

BRAND EQUITY AND CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION OF HEINEKEN LAGER BEER

By

Oghenyerhovwo Rita INONI

*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences,
Dennis Osadebay University, Asaba. Delta State, Nigeria.*

E-mail: oghenyerhovwo.inoni@dou.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Branding is an important concept in consumer buying behaviour and it is a crucial factor that influences product purchase decision. The study examined the influence of brand equity dimension on purchase decision of Heineken larger beer amongst consumers in the central senatorial district of Delta State. Data were drawn from a sample of 371 respondents in Ughelli, Effurun and Sapele with a structured questionnaire, while data were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicate that all dimension of brand equity had direct and significant impact on consumers' purchase decision of Heineken lager beer, but brand loyalty has the greatest influence. Although, brand quality had the least effect on buying decision, this could be adduced to the fact that existing customers tend to take product quality as *'given'*, and they continue to promote their association with the brand through positive word of mouth and recommendations. Owing to the intense competition in the Nigerian beer market, manufacturers need to adopt strategies to promote consumers emotional attachment to their brands through rigorous advertisement. Furthermore, their products should compare favourably with other brands in terms of aroma, taste and overall quality to elicit positive emotions that would engender customer retention.

Keywords: *consumer purchase decision, brand loyalty, brand association, brand awareness, Heineken lager beer*

INTRODUCTION

The intense competition in international markets occasioned by the globalization of the world economy is propelling many organisations to develop new strategies to sustain and aggressively expand their market shares. Due to the rapidly rising level of technological development and the hyper-competitive nature of the contemporary business environment, firms are deploying resources to achieve a higher degree of products' differentiation to enjoy continued patronage of consumers. Branding is a cardinal means by which firms can achieve this differentiation of their products. Therefore, marketers must comprehend customer perception and the degree to which brands impact consumers while making purchases (Rizwan & Al-Malkawi, 2021). P. Kotler and K. L. Keller (2016) affirmed that a company's brand is an essential instrument for fostering customer

and business synergy. Since most branded products have an impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, firms are in fierce rivalry to dominate the market and establish a loyal client base, rather than focusing only on growing sales volume.

According to Thangamani (2019), consumers hold brands in high esteem in their life. This is because consumers try to avoid ambiguity and product quality issues by choosing and trusting businesses in the same manner that they trust their relations and acquaintances. Product branding can accentuate the social status of consumers; thus, many customers prefer to use branded products that will project their status symbol (Udo, Akpan & Uford, 2024). Furthermore, branding strengthens product attributes by communicating unique benefits to consumers of branded products, engendering customers' loyalty, and giving the company's product brand an edge in the competitive environment.

In Nigeria, branding has the power to influence consumer behaviour and is highly valued as a corporate asset (Uford, Charles & Etuk, 2022) and can be extremely important for expanding the marketing horizon. Beer is a very popular alcoholic beverage drink consumed in Nigeria owing to its important role in social and cultural activities. In recent times, there is barely any social gathering where alcoholic beverages are not served, especially beer. Furthermore, apart from social gatherings where beer is consumed, individuals also patronise bars where they purchase various brands of beer according to their tastes and preferences. Nigeria's beer market is shaped and majorly dominated by three major players with Nigerian Breweries Plc being the top market leader owing to its market shares, followed by International Breweries and Guinness Nigeria plc among all the Breweries producing beer in Nigeria. The leading beer brands purchased regularly by consumers in Nigeria include; Heineken, Star beer, Gulder, Foreign Extra Stout, Harp, Hero, Trophy Black, Premium, Goldberg, Life, Gordon Spark, and 33 Export Lager beers to mention a few. Thus, brewing companies and marketers need to understand brand attributes that stimulate demand for beer and factors that influence consumers' beer consumption behaviour and buying decisions. This study thus, addressed these questions; is there a significant association between brand equity dimensions and consumers' buying decisions? Do branding dimensions significantly influence consumer purchase decisions for *Heineken* lager beer? Investigating the impact of branding on customers' decisions to buy Heineken lager beer in Delta State, Nigeria, is thus the study's main goal. The study specifically determined how customers' decisions to purchase the beer in question were influenced by product awareness, association, quality, and brand loyalty.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model is based on works in the extant literature in consumer behaviour where purchase decision for lager beer is hypothesised to be determined by brand awareness, brand association, brand quality and brand loyalty (Figure 1).

Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses tested include;

H1: Brand awareness has significant effect on consumers' purchasing decision of lager beer.

H2: Customers' buying decision of *Heineken* beer is significantly impacted by brand association.

H3: Consumers' purchasing behaviour of *Heineken* beer is significantly affected by brand quality.

H4: Brand loyalty significantly influences customers' decision to buy lager beer.

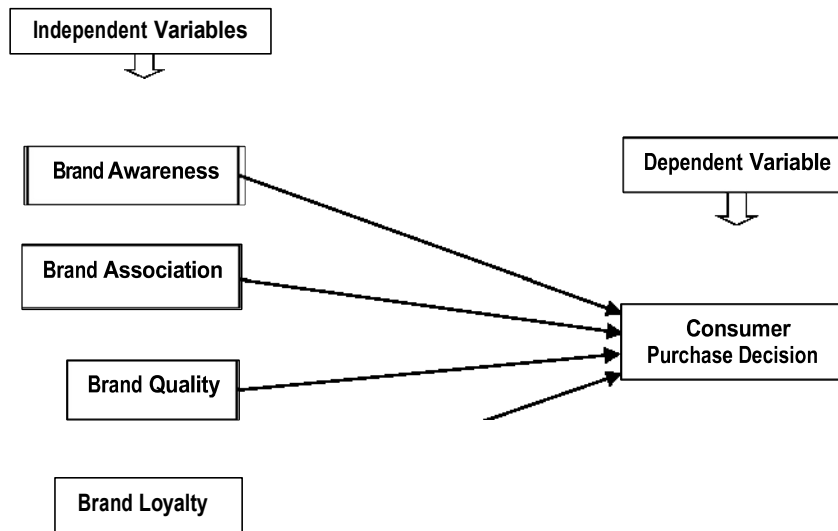


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Source: Author's; construction, (2024)

Empirical Review

O. Sawagvudcharee, S. Shrestha and S. Mandal (2018), conducted a study on —Impact of Brand on Consumer Decision Making of Beer Brands purchase in Nepal. Using a quantitative method and with the aid of a 5-point Likert scale, a questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample size of 400 buyers from four business locations including restaurants, clubs, hotels and local Bhatti's from Kathmandu, Nepal. The findings showed that there exists a significant relationship between the regressors; brand awareness, brand association and perceived quality, and consumer buying decision. Furthermore, the influence of brand loyalty was positive, but not significant. The authors thus opined that to enhance consumer purchase decision, brewery companies should focus more on their pricing strategy, promotional strategy and revenue management strategies. They also suggested that it is essential to engage advertising agencies in order to embark on rigorous advertisement and promotional campaigns of beer brands through mass media to retain existing customers while programmes are implemented to attract new ones.

Svatošová, Kosová and Svobodová (2021), examined —factors influencing consumer behaviour in the beer market in Vysočina and South-Moravian Region of the Czech Republic". Data obtained from a total of 408 respondents were analysed with results showing that taste, a high-quality brand, and domestic Czech beer were the most influential factors in products selection amongst consumers. The price of beer was neutral since it did not influence customer selection of beer brands.

Aniuga, Adindu and Obasiabara (2023), examined the influence of product quality on loyalty of consumers of *Star* lager beer in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. Primary data were elicited from 280 respondents who were consumers of *Star* lager beer using a questionnaire, while IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 23.0 was used to analyse the data. Their findings revealed that product quality is a significant determinant of consumers' loyalty of *Star* lager beer, and thus concluded that the quality of a product can lead to customer loyalty. The authors recommended that *Nigerian Breweries*, the makers of *Star* lager beer should continually improve the quality of their product, if they desire to sustain the loyalty of customers.

