PRODUCT PACKAGE AND CUSTOMER BRAND COMMITMENT IN FOOD AND BEVERAGES MARKETS OF LAGOS STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Packaging is the container for a product, encompassing the physical appearance of the container and including the design, colour, shape, labelling and materials used. The study examines the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment in the Food and Beverages markets of Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted to examine 17,552,940 consumers of packaged food 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 Pearson Product moment correlation (r) and Simple Regression Analysis. The findings of the study reveals that product package significantly influence consumer brand commitment (R=0.486; $R^2 = 0.236$; p<0.05) and that to guarantee consumer commitment as a result of brand physical attractiveness, brand and logo should be simplified and contain accurate information as consumers will like them. The study therefore recommends that marketing practitioners should be more interested in developing "committed" relationships between their brands and customers through attractive and unique package designs with the aid of excellent colour mix and visual graphics.

Keywords: Packaging, Product package, Package design, Brand commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing researchers have defined commitment in many ways: as a desire to maintain a relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), a pledge of continuity between parties, the sacrifice or potential for sacrifice if a relationship ends, and the absence of competitive offerings (Gustafsson, Johnson &Roos, 2005). These different sources of commitment create a bond that keeps customers loyal to a brand even when satisfaction may be low (Gustafsson, Johnson &Roos, 2005).According to Gustafsson, Johnson & Roos (2005) customer satisfaction and commitment might seem to be similar concepts, so it is important to clarify the conceptual difference between them: satisfaction refers backwards whereas commitment has a stronger implication towards the future. In other words, satisfaction evaluates a brands performance in the past, whereas commitment represents the strength of the relationship and the devotion to continue forward (Gustafsson, Johnson &Roos, 2005).

Brand commitment is an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship with a brand (Lacy 2007). It refers to the economic, emotional and psychological attachments that the consumer may have toward a brand (Evanschitzky et al. 2006). Committed consumers are often willing to stay in an exchange relationship as well as put forth effort to maintain the relationship. Researchers have identified distinct components of commitment – one dimension that is more

emotional in nature and the other that is more economic in structure (Bansal et al. 2004). Relationships which involve an emotional tie or connection are formed on the basis of identification and shared values (Evanschitzky et al. 2006). Consumers who are affectively committed to a brand are less expensive to retain; less vulnerable to loss from competitive efforts, brand blunders, or service failures; willing to pay a price premium; and also desire to convert others to the brand via brand advocacy (Bolton et al. 2000; Grisaffe and Nguyen 2011).

Nevertheless, consumers' level of commitment to the brand can be accessed through the amount of interaction and communication involved with the brand and the extent to which the brand is important in terms of customers' activities and personality. It is important to evaluate not only if the customers recommend the brand but also if they sustain this recommendation with strongly sustained arguments.

Statement of the problem

It has been noticed that commitment to brands as a result of physical attractiveness is not too noticeable among consumers in the Nigeria foods and beverages industry (Ladipo & Olufayo, 2011). What is common is cognitive commitment which is based on information, such as price and features (Oliver, 1999). Worthington et al. (2009) describe cognitive commitment to a brand as the decision to stay with a brand based on the examination of switching costs and the evaluation of the brands attributes. However, marketing literatures have confirmed that a brand that demonstrates high physical attractiveness, reliability and integrity ensures consumers' willingness to keep the relationship and encourage future purchases. Following this logic therefore, it is expedient to investigate the relationship between product package design and consumer brand commitment in purchase situations which will further give credence to consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Objective of the study

To examine the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment in the Food and Beverages markets of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis of the study

H_o: Package design does not significantly influence consumer brand commitment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Turri, Smith and Kemp (2013) examined how emotional or affect-based brand relationships are developed in on-line social communities. It was revealed that developing consumer-brand relationships can be an intricate and complex process, yet a rewarding endeavour. Marketers are interested in developing "committed" relationships between consumers and brands and have used social media as avenues to achieve such partnerships. Affective commitment is an emotionally base attachment to a brand where a consumer derives such value from a brand that he/she is interested in maintaining a long-term relationship with the brand. The benefits of having consumers emotionally committed to a brand proved to be multi-faceted. Such commitment manifested in varying forms of loyalty where strong affective commitment was positively related to greater purchase loyalty.

