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TOP – OF - MIND AWARENESS AND CUSTOMER REPEAT – PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR: EVIDENCE FROM AUTOMOTIVE LUBRICANTS' MARKETS OF LAGOS STATE NIGERIA

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author OJO designed the study, wrote the protocol and interpreted the data. Author KOR anchored the field study, gathered the initial data and performed preliminary data analysis. Authors OJO and KOR managed the literature searches and produced the initial draft. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Top-of-mind awareness relates to the brand name that first comes to the mind when a consumer is presented with the name of the product classification. The study investigates the relationship between Top-of-mind awareness and Customer repeat-purchase behaviour in the automotive lubricants markets of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey design to examine 2,824,047 vehicle owners registered with the Motor Vehicle Administration Agency (MVAA) between 2003- 2013. The proportionate sampling technique (a variant of stratified sampling method) was used to draw a sample of 1,890 to reflect the proportions of auto-technicians in each of the 20 local government areas of the state. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. Simple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) statistical techniques were used to test the hypothesis. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between Top-of-mind awareness and Customer repeat-purchase behaviour in the auto-lubricants markets ($R= 0.741$, $R^2= 0.549$, $p< 0.05$). The study concluded that there is significant relationship between Top-of-mind awareness and Customer repeat-purchase behaviour. Marketing practitioners, especially Brand Managers are therefore encouraged to make conscious efforts to focus on the use of robust product innovation campaigns by including engine sludge preventive materials, brand slogans, differentiating features and creative product jingles to maintain top-of-mind awareness and repeat purchases.

Keywords: Top- of- mind awareness; repeat-purchase; brand name.

ABBREVIATIONS

L.U.P.A.N – Lubricants Producers Association of Nigeria (2013; 2014); S.O.N- Standards Organisation of Nigeria; D.P.R – Downstream Petroleum Resources; N.A.T.A – Nigerian Automative Technicians Association; SERVPERF – Service Performance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Top-of-mind awareness is the level of awareness which relates to the brand name that first comes to mind when a consumer is presented with the name of a product classification. Put differently, where, for instance, in an un-aided recall, a number of brands are mentioned, the very first brand so mentioned by a lot of consumers can be said to have achieved 'top-of-mind awareness with consumers. However when it comes to top of mind awareness, brands will qualify under one of three conditions. Firstly, a right exposure (the more frequently the consumer is exposed to the brand, the more likely they are to do business/choose, the brand; as one increases exposure, brand awareness is built). This is the chance to strengthen top - of - mind awareness and it is within control. Secondly, a bad taste (this is also top – of - mind but in a negative way which could be linked to the popular phase - "I don't know what I want, but I know what I don't want". With consumers and potential consumers no one wants to be the only one coming to mind for negative reasons. Thirdly, a perennial favourite (every consumer has a favourite store, a favourite restaurant or hair saloon). The only was to be top-of-mind is to consistently provide great products and customer service to all your customers; and become a favourite choice.

Top - of - mind is conceptualized as the propensity of the brand to be thought of in a buying situation. Thus, it can be reflected in the quantity (how many) and the quality (how relevant) of the network of brand information in memory, or the brand's 'share of mind'. According to [1] this conceptualization is based on buying situations being complex multi-cue environments, which means that buyers are affected by a range of cues, beyond the product category when considering options for buying. Top of mind is distinct from brand attitude, where the focus is on the evaluation of the brand rather than the quantity and quality of the memory structures. This provides clear explanation that buyers buy different brands in different circumstances and situations (and at times in the same situations). Every measure of top-of-mind awareness should exhibit at least three key factors: measure recall relative to competitors rather than for a single brand alone [2], focus on whether the brand is thought of rather than seeking to determine how favourably the brand is judged. [2] and contain a representative range of attributes used to 'think of' brands [1].

