



An Empirical Analysis of Dominant Awareness Levels as Catalyst for Consumer Loyalty in the Automotive Lubricants Industry of Lagos State Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examines the empirical analysis of Dominant Awareness Levels as a catalyst for Consumer Loyalty 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. Stratified sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 1,890 from the 20 local government areas of the state. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection and the simple percentile statistical technique was used for analysis. The study reveals that there is positive relationship between Dominant Awareness Levels and Consumer Loyalty in the auto-lubricants industry and therefore recommends that marketing practitioners should design awareness techniques that clearly enhance consumer loyalty driven by brand awareness in the lubricants industry of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Dominant Brand Awareness, Brand Recognition, Consumer Loyalty.

1. Introduction

Brand awareness over time has been hypothesized to play a crucial role in determining the consideration set: i.e. the small set of brands which a consumer gives serious attention when making a purchase (Howard and Sheth, 1969; Narayana and Markin, 1975). The composition of this small set of brands which are considered during decision-making is important. A brand that is not considered cannot be chosen (Baker *et al.*, 1986), and further, the probability of the brand being chosen is a function of the number of other brands in the consideration set. For instance, the probability of a brand being selected from 1, 2, 3 or 4 brands decreases rapidly from 1.0 to 0.5, 0.33 and 0.25 respectively.

In a situation where the consumer is aware of a number of brands which fit the relevant criteria, he or she is unlikely to expend much effort in seeking out information on unfamiliar brands. A brand that has some level of brand awareness is for more likely to be considered, and therefore chosen, than brands which consumer is unaware of. Additionally, the strength of awareness of the brands within the consideration set can also be significant. Wilson (1981) cited in Woodside and Wilson (1981) confirmed the importance of top-of-mind awareness in a study which found that the higher the position of the brand in the consumer's mind measured by unaided recall, the higher the position of the brand in the consumer's mind measured by unaided recall the higher the purchase intention and the higher the relative purchase of the brand. In another study, increases in brand awareness were shown to increase the probability of choice even without any accompanying change in attitude or perceptions (Nedungadi, 1990).

A further way brand awareness may affect choice within the consideration set is by influencing perceived quality. In a consumer choice study by Hoyer and Brown (1990) over 70% of consumers selected a known brand of peanut butter among a choice of three, even though another brand was 'objectively' of better quality (as determined by blind taste tests) and even though they had neither bought or used the brand before. The aforementioned result is even more surprising considering the fact that the

subjects were given the opportunity to taste all the brands. Just being a known brand dramatically affected their evaluation of the brand.

Intuitively, this makes a lot of sense: consumers may rationalize that if they have heard of a brand, then it follows that the company must be spending considerably on advertising. If it is spending a lot on advertising, then the company must be reasonably profitable which translates to the fact that other consumers must be buying the product and they must be satisfied enough with its performance therefore the product must be of reasonable quality. Stokes (1985) found that for a low involvement product (in this case rice) familiarity had a greater magnitude of effect on the quality perception of a brand than either price or packaging, just as familiarity had a significant effect also on purchase intention whereas price and package design did not.

2. Literature Review

It has long been held by the researchers that one of the major goals of marketing is to generate and brand awareness. This is seen as particularly important in low-involvement situation where consumers may engage in little active search for information to aid choice (McDonald, 2000). Repetitive advertising is required to keep the brand in the consumers' consideration set i.e. the set of brands to which a consumer gives serious attention when making a purchase decision. According to Kasemi *et al.* (2014). Brand awareness has been argued to have important effects on consumer decision making by influencing which brands enter the consideration set while it goes ahead to also influence which brands are selected from the consideration set. Brand awareness affects the consideration set through its use as a heuristic for choice (for instance: "I will choose the brand I know") as well as its influence on perceived quality. For example: "I have heard of the brand, so it must be good" (Hoyer and Brown, 1990).

