

BRAND EQUITY AND CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIAN BOTTLING COMPANY, ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL, ABUJA NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of brand equity on consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was survey research design; while structured questionnaire was designed using Likert scale. Population for the study comprised of 384 consumers of Nigerian Bottling company beverages in AMAC, Abuja. The statistical tool used in data analysis is multiple regression. The study revealed that brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality have positive and significant effect on consumer buying behaviour of Nigerian Bottling company beverages in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria, except for brand loyalty which has negative but significant effect on consumer buying behaviour with Nigerian Bottling company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study recommends thus the Management of Nigerian Bottling company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should integrate modern techniques of advertisement in order to continue to remind the existing and potential consumers of its products as well as their promises to always deliver value; Nigerian Bottling company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should continue to engage in programmes such as raffle draw, health related benefits of its product and any other programmes that will keep both existing and potential consumers nearer to the company most especially against the competitors product; Nigerian Bottling company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should be consistent in value delivery without any form of compromise so as to continue to win the loyalty of their esteemed customers; Nigerian Bottling company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should be creative and innovative in developing and designing qualitative products that will meet the continuous change in customers taste while setting prices from customer perception.

Keywords: Brand Equity, Brand Awareness, Brand Association, Brand Loyalty, Perceived Quality and Consumer Buying Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Branding of goods and services has today continued to gained enormous attention in a fast changing business space specifically among emerging firms as it serve as a means of identifying certain goods and services by customers. Branding also helps to determine the

level of customers' satisfaction. Brands have become assets to diverse business firms operating locally or internationally seeking to gain competitive advantage.

Many organizations are currently focused on increasing sales volume, gaining market share, and retaining

clients. To achieve these objectives, a creative and value-added approach is required to attract attention from customers. Brand equity is critical in this process. When a company establishes a brand effectively, customers can easily recognize their products and services, leading to repeat purchases. Using branding-related activities is a strategic way to outshine competitors. Marketing is not just about selling a product; it involves promoting a memorable brand that enhances consumer perceptions. As a result, the presence of brand equity makes it easier to promote and understand consumer desires for the company (Amani, 2022).

Considering the speed of globalization, information and communication technology and the enormous activities happening in the 21st century business terrain, branding has continued to represent the face of most businesses lately. Similarly, according to Cynthia (2018), brand equity holds significant benefits for both firms and consumers. Nowadays, marketers pay increasing attention to brand equity as a useful tool to establish a global brand that appeals to all users. As a result of the information revolution and intense competition, consumers now have access to a large amount of solicited information before buying a product (Ousanee et al., 2018). The information they receive, which advocates the merits of each branded good, heavily influences their purchasing decision, and companies use different factors (such as a name, symbol, design, or mixture of these three) to create an image in the mind of the consumer, enabling them to identify a specific product or brand. To remain competitive, brand equity is a crucial tool for attracting the attention of potential customers, which could lead to a buying decision (Okechukwu et al., 2020).

A brand is a collection of both tangible and intangible attributes that aid in the recognition of a product, service, individual, location, or organization. A brand helps to create a brand reputation. The bigger picture of branding as a long-term strategy encompasses various elements, ranging from new products to marketing messages. In this case, the brand of a product is considered the most significant factor because it allows it to be identified by consumers. Selecting a brand for a product necessitates a thorough understanding of both the product and the target market segmentation in order to guarantee the product's existence, profitability, and, most importantly, success in the market. For a product to establish a strong brand equity, it must first succeed in the market (Sammur, 2015). The aim of every brand is to entice and hold on to customers, which guarantees the triumph of both the brand and the product. Research has revealed that customers seek out brands that possess distinctive characteristics (Londono et al., 2016).

Wood (2000) stipulated that brand equity denotes the combination of all the perceptions and actions that accumulate in the minds of the consumers of a product, including the influence of distribution channels and agents. This will lead to greater profits and sustainable cash flows in the long run. The impact of brand equity can also be seen in the way consumers feel, think, and behave towards a brand. Moreover, the value added by a brand's equity is evident in its effect on a company's pricing, market share, and profitability. Additionally, a robust brand enables companies to manage their assets efficiently, increase their cash flow, and expand their business.