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Lagos State and by extension Nigeria, there had been consistent loss of revenue in the lubricant business occasioned by unregulated adulteration and influx of fake lubricants into the Nigerian market (LUPAN, 2014). In 2013 alone, revenue from lubricant sales dropped from 12.5 billion to 5 billion (LUPAN, 2013). On a year to year analysis, the nation's economy loses over N250 billion annually due to the influx of adulterated lubricants (DPR Downstream report, 2014). It has been observed that consumers of automotive lubricants are so vulnerable to the multiplicity of problems within the lubricants market. The answer is not far-fetched due to lack of (or at best, low) consumer awareness to serve as a guide and basis for rational purchase decisions in Nigeria (SON). A truism of marketing is that brand awareness is a critical pre-condition for choice [3]. The main objective of the study therefore, is to investigate the relationship between Top – of – mind awareness and Customer repeat- purchase behaviour in the auto-lubricants markets of Lagos State, Nigeria.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

H_0: Top – of- mind awareness does not significantly influence customer repeat- purchase behaviour.

1.3 Scope/Significance of the Study

The scope of this study covered vehicle owners that patronize registered Nigerian Automative Technicians Association – NATA – mechanic villages as well as such registered members of NATA in Lagos State. This study is principally interested in finding out if brand awareness levels at individual (owners) and professional (Auto-Technicians) levels have any effect on their choice of lubricants, and if so, to what extent? A sample choice that will guarantee representation from the local governments in Lagos State was selected for the study with a view to generating robust primary data from these obvious stakeholders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This level of awareness relates to the brand name that first comes to mind when a consumer is presented with the name of a product category. In other words, if in an unaided recall a number of brands are mentioned, the very first brand so mentioned by a lot of consumers can be said to have achieved 'top-of-mind' awareness with such consumers [4]. [5] investigated role of brand salience in brand choice and buyer behaviour and concluded that brand salience should be considered synonymous with brand being 'Top of mind' (i.e mentioned first) whenever the product category is used to cue retrieval from memory. Relatedly, they found it useful to conceptualize 'top-of-mind' as a brand's propensity to be noticed or come to mind in buying situations,

thereby reflecting the quantity and quality of the network of memory structure that buyers hold about the brands. In yet another study, [2] popularized another conceptualization of top-of-mind as the accessibility or 'prominence' of the brand in buyers' memory.

[6] contributed to a deeper understanding of top-of-mind awareness when they analyzed that just because a brand is known or prominent as a member of a particular category does not mean it will come to mind in buying situations because retrieval is essentially dependent on the cue and the accessibility of the linked information [1]. In other words, it should not be taken for granted that the link to the product category is the cue that activates this process. This means that work in building brand consideration has focused on increasing awareness between the product category cue and the brand name.

The top-of-mind or brand 'salience' provides further benefit by making the brand once thought of, more likely to be chosen. This benefit is, however, secondary to the influence of the brand being thought of in the first instance, as without that initial step, positive evaluations will definitely have no effect on buyer behaviour [2]. It should be noted that the place of brand salience or top-of-mind is quite distinct from the concept of brand attitude. With brand attitude, the focus is on the evaluation of the brand rather than the quantity and quality of the memory structures [1]. There is provision for a different perspective and explanation for the fact that buyers buy different brands under varying circumstances and situations and at times in the same situation [5].

However in a cursory look at repeat-purchase behaviour of consumers, [7,8] in their constructs reveal that trust and repeat purchase behaviour have been linked to satisfaction. However, the literature is uncertain regarding potential mediating constructs between satisfaction and repeat-purchase behaviour in different on line contexts [9]. Although consumer satisfaction has been regarded as an antecedent of repeat-purchase, [8] opined that such traditional beliefs need to be challenged as more arguments abound that higher consumer satisfaction does not necessarily result in higher repeat-purchase. This position is supported that there is need to investigate new paradigm of post-purchase satisfaction since the relationship between consumer satisfaction and repeat-purchase behaviour seems to be more complex than it looks [10].