To further bring this into perspective as it manifests in decision making on the part of the consumer, Narayana and Markin (1975) argued that brand awareness plays a crucial role in determining the consideration set: i.e the small set of brands which a consumer gives serious attention when making a purchase (Howard and Sheth, 1969). A brand that has some level of brand awareness is far more likely to be considered, and ultimately chosen, than a brand which the consumer is unaware of.

Consistent with Howard and Sheth (1969) finding, Wilson (1981) also confirmed that the level of awareness of the brand within the consideration set can also be significant. He alluded to the importance of top-of-mind awareness level in a study which found that the higher the position of the brand in the consumer's mind measured by unaided recall, the higher the purchase intention and the higher the relative purchase of the brand. In yet another study by Nedungadi (1990), increases in brand awareness levels were shown to increase the probability of choice even without accompanying change in attitude or perceptions. The composition of this small set of brands that are considered during decision making is critical and important. After all, a brand that is not considered cannot be chosen (Baker *et al.*, 1986). However, the probability of the brand being chosen is a function of the number of other brands in the aforementioned consideration set.

Brand awareness is therefore about the ability of a consumer to recognize and recall a brand in different situations (Aaker, 1996). That is, consumers can tell a brand correctly if they ever saw or heard of it. In addition, Hoeffler and Keller (2002) observed that brand awareness can be distinguished from both depth and width. Depth refers to how to make consumers to recall or identify brand easily while width refers to when consumers purchase a product, a brand name will come to their minds at once. If a particular product owns both depth and width at the same time then it could be said to have high awareness level (Davis *et al.*, 2008). As a consequence, brand awareness will affect purchase decision through brand association and when a product owns a positive brand image, it will definitely help marketing activities (Keller, 1993).

Furthermore, in a study by Aaker (1996) on Brand Awareness, it was established that organizations can generate brand awareness by, firstly having a broad sales base, and secondly becoming skilled at operating outside the normal media channels. He concluded that brand awareness is increased according to the different ways in which consumers remember a brand which may include brand recognition, brand recall, top of mind and dominant brand (Aaker, 1996).

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design while 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. A sample of 1,890 (vehicle owners auto- technicians) was drawn, 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. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection measured on a 6-point Likert scale from Extremely High to Very Low. The data were analysed using descriptive statistical technique of simple Percentiles with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Results and Analysis

Table 1. Summated Frequencies and Percentages for Responses on Dominant Awareness

Dominant Awareness	Extremely High Freq (%)	Very High Freq (%)	High Freq (%)	Average Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)	Very Low Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)
A lubricant that reduces wear on motor moving parts	1170 (61.9)	571 (30.2)	136 (7.2)	5 (.3)	3 (.2)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.9)
A lubricant that improves performance of engine	1050 (55.6)	417 (22.1)	409 (21.6)	10 (.5)	2 (.1)	-	1888 (99.9)
The lubricant that inhibits corrosion	859 (45.4)	538 (28.5)	306 (16.2)	177 (9.4)	8 (.4)	-	1888 (99.9)
I know about the brand name through posters, radio commercial TV advert and people	898 (47.5)	599 (31.7)	230 (12.2)	96 (5.1)	62 (3.3)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.9)
There is more publicity for the brand name I know than others	996 (52.7)	360 (19.0)	238 (12.6)	183 (9.7)	105 (5.6)	6 (.3)	1888 (99.9)
More people know the brand name of lubricant I know than other	1352 (71.5)	355 (18.8)	157 (8.3)	16 (.8)	8 (.4)	-	1888 (99.9)
I think of only one brand when confronted with choice of lubricant	1235 (65.3)	501 (26.5)	116 (6.1)	24 (1.3)	8 (.4)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.8)
Am aware of my brand in social media	947 (50.1)	294 (15.6)	264 (14.0)	219 (11.6)	150 (7.9)	14 (.7)	1888 (99.9)