Brand equity, as defined by Aaker in 1991, is composed of four main factors

which are brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand association. Several studies have investigated the relationship between brand equity and consumer buying behaviour, using different measures such as brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and pricing policy by Nguyen, Tran, & Ngo (2022), and brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality by Amani (2022). Onoja et al. (2021) focused on brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty, while Miremadi (2021) considered brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association. For this particular study concerning the Nigerian bottling company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria, the proxies used by Miremadi (2021) were chosen due to their close association with the organization under study.

The scope of this study is restricted to the effect of brand Equity on consumer buying behaviour in The scope of this study is restricted to the effect of brand equity on consumer buying Behaviour in Nigeria bottling Company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja Nigeria. The period of this study covers from 2022 to 2023. The study is limited to this time frame due to the limited time stipulated for the completion of this program. The independent variable (Brand Equity) is measured in terms of brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty and perceived quality, while the dependent variable is consumer buying behaviour which is examined in terms of purchase decision. The choice for this variables is due to the fact that they have been identified as the brand attributes mostly associated with the firm under study

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recently, branding has become a crucial component of product development in marketing. It is now considered a fundamental aspect of corporate identity that has a significant impact on differentiating products from one brand to another. Consumers take into account various criteria, which collectively form what is known as brand equity, when making purchases. However, due to the competitive nature of the business environment and the continuous changes in consumer preferences, tastes, and lifestyle, companies are engaging in branding and rebranding efforts to maintain the growth and survival of their brand.

Some companies in the beverage industry have not taken into account essential brand features like brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness, price policy, advertisement, brand image, and various others relating to consumer behavior. When buying, consumers become more meticulous in determining poorly branded products. Nowadays, companies are introducing new products into the market with less emphasis on brand equity, which eventually affects how consumers purchase, use, and dispose of products and services.

From extant literatures, various studies have been carried out on the effect of brand equity and its effect on consumer buying behavior. Such of these studies include; Nguyen *et al.*, (2022), Onoja, *et al.*, (2021), Okechukwu *et al.*, (2020), Miremadi, (2021) conducted from the perspective of different industries (Information and Communication tech industry, educational sectors, cosmetic industry); Institutions (Private University, fast food industry firms, mobile phones manufacturers and

computers companies) geographical locations (Indonesian, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malaysia, Lithuania, Nairobi) at different time. To the researcher's understanding, there have been no specific studies conducted in Nigeria utilizing a combination of brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand association as measures of brand equity in relation to consumer buying behavior, with the Nigerian bottling company situated in AMAC, Abuja serving as the case study. Based on this knowledge gap, this study aims to examine the impact of brand equity on consumer buying behavior within the Nigerian bottling company, located in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria.

Research Question

The following research questions are addressed by the study:

- i. What is the effect of brand awareness on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does brand Association affect Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria?
- iii. How does brand loyalty affect Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria?
- iv. Has Perceived quality affected consumer behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The prime objective of this study is to examine the effect of Brand Equity on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling Company in Abuja Municipal

Area Council, Abuja Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the effect of brand awareness on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria
- ii. ascertain the effect of brand Association on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria
- iii. explore the effect of brand loyalty on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria
- iv. evaluate the effect of Perceived quality on Consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses given below are proposed to be tested empirically:

Ho₁: Brand awareness has no significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria

Ho₂ Brand associations has no significant relationship with Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria.

Ho₃ Brand loyalty has no significant relationship with consumer buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria.

Ho₄ Perceived quality has no significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company in Abuja Municipal Area Council, Abuja, Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Equity

Brands play a crucial role in a company's sustainability. They act as a means to differentiate a product from others in the market. In today's world, consumers tend to assess products based on their brands. To meet the needs and expectations of consumers, a company must manufacture or offer high-quality goods. If the quality is satisfactory and the price is reasonable, consumers are more likely to be loyal to the brand. With a large customer base, a brand can strengthen its standing in the industry and eventually become a household name (Koapaha & Tumiwa, 2016). Brand equity is a crucial part of a company's brand. It refers to the intangible value of the products and the power of the brand, allowing for a wide recognition that said company can establish and maintain brand loyalty among their consumers. When consumers are loyal to a brand, they are willing to pay a premium price for the company's products. To gain a larger share of the market, companies must create strong brands that consumers prefer over their competitors. Therefore, it is essential for a company to increase its brand equity to remain competitive (Koapaha & Tumiwa, 2016).