According to [11], it is even more critical to demonstrate that brand loyalty differs from simple repeat purchasing behaviour and then conceptually defined in terms of other collective conditions enhancing the distinction. While raising conclusion on a futuristic note that marketers should not only be concerned with the number of repeat purchasers but also with the underlying reasons for such behaviour, it went further to raise fundamental questions about the behavioural expression of choice that affects the development of brand loyalty. For instance: Is it the physical act of making the purchase? Is it the public commitment to a brand? Is it the perceived irreversibility of the purchase act? Following the trend of customer satisfaction, [12] hypothesized a directional causality from customer satisfaction to service quality. Satisfaction thus becomes part of the revised perception of service quality which eventually affects purchase and repeat-purchase behaviour [13].

The fact that other studies also focused on developing service quality instruments demonstrated that customer satisfaction is indeed a critical component of consumer repeat-purchase behaviour. [14] who argued that repeat-purchase behaviour is determined by service quality subsequent to satisfaction further claimed that service quality should be measured by comparing perceptions against expectations which is known as the "Discomformation approach" [14]. Conversely, others who assumed that repeat purchase behaviour is determined by customer satisfaction resulting from service quality claimed that service quality should be measured solely on the basis of perception, otherwise known as the performance-based approach, typified by the "SERVPERF" proposal put forward by [15,16].

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design because it involves collection of data from respondents and test of hypothesis. The target population comprised 2,824,047 registered vehicle owners between January, 2003 and December, 2013 and the 975,000 Auto Technicians found in NATA register in Lagos State. The sample frame were the owners of serviceable vehicles with service history of between 4-12 weeks as well as auto-technicians in registered mechanic villages in Lagos State. The formular for sample size determination for a finite population as expressed by Research Advisors (2006) was used to draw a sample of 1,890 (vehicle owners auto- technicians) using the stratified sampling method, while its variant, proportionate sampling technique was used to reflect the proportions of the people in each local government area of Lagos State. A self-designed questionnaire tagged 'Top –of-mind awareness and Repeat purchase behaviour' was the main instrument for data collection measured on a 6-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly

Disagree. The validity of the measuring instrument was established relying on the opinions of experts as used by [17] which included senior academics as well as oil and gas experts which however facilitated the necessary modifications and adjustments. Reliability, in line with the research recommendation of [18], the overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges between 0.738 to 0.908 for all the variables which show that the questionnaire items are reliable as prescribed by [19]. The data were analysed and hypothesis tested using descriptive statistical techniques of Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) and Simple Regression Analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Based on the Table 1 below kindly respond to the following statements as follows:

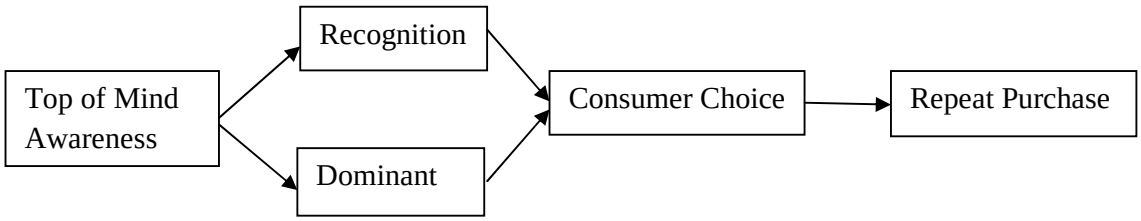


Fig. 1. Conceptual model

(a) Ascon Oil [ ]	(b) AZ oil [ ]	(c) Eterna Oil [ ]
(d) Forte Oil [ ]	(e) Golden Super [ ]	(f) Honeywell [ ]
(g) Lubcon [ ]	(h) Mobil [ ]	(i) MRS [ ]
(j) Oleum [ ]	(k) Pepco [ ]	(l) Shell [ ]
(m) Techno Oil [ ]	(n) Total [ ]	(o) V Gold [ ]
(p) Whiz [ ]	(q) none (I can't recognize any without it seeing it) [ ]	