Hren (2013) in a quantitative research attempted to determine the possible correlation between consumer commitment and brand personality characteristics. The study used the concept of cult brands to measure perceived brand personality characteristics and the consumer's commitment level for the brand. Results showed that all five of the "Big Five" personality characteristics had a positive correlation with consumer commitment. The personality characteristics of sincerity, excitement and competence possessed the highest, strong, positive correlation with consumer commitment. Sophistication and ruggedness were shown to have rather low, weak and insignificant positive correlations with consumer commitment.

Li (2013) attempted to identify the key antecedents influencing on brand commitment levels demonstrated by Chinese luxury consumers. The study finds that Chinese consumers' social value positively impact on brand commitment towards luxury brands but functional value and symbolic value were not. In addition, emotional value positively impact on brand commitment on luxury brands. The finding offers a new insight into consumer perceptions of luxury brands and provides managerial implications for marketers to build sustainable luxury brand businesses in China. Consequently, the stud offers new empirical findings which contribute to a re-conceptualization of the antecedents of brand commitment in the area of luxury brand consumption.

Choi et al (2013) carried out a cultural examination of exercise commitment and brand equity in United States and South Korean fitness clubs. The results suggest that cultural differences do exist in both the predictors of exercise commitment and brand loyalty between the American and Korean sample utilized. While escape and price were predictors of exercise commitment in both cultures, pride and product delivery were also important to the Korean sample. In addition, logo, price,, and location were significant predictors of brand loyalty to a fitness club with the American sample, while escape, place, product delivery and price were important for the Korean sample. This suggests that, in order to develop consumers who are committed to exercise, Korean fitness club managers may need to provide a more in-depth service experience to deliver the expected value on the price those consumers pay and to build loyalty towards the club. In addition, the results of the study point to the need to continue to examine brand associations that foster exercise commitment and brand loyalty in other cultures in order to cultivate service based brand equity.

Shuv-Ami (2013) in a new brand commitment scale for market segmentation combined well esthablished and related constructs of consumer behaviour into one scale-commitment. He defined commitment as the degree of attachment to a brand that has four emotional and behavioural underlying constructs: emotional and behavioural attachment to repurchase or patronise a preffered brand represented by brand loyalty construct; the need to reinforce end of consumption pleasurable experience-which is the satisfaction construct; the strength of attachment is represented by the involvement construct or the relevance and importance of the brand category and the attachment to the brand because the other brands are not a real alternative in comparison to the brand used is represented by the relative brand performance construct. However, the study provided an explanation for the inconsistency of the use and measurement of brand loyalty, commitment and involvement and their relationship to satisfaction. Examining the attributes of brand images between segments of commitment may explain in part why the customer is committed or not committed to a brand studying the brand commitment of the competitor may reveal the uncommitted users and the potential users of the company's brand.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey design to enhance a comprehensive review of the active variables of Brand Package and Purchase Behaviour. The packaging attributes that guided respondents' responses included package design, communication. 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 sample frame for the study was the forty-two (42) Food and Beverages companies registered in the state. 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 (product package), the dependent variable (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.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Summary of respondents' responses to product package and consumer brand commitment

	Product package						Consumer brand commitment					
	Extremely High	Very High	High	Ave.	Low	Very Low	Extremely High	Very High	high	Ave.	Low	Very Low
Value	16320	17017	11683	5662	1957	885	2871	2827	2910	1673	430	361
%	30.5	31.8	21.8	10.6	3.7	1.7	25.9	25.5	26.2	15.3	3.9	3.3

Source: Statistical Analysis, 2015.

In the consideration of the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment, about 84.1% of respondents rate product packaging as extremely high, very high and high; 25.9% rate brand commitment to be extremely high, 25.5% rate to be very high and 26.2% rate to be high. This gives about 77.6% commitment to product brand by customers, while 15.3% rate commitment to be average, 3.9% to be low and 3.3% to be very low. This however indicates that there is a significant relationship between package design and consumer commitment to a product brand. Marketing practitioners need to understand the phenomenon of how perceptions of external market cues influence consumers' buying behaviour that will contribute to a naturally ordered market so that both the buyer and the seller can transact business fairly and effectively.