According to Shariq (2018), brand equity can be defined as the value derived from a brand comprising of its name, associations, and emotional connect that the consumer perceives. Brand equity encompasses the assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol, which can add to or decrease the value offered by a product or service to a firm and/or to its customers as per Asuma (2015). According Gunelius (2014) puts forth that brand equity is the tangible and intangible values that a brand contributes, either positively or

negatively, to the company, its products, services, and profits based on knowledge, experiences, and perceptions associated with that brand. Brand equity refers to the relationship between consumers and a brand, as well as their reactions to the brand and its offerings (Nguyen et al., 2022). This concept encompasses a range of elements that contribute to, or detract from, the value that a product or service brings to both the company and its customers. These elements include factors like brand recognition, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. In order to effectively manage a brand, marketers must understand the key drivers of its value and how to assess the brand's equity across various dimensions - such as consumer perceptions, product performance, and financial metrics (Andai, 2016).

Brand equity refers to the value that a brand adds to a product. This includes the positive associations that a brand has in a consumer's memory, which results in increased loyalty. The strength of brand equity can be seen in what consumers think, feel, and do in relation to the brand, as well as how much the brand can charge for its products, its market share, and its profitability. Brand equity is based on several assets and liabilities, which are grouped into five categories: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand association. The creation of brand equity is beneficial for both businesses and customers. It helps customers understand and remember important information about products and brands, and for companies, it is important for financial reasons, as well as to motivate their strategies and improve marketing effectiveness. Brand equity refers to the power of a brand that has the potential to either increase or decrease the value of

the brand based on customer feedback regarding the products or services sold. It is a non-physical asset that provides extra value to the company, which can be determined by the attitudes, emotions, and behaviors of customers towards the brand (Swasty, 2016).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness has been defined by various researchers. Shariq (2018) describes it as the ability of a potential buyer to identify or remember that a brand belongs to a particular product category. On the other hand, according to Civelek and Ertemelb (2019), brand awareness refers to the level of recognition a brand obtains before customers intend to purchase. Baalbaki and Guzman (2016) note that brand awareness is necessary for building brand equity and is usually the initial step in this process. Keller (2013) divides brand awareness into brand recognition and brand recall, while Latif et al. (2014) contend that it is primarily determined by brand recognition and brand recall performance, with the ultimate aim of proliferating extensive knowledge about brands, which plays a crucial role in shaping positive perceptions of brands and companies among consumers, rather than negative impressions of their competitors.

Aaker (1991) posits that, brand awareness is an asset that has the potential to be exceptionally long-lasting and sustainable. The author pointed out that brand awareness primarily comprises of brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition pertains to the ability of customers to identify or affirm a brand and remember it based on its logos, slogans, or even colors. For new or upcoming brands, brand recognition is crucial to establish their identity. Rungtornsupatt and Sirinapatpokin (2019) suggest that brand awareness reflects

how much a brand is comprehended by consumers or the extent to which they recognize and acknowledge it. Zavattaro et al. (2015) state that brand awareness is the way in which consumers talk about a brand and influences their behavior towards the marketed product. David (2015) suggests that brand awareness occurs when consumers have a detailed and precise mental image of a product, and acquire brand knowledge from the direct experiences of other consumers who have interacted with the product or service, as well as indirect experiences such as advertising and marketing.

Brand Association

Brand association, as explained by Pradnyaputra (2016), pertains to anything that is linked to a particular brand in the minds of people. This includes the brand's assets and liabilities, which can create specific memories for customers, resulting in brand association (Titi & Anang, 2018). The value of a brand is presented through its brand association, which is determined by the associations it is associated with (Satvati et al., 2016). Brand associations play a crucial role in differentiating and positioning products, creating a compelling reason for potential consumers to buy based on specific physical or emotional features. If a brand is well-positioned in a critical product attribute, attempting to claim superiority in that dimension can damage credibility. A strong brand association can also act as a barrier to competitors and serve as the foundation for brand extensions, providing a significant competitive advantage in the targeted area. Brand association refers to anything connected to a brand by memory, and it can be measured in terms of guarantee, personal identification, social identification, status, and willingness to accept brand extensions.