Fig. 2. Questionnaire on 'top-of-mind awareness and repeat-purchase behaviour

NB: Kindly tick the brand name of automotive Lubricant you will first mention among competing lubricants

Table 1. Questionnaire on 'top-of-mind awareness and repeat-purchase behaviour

	Top of mind awareness						
	Statements	**SA**	**A**	**FA**	**FD**	**D**	**SD**
1	You see more advert of a particular lubricant						
2	Friends , colleagues, relations usually mention a particular lubricant						
3	When ask to name lubricant one particular lubricant comes to you mind						
4	When you talk of a lubricant you seem to refer to a particular brand name						
5	I get technical assistance from a company or sales agent for a particular well known lubricant						
6	Because of constant publicity you are very familiar with a particular brand						
7	You have done a thorough thinking of the benefits of a particular brand of lubricant						
8	One particular brand meet your need adequately						
9	You like the advert of a particular lubricant						
10	You know many other consumers that use the type of lubricant brand you know very well.						

	Repeat – purchase behaviour						
	Statements	**SA**	**A**	**FA**	**FD**	**D**	**SD**
1	I buy the same lubricant over and over again						
2	I may still buy the same brand of lubricant even if the price changes						
3	You buy the brand of lubricant that is uppermost in your mind						
4	It is convenient for you to keep buying the same brand because you don't have to do much thinking						
5	I keep buying this band of lubricant because other brands have disappointed me						
6	There are no close substitutes to this brand of lubricant that's why I keep patronizing it						
7	I keep buying this lubricant not because the stores don't have other ones because the quality seems better than other brands						

Key: Strongly agree (SA) – 6; Agree (A) – 5; Fairly agree (FA) – 4; Fairly disagree (FD) – 3; Disagree (D) -2; Strongly disagree (SD) -1

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

There is a strong positive relationship between top-of-mind awareness and repeat purchase behaviour (R = 0.741) but only 54.9% difference/change in repeat-purchase behaviour of consumers is caused by top-of-mind awareness (from model summary Table 2). The adjusted R-square is 0.546 and the standard error of the estimate is 0.565.

The ANOVA Table 3 shows that the model is significant. In other words, the model is adequate (sig. value of 0.000<0.05). We then conclude by accepting the alternative hypothesis that top-of-mind awareness has significant influence on repeat-purchase behaviour of consumers.

The coefficient Table 4 shows that six out of the ten factors contributed positively and are significant with their p-values less than 0.05. These factors are: "when asked to name a lubricant one particular lubricant comes to my mind" (x_3); "When I talk of a lubricant I only refer to a particular brand name" (x_4); 'I get technical assistance from a company or sales agent for a particular well known lubricant ' (x_5); 'Because of constant publicity, I am very familiar with a particular brand' (x_6); 'I like the advert of a particular lubricant'(x_9); "I know many other consumers that use the type of lubricant brand I know very well" (x_{10}). However, it was observed that constant publicity contributed more followed by knowledge of consumption of the lubricant brand by other consumers. Furthermore, "Advert of a product; friends, colleagues, relations usually mention a particular lubricant" (x_1 and x_2); "I have done a thorough thinking of the benefits of a particular brand of lubricant" (x_7) and "One particular brand meets my need adequately" contributed negatively and are also significant' (x_8).