Table 2: Model summary on the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.486[a]	.236	.229	.934

Table 3: Summary showing the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	630.246	22	28.648	32.847	.000[b]
	Residual	2041.698	2341	.872		
	Total	2671.944	2363			

a. Dependent Variable: consuming my brand is one of the most enjoyable things i do

Table 4: Summary on the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment

Variable constant	R	R^2	Unstandardized Coefficients	Sig
X_1			0.091	0.000
X_2			0.010	0.665
X_3			0.119	0.000
X_4	0.486	0.236	0.060	0.012
X_5			0.046	0.027
X_6			0.004	0.828
X_7			-0.081	0.000
X_8			0.090	0.000
X_9			-0.051	0.006
X_{10}			0.065	0.001
X_{11}			0.101	0.000
X_{12}			-0.034	0.052
X_{13}			0.029	0.169
X_{14}			0.023	0.198
X_{15}			-0.020	0.305
X_{16}			0.068	0.001
X_{17}			0.141	0.000
X_{18}			-0.011	0.512
X_{19}			0.016	0.424
X_{20}			0.005	0.810
X_{21}			0.011	0.598
X_{22}			0.039	0.066

Source: Statistical Analysis, 2015.

The dependent variable used for this model is "consuming my brand is one of the most enjoyable things I do" with other independent variables classified as product label, product logo, product size, product shape and product colour.

The result as seen in table 4.9.1 Indicates that there is a weak positive relationship between the variables considered (i.e. the dependent and independent variables) with R – value of 0.486 and 23.6% variation in customers' opinion about consuming and enjoying their product is caused by joint effect of the independent variables used. Also, the R2 adjusted indicates that addition or removal of any variable will cause the variation of customers' opinion to be 22.9%. Moreover, only twelve of the independent variables are significant out of twenty two used with their p – values less than 0.05.

Four out of these are significant affect customers' usage and enjoying product negatively while others affect it positively.

The model is:

$y_4 = 1.368 + 0.091X_1 + 0.119X_3 + 0.060X_4 + 0.046X_5 - 0.081X_7 + 0.090X_8 - 0.051X_9 + 0.065X_{10} + 0.101X_{11} - 0.034X_{12} + 0.068X_{16} + 0.141X_{17}$

The model derived is significant with p – value less than 0.05 as seen in table 4.9.3 hence; we accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that package design significantly influence brand commitment.

DISCUSSION

The result of this study implies that product package have significant relationship with consumer brand commitment. This study provides an explanation for the inconsistency in the use and measurement of brand loyalty, commitment and involvement and their relationship with packaging. Marketers are interested in developing "committed" relationships between consumers and brands and have used packaging as avenues to achieve such partnerships. Affective commitment is an emotionally based attachment to a brand where a consumer derives such value from a brand that he/she is interested in maintaining a long-term relationship with the brand.

Hren (2013) in a quantitative research attempted to determine the possible correlation between consumer commitment and brand personality characteristics. It was however discovered that the personality characteristics of sincerity, excitement and competence possessed the highest, strong, positive correlation with consumer commitment. Similarly, Li (2013) attempted to identify the key antecedents influencing brand commitment levels demonstrated by Chinese luxury consumers. It was however discovered that emotional value positively impact on brand commitment on luxury brands. The finding therefore offers a new insight into consumer perceptions of luxury brands and provides managerial implications for marketers to build sustainable luxury brand businesses in China. In the same vein, Shuv-Ami (2013) in a new brand commitment scale for market segmentation combined well established and related constructs of consumer behaviour into one scale-commitment. The study however provided an explanation for the inconsistency of the use and measurement of brand loyalty, commitment and involvement and their relationship to satisfaction.

It should however be noted that committed consumers are often willing to stay in an exchange relationship as well as put forth effort to maintain the relationship. Consumers who are affectively committed to a brand are less expensive to retain, less vulnerable to loss from competitive efforts, brand blunders or service failures, willing to pay a price premium and also desire to convert others to the brand through brand advocacy (Bolton et al., 2000, Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). Choi et al (2013) also revealed that logo, price and location were significant predictors of brand loyalty while Kim et al (2007) confirm that brand commitment occurs when consumers pledge or bind themselves to purchase a brand. In the same vein, Bansal et al (2004) found that customer commitment is a central construct in the development and maintenance of marketing relationships. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the higher the level of commitment, the higher the level of brand loyalty (Fullerton, 2005).

Turi et al (2013) also found that marketing practitioners are interested in developing "commited" relationships between consumers and brands and have used social media as avenues to achieve such partnerships. Li (2013) offers a new insight into consumer

perceptions of luxury brands and provides managerial implications for marketing practitioners to build sustainable luxury brand businesses in China.

According to Preetam (2011) building brand loyalty and commitment can be done by integrating the use of social media by the companies. Social media helps to improve brand visibility and engage with existing and potential customers. A high degree of loyalty and commitment among customers provide a firm with a series of specific competitive advantages, loyalty having strong positive effect in to main directions, reducing marketing cost and increasing the brands revenue.

