Consumer Brand Perception Variables and Purchase Intention of Selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Firms in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The role of consumers in product purchase is critical as the success of any firm depends majorly on how the brand is perceived and the intention to purchase such product. However most firms do not position their products in the minds of the consumers which consequently results to little or non-brand perception as well as non-purchase intention by consumers. This study investigated the effect of consumer brand perception variables and purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was 1,774,657 consumers of fast-moving consumer goods firms that reside in different local governments of the different five regions in Lagos state Nigeria, and a sample size of 499 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan. Primary source of data was adopted with a validated and instrument with a Cronbach alpha value greater than 0.7. Both descriptive and inferential tools were used for the data analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent sub-variables on the dependent variable using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27. The study indicated that consumer brand perception variables have significant effect on the purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria *(Adj. R^2 = 0.573; $F(4, 425)$ = 106.412, p < 0.05)*. The study concluded that consumer brand perception has significant effect on the purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study recommended that management of fast-moving consumer goods firms should prioritize developing and maintaining strong brand perception among consumers which will enhance purchase intention and firm's profitability.

Keywords: *Brand awareness, Brand attractiveness, Brand positioning, Brand association, Brand image, Consumer brand perception, Purchase decision.*

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Background to the Study

The intention of a consumer to purchase a product may be influenced by the rate of brand perception of such product. Consumers could be seen as the driving force behind successful organizations as their purchasing behaviour could determine the success of an organisation. Different measures such as effective marketing strategies, product innovation, customer service, and a strong online presence could be adopted by organisations to enhance consumers' purchase behaviour. Despite this, it is observed that consumers' purchase behaviour may not have been as expected due to poor consumer brand perception, which could lead to a decline in purchase intention, purchase decision, customer loyalty and customer retention. the global pandemic crisis has drastically transformed consumers' market needs, attitudes, and purchase intentions (Gu et al., 2022). The new market dynamics caused by the Covid-19 have taught consumers to set new priorities regarding their shopping habits and consumer behavior (Van et al., 2022). Impulse buying when customers actually do not have an idea what they want to buy.

According to Ursu (2018), the purchase behaviour in the United States is high unpredictable because of the changing perception and what individuals think a product should be able to do. The availability of products and services that meet the needs of consumers, as well as the availability of information on those products and services, can also influence purchase decisions (Weersink et al., 2021). However, with the post pandemic actions continuing to cause disruption, many are uncertain about their future, leading to a decrease in purchase intention (Mason et al., 2020). Also, many consumers have become more wary of brands and their practices, leading to decreased purchase intention (Li et al., 2021).

Consumers' purchase behaviour in the United States of America is largely driven by convenience and how the customers view the organisation's offerings. (Radoslaw Nielek 2018). Consumers in the United States of America are influenced by marketing and advertising, which drives their purchase decisions. Consumers in the United Kingdom often look for good value for money, quality, and convenience when purchasing. (Gomez-Luciano et al., 2019). Kowalska et al. (2021), posits that generally, customers with varied opinions and intentions are more likely to purchase higher-end products and luxury items in the country. On the other hand, conservative customers tend to focus on finding the best value for money and may opt for lower-priced items and more budget-friendly alternatives (Beneke & Rozum, 2018). Consumers in Poland exhibit price-consciousness and tend to compare prices of products before making purchase decisions (Kowalska et al., 2021). The consumers rely on the past actions and product capabilitie and their brands to make purchase decisions, as brand reputation is often associated with product quality and reliability (Wojciechowska-Solis et al., 2022).

The African culture places high value on relationships and communal trust, which further encourages consumers to rely on the opinions of others when making purchasing decisions (Bashir, 2019). However, customer retention in Africa is declining for a variety of reasons. The most important factor is the increasing competition from international companies (Siwela et al., 2020). Domestic companies are having difficulty competing with international companies

offering more competitive prices and better customer services (Mbondo et al., 2018). the lack of reliable infrastructure and services in Africa has been a major obstacle for companies trying to increase customer retention (Afiuc et al., 2020). Also, poor customer service remains a major challenge in South Africa. Customers often feel they are not being taken seriously and their complaints are not heard. This makes them less likely to remain loyal to a brand (Haripersad & Sookdeo, 2018). On the other hand, the Nigerian manufacturing sector is experiencing stiff and fierce competition Surviving the challenges, the marketing environment poses has been highly dynamic and competitive. Hence, only customer-centric companies can become successful.

