to the growing field of branding in emerging markets by highlighting the unique dynamics and strategic potential of brand ambassadors in Ethiopia. Clean Material's experience offers practical insights for businesses looking to use ambassadorship as a powerful tool for identity development and consumer connection.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the research results, the following recommendations are made to improve brand ambassadors for Ethiopia companies:

### 1. Developing national marketing indicators for brand ambassadors:

needs to make an official framework to guide and manage brand ambassadors in Ethiopia. This directive should determine the use of the morality of brand ambassadors, ensuring that they represent the values of the brand while maintaining consistency among different campaigns.

### 2. Ensuring transparency and discipline:

Is important for companies to ensure that brand ambassadors maintain moral discipline, especially when it comes to promoting competitive products. Ethiopia societies should implement policies to prevent ambassadors from approving contradictory brands, now the integrity of the brand. For example, if a brand ambassador advertises a mobile phone brand, it is not advisable to see another brand like the iPhone publicly.

### 3. Expand the Scope of Ambassador Selection:

While the entertainment industry has proven to be a valuable source of brand ambassadors, Ethiopian companies could benefit from diversifying their selection process. Including influencers from various fields such as sports, business, and social media could help extend brand reach to different demographic groups.

### 4. Invest in visual and emotional cohesion:

companies should work to maintain visual cohesion in their ads, especially in terms of fonts, color schemes and global design. The cohesion in the visual brand image consolidates the company's identity and improves the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. In addition, maintaining an emotional link with the target audience thanks to the ads that can be trusted and attractive can increase consumers' loyalty.

## 5. Continuous evaluation and feedback:

regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms must be done to evaluate the effectiveness of brand ambassadors. This will help identify improvement areas and ensure that marketing strategies are still consistent with consumer expectations and evolution trends.

By implementing these recommendations, Ethiopian companies can strengthen their brand image, enhance the credibility of their ambassadorial partnerships, and improve their marketing strategies overall.

## 5.4 Limitations and Future Research

### 5.4.1 Limitations

Although this study provides valuable information about the role of brand ambassadors in training the business identity of Ethiopia companies, some limitations must be recognized:

#### 1. Size and range of the sample:

studies are limited by the relatively small sample size, focusing mainly on clean materials and a brand group. The results may not fully show the experience of all Ethiopia companies or the entire scope of the domestic brand ambassador. A larger sample size, combining many companies from different fields, can provide a more complete understanding.

#### 2. Geographic limit:

research focuses on companies based at Addis Ababa and surrounding areas. This geographical limit means that the results may not participate in different marketing strategies used by companies in other areas of Ethiopia. Future research can expand to different areas, giving a broader view of brand activities across the country.

### **3. Time limit:**

Research is conducted in a specific time, which may not explain the long -term trend of brand ambassadors or change in consumers' behavior. Future research may explore studies along the effects of brand ambassadors for a long time.

### **4. Data subjectivity:**

depends on interviews, individual discussions and observations can give bias in the results. The viewpoint of participants of the brand ambassador may be affected by personal experience or subjective explanation, may not completely represent the population greater than

## **5.4.2 Future research**

Despite these limits, this study opens a number of ways for future research in the brand's ambassador to Ethiopia. Some potential directions include:

**1. Comparative studies in different fields:** future studies may consider how the brand's ambassador is used in different industries, such as technology, fashion or food, to see whether the impact of the identities of companies varies depending on this field. A comparative analysis between industries can provide valuable information about the most effective ambassadors in different contexts.

**2. The impact of people with social media influence:** with the growing role of social media in marketing, future research can explore the influence of those who influence social media related to the ambassador of the famous traditional brand. This will provide a deeper understanding of how digital platforms shape the role of brand ambassadors and their impact on the brand's identity.

**3. Consumer awareness and brand loyalty:** additional research can focus on understanding consumer awareness from brand ambassadors and direct influence on the brand's loyalty. Research on how consumers participate with brand ambassadors on social networks or in advertising can clarify emotional and psychological elements that stimulate the confidence and loyalty of the brand.

#### **4. Ethical considerations in brand ambassadorship:**

Future research could explore the ethical dimensions of brand ambassadorship, particularly in contexts like Ethiopia, where the use of brand ambassadors is growing rapidly. Studies may investigate the presence or absence of formal ethical guidelines, how companies address reputational risks, and how ambassadors manage public controversies. This can help inform the development of best practices for ethical alignment between brands and their representatives.