Brand Loyalty

Loyalty in branding is reflected through brand trust, commitment, satisfaction, perceived value, image, association, and quality (Andai, 2016). The establishment of loyalty among consumers by a company can result in an enhancement of brand value, creation of strong brand affiliation, reduction in marketing costs, and influence on potential customers through positive word-of-mouth. Tahreem (2018) defined brand loyalty as a probability of repeat purchases, leading to the formation of brand loyalty over time. Additionally, brand value generated by brand signals can drive people to choose and buy a brand. Pedeliento et al. (2015) stated that brand loyalty results in customer-brand manufacturer attachment. The measurement of brand preference explains brand loyalty whereby consumers pick a specific brand among competing brands (Kumar et al., 2016). Brand loyalty is influenced by the consumer's recognition, awareness, and perception of the brand. A successful brand must attract and retain loyal consumers, as described by (Zavattaro et al., 2015). The loyalty is assessed by examining practical and emotional dimensions. The emotional dimension is related to the consumer's preference and willingness to buy, while the practical dimension represents the actual purchase behavior. Various measures have been used by scholars to evaluate brand loyalty, including repurchase behavior, acceptance of premium pricing, customer retention ratio, switching behavior, and willingness to recommend the brand to others (Liu & Wang, 2017). Other assets that belong to the brand but are exclusive to it, include patents, trademarks, and channel relationships that give it a significant competitive edge. A trademark serves as protection for the brand value against

rivals who might try to mislead customers by utilizing a similar name, logo, or packaging (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014).

Perceived Quality

The measurement of brand quality perceived by consumers can be determined by evaluating how closely a consumer's opinion of a product's quality and attributes aligns with its expected performance (Saleem et al., 2015). Perceived quality refers to how consumers perceive a brand as superior to alternative brands in the competitive market. This assessment is subjective and reflects how consumers view the overall superiority and excellence of a product. As Muigai (2017) suggests, perceived quality allows consumers to differentiate between brands and provides them with added value. Perceived quality pertains to how customers perceive a company's product based on their knowledge of what they see and feel when they interact with it (Akkucuk & Esmaeili, 2016).

This perception is built upon the customer's assessment of the brand's performance and various quality dimensions. Perceived quality can create value in several ways, such as driving customers to purchase a particular brand. When selecting products, consumers tend to favor brands that they believe possess high quality and dismiss those that don't. Perceived quality serves as a benchmark for making purchasing decisions, particularly in cases where data on the brand is limited. Additionally, perceived quality plays a valuable role in positioning and distinguishing a brand in the competitive marketplace (Kandasamy, 2015). The quality associated with a brand can also be a substantial factor in differentiation and positioning. Building a strong, durable brand implies an above-average

quality positioning or a minimum perceived quality when considering brands positioned as low market competitors (Onoja et al., 2021). Perceived quality provides a reason to buy and can also attract channel member interest, allow extensions, and support reinvestment (Chuma, 2017). The dimension of quality perception in a study conducted by Rahma, (2018) is divided into; Performance, Services, Resilience, Reliability, Product Characteristics, Compliance with specifications and Results.

Consumer Behaviour

According to Khaniwale (2015), consumer behavior refers to the actions individuals take before or during the purchase of a product or service to satisfy a need. The author suggests that sources of information for consumers include family, friends, personal observation, consumer reviews, salespeople, or mass media. However, millennials primarily rely on the internet for information. Furthermore the author also describes buyer behavior as answering the questions of what, why, how, when, and where an individual makes a purchase, with the final outcome being the buyer's decision. Generally, consumers go through five stages before making a purchase, and the evaluation of alternatives varies for each consumer and purchase. In situations where consumers habitually make purchasing decisions, they are more likely to rely on impulse and intuition rather than carefully evaluating their options. In contrast, consumers who engage in an extended problem-solving process will often thoroughly evaluate multiple brands. Factors that may influence the options considered during the selection process include financial costs, the amount of information already obtained, perceived risk of making the wrong

choice, and the consumer's attitudes towards choice behavior.