Brand awareness is a powerful tool influencing consumer buying behaviour (Bilgin, 2018). When a consumer is familiar with a brand, they are more likely to purchase its products or services due to the trust built up over time. Brand familiarity is often created through various marketing efforts, such as advertising, public relations, word-of-mouth, and social media. According to Bilgin (2018), Brand attractiveness is a key factor that impacts purchase intention. Consumers are more likely to purchase a product or service from an attractive brand. Having an attractive brand increases the likelihood of customers making a purchase. Customers feel more comfortable buying a product or service from an attractive brand (Bernarto et al., 2020). Additionally, customers view the product or service as more valuable or worth their money if it comes from an attractive brand.

Brand image has a powerful impact on customer retention, as customers are more likely to remain loyal to a brand and have a positive perception (Isyanto et al., 2020). According to Hien et al. (2020), a strong and consistent brand image creates recognition and trust in customers' eyes and encourages them to remain loyal. Consumer brand perception significantly impacts purchase behaviour in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms. FMCG firms rely heavily on consumer buying decisions, and consumer brand perception is a significant factor in those decisions (Yu & Yuan, 2019). On the other hand, brands with a negative perception can be a huge deterrent to shoppers. Consumers are often wary of brands they perceive as having low-quality products or services. They may also be wary of brands they view as untrustworthy or unreliable. These negative perceptions can be difficult to overcome, as they can make it difficult to convert shoppers into customers (Ceyhan, 2019).

Diverse studies have been conducted on consumer brand perception and purchase intention in different geographical locations with mixed findings (Agmeka et al., 2019; Ceyhan, 2019; Dam, 2020). Nevertheless, the effect of consumer brand perception on purchase intention among the fast-moving consumer goods firms in Nigeria has not received adequate research attention. Thus, such a knowledge gap requires adequate empirical investigation. Most organisations fail to treat their brands as assets, affecting customers' purchase intentions. The pressure to deliver short-term financial results and media fragmentation will tempt organisations to focus on tactics and measurables and neglect the objective of building brand assets.

Another observed issue with poor purchase intention among customers of fast-moving consumer goods firms is the non-engaged audience. Sometimes organisations can get their customer's attention but have trouble holding it. The customer audience may see competing products or services but be uninterested. This results from poor brand attractiveness, which eventually affects purchase intention. Additionally, poor purchase intention among many consumers has led to negative brand perceptions, as customers view certain products as being low quality or not worth the price. The objective of this study follows the aforementioned which is to   evaluate the effect of consumer brand perception variables on consumer intention of selected FMCGs firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. To achieve the stated objective, research question and hypothesis are asked and formulated respectively.

Research Question
What is the effect of consumer brand perception (brand awareness, brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association and brand image) on purchase intention of selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis
Ho: Consumer Brand perception variables have no significant effect on the purchase intention of selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Literature Review
Consumer Brand Perception
Brand Perception is how customers view a brand because of their interactions and experiences with the brand, either directly (e.g., first-hand experiences) or indirectly (e.g., word-of-mouth) (Ifediora et al., 2017). Also, Brand Perception is what customers believe a product or service represents, not what the company owning the brand says it does. Brand Perception comes from customer use, experience, functionality, reputation, and word-of-mouth recommendations (Ajeyalemi & Dixon-Ogbechie, 2020). Sharma et al. (2020) opined that brand perception refers to a consumer's knowledge, perception, or impression of a product. The brand perception variables are conceptually reviewed below;

Brand Awareness
There are many definitions of brand awareness, but at its core, brand awareness is the extent to which consumers are familiar with a brand and its associated products or services. Brand awareness is often used as a metric to measure the success of marketing campaigns and to track the overall health of a brand (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). According to the work of Romaniuk et al. (2017), brand awareness is the capacity of a given customer to recognize or recall that a given brand belongs to a particular category of products. Brand awareness is strongly related to the power with which the presence and traces of a brand in customers' minds result in their capacity to recognize (identify) the brand under various market conditions (Ilyas et al., 2020). Brand awareness is a fundamental component of brand equity (Sürücüet al., 2019). It reflects the salience of a brand in the customer's mind. Brand awareness is the degree to which consumers are familiar with a brand and its associated products or services. A high brand awareness indicates that consumers are more likely to

consider purchasing products or services from the brand in the future. Brand awareness is the level of consumer recognition of a brand. It is the extent to which consumers are able to correctly identify a brand when they see it. Brand awareness is a driver of brand equity, which is the value of a brand (Dedeoǧlu, 2020).