Natasya and Yunisa (2024) analysed —the influence of brand image, brand awareness, and promotion on *MAN TANG* purchasing decisions in Batam City, Indonesia". Data obtained from a sample of 100 respondents through questionnaires were analysed using SPSS 25. The multiple linear regression test showed that brand image, awareness, and promotion have an effect on *Man Tang's* buying decision with coefficients of determination test of 0.246, 0.328, and 0.236 respectively. Based on the results, the research concluded that marketers should promote their brands due to the impact product branding has on purchasing decisions.

Consumers perceive brands as status symbols and thus prefer branded to unbranded products. Udo, Akpan and Uford (2024) examined the effect of product branding on customers' patronage of *Champion Breweries* products in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State". Data elicited from 361 respondents through survey research were analysed using regression analysis. The results showed that among the independent variables used to examine the effects of brand equity, brand awareness, and brand image had a positive and significant effect on patronage of the company's brands. The authors posited that product brands of the brewery be revealed to its target market using promotional mix elements that are appropriate for enhancing brand awareness and the firm's brand image as patronage is determined by the consumers.

Research Methods

The study adopted a causal research design for the relationship between dependent and independent variables studied. The use of an appropriate research design is crucial to the study because it determines the method and nature of data collected, the sampling plan and the time schedule for the research study (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2018). In this study, a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from lager beer consumers,

to determine the effects of branding dimensions on consumers' purchase decision in Ughelli, Effurun and Sapele; three major towns in the central senatorial district of Delta State, Nigeria. The research instrument is composed of four sections; section A addressed socio-demographic characteristics of consumers, B focused on the brand equity dimensions of, awareness, association, quality and brand loyalty, while section C dealt with consumer purchase decision. Statements used in the constructs were modified from extant literature, and statements were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 implies strong disagree and 5 strongly agree. Details of the constructs' operationalization are presented in Table 1. Owing to unavailability of a formal sampling frame, the R. V. Krejcie and D. W. Morgan (1970) formula for determining sample size for infinite population was applied to obtain a representative sample;

Where n (sample size for infinite population); $Z = Z$ -value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

P (Population proportion, expressed as decimal, assumed to be 0.5 (50%); M (margin of error at 5% (0.05)