The model derived is:

$$Y = 1.531 + 0.131_{x1} - 0.297_{x2} + 0.144_{x3} + 0.211_{x4} + 0.045_{x5} + 0.496_{x6} - 0.095_{x7} - 0.2_{x8} + 0.063_{x9} + 0.461_{x10}.$$

Table 2. Model summary of the relationship between top – of - mind awareness and Repeat-purchase behaviour

Model	**R**	**R square**	**Adjusted R square**	**Std error of the estimate**
1	.741[a]	.549	.546	.565

Table 3. Summary showing the analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the relationship between top-of-mind awareness and repeat-purchase behaviour

Model	**Sum of squares**	**Df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	722.548	10	72.255	226.033	.000[b]
Residual	593.938	1858	.320		
Total	1316.486	1868			

Table 4. Coefficients of Top-of-mind awareness and Repeat-purchase behaviour

Model	Standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	STD. error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.531	.128		12.000	.000
I see more advert of a particular lubricant (x1)	-.131	.023	-.217	-5.626	.000
Friends, colleagues, relations usually mention a particular lubricant (x2)	-.297	.021	-.526	-14.319	.000
When asked to name lubricant one particular lubricant comes to my mind (x3)	.144	.027	.162	5.226	.000
When I talk of a lubricant I only refer to a particular brand name (x4)	.211	.029	.282	7.333	.000
I get technical assistance from a company or sale agent for a particular well known lubricant (x5)	.045	.018	.070	2.480	.013
Because of constant publicity I am very familiar with a particular brand (x6)	.496	.021	-.535	23.527	.000
I have done a thorough thinking of the benefits of a particular brand of lubricant (x7)	-.095	.035	-.090	-2.699	.007
One particular brand meets my need adequately (x8)	-.200	.025	-.317	-7.904	.000
I like the advert of a particular lubricant (x9)	.063	.023	.081	2.735	.006
I know many other consumers that use the type of lubricant brand I know very well (x10)	.461	.034	.390	13.504	.000

The model for the hypothesis is:

$$Y = \beta_o + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 \chi_2 + \beta_3 \chi_3 + \beta_4 \chi_4 + \beta_5 \chi_5 + \beta_6 \chi_6 + \beta_7 \chi_7 + \beta_8 \chi_8 + \beta_9 \chi_9 + \beta_{10} \chi_{10} + e_i$$

Y = *I keep buying this lubricant not because the stores don't have other ones but because the quality seems better than other brands.*

χ_1 = *I see more adverts of a particular lubricant.*

χ_2 = *Friends, colleagues, relations usually mention a particular lubricant.*

χ_3 = *When asked to name lubricant one particular lubricant comes to mind.*

χ_4 = *When I talk of a lubricant I only refer to a particular brand name.*

χ_5 = *I get technical assistance from a company or sales agent for a particular well known lubricant.*

χ_6 = *Because of constant publicity I am very familiar with a particular brand.*

χ_7 = *I have done a thorough thinking of the benefits of a particular brand of lubricant.*

χ_8 = *One particular brand meets my need adequately.*

χ_9 = *I like the advert of a particular lubricant.*

χ_{10} = *I know many other consumers that use the type of lubricant brand I know very well.*

5. DISCUSSION

The result revealed that there is significant relationship between Top-of-mind awareness and Repeat-purchase behaviour. This result find support in the previous works done by [20,21,22,23,24,4,2, 25,26], all of which found out that top of mind awareness (i.e mentioned first) should be considered synonymous with brand salience.

According to these investigations, top of mind awareness relates to the brand name that first comes to mind when a consumer is presented with the name of a product category. In other words if in an unaided recall a number of brands are mentioned, the very first brand so mentioned by a lot of consumers can be said to have achieved 'top of mind' awareness with such consumers. Previous work also supported his finding through this investigation of the role of top of mind in

brand choice and buyer behaviour and concluded that top of mind could as well be conceptualized as a particular brand's propensity to be noticed or come to mind in buying situations. This was also in congruence with another study by [2] which equally introduced another conceptualization of top of mind as the accessibility or 'prominence' of the brand in buyers' memory.

