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Brand Perception and Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Study of Nestle Nigeria Plc, Agbara Ogun State

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Abstract
Product branding plays a crucial role in the success of businesses by creating a distinct identity and fostering consumer loyalty and it positively impact sales performance, leading to increased market share and profitability. However, the way consumer feels about a brand plays a key role in building any organisational performance. The driving force for any business as it's an effective source of passing message and staying in consumer's mind is very important. Many organizations have underestimated the need to design product branding strategies that are feasible to implement and work effectively in a dynamic marketplace. This study was carried out to examine the effect of brand perception on consumer buying behaviour in Nestle Nigeria Plc. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised consumers of Nestlé products in Agbara, Ogun State. A sample size of 385 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, and convenience sampling technique was adopted to select respondents. Analysis was done using regression analysis with the aids of Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings showed that brand trust has a significant effect on customers buying intention (β= 0.754, R2 = 0.904, p<0.05). The Rsquare value of 0.904 revealed that brand trust explains 90.4% variance of customers purchase intention. Also the second hypothesis showed that brand experience has a significant effect on customers brand loyalty (β= 0.572, R2 = 0.924, p<0.05). The Rsquare value of 0.924 suggests that 92.4% variance in customer's brand loyalty can be explained by brand experience. The study concluded that the way customers perceive a brand goes a long way in influencing their buying pattern. However, brand perception is the sum total of the experience, attitude and feelings customers have with a product. The study recommended among others that Nestle Nigeria Plc should strategically position its brand in the mind of its customers in such a way that customers are naturally drawn to the product.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Brand Perception, Brand Trust, Buying Behaviour, Customers, Purchase Intention.

Introduction

In the contemporary business world today, there is need to have a well-grounded understanding of the buying behaviour of consumers. As such, in order that the right marketing strategies and policies can be developed in meeting their needs more effectively and efficiently as well as helping to build the right perception about a brand (Ulas & Javad, 2016). Product branding plays a crucial role in the success of businesses by creating a distinct identity and fostering consumer loyalty. Effective

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branding strategies have been shown to positively impact sales performance, leading to increased market share and profitability. The end result of this for marketers and firms is to create more product differentiation to avoid their products being seen as commodities(Huang & Rust, 2021). To cope with this increasing demand, organisations and marketers have intensified the branding of their products to be unique from their competitors (Mitchell, 2017).

Recently, many organisations utilize different strategies on their products in order to attract new customers and differentiate their products from that of their competitors (Gupta, 2018). One important and effective strategy that can be used to influence consumer behaviour in product selection is using the brand of the product (Aghdaie & Honari, 2014). Brands offer several advantages to the organisation which goes far beyond its physical assets. In the opinion of Kisunsi (2020), creating an appropriate characteristic through product branding will draw a great distinction between products and services of competing businesses. Brands can make it easier for organisations to sell their products when they put themselves on the side of the customer and imagine what the customer would like to see in that brand.

Therefore, a brand is a set of tangible and intangible features designed to create awareness and unique identity and to enhance the reputation of a product, service, person, place, or organisation (Tanya, 2015). Organisation must make sure that its brand is the most accepted in the competitive market because it gives room for building a wide range of advantages to the organisation including low risk, increment in profit, association with other parties as well as the opportunity for brand extension (Makki, 2017). Brands also help to contribute and sustain the competitive nature of the existence of offers given because brands are usually connected with a unique image that can create certain associations in the minds of consumer (Keller, 2020).

Understanding the essence of perception is important in contemporary marketing because consumers' decisions to purchase products and services are largely influenced by the value they perceive in such offerings. Perception refers to the process through which individuals select, organize, and interpret information to form meaningful impressions about products, brands, and organizations. Various factors shape consumers' perceptions of a brand, including marketing communications, personal experiences, word-of-mouth, and social influences. While organizations can control some of these factors through branding and marketing strategies, other influences remain beyond their control, making it difficult to fully determine or predict consumers' perceived value of a brand (Kotler et al., 2022; Solomon, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

The contemporary business environment is characterized by intense competition, increasing product similarity, and rapidly changing consumer preferences. As a result, organizations can no longer rely solely on the functional attributes of their products to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Rather, consumers increasingly make purchasing decisions based on their perceptions of a brand, including the level of trust, credibility, experience, and emotional connection associated with it. Brand perception has therefore become a critical factor influencing consumer buying behaviour and organizational performance. The ability of a brand to create a positive and distinctive image in the minds of consumers determines not only its market acceptance but also its capacity to attract and retain customers over time. According to Muhammed, Mudasar, Hafiz, Qasin, Hira, Noman, and Bilal (2023), the manner in which consumers perceive a brand plays a significant role in shaping their purchasing decisions and serves as an effective means of maintaining a lasting presence in consumers' minds.