Table 1: Constructs Operationalization

| Construct | No. of Items | Construct Statements | Code | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------------|--------------|---|-------|-----|-------|----------------|
| Consumer Purchase Decision | 8 | The brand name influences the choice of beer I buy | CPD 1 | 371 | 4.189 | 0.4513 |
| | | The value I receive affect my purchase decision beer brand | CPD 2 | 371 | 3.827 | 0.5487 |
| | | Quality is a key determinant of the beer I purchase | CPD 3 | 371 | 4.189 | 0.4514 |
| | | The ingredients and taste of the beer affect my buying decision | CPD 4 | 371 | 3.825 | 0.5504 |
| | | I am satisfied whenever I purchase and consume this brand of beer | CPD 5 | 371 | 3.833 | 0.5475 |
| | | This brand of beer is quality personified | CPD 6 | 371 | 3.712 | 1.0269 |
| | | I have no regret buying my brand of beer | CPD 7 | 371 | 3.647 | 1.0889 |
| | | I always recommend my beer brand to other people | CPD 8 | 371 | 3.776 | 0.8768 |
| Brand Loyalty | 7 | I firmly believe in this beer brand. | BLT1 | 371 | 3.625 | 1.0941 |
| | | I am prepared to spend more money on this brand of beer | BLT2 | 371 | 3.650 | 1.0006 |
| | | I have an emotional attachment to this beer brand | BLT3 | 371 | 3.601 | 1.0253 |
| | | This brand is my first pick whenever purchasing a beer | BLT4 | 371 | 3.720 | 0.9793 |
| | | I believe that I have a strong bond with the brand of beer I drink. | BLT5 | 371 | 3.701 | 1.0238 |
| | | I would still purchase my brand of beer even if someone gives me a competing brand. | BLT6 | 371 | 3.612 | 1.0906 |
| | | I would speak well of this brand of beer, and recommend it to anyone who asks for my advice | BLT7 | 371 | 3.741 | 0.8779 |
| Brand Association | 5 | There are lots of association between this brand of beer and my personal experiences. | BAS 1 | 371 | 3.763 | 1.0069 |
| | | This beer brand helps to define and convey the "I" and "me" that I am. | BAS 2 | 371 | 3.749 | 1.0419 |
| | | The beer brand has a positive reputation that always comes to my mind. | BAS 3 | 371 | 3.712 | 1.0029 |
| | | Being associated with this brand of beer makes me happy | BAS 4 | 371 | 3.830 | 0.5480 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---|------------|-----|-------|--------|
| | | Recollections of the beer brand have a favourable impact on my buying decision. | BAS5 | 371 | 4.190 | 0.4510 |
| Brand Awareness | 5 | My beer brand is very familiar to me | BAW1 | 371 | 3.601 | 1.0306 |
| | | I easily recall this brand of beer whenever I am making a purchase. | BAW2 | 371 | 3.607 | 1.0248 |
| | | Attributes of this beer brand quickly come to my mind | BAW3 | 371 | 3.741 | 0.9686 |
| | | This brand of beer is easier for me to recognise than rival brands | BAW4 | 371 | 3.712 | 1.0269 |
| | | I always visualize this beer by the brand's logo. | BAW5 | 371 | 3.647 | 1.0889 |
| Brand Quality | 9 | This beer brand's flavour and colour appeal to me. | BQA1 | 371 | 3.652 | 1.0907 |
| | | I often buy this brand because of its value-added features. | BQA2 | 371 | 3.774 | 0.8776 |
| | | My selection of beer brand is based on continuous quality improvement brand. | BQA3 | 371 | 3.669 | 1.0783 |
| | | This beer is a premium | BQU4 | 371 | 3.739 | 1.0103 |
| | | This beer quality is quite excellent | BQA5 | 371 | 3.782 | 1.0152 |
| | | This beer brand is highly dependable | BQA6 | 371 | 3.747 | 1.0137 |
| | | The quality of this beer is superior to that of generic substitutes. | BQA7 | 371 | 3.747 | 1.0163 |
| | | I believe that my brand of beer is superior to all other Brands | BQA8 | 371 | 3.725 | 1.0423 |
| | | This beer brand has very high quality | BQA9 | 371 | 3.704 | 1.0046 |
| Valid N (listwise) | | | 371 | | | |

Source: Author's computation (2024)

The target population for the study is comprised of beer consumers in Ughelli, Effurun and Sapele towns; headquarters of Ughelli North, Uvwie and Sapele local government areas respectively, in the central senatorial district of Delta State, with a total population of 594,388 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). Random sampling technique with proportional allocation to population size, was used to draw a sample of 371 consumers between October 2023 to January, 2024. Data were analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics, including the use of mean, frequency table and percentages to explain the socio- demographic profile of beer consumers, while ANOVA and regression were used to determine the impact of brand awareness, association, quality and brand

loyalty on beer consumers buying decision. IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software was used to analyse data generated.

Discussion of Findings

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of beer consumers are presented in Table 2. Males constitute the majority (67%) of the respondents and 32.9 % females. Beer consumers in the study area are within the economically active age, and they constitute 84.1% of the sampled elements; the average age is 38 years. The educational status indicates that 63.3% of the sample had tertiary education. The occupation and household data reveal that beer consumers cut across the general population with civil servants as the median group, and the mean number of persons per household is 6. Income level appears to be somewhat low and skewly distributed as 70.6% of the respondents are within an average income bracket of N= 30,000.00 to N= 91,000.00 per month.

The descriptive statistics of the model constructs indicating measures of central tendency

and dispersion are shown in Table 3. The variables are normally distributed; skewness values range from -0.144 to 0.033 and kurtosis, -0.749 to -0.439 , in accordance with the rule of thumb that values should range between -1 and $+1$ (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2018). Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to determine reliability and internal consistency of the constructs (Table 4), and all values are higher than or equal to 0.7 (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2018).

