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An Empirical Analysis of Consumer Brand Involvement in the Food Industry of Lagos State Nigeria

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Abstract

The study is an empirical analysis of consumer brand involvement in the food industry of Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted to examine 17,552,940 consumers of packaged products in Lagos State (Lagos State Bureau of Statistics, 2005). The proportionate sampling technique (a variant of stratified sampling method) was used to draw a sample of 2,500 consumers across the 20 local government areas of Lagos State. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection rated on a 6 – point Likert scale. 2374 copies of questionnaire were successfully returned representing a response rate of 94.96%. Data were analysed using the descriptive statistical techniques of Percentiles with the aid of SPSS software. The result of the study reveals that consumer brand involvement influence purchase decisions in the food industry. The study recommends that the design of brand package must be done to enhance adequate sensory pleasure and stimulation thereby guaranteeing consumer consistency in patronage.

Keywords: Branding, Brand involvement, Product package, Purchase decision.

1.0 Introduction

In order to understand consumer's behaviour, knowing structure of consumer's involvement is highly important; and the word consumer involvement is often used to perceive customer behaviour in correlation with a specific subject. Many researches consider this variable as the most important variable in marketing literature especially in marketing research due to its high value on predicting the consumer's purchase behaviour (McFatter, 2005). It is accepted in the market that acquisition of new customers is more costly than retaining the current customers; it is why losing the customers should be the companies concern hence understanding two factors, product purchase involvement and consumer product knowledge, is useful in creating appropriate and effective communication messages and to help the consumers recall these messages during purchasing. These messages guide the consumers to the intended brand in the intended brand in the course of purchasing process.

Today, the brand management is considered as an extremely important area in marketing management, particularly as the organisations coordinate their efforts to communicate ever complex and intangible messages (Goodchild and Callow, 2002). Nature of the brand shows which benefits it gives to the customers and which role does it plays in the individuals' lives. It can be said that when individuals select a brand, do not just notice one characteristic of a brand; rather, they consider multiple features related to the kind of the product and the level of involvement and decide to purchase based on these factors.

Consumer involvement makes sense when the consumer is aware of the product or the brand and has received some information in this field. Then this information is processed in the consumer's mind and is used when necessary. Nowadays companies utilize various strategies in order to attract new customers, retain current customers and differentiate their products from their competitors. Perhaps, the most important and effective strategy to create consumer involvement in the product selection is using the brand for the products. Having effect on conception and perception of the consumers, the brand increases consumer involvement and alters consumer preferences and attitudes. The more involvement increases, the more information is processed deeply.

2.0 Literature Review

Choubtarash, Mahdieh and Marnani (2013) investigated the relationships between consumer involvement and purchase decision for cell phone. The result of the study indicates a significant statistical relationship between consumers' involvement and purchase decision. As a result, consumer's involvement must be taken into account by marketers who want to increase their profit by boosting consumers' purchasing tendency and purchasing behaviour as well.Naveed

(2012) in his study focused on the role of social media on public relation, brand involvement and brand commitment. It is found that social media has a strong impact on public relation, brand involvement, buying behaviour and brand commitment.

Furthermore, Bhattacharya and Dipaksaha (2013) in consumer involvement profile incorporating the moderating effects of brand loyalty ad brand trust found that for durable products like cell phone, sneakers, laptops and two-wheelers, the involvement scores are on the higher side indicating that the products are perceived as very important by the customers. In view of this, marketers should adopt informative advertising strategy to develop the proper image of the brand in the minds of the customers. Marketers should adopt aggressive sales promotional strategy to hire buyers to switch their brands in an attempt to make them brand loyal for products having low score on the facet. A bandwagon of loyal customer is needed to keep the market share stable. Aghdaie and Honari (2014) investigated brand role in forming consumer involvement. In this study, effects of brand reputation, brand loyalty, willing to pay higher, awareness of brand, brand popularity, brand name and brand quality on consumer's involvement are hypothesized. The results however, showed that awareness of brand; willing to pay higher and brand popularity affect consumer involvement.

Rizvi, Sami and Gull (2012) attempted to evaluate and understand the relationship between consumer involvement (CI) and consumer scepticism towards advertising (CSA). The research focused on the ever-growing concern for marketers in the form of consumer scepticism towards advertising. The results help in concluding that CSA is a variable that is of tremendous importance to marketing and consumer involvement is a factor that moderates the influence of CSA. As the involvement increases, a consumer tends to be more skeptic, but the increase is not large. But when the involvement is really high, consumers prefer searching and verifying the claims instead of being sceptical about them. So the advertiser/marketers should get the understanding from this that CSA can be reduced when consumers find it easy to verify the claims and most importantly, when the claims are verified, it develop a sense of trust in the consumer's mind for the brand/company/advertiser.

Teeni-Harari and Hornik (2010) examined variables that influence product involvement among young consumers. The findings among the entire sample imply that young people's product involvement is explained by all of the variables examined (age, subjective product knowledge, influence of parents, influence of peers and product category). It was however revealed that young children's product-involvement level was influenced by parents and peers. The product-involvement level for children was influenced by peers and product category; adolescents' product-involvement relies on subjective product knowledge and product category.

Nevertheless, the above findings have practical implications. The product—involvement constructs is an important dimension for further understanding of the behaviour of young consumers; as such, the product-involvement variable must be seen as a basis for market segmentation of the younger populations. Ghafelehbashi et al. (2011) analysed acquaintance with all types of involvement in consumer behaviour. The study however revealed that involvement is a determinant of decision-maker behaviour in purchase process; that involvement in information process and other related matter to consumers is vital (Bennetthe et al, 2007).