Despite the recognized importance of brand perception, many organizations continue to underestimate the need for comprehensive branding strategies that are adaptable to the realities of a dynamic marketplace. Keller (2016) observed that some firms focus predominantly on product features while paying insufficient attention to the strategic development of strong brand identities capable of influencing consumer attitudes and behaviour. Similarly, Kapferer (2022) noted that organizations often neglect important branding dimensions such as brand personality, organizational values, and brand purpose, concentrating instead on the functional benefits of their offerings. Such an approach may limit consumers' emotional attachment to brands and reduce the effectiveness of branding efforts in influencing buying decisions.

Although numerous studies have examined branding and consumer buying behaviour, much of the existing literature has focused on general branding factors, brand equity, brand awareness, and purchase decisions. Comparatively fewer studies have specifically investigated how dimensions of brand perception such as brand trust and brand experience influence consumer buying behaviour, particularly within the Nigerian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Existing studies

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also reveal inconsistent findings regarding the extent to which consumers' perceptions of brands translate into purchase intentions and loyalty, suggesting the need for further empirical investigation.

In addition, a significant contextual gap exists in the literature. Many previous studies were conducted in developed economies or in sectors different from the FMCG industry, making it difficult to generalize their findings to the Nigerian market environment. Similarly, while several studies have focused on multinational manufacturing companies such as Nestlé Nigeria Plc, limited empirical attention has been given to Unilever Nigeria Plc, despite its prominence in the Nigerian consumer goods market. This creates a geographical and organizational gap that warrants investigation.

Unilever Nigeria Plc, Agbara, Ogun State, operates in a highly competitive market characterized by numerous local and international brands competing for consumer attention and loyalty. The company markets a wide range of household, personal care, and food products that depend heavily on favourable consumer perceptions for market success. However, increasing competition, changing consumer expectations, and the availability of alternative brands make it necessary to understand how consumers perceive Unilever's brands and how such perceptions influence their buying behaviour.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the effect of brand perception on consumer buying behaviour in Unilever Nigeria Plc, Agbara, Ogun State, using brand trust and brand experience as dimensions of brand perception and purchase intention and brand loyalty as measures of consumer buying behaviour. The study is expected to provide empirical evidence that will contribute to the understanding of the relationship between brand perception and consumer buying behaviour within the Nigerian FMCG sector.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of brand perception on consumer buying behaviour in Nestle Nigeria Plc. While the specific objectives are to:

I. examine the effect of brand trust on customers purchase intention in Nestle Nigeria Plc;
II. assess the effect of brand experience on customer's brand loyalty in Nestle Nigeria Plc;

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated:

I. Does brand trust have significant effect on customers purchase intention in Nestle Nigeria Plc?
II. To what extent does brand experience significantly affect customer's brand loyalty in Nestle Nigeria Plc?

Research Hypotheses

$H0_1$: Brand trust have no significant effect on customers purchase intention in Nestle Nigeria Plc.
$H0_2$: Brand experience do not affect customer's brand loyalty in Nestle Nigeria Plc;

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is focused on investigating the effects of brand perception on consumer buying behavior with particular reference to in Nestle Nigeria PLC, Agbara Branch, Lagos. Respondents to the survey were the customers of Nestle Nigeria Plc, Agbara Branch. The research approach focus on this company because they are one of the market leaders of the industry in Nigeria on food processing (Statista market insights, 2025).

Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to provide a guideline that can be applied by an organization in order to foster their understanding on how consumers react to certain changes which is influenced by their perception so as to be able to maintain their customers. The findings from this study will have a wide implication on certain stakeholders:

Consumer: Consumers will also want to be associated with brands they derive high level of satisfaction from as a result influences their buying behaviour. Although impulse buyers may not really pay attention to brand s other buyers, unless they are influenced by a planned purchase decision

Mangers: The results of this study will assist managers to improve the way they manage their corporate brands.

Industry: This study will be of importance to the entire manufacturing sector, as it will provide the organisation with information that will help to evaluate whether the branding strategy being adopted has an effect on the buying behaviour of consumers of such product.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Brand Perception

A brand can be seen as set of tangible and intangible attributes designed to help an organisation known and create identity, and also to build the reputation of a product, person, place, or organisation (Tanya, 2015). A brand can also be identified in term of symbols, logo or name a product carries which helps such product to be differentiated from that of the rivals. It is a combination of many features such as packaging, advertisement, promotion, presentation etc. Consumers would only want to be associated with brands they can derive high level satisfaction from (Hafiza, 2015). As a result, there is need for an organisation to have an understanding of how consumers feel about its' product so that consumers can be served better, which in return helps to keep such consumer and attract new one.

Brand is 'perception' too.; which is the cognitive relationship of a consumer with the product. The brand perception of a consumer derives value (Zarlish *et al*., 2017). Brand perception is what consumers think or think about a brand. it can be seen as the sum total of all experience consumers' have with the brand. Brand perception helps in building customer relationship and it is owned by customers (Aiswarya and Jayasree, 2019). However, for the purpose of this study brand perception will be measured based on : brand trust, brand experience and brand image.

Brand Trust

Brand refers to the consumer's belief in the reliability, credibility, and honesty of a brand (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2020). The level of trust that consumers have in a brand can significantly influence their purchase decisions, brand loyalty, and advocacy (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2020).

One recent study by Folorunso and Akinlabi (2021) examined the impact of brand trust on customer loyalty in the Nigerian banking sector. The study found that brand trust has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty, indicating that customers who trust a bank are more likely to remain loyal to that bank. Similarly, a study by Oluwafemi, Oluwasegun, and Bello (2020) found that brand trust plays a significant role in building brand loyalty among Nigerian consumers.

Another study by Xie and Ma (2020) explored the relationship between brand trust, brand equity, and brand loyalty in the Chinese context. The study found that brand trust has a significant positive effect on both brand equity and brand loyalty, highlighting the importance of building trust with Chinese consumers. A similar finding was reported by Kim and Lee (2020), who investigated the effect of brand trust on consumer engagement in the South Korean beauty industry. The study found that brand trust positively influences consumer engagement, suggesting that building trust can enhance consumer engagement with a brand.

Brand Experience

The concept of brand experience has gathered the attention of marketing managers as consumers search for brands that provide them unique and memorable experiences (Schmitt, 2010). According to Schmitt (1999), traditional marketing appeals to functional links ith the customer. However, customers look for more exciting activities and experiential marketing emerges as a good starting point for customer brand relationship research. Then, creating distinctive experiences can provide enormous economic value for firms (Gilmore, 1999). Brand experience has then been defined by Brakus *et al.* (2009) as subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand related stimuli that are part of a brand's design, identity, packaging, communications and environment.

Brand experience is formed from a sensory dimension (related to visual, auditory, tactile, taste and olfactory stimulations provided by a brand) an affective dimension (including feelings created by the brands and its emotional links with the consumer) a behavioral dimension (which refers to bodily experiences, lifestyles and interactions with the brand) and finally, an intellectual dimension (including the ability of the brand to engage consumers in convergent and divergent thinking) (Brakus *et al*., 2009). Depending on the number of dimensions and the strength evoked by a stimulus, brand experiences can be more or less intense. These brand-related stimuli are part of a brand's identity and design (name and logo), packaging and marketing communications (advertisement and brochures) or the environments where the brand is commercialized (stores), and are the main source of subjective internal consumer responses or brand experiences (Brakus *et al.*, 2009).