Regression Results

Regression results of factors influencing consumers' brand preference of *Heineken* lager beer are shown in Table 5. With adjusted R^2 of 0.895 , the model has a good fit; implying that about 90%

Table 2: Socio-economic Characteristics of Consumers

| Parameter | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Mean (Mode) |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 122 | 32.9 | |
| Female | 249 | 67.1 | (Male) |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |
| Age | | | |
| 20 – 28 | 61 | 16.4 | |
| 29 – 37 | 116 | 31.3 | |
| 38 – 46 | 125 | 33.7 | 38 years |
| 47 – 55 | 49 | 13.2 | |
| 56 – 64 | 20 | 5.4 | |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |
| Marital status | | | |
| Single | 145 | 39.0 | |
| Married | 169 | 45.6 | (Married) |
| Divorced | 47 | 12.7 | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Widowed | 10 | 2.7 | |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |
| Educational status | | | |
| Primary school | 50 | 13.5 | |
| Secondary school | 86 | 23.2 | |
| Polytechnic/NCE | 94 | 25.3 | |
| HND/First Degree | 112 | 30.2 | (HND/First Degree) |
| Masters/Ph.D | 29 | 7.8 | |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |
| Household size | | | |
| 2 – 4 | 94 | 25.3 | |
| 5 – 7 | 182 | 49.1 | 6 persons |
| 8 – 10 | 95 | 40.6 | |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |
| Occupation of consumers | | | |
| Student | 37 | 10.0 | |
| Trader | 91 | 24.5 | |
| Civil Servant | 108 | 29.1 | (Civil servant) |
| Private Sector Employed | 84 | 22.6 | |
| Self Employed | 51 | 13.8 | |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |
| Average Monthly Income(N= †) | | | |
| 30,000 – 60,000.00 | 147 | 39.6 | |
| 61,000 – 91,000.00 | 115 | 31.0 | N= 76,584.91 |
| 92,000 – 122,000.00 | 64 | 17.3 | |
| 123,000.00 – 153,000.00 | 45 | 12.1 | |
| Total | 371 | 100.0 | |

†N= 1678.00 =1 US Dollar in November, 2024

Source: Author's computation (2024)

of the change in consumer buying decision is explained by brand awareness, association, quality and brand loyalty. The independence of the error term and the permissible level of autocorrelation

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Model Constructs

| Variables | N | Minimu m | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------|-------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | | | | | | Statistic | Error | Statistic | Error |
| Cbrndprefrnce | 371 | 2.69 | 4.95 | 3.875 | 0.4871 | -0.144 | 0.127 | -0.643 | 0.253 |
| Brndquality | 371 | 2.38 | 5.00 | 3.597 | 0.5387 | 0.032 | 0.127 | -0.439 | 0.253 |
| Brndloyalty | 371 | 2.00 | 4.86 | 3.554 | 0.5816 | -0.084 | 0.127 | -0.749 | 0.253 |
| Brndawareness | 371 | 1.60 | 5.00 | 3.662 | 0.7640 | -0.109 | 0.127 | -0.734 | 0.253 |
| Brndassociation | 371 | 1.88 | 4.98 | 3.849 | 0.6421 | 0.033 | 0.127 | -0.717 | 0.253 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 371 | | | | | | | | |

Source: Authors' computation (2024)

Table 4: Constructs' Reliability Statistics

| Construct | No. of Items | Cronbach's alpha value |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Consumer Purchase Decision | | 0.835 |
| Brand Quality | | 0.873 |
| Brand Loyalty | | 0.839 |
| Brand Awareness | | 0.882 |
| Brand Association | | 0.911 |
| Research Instrument | | 0.892 |

Source:
Authors' computation
(2024)