#### **5. Regional differences in brand ambassador effectiveness:**

Further studies can examine whether consumers in different regions of Ethiopia respond differently to specific types of brand ambassadors or marketing messages. Exploring regional variations in cultural values, media consumption habits, and brand perception can provide insights into tailoring ambassador strategies for more localized and effective marketing outcomes.

In short, although this study offers an important basis to understand the role of brand ambassadors in Ethiopia, additional research is necessary to discover the greater implications, challenges and opportunities in this field. Future studies can improve our understanding of how Ethiopia companies can optimize their brand ambassadors to better suit the expectations of consumers and the development of marketing trends.

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# Appendix

## Appendix A: List of Respondents

This appendix provides a list of all respondents who participated in the study, categorized by their roles.

### 1. Clean Material Marketing and Branding Professionals

- **Respondent 1:** Haireya Ahmed – Managing Director
- **Respondent 2:** Yehualashet Ketsela – Commercial Director
- **Respondent 3:** Tsion Dejene – National Sales Manager
- **Respondent 4:** Henok Tsegaye – Marketing Manager

### 2. Agency Representative

- **Respondent 5:** Ibrahim – Managing Director of Ebro Media & Communication

### 3. Brand Ambassadors

- **Respondent 6:** Actress Ruta Mengesteab
- **Respondent 7:** Danayit Mekbib

### 4. Focus Group Participants

- **Participant 1:** Seyfesilas Endale
- **Participant 2:** Meseret Bekele
- **Participant 3:** Tesfaye Alemu
- **Participant 4:** Israel Fekadu
- **Participant 5:** Bemnet G/Meskel
- **Participant 6:** Frehiwot Lakew
- **Participant 7:** Tirsit Emanuel

## Appendix B: Questionnaire for Marketing and Branding Professionals

### Questionnaire for Marketing and Branding Professionals

#### **The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity**

Researcher Details

Researcher: Hilina Meskelu

Institution: Addis Ababa University College: College of Humanities, Languages, and Journalism

School: School of Journalism and Communication

Program: Public Relations and Strategic Communication (Extension Program)

Degree: Master's Thesis - Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

#### **Preface**

Esteemed Participant,

I am Hilina Meskelu, a Master's student at the School of Journalism and Communication, Addis Ababa University. "The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc," is my research paper. This paper aims to investigate how Ethiopian companies use brand champions to strengthen their corporate identity, spot possible and challenges, and contrast local methods with global standards.

Your expertise as a marketing and branding specialist is invaluable for this research. This study employs a qualitative exploratory technique, and your involvement will enhance the comprehension of the strategic function of brand ambassadors within Ethiopia's commercial environment.

#### **Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation**

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary, and you may opt to withdraw at any moment. All responses will remain secret and will be utilized exclusively for academic reasons. The anticipated duration to finish this questionnaire is roughly 20 to 30 minutes.

For any inquiries pertaining to this study, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [hilumeskelu@gmail.com](mailto:hilumeskelu@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and significant contribution to this research.

## **Research Survey**

### **First Section: Overview.**

1. Provide a brief overview of who you are and what you do for the company.
2. How many years of marketing and branding experience do you have in total?
3. Which sectors have you experience with branding and ambassadorship?

### **Section Two, the Effects of Brand Ambassadors on Company Culture**

4. From what you've seen, how may brand ambassadors in Ethiopia affect a company's reputation?
5. Is there an example of a time when a brand ambassador had a significant impact on how the firm was perceived?
6. What measures do Ethiopian businesses take to ensure that its representatives represent the company in a positive light?

### **The Third Section: Issues and Opportunities in the Process of Choosing Brand Ambassadors.**

7. What are the most common challenges that Ethiopian businesses have when choosing representatives to represent their brand?
8. Does the selection procedure take into account any specific cultural, sociological, or economic factors?

9. In a highly competitive industry, how do Ethiopian companies benefit from having brand ambassadors on staff?

10. How can companies measure the impact of a brand ambassador on their company's growth and recognition?

#### **Fourth Section: Bringing Brand Ambassadorship in Line with International Best Practices**

11. How can Ethiopian businesses ensure that their plans for brand ambassadorship are in line with marketing and branding strategies used worldwide?

12. How can companies make sure that the people representing their brand effectively communicate their mission and principles?

13. Looking for data on how Ethiopian companies measure the success of their brand ambassador programs compared to international standards?

#### **The Fifth Section: Strengthening the Company's Mission, Vision, and Values**

14. How can brand ambassadors in Ethiopia help to reinforce a company's values and vision?

15. In your opinion, how can a well-executed strategy for brand ambassadorship influence the level of trust and loyalty exhibited by customers?