Nysveen, et at (2019) concluded that brand experience has a strong influence on brand personality, brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. Moreover, Schlesinger & Cervera (2009) found that the ideal and perceived brand personality might differ among service users. e expect brand experience, service quality, trust and

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satisfaction to be important for loyalty in a relational context. Marketing activities related with a brand, affect a customer's mind-set with respect to that brand. Brand experiences are generated based on a customer's interaction and stimuli from a brand, either as part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, marketing communication or even the environment in which the brand is sold. Experience expect that some brand stimuli (e.g. color, logo and advertising) can change customer's perception of a brand's integrity, reliability and dependability.

Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the study of people and the product that helps in shaping their identity. There are so many diversities among consumers and likewise, there is great diversity among marketers. Behaviour is a reflexion of who a person is (Zubair & Sanjay, 2017). Schiffmanand (2000) as cited in Hafiza (2015), mentioned that consumer buying behaviour is simply about how individual, group of individuals or organisations make decisions on the basis of resources available to them i.e money, effort and time. Consumers consider certain product features before making decision with respect to purchase. Consumers view of specific brand creates a general belief of the product (Achmad. *et al.,* 2014). The consumer behaviour study involves how an individual or group of individuals select, purchase, use or disposal of goods, services, ideas, or experience in order to satisfy their needs and desires (Solomon, et al., 2008 in Ulas & Javad, 2016).

Consumer buying behaviour is a process by which individuals search around for the goods or service they need or want, make purchase decision to buy the required and most suitable one from different alternatives. It is important that marketers have an understanding of the various stages consumers or prospective consumers is likely to pass through before making their purchase decision, this is important because to helps the marketer to properly under consumer behaviour, as it is dynamic in nature and how they reaction to certain stimuli (internal or external) so that they can be served properly (Rizwan, *et al*., 2015).

Customers Purchase Intention

Customer purchase intention refers to the likelihood, willingness, or conscious plan of a consumer to buy a particular product or service in the future. It represents a consumer's predisposition to make a purchase after evaluating available information, personal needs, preferences, and perceptions about a product or brand. Brand and has an influence on consumer behavior. For marketers, whatever their companies' marketing strategies are, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumers' perception and attitude toward a brand, establish the brand image in consumers' mind, and stimulate consumers' actual purchasing behavior of the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity. Consumer behavior entails a wide range of concepts and is a broadly studied field due to its importance. Consumers follow through complex processes to choose, consume, and dispose of goods and services. These processes might entail behavioral, mental, and emotional responses of an individual or group. In this regard, consumer behavior integrates ideas and concepts from different fields of study, including economics, chemistry, biology, and psychology (Solomon, 2024; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).

According to Chandan (2019), numerous characteristics, specificities, and factors affect an individual consumer in their decision-making process, the retailers one chooses, the brands one prefers, their purchasing behavior, and shopping habits. A consumer's purchase decision is, therefore, a result of diverse factors. Commonly, a consumer seeks to identify the commodities they desire and select those that promise greater utility based on prevailing circumstances (Chandan, 2019). Consumers further consider the amount of money they are willing to spend on a specific commodity depending on aspects such as influence from their friends, how they perceive such a commodity and whether it addresses their current or future needs, among other influences. As a result, a commodity or service price might determine whether a consumer purchases or foregoes it.

On the other hand, some researchers believe that brand equity should be evaluated in terms of market share, market value and cash flow. Also, extant studies take financial performance and non-financial performance as the manifestation of brand equity. Financial performance can be described as brand premium and market share; non-financial performance refers to the brand awareness, brand reputation, brand loyalty and brand association. Following the brand equity analysis in the perspective of consumer and perspective of non-financial performance, this study analyzes the relationship between brand image and brand equity by examining consumers' attitude and purchase intention.

Customers Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a term that refers to a consumer's commitment and devotion to a specific brand, which can

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be influenced by a variety of factors, such as product quality, brand image, brand reputation, and marketing strategies. Brand loyalty is a crucial factor for the success of a company as it leads to repeat purchases, increased market share, and a more stable customer base, a study by Saha & Akhtar (2020).