Table 5. Output of Regression Analysis

| A. Model Summary ^b | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|--|
| Model | R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson | |
| | | | | | R ² Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change | | |
| 1 | 0.946 ^a | 0.896 | 0.895 | 0.1582 | 0.896 | 785.401 | 4 | 366 | 0.000 | 1.86 | |
| B. ANOVA ^b | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | | | |
| 1 | Regression | | | 78.64 | 4 | 19.660 | 785.401 | 0.000 ^b | | | |
| | Residual | | | 9.162 | 366 | 0.025 | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | 370 | | | | | | |
| . Coefficients ^b | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model 1 | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | | | | | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF | | | | |
| | (Constant) | 0.625 | 0.062 | 10.115 | 0.00 | | | | | | |
| | Brandqual | 0.155 | 0.022 | 7.178** | 0.00 | 0.503 | 1.988 | | | | |
| | Brandloyal | 0.341 | 0.031 | 11.164** | 0.00 | 0.214 | 4.669 | | | | |
| | Brandawe | 0.150 | 0.021 | 7.248** | 0.00 | 0.271 | 3.692 | | | | |
| | Brandasso | 0.242 | 0.016 | 14.927** | 0.00 | 0.624 | 1.603 | | | | |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brandasso, Brandawe, Brandqual, Brandloyal

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer purchase decision ** Significant ($p < 0.01$) **Source:** Authors' computation (2020)

between the variables are indicated by the Durbin-Watson (D.W.) statistic of 1.86 (Ndubisi & Koo, 2006). The ANOVA results revealed the statistical significance ($F(4, 366) = 785.401$, $p < 0.001$) of the model. The VIF values show the insignificance of multicollinearity among the variables, with values ranging between 1.603 and 4.669, below a threshold of 10 (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). Moreover, the findings show that the

brand equity dimensions exerted direct and significant influence on consumer buying decision, with brand loyalty as the dominant predictor of *Heineken* consumption.

According to G. Christodoulides, J. Cadogan and C. Veloutsou (2015), ‘awareness is the ability of a current or potential consumer to recall or recognize that a brand belongs to a certain product category’. The significant ($\beta = 0.235$, $p < 0.001$) influence of brand awareness on beer purchase decision shows that for customers to continue to buy a product, they must be aware of its availability in the market. Brand awareness is the anchor that helps to create and strengthen the brand’s association in the consumer’s mind (Macias, Barquet-Arenas & Yambay-Aucancela, 2024). And for *Heineken* beer, they are aware of the product through various promotional campaigns and advertisement, hence their patronage of the brand. Therefore, with higher awareness level of the beer, buyers patronage of the product will increase. In fact, a unit increase in awareness level caused a 0.235 rise in buying decision. Therefore, hypothesis one (H₁) is supported. O. Sawagvudcharee, S. Shrestha and S. Mandal (2018) report in Vietnam supports this finding, where awareness and association with brands of beer showed a significant relationship with consumers’ buying decision. Comparable results were also reported by Udo, Akpan and Uford (2024) in their study of consumers of *Champions* lager beer in Uyo, Nigeria. J. A. Anyadighibe, M. S. Ezekiel and N. F. Sawara (2023) study on customer patronage of petroleum products in Calabar metropolis, further lends credence to this finding. Owing to the intense competition in the beer market, manufacturers need to embark on aggressive promotional and advertising strategy to expand their market share as well as retain their customers.

Similarly, brand association has positive and impactful ($\beta = 0.319$, $p < 0.001$) effects on the buyers’ decision to consume beer. Once buyers are aware of a product, tasted it, and are satisfied with it, they are likely to be associated with it. This may explain why brand association had a greater impact on purchase decision than awareness. Based on the beta coefficient, if there is a 10% increase in consumers’ awareness of the beer brand, purchase decision is likely to rise by 3.2%. This finding is consistent with that of O. Sawagvudcharee, S. Shrestha and S. Mandal (2018) study in Vietnam, and W. Macias, G. Barquet-Arenas and J. Yambay-Aucancela (2024) in Ecuador where brand awareness with a strength of association, was found to positively affect consumers’ purchase decision. Consequently, hypothesis two (H₂) is validated. The finding is further supported by the report of Y. E. Bagobiri and T. V. Atotileto (2024) in Abuja, Nigeria, where brand association significantly affected consumers’ buying behaviour of non-alcoholic beverage drinks. Another study that agrees with our results is that of M. C. Okechukwu, P. Eze and A. C. Asiagwu (2020) where brand association showed significant impact on alcoholic beverages patronage in Abia State.