After considering different options, the consumer is prepared to make a purchase. According to Khaniwale (2015), marketers can improve the purchasing process by providing product information through labels, advertising, and personal selling. For example, recommending the best smartphone for a particular use. Once the purchase is made, the consumer evaluates their level of satisfaction. Lautiainen (2015) suggests that if their expectations are not met, they may feel disappointed. Conversely, meeting expectations can lead to brand loyalty. Andai (2016) notes that consumer preferences and intentions to purchase are often influenced by factors such as brand equity.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Nguyen, et al., (2022) studied the impact of brand equity (brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and pricing policy) on customer purchase decision (CPD) in retailers' distribution. The study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the research model and variables. A survey was carried out using a Likert scale to gather data from 251 respondents who purchased products from RB in Ho Chi Minh City. The collected data underwent analysis using scale reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and hypothesis testing by SPSS 22. Results revealed that brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and pricing policy had a significant impact on CPD for RB. Additionally, the study found that perceived quality was the most significant component in influencing CPD in retailers. Based on the findings, the study recommends that RB should concentrate on improving its

perceived quality and offer more choice to customers.

Amani (2022) conducted research on the factors that determine brand equity and how it affects consumer decisions when purchasing an iPhone in Jakarta, Indonesia. The study used a questionnaire survey method for primary data collection and utilized a nonprobability convenience sampling technique with a minimum of 175 respondents according to the SEM (Structural Equation Model) sample size determinant recommended by Hair, et al., (2010). The researchers obtained 202 responses. The study identified several drivers of consumer purchase decisions, including brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations. These factors were found to have a significant direct influence on consumer purchase decisions, with brand loyalty being the strongest and having a positive impact. The study also focused on the mediating effect of brand equity on consumer purchase decisions. The study reveal that there is a correlation between brand loyalty and consumer purchase decisions, with higher brand loyalty leading to higher purchase decisions. The study also indicates that other variables, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations, have a positive effect on purchase decisions when mediated by brand equity.

Onoja, et al., (2021) analyzed the impact of brand equity, including brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty, on consumer behavior among Veritas University students in Nigeria who use Apple Smartphones. The research was cross-sectional, and the authors used primary data gathered through a questionnaire completed by 341 participants. Specifically, the study aimed to determine how brand

awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty influenced customer behavior among Veritas University students. The findings indicated that brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty had a positive and significant influence on customer behavior among the students. Therefore, it was concluded that when consumers develop a strong attachment to and loyalty toward a brand, they are more likely to make repeat purchases. When a brand and user have a deep emotional connection, the occurrence of specific customer behaviors, such as repurchasing, are more likely to happen. To expand customer behavior in repurchasing product categories, firms should focus on building brand loyalty, awareness, and association linked to the functions of guarantee, social identification, and status, as suggested by the study.

Miremadi (2021) assessed brand equity, which comprises of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association, on consumer behavior in the laptop market in Iran. The study involved 505 respondents from different cities in Iran, and statistical techniques using SPSS ver22 were utilized to analyze the influence of brand equity dimensions. The analysis provided evidence that all four dimensions of brand equity significantly influence Iranian consumers when it comes to their laptop consumption. From this perspective, brand association and brand loyalty emerged as the most crucial factors for Iranian consumers. Hence, marketing and advertising managers should focus their efforts on improving perceived quality and brand awareness to strengthen their brand equity in this highly competitive market. It is noteworthy that brand image is the strongest point, whereas value is the weakest point in brand association as one

of the brand equity dimensions. It is important to note that brand recognition is a key component of brand awareness and it highlights the limitations of brand awareness in the Iranian laptop market.