Li and Green (2011) stated that in case of a strong competition, loyalty to specific brand, is significant for the success of the organizations. In particular, loyalty to a brand produces some practical advantages through saving marketing cost by means of spreading word-of-mouth (Keller, 1993). Saili et al. (2012) noted that loyalty have two wings (behavioral and attitudinal). The attitudinal loyalty is the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand as demonstrated by the intention to buy it as a primary choice (Oliver, 1997). On the other hand, according to Rundle-Thiele and Mackay (2001), behavioral loyalty includes procurement procedure, and continues in this behavior. Fournier (1998) noted that loyalty towards a specific brand is the outcome of a range of powerful emotions (psychological attachment) between both the customer and the brand. As stated by Nam et al. (2011) brand loyalty is behavioral construction relating to intentions towards repeat purchase; hence the loyalty is one of the consequences of brand equity rather than its component.

Consequently, in this research, brand loyalty is combined of two dimensions: to repeat purchase for the same brand, and recommend others (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Furthermore, the loyalty is vital since it increases the future market share of brands. Eakuru and Mat (2008) noted that loyalty leads to the success the organizations. The loyalty is the result of a successful marketing strategy in competitive markets that creates value for brands (Ramaseshan et al., 2013). As stated by Rechinhheld and Sasser (1990), loyal customers are willing to (A) re-buy brands, although there are competitive alternatives attractive to the cause of the shift, (B) further recommend the organization's services to others, (C) further spend a lot of effort to experience brands, and (D) give sincere feedback for an organization to serve their needs and expectations. Briefly, there are many types of loyal customers. Each group needs different techniques to create loyalty, for instance, by creating brand awareness and building a strong brand image through advertisements and other ways of grabbing attention.

Theoretical Framework
Aakaer Brand Image Value Model

The Aaker model of brand image value is a well known brand value model that helps in identifying the various factors that create the product brand value for the customer (Margarita, 2018). Aaker model indicates how to build a very strong brand image that ensures brand value to the potential customers. The model is made up of five brand building aspects, which includes; brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, perceived quality and proprietary (Isoraite, 2018). Brand value grows heavily as a result of customer's experience and association with the brand. This process involves a customer natural relationship with the brand, which happens accordingly to a predictable model (Margarita, 2018);

I. **Awareness:** there is need to draw customers attention to a particular brand, often through advertisement.
II. **Recognition**: the ability of a customer to be able to easily identify such brand any where it is found.
III. **Investigation**: this is the next step after customers have been able to recognize the brand.
IV. **Preference**: this is the last step in the brand value model. When users have a satisfactory level of brand experience, they become regular buyers of such brand.

Brand image means the perception or view that is associated with building brands that create impact on the consumer buying behaviour while buying products of similar features. This model is significant because it helps in enhancing brand trust and ensures customers loyalty towards the brand which lead to improve brand image (Kim & Chao, 2019).

Iceberg Brand Developing Model

The Iceberg model of brand developing focuses on the fact that brand image or perception of a firm can be developed through both short term dimensions and long term dimensions Kapferer (2022). Iceberg brand developing model indicates how a firm can achieve success in brand building initiatives as these initiatives have a positive impact on the consumer purchase behaviour (Mitra & Jenamani, 2020). This model is important as it helps to ensure brand value and brand image as customers focus their attention on the brands with highest brand image and value. The model ensures high brand appeal, brand value , brand trust and brand loyalty which positively affects the consumer purchase behaviour in the competitive market (WANG & SONG, 2019).

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Empirical Review

Ulas and Javad (2016) in their study, the impact of Brands on Consumer Buying Behaviour: An Empirical Study on Smartphone Buyers aims to understand the factors behind smartphones purchase decisions of consumers. This research used Aaker model about brand equity, including perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty to build hypothesis. The study involved the use of questionnaire administered to 171 smartphone consumers, and this consumer were chosen by convenience sampling technique among the entire population. The findings of the research indicate that a majority of the smartphone buyers, decisions are mainly influenced by brand loyalty and brand awareness. Perceived quality and brand association as no influence on purchase decisions for the sample of this study.

A study by Adegbite & Oladipo (2020) investigated the influence of brand personality on brand loyalty among Nigerian consumers. The study found that brand personality has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty, indicating that consumers are more likely to be loyal to brands that exhibit desirable personality traits. Similarly, a study by Cheng, Chiu, & Wang (2021) explored the role of brand image and brand attachment in building brand loyalty in the Taiwanese fast-food industry. The study found that both brand image and brand attachment have significant positive effects on brand loyalty, highlighting the importance of creating a positive brand image and fostering emotional attachment to the brand.