Product quality is a very important determinant of consumer buying behaviour. Once consumers perceive a product to be of good quality, there is the likelihood that demand for it would increase, given the price. The quality of a product is better assessed

subjectively from the buyers' lens, being the final consumers (Wen, Wong, Kim, Badu-Baiden & Ji, 2021). The quality of a product in terms of its taste, aroma and flavour are emotionally fulfilling, and thus are very important determinants of consumer purchase behaviour (Inoni, Olannye & Gladson-Nwokah, 2016; Inoni & Ogundare, 2024). Thus, the positive and significant ($\beta = 0.171$, $p < 0.001$) impact of brand quality on beer buying decision is a testament to the foregoing assertion. The beta value implies that when product brand quality increases by 1 unit, the consumers' decision to purchase will rise by 0.17. The findings thus support hypothesis three (H₃). V. T. Nguyen, T. H. D. Tran and T. X. B. Ngo (2022) report that perceived quality, a proxy for brand quality, had the strongest effect on customer behaviour in their study of retailers' distribution products in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, is in consonance with our finding. Y. E. Bagobiri and T. V. Atotileto (2024) study in Abuja, Nigeria, also found perceived brand quality as a significant predictor of purchase decision.

Output of the statistical analysis has found brand loyalty as the dominant predictor of *Heineken* beer purchase decision with a direct and significant ($\beta = 0.407$, $p < 0.001$) impact. The implication of the finding is that, if the degree of loyalty of consumers for the beer brand increases by a unit, the decision to purchase the product will rise by 0.41. Thus, hypothesis four (H₄) is confirmed. This finding is supported by the report of M. Raza, R. Frooghi, S. H. Rani and M. A. Qureshi (2018) in Karachi, Pakistan where brand loyalty exhibited the greatest impact on purchase intention of FMCG. V. T. Nguyen, T. H. D. Tran and T. X. B. Ngo (2022) also reported comparable results in their study of convenience products in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. A study by L. P. Kunle, R. A. Ganiyu and P. Nkechi (2020) of the effects of brand loyalty on customer retention of postpaid telecom subscribers in Lagos State, Nigeria, also affirmed our finding on the influence of brand loyalty. Once consumers show positive evaluation of a product's quality, it would elicit favourable emotional responses towards the brand thereby fostering trust and loyalty. Furthermore, when consumers are loyal to a brand, they make repeat purchases of the product, and are even willing to pay more for it, even when prices are rising.

Conclusion

The impact of brand equity dimensions and competitive price as predictors of convenience goods purchase decision has been widely studied. Nevertheless, the rapid emergence of new products, continuous differentiation of existing ones, as well as the influence of contemporary marketing technologies on buyers' behaviour, products branding will continue to stimulate researchers' interests in years to come. The study examined the influence of the dimension of brand equity; awareness, association, product quality and brand loyalty on the purchase decision of beer consumers in the central senatorial district of Delta State, Nigeria. The results indicate that *Heineken* lager beer consumers are within the economically active age group, with an average age of 38 years. All dimensions of brand equity had statistically significant impact on consumers' buying decision, with brand quality as the least regressor while brand loyalty as the dominant

predictor. The low beta coefficient of product quality requires further scrutiny. Whenever buyers adjudged a product to be of good quality, they develop trust and commitment to the brand and they continue to make repeat purchases and become loyal, except the firm fails to nurture and sustain the relationship. Thus, existing customers tend to take product quality as ‘given’ and continue to promote their association with the brand through positive word of mouth and recommendation to acquaintances. Owing to the fierce competition in the beer market in Nigeria, marketers need to take a cursory look at how emotions connect consumers with products and brands. Beer manufacturers must ensure that their products compare in terms of aroma, taste and overall quality with competing brands, and to engender positive emotions. Producers must ensure that they formulate and implement appropriate customer relationship management strategies to retain existing customers while making efforts to attract new ones, in order to stay above the competition.

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