[21] also found that heightening prominence of a product actually resulted in increased consumption incidence for all categories of products. This result is also in agreement with the study [6] where they analyzed and gave a deeper understanding of top-of-mind awareness. They concluded that just because a brand is well known or prominent as a member of a particular category does not mean it will come to mind in buying situations because retrieval is essentially dependent on the cue and the accessibility of the linked information. This analysis complimented the previous work of [1] that it should not be taken for granted that the link to be product category is the cue that activated this process. Other factors like quality, price and volume need to be appraised. [27] found out that an important determinant of choice in deepening top of mind awareness is the level of involvement on the part of the consumer. They opined that a buyer's level of involvement determines why he/she is motivated to seek information about a particular product and thereafter keeps buying all over and over again.

This assertion notwithstanding, [26] in their study on Hotels (in Hawaii) found that consumers do not necessarily purchase the highest level of service. In other words, there could be other factors affecting their decisions beyond prominence such as perceived quality, value, price and convenience. This position was well situated in the current study whereby consumers insisted on the choice of a particular brand, despite the availability of others, based on perceived quality. To this end, they suggested that there is need to identify or measure those factors affecting consumers' repeat-purchase behaviour while consciously moving away from focus on service or quality alone. This supports the opinion of researchers that if those critical factors affecting consumers' repeat-purchase behaviour can be identified and measured they could facilitate building and maintaining loyal consumers who keep buying and buying.

[15] in their work found enough reason to isolate consumer satisfaction as a special form of attitude, a post-purchase phenomenon reflecting how much the consumer likes or dislikes the service after experiencing it. The study concluded that such an experienced based, attitude construct as consumer satisfaction would strongly influence repeat-purchase behaviour. They further explained why consumer satisfaction has been proposed as an important hypothetical construct in models of repeat-purchase behaviour – [28]. The empirical work of [8,7] supports the above through its finding that constructs of trust and repeat purchase behaviour have also been linked to satisfaction. However, the literature is uncertain over the potential mediating constructs between satisfaction and repeat-purchase behaviour in certain on-line contexts [9].

It is interesting to note some other empirical works that had different positions. [8] Opined that such traditional beliefs on the place of satisfaction need to be challenged as more arguments abound to contest that higher consumer satisfaction does not necessarily result in higher repeat-purchase. This same position is supported by [18] that there is indeed a need to investigate new paradigm of post-purchase satisfaction since the relationship between consumer satisfaction and repeat-purchase behaviour seems to be more complex than it looks.

Rather than maintain a rigid perspective of these constraints, the previous work of [11] provided a distinction between brand loyalty and repeat-purchasing behaviour. They concluded that it is even more critical to demonstrate that brand loyalty differs from simple repeat-purchase behaviour and then defined in term of other collective conditions enhancing the distinction. They painted a futuristic note to marketers not to be concerned only with the number of repeat purchasers but more importantly with the underlying reasons for such behaviour.

Clearly, top-of-mind or brand salience provides further benefit by making the brand first mentioned (first thought of), more likely to be chosen. It should be noted that the place of top-of-mind is quite distinct from the concept of brand attitude. With brand attitude focus is on the evaluation of the brand rather than the quantity and quality of the memory structures lending credence to the explanation that buyers buy, or repeat-purchase different brands under varying circumstances and situations [5,1].

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research have empirically shown that the bond between consumers and product brands depends on high levels of awareness. Also, the result confirmed that brand awareness has considerable effect on consumer choice, with brand awareness providing a convenient cue for choice. This implies that starting from recognition through top-of-mind to

consumer loyalty, awareness of the existence of a product is necessary before purchase behaviour can be expected. Once awareness has been created in the target market, it should not be neglected. If there is neglect, consumers may become distracted by competing messages and the level of awareness of the focus product (or company) may decline. Awareness therefore needs to be created, developed, refined, sustained and preserved. This study has, however, shown that this is achievable through effective and strategic use of effective packaging, consistent and regular advertising, valuable product innovations; strategic sales promotion schemes; brand slogans and jingles; use of gift items; ; sponsorship of programmes and events on and around the target brands.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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