Table 2. Summated Frequencies and Percentages for Responses on Consumer Loyalty

Consumer Loyalty	Extremely High Freq (%)	Very High Freq (%)	High Freq (%)	Average Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)	Very Low Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)
I do not purchase another brand name because I value the one I use	1245 (65.9)	444 (23.5)	154 (8.1)	16 (.8)	14 (.7)	4 (.2)	1877 (99.3)
I will recommend my lubricant to my friend and relations	1354 (71.6)	247 (13.1)	245 (13.0)	22 (1.2)	7 (.4)	1 (.1)	1876 (99.3)
I will be loyal to this brand even if others have same characteristic	1039 (55.0)	449 (23.8)	175 (9.3)	174 (9.2)	31 (1.6)	7 (.4)	1875 (99.2)
I will purchase this lubricant again and again in future	1112 (58.8)	405 (21.4)	177 (9.4)	142 (7.5)	40 (2.1)	-	1876 (99.3)
Negative comments about the lubricant will not discourage me from buying it	1307 (69.2)	223 (11.8)	174 (9.2)	117 (6.2)	36 (1.9)	19 (1.0)	1876 (99.3)
I will purchase this lubricant even if more expensive	954 (50.5)	657 (34.8)	182 (9.6)	83 (4.4)	9 (.5)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.9)
I am sure I will keep patronizing this lubricant for a long time	1254 (66.3)	543 (28.7)	70 (3.7)	14 (.7)	3 (.2)	1 (.1)	1888 (99.9)
I am satisfied with my decision to purchase this lubricant	1144 (60.5)	641 (33.9)	76 (4.0)	19 (1.0)	6 (.3)	2 (.1)	1888 (99.9)
I identify with the people and image associated with the brand	1505 (79.6)	285 (15.1)	67 (3.5)	20 (1.1)	8 (.4)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.9)

The lubricant I use would rank first among other lubricants	994 (52.6)	779 (41.2)	81 (4.3)	26 (1.4)	5 (.3)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.9)
I trust my brand to provide great value	1128 (59.7)	699 (37.0)	40 (2.1)	13 (.7)	5 (.3)	3 (.2)	1888 (99.9)

Table 1 shows how respondents reacted to questions on dominant awareness level. Some of the respondents 1170 (61.9%) agreed that their choice lubricant helps reduce wear on motor engines; 571 (30.2%) of them also strongly agreed with this item, 136 (7.2%) of the respondents fairly agreed with it while only 5 (0.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the item. In addition, 1050 (55.6%) and 409 (21.6%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that their choice of lubricant is a function of the ability of the lubricant to further improve engine performance, 417 (22.1%) of them fairly agreed with this item.

Among the responses, 859 (45.4%) of the respondents agreed that they will continue to introduce their brand of lubricant to whosoever is in need of the lubricant that inhibits corrosion of engine; 538 (28.8%) of them strongly agreed with the item, 306 (16.2%) of them fairly agreed with it but only 177 (9.4%) of the respondents fairly disagreed with the item.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether they know their brand of lubricant choice through posters, radio commercials, TV Adverts and people. 898 (47.5%) of them agreed that they became familiar with this product through one of the media listed; 62 (3.3%) of them strongly agreed with the item; 599 (31.7%) of the respondents fairly agreed with the item but 230 (12.2%) of the respondents disagreed with the item.

Respondents' opinion on whether there is more publicity for their brand choice revealed as follows: 996 (52.7%) of them agreed with the item, 105 (5.6%) of them strongly agreed with the item. 360 (19%) of them fairly agreed with the item while 238 (12.6%) and 183 (9.7%) of the respondents fairly disagreed and disagreed respectively with the item.

The respondents were also asked if "more people know the brand name of the lubricant than other lubricants". Majority of the respondents (1352 i.e. 71.5%) agreed with the item; 157 (8.3%) of them strongly agreed with the item, while 355 (18.8%) of them fairly agreed with it. However, only 8 (0.4%) and 16 (0.8%) of the respondents disagreed and fairly disagreed with the question.