Okechukwu et al., (2020) explored the impact of different factors of brand equity such as brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty on consumer patronage of various alcoholic drinks in Abia State. They used primary data collected from 384 consumers of alcoholic beverages in the state and employed Cochran's formula to determine their sample size. They administered questionnaires to collect data and used frequency tables, percentages, and regression analysis to analyze their findings. The study discovered that the positive effects of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are significant at a 0.05 level of significance on consumer patronage of alcoholic beverages in Abia State. The study recommends that alcoholic beverage producers should focus on increasing brand awareness to improve customer loyalty, as brand equity has been shown to have a significant positive impact on beverage patronage.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Aaker's 1991 Brand Equity Theory

Considering the various theories such as Congruity theory, Consumption Values Theory and Signaling Theory which have been postulated by different scholars on the subject matter, the Aaker's theory of brand equity underpins the subject matter of discuss as it reveals and extensively explains the concept of brand equity in terms of measures adopted as measures and its relation to the behaviors of consumers. According to Aaker's brand equity model (1991), brand awareness,

perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty are crucial factors in building a strong brand. However, this study only focuses on brand awareness and loyalty. Brand awareness refers to how familiar consumers are with the brand and how strongly it exists in their minds. Aaker suggests four levels of brand awareness: top-of-the-mind, brand recall, brand recognition, and brand awareness. The first step in communicating with consumers is to establish brand awareness. Aaker also suggests several ways to achieve brand awareness, such as being memorable and distinctive, incorporating a slogan or jingle, using a recognizable symbol or logo, promoting the product, considering brand extensions, and building recognition and recall through repetition.

The second most important aspect of brand equity is brand loyalty, which forms the core of the brand's value. Aaker's research revealed that no other component of brand equity is as effective as brand loyalty. When consumers become loyal to a particular brand, they make regular purchases of that brand. Brand loyalty, according to Aaker (1991), is a consumer's emotional attachment to the brand. It indicates whether consumers are willing to switch to another brand based on differences in features or price. As a result, for this study, the two key dimensions of Aaker's brand equity model, brand awareness, and brand loyalty, were considered to assess their impact on consumer purchase decisions.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is infinite as there are no actual figure that represent the total number of Nigeria Bottling Company consumers. Therefore, the study used non-probability sampling approach particularly purposive and

convenient sampling techniques because non-probability sampling approach enables the researcher to get some idea of the population and characteristics of the problem using well informed member in a short time. The population of the study is infinite, therefore, the formula of Kothari, (2004) sample determination for infinite population was used. Hence, the formula is used to determine the appropriate sample size.

$$n = \frac{z^2 * p * q}{e^2}$$

Where;

n= sample size

z=the value of standard value of a given confidence level

P= sample proportion

q=1-p e=acceptable error so in this case we set

e= 0.05, z=1.96

p= 0.5 q= 0.5 and we get

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

Reliability test

Table 1: Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's α	No. of Items
Brand Awareness	$\alpha \geq 0.87$	3
Brand Association	$\alpha \geq 0.71$	3
Brand Loyalty	$\alpha \geq 0.83$	3
Perceived Quality	$\alpha \geq 0.85$	3
Consumer Buying Behavior	$\alpha \geq 0.82$	3
Recommended α	$\alpha \geq 0.70$	

Source: Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS, *version-28*

Table 3.2 shows the reliability test through Cronbach's Alpha conducted to ascertain the construct reliability. The criterion adopted is from Hair et al. (1998), who opined that the proposed construct reliability assessed should be greater than 0.70.

The study adopted multiple regression as the statistical tool, which is used to

0.0025
n= **384**

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire accompanied by a cover letter, as the study utilized the primary data source. The primary data source is considered appropriate in capturing the information from the respondents. The survey consists of two sections. Section A consists of items that sought personal and demographic data of the respondents, such as age, qualifications and gender. While Section B consist of the questions relating to the variables under investigation scaled in a 5-point Likert scale. Each item had five response options ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Undecided (U) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) of which the respondents are required to tick one of the five options against an item to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the items.

indicate the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The study also use descriptive statistics to present the data obtained from the field. The regression model has been estimated using SPSS statistical package that has the capacity to answer the question on how fit a model is, given a set of variables. It uses software tool like excel in computing primary data or

information obtained from the questionnaire. The statistical software package of SPSS was well utilized in analysing data gotten from the field.

The regression model is stated as follows:
 $CBB = \alpha + \beta_1BAW + \beta_2BAS + \beta_3BLY + \beta_4PQY + \mu \dots\dots\dots 1$

Where CB = Consumer Buying Behaviour

α is the intercept

β_1, β_2 and β_3 are the parameters to be estimated as the independent variable and as such recognition, promotion, salary and bonus.