Brand Attractiveness

The attractiveness of a brand is based on the extent to which a customer has a favourable evaluation of its characteristics (Stumpf & Baum, 2016). Also, Elbedweihy et al. (2016) defined brand attractiveness as a quintessence of those qualitative features of an organisation that are attractive to a target audience. Brand attractiveness represents the envisioned benefits that a potential customer sees in the product or service offering of an organisation (So et al., 2017). Brand attractiveness is the degree to which a consumer is attracted to a brand. It is a combination of the brand's perceived quality and the consumer's emotional connection to the brand (Ronda, 2018). The concept of brand attractiveness is relatively new, but it can be defined as the overall desirability of a brand. This includes factors such as the brand's reputation, image, and customer loyalty. Brand attractiveness is the degree to which a brand is seen as favourable, desirable, and appealing by consumers. Brand attractiveness refers to the positive evaluation of the brand's central, distinctive, and enduring associations and characteristics (Santiago, 2019).

Brand Positioning

According to Fayvishenko (2018), brand positioning is the process of creating a unique and differentiated position for a brand in the market. It is the act of defining what a brand is, what it does, and why it matters to consumers (Akbari et al., 2019). A brand's position is its identity in the market. It is how the brand is different from its competitors and how it is perceived by its target audience. Brand positioning is the personality of a brand that conveys symbolic and cultural aspects that enable consumers to relate to the brand in a humanlike way (Iyer et al., 2019). According to Perera, Nayak and Nguyen (2020) brand positioning is an attempt to create, change, or foster specific images about a brand in the minds of consumers. Brand positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market (Heinberg et al., 2020).

Brand Association

One of the biggest psychological influences on customer behaviour is brand association. This can be the silent difference between someone buying your product or a competitor's. It's a complex phenomenon that every brand wants to establish in the minds of their audience, but few understand how to create (Phong et al., 2020). A brand association is a mental connection a customer makes between your brand and a concept, image, emotion, experience, person, interest, or activity. This association can be immediately positive or negative and it heavily influences purchase decisions. Brand association is favourable sentiments of a consumer toward the brand given the relative level of brand quality (Rohit & Panda, 2018). Brand Association works as an information collecting tool to execute brand differentiation and brand extension (Perera et al., 2021). Brand associations help the consumer process, organize, and retrieve information in memory to aid product choice (Jin et al., 2019).

Brand Image

According to the work of Bilgin (2018), brand image is identified as an observation about the brand as replicated by the brand relations detained in the customer psyche. A brand image is the overall impression that a company makes on its consumers. It encompasses everything from the company's name and logo to its advertising and public relations. A brand image is the overall impression that a company makes on consumers (Plumeyer et al, 2019). It encompasses everything from the company's logo and slogan to its customer service and product quality. Creating a strong, positive brand image is essential for any business that wants to succeed in the marketplace. The corporate brand name or characters serve up as the mainly dominant part with that customer communication brands (Bernarto, 2020). The brand image is also stated as brand sense, and it is mainly established on customers' previous considerations and the position of the product or service but is well affected by organizations' symbol of their external brand communications (Marliawati & Cahyaningdyah, 2020).

Consumer Brand Perception and Purchase Intention

Mansuret al. (2021), examined brand engagement, the results showed that the use of Instagram is successful in creating destination brand equity because the entertainment and interaction dimension provided a strong effect on the loyalty dimension of the destination brand equity variable. The results further revealed that people who are online and following the Instagram account became loyal because the pictures posted gave entertainment value, joy, and relaxation effect. Similarly, Grashuis (2019), carried out a study on the impact of brand equity on financial performance, the empirical analysis indicates a positive relationship of brand equity to the financial performance of marketing cooperatives. Specifically, the result revealed that a1% increases in the total stock of trademarks and service marks have a positive impact of $130,441 and $141,921, respectively, on the net sales of the mean marketing cooperative. Susanto, Rinawati and Ramadhani (2019), observed that sales data and market share of a truck product called ILT in PT AIIS continues to decline during the period 2014-2016. Based on these findings, this research aims to improve purchasing decision performance of the truck by examining brand awareness, association, loyalty, and perceived quality.