16. To what extent do companies check that their brand ambassadors truly represent the company?

17. How can Ethiopian enterprises strengthen their long-term brand identity through brand ambassador initiatives?

#### **Questions for Conclusion**

18. How can Ethiopian businesses improve their brand ambassador strategies? What advice would you provide them?

19. Is there anything else you can tell me about the role of brand ambassadors in Ethiopian branding strategies?

## Appendix C: Questionnaire for Brand Ambassadors

### **Questionnaire for Brand Ambassadors**

#### **The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc**

Researcher Information

Researcher: Hilina Meskelu

Institution: Addis Ababa University

College: College of Humanities, Language, and Journalism

School: School of Journalism and Communication

Program: Public Relations and Strategic Communication (Extension Class)

Degree: Master's Thesis – Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

### **Introduction**

Dear Participant,

I am Hilina Meskelu, a Master's student at Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism and Communication. I am conducting research on The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc

This questionnaire is specifically designed for brand ambassadors to explore:

- Your experiences and insights as a brand ambassador.
- The challenges and opportunities in Ethiopian brand ambassadorship.
- How your role affects corporate identity, consumer trust, and market presence.

Your responses will be invaluable in understanding the evolving role of brand ambassadors in Ethiopia.

## **Confidentiality & Voluntary Participation**

Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to skip any question or withdraw at any time. All responses will be kept confidential and used for academic purposes only. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 20–30 minutes.

### Section 1: Time for Personal and Professional Growth

1. How long have you been a brand ambassador?
2. What types of businesses or brands have you collaborated with?
3. What inspired the concept of becoming a brand ambassador?
4. What are some of the most common methods you use to engage with your audience, such as live events, social media, or advertisements?

### Section 2: Understanding What Brand Ambassadors Do

1. What do you think the most important duties of a brand spokesperson are?
2. What makes you different from other brand champions in Ethiopia?
3. What steps do you take to make sure that your personal picture matches the brand you represent?
4. People in Ethiopia seem to trust brand spokespeople more than regular ads, do you agree? What are the reasons for or against this?

### Section 3: How brand ambassadors affect a company's image

1. In what ways do you think your job as a brand ambassador makes a company's general image better?
2. Could you provide an instance in which your portrayal directly impacted brand perception?
3. Do you believe Ethiopian firms utilize brand ambassadors well to cultivate enduring brand loyalty? For what reasons or against what reasons?

### Section 4: Challenges and Ethical Considerations in Brand Ambassadorship

1. What are the primary barriers encountered as a brand ambassador in Ethiopia?
2. Have you ever had to reject an ambassadorship role because of ethical concerns? If yes, why?
3. How do you handle situations where a company's values or public image conflict with your personal beliefs?

#### Section 5: Market Trends & International Standards

1. How do Ethiopian companies' brand ambassador programs compare with international brands in terms of support, engagement, and professionalism?
2. Are Ethiopian businesses keeping up with global trends in brand ambassadorship and influencer marketing?
3. What strategies can Ethiopian businesses implement to improve the recruitment and oversight of brand ambassadors?

#### Section 6: Ethiopia's Potential for Brand Representation

1. What transformations do you anticipate for brand ambassadorship in Ethiopia moving forward?
2. What role do you believe digital marketing and social media will have in the future of Ethiopian brand ambassadorship?
3. What advice would you offer to aspiring brand ambassadors looking to build a successful career in this field?

#### **Final thoughts**

1. Is there anything more you would like to share regarding your experiences as a brand ambassador in Ethiopia?

## Appendix D: (FGD) Guide for Consumers

### **Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Consumers**

#### **The influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity**

Researcher Information

Researcher: Hilina Meskelu

Institution: Addis Ababa University

College: College of Humanities, Language, and Journalism

School: School of Journalism and Communication

Program: Public Relations and Strategic Communication (Extension Class)

Degree: Master's Thesis – Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

#### **Introduction for Focus Group Discussion**

Dear Participants,

My name is Hilina Meskelu, and I am a Master's student at Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism and Communication. I am undertaking a research study entitled the "Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Corporate Identity: A Case Study of Clean Material and Child Health Supplies Manufacturing Plc."

This research looks into how Ethiopian businesses use brand ambassadors to shape their corporate identity and the influence these representatives have on how consumers perceive, trust, and make purchasing decisions.