$\beta_0 =$ Constant

$\epsilon =$ Standard Error terms

BAW = Brand Awareness

BAS = Brand Association

BLY = Brand Loyalty

PQY = Perceived Quality

$\mu =$ error term

Data analysis and result

Data was obtained through the administration of questionnaires to customers of Nigerian bottling company located in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria which were further analyzed using regression analysis to test the association and the degree of relationship between the variables. A total of three hundred (400) questionnaires were administered above actual sample size in order to enable the researcher retrieve a minimum of (384) valid questionnaires, but only three hundred and ninety-six were returned and filled properly. In comparison, the remaining four (4) questionnaires were returned but not correctly filled and cannot be considered valid for the analysis. Consequently, only three hundred and eighty-four (384) questionnaires were randomly selected and considered valid for analysis as presented:

Regression result

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.948 ^a	.898	.897	.42009

a. Predictors: (Constant), PQY, BAS, BAW, BLY

Source: SPSS Output version-28

The model summary table above shows the coefficient of the regression R^2 with a value of (0.898), which means that (89.8%) of the variation in CBB can be explained by brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty and

perceived quality. Other associated aspects that are not included in the regression are known as error terms which account for the remaining 0.102 (10.2%).

Table 3: ANOVA^a

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	590.899	4	147.725	837.086	.000 ^b
	Residual	67.061	380	.176		
	Total	657.960	384			

a. Dependent Variable: CBB

b. Predictors: (Constant), PQY, BAS, BAW, BLY

Source: SPSS Output version-28

Furthermore, the Anova table reveal the model's fitness. The p-value of (0.000) is substantially lower than the 5% level of significance (0.05), the F-statics value of (837.086) is widely used at 5%. This shows that the version is well-fitting, and

the null hypotheses may be rejected, revealing that consumer buying behavior range has a widespread effect on consumers overall buying behaviour.

Table 4: Coefficients^a

Model	Coefficients ^a					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	.155	.063		2.462	.014
1	BAW	.417	.096	.430	4.345	.000
	BAS	.147	.056	.158	2.626	.009
	BLY	-.193	.095	-.203	-2.034	.043
	PQY	.554	.120	.568	4.636	.000

a. Dependent Variable: CBB

Source: SPSS Output version-28

Decision Rule: 5% level of significance

The co-efficient table indicates that; the co-efficient of brand awareness (0.417) is positive and significant ($0.000 < 0.05$) in improving consumers buying behavior. $CBB = 0.155 + 0.417\log_BAW$ shows that brand awareness will improve by 41% for every 1% increase in consumer buying behavior; the co-efficient of brand association (0.147) is positive and significant ($0.009 < 0.05$) in improving consumer buying behaviour. $CBB = 0.155 + 0.147\log_BAS$ shows that brand association will improve by 14% for every 1% increase in consumer buying behaviour; the co-efficient of brand loyalty (-0.193) is negative and significant ($0.043 < 0.05$) in improving consumer behaviour. $CBB = 0.155 - 193\log_BLY$ shows that brand loyalty will decrease by 19% for every 1% decrease in consumer buying behaviour. Finally, the co-efficient table indicates that, the co-efficient of perceived quality (0.554) is positive and significant ($0.000 < 0.05$) in improving consumer buying behaviour. $CBB = 0.155 + 0.554\log_PQY$ shows that perceived

quality will improve by 55% for every 1% increase in consumer buying behaviour.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested with the model stated in chapter three.

Test of Hypotheses One:

H0₁: Brand awareness has no significant effect on Consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company, AMAC, Abuja.

From the regression result it was observed that the p-value for brand awareness and Consumer buying behaviour is (0.000). Since the p-value is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$) it thus, falls in the rejection region and hence, we reject the first null hypothesis (**H0₁**). The study, therefore concludes that brand awareness has a significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company, AMAC, Abuja.

Test of Hypotheses Two:

H0₂: Brand association has no significant effect on Consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company, AMAC, Abuja.

The result of the regression shows that the calculated p-value for brand association and Consumer buying behaviour is (0.009) less than 0.05 used as the level of significance. Since the p-value ($0.009 < 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}) and accept the alternative hypothesis and then conclude that brand association has a significant effect on Consumer buying behaviour in Nigeria bottling Company, AMAC, Abuja..