Another study by Pandey and Ullah (2020) examined the role of customer satisfaction and trust in building brand loyalty in the Indian smartphone industry. The study found that both customer satisfaction and trust have significant positive effects on brand loyalty, indicating that companies need to focus on providing high-quality products and building trust with their customers to enhance brand loyalty. Similarly, a study by Saha and Akhtar (2020) investigated the effect of brand experience on brand loyalty in the Indian retail industry. The study found that brand experience has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty, indicating that companies need to focus on creating positive experiences for their customers to enhance brand loyalty.

In addition, a study by Kim and Lee (2020) explored the impact of brand trust on consumer engagement in the South Korean beauty industry. The study found that brand trust positively influences consumer engagement, suggesting that building trust can enhance consumer engagement with a brand. A similar finding was reported by Folorunso and Akinlabi (2021), who found that brand trust has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty in the Nigerian banking.

Conceptual Framework

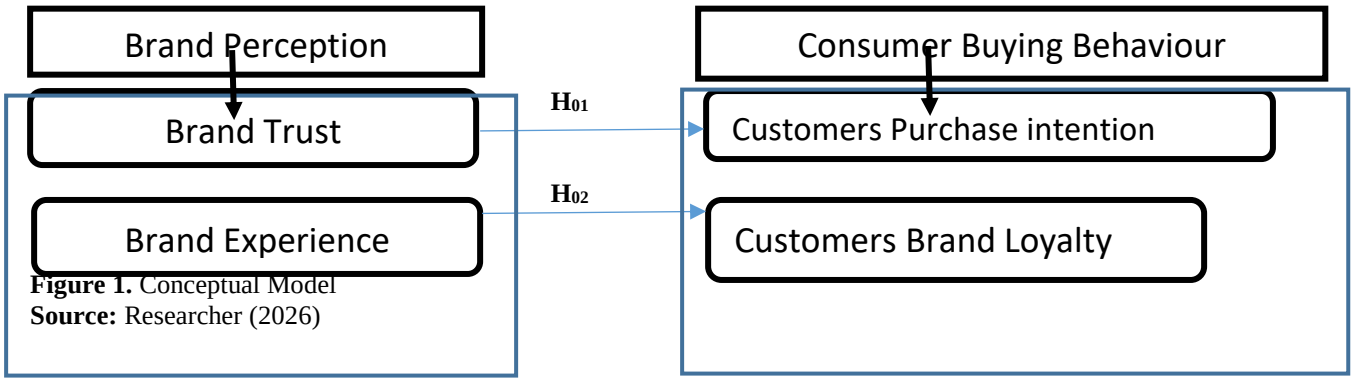


Figure 1. Conceptual Model
Source: Researcher (2026)

Research Methods

Research Design

The research employed a descriptive survey design to investigate the underlying reasons for behavior in the situation. This methodology was selected to facilitate collecting and analyzing pertinent information related to respondents' perspectives on the effect of brand perception and consumer buying behavior. Specifically, at Nestle Nigeria Plc,Agbara Branch.Research questions will be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses will be tested using regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance.

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Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all consumers of Nestlé Nigeria Plc products within Agbara, Ogun State. This includes individuals who purchase and use Nestlé products such as beverages, food seasonings, and dairy products. The population is considered large and indeterminate, as the exact number of consumers cannot be precisely determined.

Sample Technique and Sample Size

Due to the large and indeterminate nature of the population, a convenience sampling technique was adopted to select respondents who are readily accessible and willing to participate in the study. The sample size for the study was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for large populations at a 5% level of significance:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:
n = sample size
N = population size (assumed to be large, i.e., 10,000)
e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{10000}{1+10000(0.05)^2} \qquad n = \frac{10000}{26} \qquad n=384.6$$

The sample size was therefore approximated to 385 respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection
A self-developed and structured questionnaire was used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was divided into 4 sections. Section 1 solicited demographic information. Sections 2 to 4 were designed as five-scale Likert-type questions/statements. The scale ranged from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), and Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD). Section 2 solicited information relating to brand perception and Consumer buying behaviour; Section 3 solicited information relating to brand engagement; Section 4 solicited information relating to brand advocacy; Section 5 solicited information relating to brand trust.