We're excited to have you join this Focus Group Discussion (FGD)! Your insights are really important for understanding consumer perspectives on brand ambassadors and how they work in Ethiopian markets. This session is designed to encourage openness, interactivity, and engagement, giving you a chance to share your experiences and perspectives.

## Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation

Participation is optional, and you may discontinue at any moment. All responses will remain secret, and the data will be utilized exclusively for academic reasons. The discourse will endure for roughly 60 to 90 minutes.

The session will be audio-recorded (with your approval) to ensure accuracy, but no personally identifiable information will be revealed. If you have any inquiries or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you for your time and significant contribution to this research.

### **First part: consumer background and brand recognition**

1. Tell me a bit about yourself and the brand or product you use most regularly?
2. Have you ever allowed the advice of a brand ambassador influence your buying choice?  
Could you give me an example?

### **Part 2: Customers' Views of Brand Ambassadors**

1. When you hear the term "brand ambassador," what comes first?
2. What, in your opinion, qualifies a brand as emblematic of trust and belieability?

### **Part 3: How Brand Ambassadors Affect What People Buy**

1. How much do brand ambassadors affect your choice to buy compared to traditional ads or recommendations from friends and family?
2. Have you ever stopped buying a product because the person who represents it got into trouble? Why?

#### **Part 4: How Brand Ambassadors Fit into Society and Culture**

1. Do you think that Ethiopian companies pick brand champions who really show what Ethiopian culture and values are all about?
2. How do you feel when celebrities from other countries end up promoting Ethiopian goods instead of Ethiopian ones?

#### **Part 5: Brand Ambassadors and Consumer Trust**

1. When a brand is supported by someone you admire, does it make you feel more connected to it? Why not?
2. How can you determine whether a brand ambassador is endorsing a product sincerely or if their motivation is purely financial?

#### **Part 6: Brand Ambassadors and Corporate Identity**

1. In your perspective, how may brand advocates enhance a company's name and reputation?
2. How can companies in Ethiopia ensure that their brand ambassadors truly embody their principles?

#### **Part 7: Unstructured Conversation and Concluding Remarks**

1. What advice would you provide Ethiopian companies looking to select the most qualified applicants for brand ambassador roles?

### **Appendix E: Thematic Coding Framework Used for Data Analysis**

This appendix presents the organized coding scheme applied to analyze the data collected through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion. The analysis followed a thematic approach, aligning participant responses with the study's four core research questions. Themes were identified and categorized based on patterns across participant responses.

Number	Research Question	Themes Identified	Description of the Theme
1	<b>RQ1: How do brand ambassadors influence Ethiopian companies' corporate identities?</b>	Enhancing Brand Recognition and Market Penetration	Role of ambassadors in gaining visibility for new or lesser-known products.
		Credibility and Positive Brand Associations	Ambassadors' personal image impacts public perception of the brand.
		Measuring the Impact of Brand Ambassadors	Challenges in quantifying impact via sales and engagement.
		Public Perception and Brand Ambassador Influence	Mixed views on whether ambassadors build identity or are just seen as paid promoters.
		Risks and Negative Impacts	Harm to brand image due to ambassador scandals
2	<b>RQ2: What challenges and opportunities do Ethiopian firms face when selecting brand ambassadors?</b>	Limited Celebrity Pool and Societal Acceptance	Difficulty finding widely accepted public figures.
		Strategic Alignment and Brand Identity	Misalignment between ambassadors' image and brand values.
		Cultural and Economic Considerations	Selection often overlooks deeper cultural fit.
		Opportunities for Diverse Selection	Broadening the scope beyond entertainment industry figures.
3	RQ3: How do Ethiopian enterprises align brand	Aligning with International Marketing Standards	Efforts made with local limitations in mind

	ambassadorship with international standards?	Creating Brand Narratives	Ambassadors as storytellers for brand identity
		Cultural Adaptations in Global Trends	Customizing international strategies for Ethiopian culture.
		Strategic Oversight and Professionalism	Gap between global best practices and local implementation
4	<b>RQ4: How do brand ambassadors help strengthen the company identity, vision, and values?</b>	Adapting to Trends and Enhancing Brand Identity	Ambassadors used in response to changing social and digital trends.
		Strategic Alignment with Values	Contracts and careful selection based on brand principles.
		Strengthening Trust and Loyalty	Building emotional connections through credible ambassadors.
		Long-Term Alignment	Using ambassadors over time to reinforce consistent brand messages.
		Ethical Agreements and Principles	Need for written expectations and ambassador accountability.