Test of Hypotheses Three:

H₀₃: Brand Loyalty has no significant effect on Consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company, AMAC, Abuja.

In addition, the calculated p-value for brand loyalty and Consumer buying behaviour was found to be less than 0.05 (that is; $.043 < 0.05$), we thus, reject the third null hypothesis (H_{03}) and conclude that brand loyalty has significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company, AMAC, Abuja.

Test of Hypotheses Four:

H₀₄: Perceived quality has no significant effect on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Nigerian bottling company AMAC, Abuja.

Last, the calculated p-value for perceived quality and Consumer buying behaviour was found to be less than 0.05 (that is; $.000 < 0.05$), we thus, reject the fourth null hypothesis (H_{04}) and conclude that perceived quality has significant effect on consumer buying behaviour in Nigerian bottling company, AMAC, Abuja.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following findings were found;

Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on consumer buying behaviour, according to the study's findings. The implication of this finding

is that some features relating to Nigerian bottling company brand easily comes to mind very quickly compare to other beverage brands, consumers are very much familiar with Nigerian bottling company as a brand and also, amongst other competing brands consumers can easily recall Nigerian bottling company brand. The study is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Nguyen, Tran, & Ngo, (2022) which revealed that brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and pricing policy have a significant impact on consumer purchase decision, a fundamental area of consumer buying behaviour.

The study also discovered that consumer buying behaviour is influenced by brand association. The findings imply that, consumer admire celebrities and other highly respected personalities who are very much associated to Nigerian bottling company brand, periodic events, Exhibitions, games, sport etc. sponsored by Nigerian bottling company does portrays its image as a unique brand, liked and trusted considering it years of existence. Nigerian bottling company has a unique association in terms of it brand compare to competing brands. As a result these responses brand associations improves the buying behaviour of consumers. The result of the study is in agreement with the findings of Onoja et al., (2021) who found that brand association positively and significantly affect customer behaviour among Veritas University students

The findings also revealed that brand loyalty has a negative but significant impact on the buying behaviour of consumers. The implications of this finding is that, despite consumers preference of Nigerian bottling company beverages at any point in time compare to other brands considering their several

repeated purchases over the years; they claimed that, increase in price is affecting their consumption level of Nigerian bottling company beverages which has limited them from recommending the brand to other consumers who are price sensitive. The result of the study contradicts the findings of Amani, (2022) which discovered that, amongst the brand equities brand loyalty is the strongest factor and has a significant positive path which shows that higher brand loyalty leads to higher consumer purchase decisions.

Finally, the study's findings revealed that perceived quality had a considerable impact on consumers buying behavior. The implications of this finding is that, Nigerian bottling company brand represent a symbol of quality compare to other competing brands and offers high quality beverages to her esteem customers, compare to other competing beverage brands Nigerian bottling company offers the most superior quality, and considering price Nigerian bottling company brands still offers quality beverage at affordable price. The study is in agreement with, Okechukwu et al., (2020) whose study found that perceived quality have significant positive effect on customer patronage of alcoholic beverages in Abia State.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn from the results of the findings:

There exist a positive and significant effect of (brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality) on Consumer buying behavior in Nigerian Bottling Company AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria. This implies that brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality contributes

significantly to Consumer buying behavior in Nigerian Bottling Company AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria. While brand loyalty negatively and significantly affect Consumer buying behavior in Nigerian Bottling Company AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria. This implies that brand loyalty negatively contributes significantly to Consumer buying behavior in Nigerian Bottling Company AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Management of Nigerian Bottling Company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should integrate modern techniques of advertisement in order to continue to remind the existing consumers and potential consumers of its existence and promises to always deliver value.
- ii. Nigerian Bottling Company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should continue to engage in programs such as raffle draw, health related benefit of it product and any other programs that will keep both existing and potential consumers nearer to the company most especially against the competitors product.
- iii. Nigerian Bottling Company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should be consistent in value delivery without any form of compromise so as to continue to win the loyalty of their esteem customers.
- iv. Nigerian Bottling Company in AMAC, Abuja, Nigeria should be creative and innovative in developing and designing qualitative products that will meet the continuous change in customers taste while setting prices from customer perception

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