Validation of the Research Instrument

Validation of Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was subjected to validity testing to ensure that it adequately measured the variables under investigation and generated data relevant to the objectives of the study. Specifically, content validity and face validity were employed in validating the questionnaire.

Content validity was established by presenting the draft questionnaire to experts in Marketing and Research Methodology. The instrument was carefully examined by the research supervisor and other academic experts to determine whether the items sufficiently covered the constructs of brand perception and consumer buying behaviour. Their comments, observations, and recommendations regarding the relevance, clarity, adequacy, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. This process ensured that the questionnaire adequately represented the dimensions of the study variables, namely brand trust, brand experience, purchase intention, and brand loyalty.

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Face validity was also carried out to ascertain whether the questionnaire appeared suitable for measuring the intended constructs. The experts assessed the wording, structure, sequence, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items to ensure that respondents would easily understand and interpret the questions as intended. Necessary modifications were made based on their suggestions to enhance the clarity and readability of the instrument.

Through these validation procedures, the researcher ensured that the questionnaire possessed adequate validity and was capable of generating reliable and relevant data for examining the effect of brand perception on consumer buying behaviour among consumers of Unilever Nigeria Plc in Agbara, Ogun State.

Reliability of Research Instrument

Reliability is the degree of internal consistency of the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of the research instrument. In order to determine the internal consistency reliability of each variable, coefficient alpha was applied on the pilot test conducted. A pre- test of the instrument was carried out from conveniently selected respondents from the study area that were not part of the study. The result of the Cronbach Alpha for each of the variable is presented in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Internal Consistency Reliability Result

S/N	Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Result
1	Brand trust	5	0.756
2	Brand experience	5	0.832
3	Customers purchase intention	5	0.842
4	Customer's brand loyalty	5	0.765

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all the study variables result test are above 0.70, which suggests that the instrument used for evaluation is highly reliable. Hence, the researcher affirmed that the researcher instrument was reliable for the study.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to the selected respondents. A total of 385 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to consumers of Unilever Nigeria Plc products in Agbara, Ogun State. The researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants where necessary, administered the questionnaires directly to the respondents. Before administering the instrument, the respondents were informed of the purpose of the study and assured that all information provided would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. The completed questionnaires were retrieved after completion and carefully screened for completeness and accuracy before being coded and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Techniques

Research questions will be analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses will be tested using regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. The data collected from the sample survey was analyzed using SPSS Regression analysis, utilized in determining the impact among study indicators.

Results and Discussion of Findings

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This chapter is allocated to the presentation and analysis of the research data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) was employed for the data analysis. Regression analysis, was used to test the hypotheses in order to establish the significant between the dependent and independent variables in each of the hypothesis.

This section deals with the presentation of demographic data, response rate and test of hypotheses
Table 1: Demographic profile of Respondents

Sex	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	88	65.2
Female	47	34.8
Total	135	100

Source: Research Survey, 2023
65.2% of the respondents were male while 34.8% were female.

Hypotheses Testing and Discussions of Results

Test of Hypothesis 1

$H_0$1: Brand trust has no significant effect on customers purchase intention.

Table 2: Model Summary of Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.721[a]	.504	.522	.20027	1.873

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand_Trust

Table 3: ANOVA or Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-stat	Sig.
1	Regression	3.568	1	3.568	19.497	.000[b]
	Residual	24.523	133	.183		
	Total	28.091	134			

a. Dependent Variable: Customers Purchase Intention
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand_Trust

Table 4: Coefficients of Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.164	.146		2.120	.266
	Brand_Trust	.972	.033	.961	8.291	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Purchase Intention

Hypothesis one examine significant effect of brand trust on customers purchase intention. For interpretation of the formulated hypothesis, the t-statistic values which determine the calculated differences represented in units of standard error, the R-square values that focus on the determination of the level of variance of the dependent variable that can be describe by the independent variable as well as the p-values that focused on calculated probability were used.
Therefore, Table 2, 3 and 4 shows the linear regression statistical outcomes of hypothesis one, which aimed at examining the effect of brand trust on customers purchase intention of Nestle Nigeria Plc. The findings showed that brand trust has a

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significant effect on customers purchase intention (β= 0.754, R^2 = 0.504, $p<0.05$). The Rsquare value of 0.504 revealed that brand trust explains 50.4% variance of customers purchase intention. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative was accepted. This implies that brand trust has significant effect on customers purchase intention of Nestle Nigeria Plc.