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a survey design to enhance a comprehensive review of consumer brand involvement in the food industry. The target population comprised 17,552,940 consumers of packaged products in Lagos State (Lagos State Bureau of Statistics, 2005) which is one of the biggest economic and commercial nerve centres in Nigeria. The stratified sampling method was used to select sample from the target population while its variant, proportionate sampling technique was used to obtain sample of 2500 from the twenty (20) Local Government Areas of Lagos State. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire with two parts A and B. Part A covered respondents demographic data while Part B contained instruments for the measurement of the independent variable (brand involvement), the dependent variable (customer purchase behaviour). The questionnaire items were measured on a 6-point Likert Scale of Very Low (VL) = 1; Low (L) = 2; Average (A) = 3; High (H) = 4; Very High (VH = 5 and Extremely High (EH) = 6. Simple Percentile statistical technique was used to aggregate the responses.

4.0 Results and Analysis

Table 1: Summated Frequencies and Percentages for Responses on Brand Involvement

Brand Involvement	Extremely High Freq (%)	Very High Freq (%)	High Freq (%)	Average Freq (%)	Low Freq (%)	Very Low Freq (%)	Total Freq (%)
I usually enjoy my brand.	947 (39.9)	790 (33.3)	474 (20.0)	139 (5.9)	14 (0.6)	10 (0.4)	2374 (100)
Consuming my brand is one of the most enjoyable things i do.	686 (28.9)	862 (36.3)	582 (24.5)	173 (7.3)	46 (1.9)	25 (1.1)	2374 (100)
My brand has a central role in my life.	524 (22.1)	708 (29.8)	630 (26.5)	409 (17.2)	73 (3.1)	30 (1.3)	2374 (100)
I enjoy my brands with my friends.	538 (22.7)	696 (29.3)	689 (29.0)	357 (15.0)	55 (2.3)	39 (1.6)	2374 (100)
To change my preference from my brand to another in the same category will require major re-thinking.	579 (24.4)	811 (34.2)	578 (24.3)	250 (10.5)	93 (3.9)	62 (2.6)	2373 (100)
Most of my friends are in some way connected with my brand.	468 (19.7)	734 (30.9)	585 (24.6)	391 (16.5)	92 (3.9)	104 (4.4)	2374 (100)
My brand gives me opportunity to be with friends.	507 (21.4)	655 (27.6)	564 (23.8)	447 (18.8)	94 (4.0)	107 (4.5)	2374 (100)
I follow my brand on social media.	551 (23.2)	602 (25.4)	637 (26.8)	304 (12.8)	170 (7.2)	110 (4.6)	2374 (100)
I identify with people and image associated with my brand.	550 (23.2)	674 (28.4)	580 (24.4)	353 (14.9)	157 (6.6)	60 (2.5)	2374 (100)

Source: Survey Analysis, 2016

The researcher reviewed the responses of respondents on brand involvement. Table showed that 6.9% of the respondents do not enjoy their brand while 474 (20%) rated this item high which implies that they enjoy it, 790 (33.3%) rated it very high and 947 (39.9%) rated it extremely high; on whether respondents derive pleasure in consuming their brand, 10.3% of the respondents do not really enjoy it as they rated this factor as low, very low, and medium; however 582 (24.5%) rated it high, 862 (36.3%) rated it very high and 686 (28.9%) rated it extremely high.

The table also shows that 21.6% of the respondents rated my brand has a central role in my life very low, low or medium and 630 (26.5%) rated this item high, 708 (29.8%) rated it very high and 524 (22.1%) rated this extremely high. 19% of the respondents could not introduce their brand/product type to their friends while 689 (29%) of the respondents rated this item high, 696 (29.3%) rated the item very high and 538 (22.7%) rated it extremely high. This implies that 81% of the respondents enjoy their brands with friends.

On whether customers/respondents will have to re-think before changing their preference for a particular brand, it is observed that about 17.1% of the respondents do not believe there should be re-thinking as such while the remaining respondents believed that proper re-thinking need to take place before changing their preference for another product. The responses from the survey showed that 578 (24.3%) of the respondents rated re-thinking high, 811 (34.2%) rated the item very high and 579 (24.4%) rated this item extremely high. 24.7% of the respondents have their friends using another brand of product different from theirs; but 75.3% of the respondents have their friends using their brand.

On the ability of the respondents' choice brand to connect them to their friends, it is observed from the survey analysis that 27.3% of the respondents do not have anything connecting them to their friends in terms of brand but 564 (23.8%) of the respondents rated this item high in their relationship with friends, 655 (27.6%) rated it very high and the remaining 507 (21.4%) rated it extremely high. However, 24.6% of the respondents do not follow their brand on social media as they rated this item as very low, low and medium but the remaining 75.4% of the respondents do follow their brand on the social media. 24% of the respondents do not identify with the people and image associated with their brand, the remaining 76% of the respondents rated their association with the people of same brand and image high, very high and extremely high.

5.0 Conclusion

Most products in the food and beverages category are low involvement items where consumers do not search extensively for information and evaluate their characteristics before making purchase decisions; therefore the design of the adequate brand package must be done to enhance adequate sensory pleasure and stimulation thereby guaranteeing consumer consistency in patronage. This will assist manufacturing companies an opportunity of proper and adequate mix of packaging elements to aid customer decisions in purchase situations.

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