Questions relating to fuel reduction were asked. 1235 (65.3%) of the respondents agreed that they still rely on only one lubricant brand; 116 (6.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the item, 501 (26.5%) of them fairly agreed. Only 24 (1.3%) of them fairly disagreed with the item. Also, 947 (50.1%) of the respondents agreed that their lubricant brand is on social media; 150 (7.9%) of them strongly agreed, 294 (15.6%) of them fairly agreed that their brand of lubricant is on social media. But 264 (14%) and 219 (11.6%) of them fairly disagreed and disagreed that their brand is on social media.

Table 2 revealed 11 items to elicit responses on consumer loyalty. 1245 (65.9%) of the sampled population agreed that they cherish and value the brand of lubricant they use, while 444 (23.5%) of them strongly agreed. Only 154 (8.1%) of them fairly disagreed with the item. On the recommendation of brand choice, 1354 (71.6%) of the respondents agreed to recommend their brand choice to other consumers, 247 (13.1%) of them strongly agreed with the item while 245 (13%) of them fairly agreed. However, only 22 (1.2%) of them fairly disagreed with the item. It was examined if respondents' loyalty to their choice brand will change even if other brands have same characteristics. 1039 (55%) of them agreed to continue to buy their choice brand, 449 (23.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed to still stay with their choice brand, while 175 (9.3%) of them fairly agreed to stay with the brand, 174 (9.2%) disagreed to continue purchasing their choice brand.

The study further examined the loyalty time frame with the respondents. 1112 (58.8%) of them agreed that they will continue to patronize the product now and in future, 405 (21.4%) of them strongly agreed with the item while 142 (7.5%) of them fairly agreed with it. But 177 (9.4%) of the respondents disagreed. Out of the total respondents, 1307 (69.2%) of the sampled population agreed not to be discouraged with the purchase of their brand choice despite negative comments about the brand, 223 (11.8%) of them strongly agreed with the item, 117 (6.2%) of them fairly agreed with it. On the contrary 174 (9.2%) of the sampled population disagreed and 36 (1.9%) of them strongly disagreed with the item.

In addition, 954 (50.5%) of the respondents agreed to still purchase their choice lubricant brand even if the brand is more expensive than others with same characteristics; 657 (34.8%) of them strongly agreed not to go for other brands despite the fact that their choice is more expensive than others with similar or same characteristics but only 182 (9.6%) of the sampled population fairly disagreed with the item. Only 14 (0.7%) of the respondents fairly disagreed to keep patronizing their choice of lubricant for a

long time, but 1254 (66.3%) of them agreed and 543 (28.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the item.

The study sought responses on 'satisfaction'. 1144 (60.5%) of the sampled population agreed, 641 (33.9%) strongly agreed to be satisfied with their decision to purchase their choice lubricant. Only 19 (1%) of the respondents fairly disagreed with the item. 1505 (79.6%) of the respondents were proud to be identified with the people that use the brand and were also proud of the brand, 285 (15.1%) of them strongly agreed.

In addition, 779 (41.2%) and 994 (52.6%) of the population strongly agreed and agreed respectively that their choice brand would rank first among other lubricants in use. More importantly, majority of the respondents confirmed that they trust their brand to continue to provide great value, 1128 (59.7%) and 699 (37%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the item that their brand will continue to provide great value.

Outside the general comments of the respondents, majority of them opined that as long as they continue to get value for their money with their choice brand, they will not contemplate changing or switching brands. However, some claimed that they are aware of the existence of other "better" brands that are not well known but they are not ready to risk it even though their auto-technicians do come up with recommendations of such brands from time to time.

5. Conclusion

From the above, there is a very high positive relationship between dominant awareness and consumer loyalty. In view of the high dominant awareness achieved on the brand of lubricants purchased, respondents' loyalty level becomes very high. The responses confirmed that dominant awareness positively affect consumer loyalty. The study therefore recommends that marketing practitioners should design awareness techniques that clearly enhance consumer loyalty driven by brand awareness in the lubricants industry of Lagos State, Nigeria.

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