Hypothesis Two

$H_0$2: Brand experience does not affect customers brand loyalty.

Table 5: Model Summary of Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.651[a]	.524	.534	.24379	1.965

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand_Experience

Table 6: ANOVA of Regression

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.629	1	4.529	26.331	.000[b]
	Residual	22.848	133	.172		
	Total	27.477	134			

a. Dependent Variable: Customers Brand Loyalty
b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand_Experience

Table 7: Coefficients of Regression

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.112	.153		5.105	.052
	Brand_Experience	.572	.029	.761	7.362	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customers_Brand_Loyalty

Hypothesis two tested the significant effect of brand experience on customer's brand loyalty. Table 5, 6 and 7 explains the linear regression statistical results of hypothesis two, which is hinged on the effect of brand experience on customer's brand loyalty of Nestle Nigeria Plc. The findings brought to the fore that brand experience has a significant effect on customers brand loyalty (β= 0.572, R^2 = 0.524, $p<0.05$). The Rsquare value of 0.524 suggests that 52.4% variance in customer's brand loyalty can be explained by brand experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative was accepted. Thus, brand experience has significant effect on customers brand loyalty of Nestle Nigeria Plc..

Discussion of Findings

The findings to this research are has follows;

The result obtained from hypothesis one showed that brand trust has a significant effect on customers purchase intention in Nestle Nigeria Plc products . This result coincides with the findings of Cuong (2020) who emphatically stated that brand trust is positively associated with purchase intention. Brand trust was a precursor of purchase intention. For organization to maintain customers there is need to build adequate level of trust in the mind of its customers, as brand trust helps to build confidence in the mind of customers which influences their purchase behavior.

From hypothesis two, it was found out that brand experience affects consumer brand loyalty positively in Nestle Nigeria Plc. This result is in accordance with the findings of Ugur et al(2015) who confirmed that brand experience has a greater effect on brand loyalty. As a result, it has been deduced that brand experience is a crucial antecedent of brand loyalty.

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Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that brand perception plays a significant role in shaping consumer buying behaviour. The way consumers perceive a brand, through their experiences, level of trust, and overall impressions, influences their purchase intentions and loyalty towards the brand. A favourable brand perception enhances consumers' willingness to purchase products repeatedly and recommend them to others, thereby contributing to the long-term success of the organization.

The study further reveals that positive perceptions of a brand can strengthen consumers' confidence in the brand and encourage favourable buying decisions. In a highly competitive marketplace, organizations that consistently build trust and deliver satisfying brand experiences are more likely to attract, retain, and maintain loyal customers.

Therefore, it is concluded that brand perception is a critical determinant of consumer buying behaviour. For companies such as Unilever Nigeria Plc, developing and maintaining a positive brand image is essential for influencing purchase intentions, fostering customer loyalty, and sustaining competitive advantage in the market.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Unilever Nigeria Plc should focus on building and maintaining consumer trust by consistently delivering quality products that meet customer expectations.
2. The company should create memorable brand experiences through effective customer engagement and prompt response to consumer complaints and feedback.
3. Management should regularly assess consumers' perceptions of its brands to identify areas requiring improvement and strengthen positive brand associations.
4. Marketing communications should emphasize the values, reliability, and uniqueness of the brand rather than focusing solely on product features.
5. The company should encourage satisfied customers to share their positive experiences, as word-of-mouth recommendations can enhance brand perception and influence the buying decisions of potential customers.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Notwithstanding the limitations of this study, this research contributes well in providing adequate information on the effect of brand perception on consumer buying behavior. However, this research covers the food industry using Nestle Nigeria Plc. Further research could be done on the same topic with focus on a larger population in the service industry.

Moreso, the brand perception with variables brand trust, brand experience and brand image, and consumer buying behaviour with variables purchase intention, brand loyalty and purchase decision can also be used in other sector of the economy.

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