Customers can manifest their loyalty and commitment to a brand in several ways: they may choose to stay with a provider, and they may increase the number of purchases or the frequency of their purchases or even both, thus generating higher revenues for the brand. They may also become advocates of the brand concerned by playing a powerful role in the decision making of others, thus reducing the brand's marketing communication costs. Furthermore, it is well known that it is more expensive to gain new customers than to keep existing ones, especially when the existing customer base is satisfied and loyal. Even if there are very low switching costs and low customer brand commitment, there is a substantial inertia among customers.

Kirkhang (2009) examined conditions for perception of brand values in Norway. The study revealed that affective brand commitment correlated positively with perception of value among consumers. This however generated a more realistic understanding of how values can be used to enhance brand commitment and loyalty. In same vein, Dodd (2002) investigated the effects of brand name information on buyer's product evaluation. It was discovered that there are strong interaction effects between brand name information and value perception resulting in brand loyalty.

Marketing practitioners will be better informed to better manage the information cues on product brands to enhance customer commitment and loyalty. Consumers need to understand the phenomenon of how perceptions of external market cues influence their buying behaviour and how the use of objective quality-rating information can counter this influence. Marketers' awareness of these commitment cues will contribute to a naturally ordered market so that both the buyer and the seller can transact business fairly and effectively.

Anuwichanout (2011) examined customer brand commitment and loyalty in the Airline Context. The result of the research found that perceived value (quality/emotional, response/reputation and behavioural price) significantly influence brand affect and brand trust. This inducates that marketing practitioners need to emphasize on delivering services with superior quality servicez, pleasing service interactions, companies favourable image and low behavioural costs to capture target market. Marketers may consider strategies focusing on developing ervices with reliability and integrity to enhance customer commitment and loyalty.

According to Bloemer and Kasper (2009), brand loyalty implies a deep-seated commitment to brands and there is sharp distinction between repeat purchases and actual brand loyalty. In their published research, they assert that repeat-purchase behaviour or commitment is the actual re-buying of a brand whereas loyalty includes antecedents or a reason or fact occurring before the behaviour. They affirmed that the loyalty and commitment of the customer base reduces the vulnerability of competitive attacks. In the same vein, Aaker (1999) clarifies how consumers prefer brands with characteristics that are in harmony with the personality traits

that form their images. Also Kim, Han and Park (2001) examined the link between brand personality, loyalty and commitment and found that the attractiveness of a brand's personality or package indirectly affects brand loyalty.

The findings of the study were also supported by Chandhuri and Holbrook (2001) where they empirically tested the effects of the two aspects of brand loyalty and commitment. Their findings demonstrate that consumer trust leads to both types of loyalty, where behavioural loyalty results in repeated purchases and therefore greater market share for the company while attitudinal loyalty results in consumer commitment to the product allowing a higher price for the brand. Similarly, Reichheld (2001) claims that the most important sign of commitment to a brand is the customer's willingness to recommend the brand to others because a person recommending is putting their own reputation on the line, the probability for referrals can be seen as a good predictor of loyalty.

Also, according to several researchers such as Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol (2002) brand loyalty results in positive word-of-mouth and repeat purchasing by the brand's existing customers. As stated by Alhabeeb (2007), positive word-of-mouth plays important role in strengthening brand commitment and loyalty and widening its reach. It acts as a free advertisement, declaring information on the satisfying experience with the brand and offering proven benefits that can lead to an automatic recruiting of new customers, who may do the same and pull in more new customers and so on. The group of favourable consumers gets larger and larger and many favourable consumers may soon become loyal and committed.

The current study was supported by Sung et al. (2005) when they examined the relationships among brand personality, brand attachment and brand loyalty and also investigate the moderating role of brand commitment. The study found that brand personality was an excellent preceeding variable that influenced brand attachment which in turn affected brand loyalty, also, there were significant differences brand comminuty members and non-members in terms of perception strength of the brand personality and influential factors making brand attachment. Similarly, Yang and Peterson (2004) confirmed that the moderating effects of switching costs on the association of customer commitment/loyalty satisfaction and perceived value are significant only when the level of customer satisfaction or perceived value is above average.

From the foregoing, it is pertinent that marketing practitioners reinforce foundations for consumer brand commitment to identify the uncommitted users and the potential users of a company's brand. Also brand managers will be able to optimise brand positioning and strengthen customers brand commitment in modern marketing management practices. Similarly, advert executives and package designers will be better informed to appreciate the importance of brand differentiation and trust for brand images to enhance greater commitment in the process of building a strong brand.

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