Theoretical Review

Brand Equity Theory was propounded by American marketing professor Kevin Lane Keller in his 1998 book, Strategic Brand Management (Keller, 2003). According to Keller, a brand's equity is determined by the consumer's perception of the brand. It is based on the idea that the value of a brand is largely determined by how consumers perceive it and the brand's ability to create positive associations in their minds. The theory states that brand equity is created through a combination of brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations. Brand awareness is the extent to which customers recognize the brand. It is determined by factors such as advertising, word-of-mouth, and the brand's presence in the marketplace (Bae et al., 2020). Brand loyalty is the extent to which customers are committed to the brand and are likely to repurchase it. Perceived quality is how a customer perceives the quality of the brand relative to other brands. Brand associations are the ideas and feelings that customers associate with the brand.

Criticisms holds that the theory fails to account for the impact that external factors have on brand perception, such as competition and current events (Jiang et al., 2017). Furthermore, the Brand Equity Theory has been criticized for failing to take into account the impact of marketing tactics on brand equity, such as advertising and promotions. Likewise, the theory fails to provide a comprehensive framework for measuring and managing brand equity (Ishaq & Di Maria, 2020).

Brand equity can be used to measure consumer perception of a brand and to predict consumer purchase behaviour. Brand equity theory is thus a valuable tool for businesses looking to optimize their marketing strategies and improve their bottom line (Boukis & Christodoulides, 2020). Consumers tend to higher levels of brand equity more often because they are more familiar with the brand and trust it more. Consumers are also more likely to try new products from a brand with high brand equity because they feel more confident that it will be of good quality (Huang & Liu, 2022). As such, FMCG companies should focus on building strong brand equity to ensure that their products are more likely to be purchased and remembered.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was 1,774,657 consumers of fast-moving consumer goods firms that reside in different local governments of the different five regions in Lagos state Nigeria, and a sample size of 499 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan. Primary source of data was adopted with a validated and instrument with a Cronbach alpha value greater than 0.7. Both descriptive and inferential tools were used for the data analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent sub-variables on the dependent variable using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Restatement of Research Objective, Research Question and Research Hypothesis

Objective: Examine the effect of consumer brand perception variables on purchase intention of selected FMCGs in Lagos State Nigeria.

Research Question

How do consumer brand perception variables affect purchase intention of selected FMCGs in Lagos State Nigeria?

The objective of the study sought to examine the effect of consumer brand perception variables on purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. To achieve this, the respondents were asked to respond to various statement raised on various consumer brand perception variables and purchase intention. At the end of it all, due to publication, space the multiple regression was used to test the study hypothesis.

(H_0) which states that consumer brand perception variables have no significant effect on the purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria was rejected.

Table 1: Summary of multiple regression between consumer brand perception and purchase intention of selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria

N	Model	B	Sig.	T	ANOVA (Sig.)	R	Adjusted R^2	F $(4,425)$
	(Constant)	2.650	.005	2.812				
	Brand Awareness	.082	.097	1.664				
	Brand Attractiveness	.133	.004	2.921	0.000^b	0.761^a	0.573	106.412
	Brand Positioning	.108	.029	2.193				
	Brand Association	.235	.000	5.483				
393	Brand Image	.318	.000	6.921				
	Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image, Brand Attractiveness, Brand Positioning, Brand Awareness, Brand Association							
	Dependent Variable: Purchase Intension							

Source: Authors' computation, 2023 underlying data from Field Survey

Table 1 shows the multiple regression analysis results for the components of consumer brand perception on purchase intension of selected Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results showed that brand attractiveness($\beta = 0.133$, $t = 2.921$, $p<0.05$), brand positioning ($\beta = 0.108$, $t = 2.193$, $p<0.05$), brand association ($\beta = 0.235$, $t = 5.483$, $p<0.05$) and brand image ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 6.921$, $p<0.05$) all have positive and significant effect on purchase intension of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria while brand awareness($\beta = 0.082$, $t = 1.664$, $p>0.05$) is the only factor that shows a positive but insignificant effect on purchase intension. This implies that, brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association, and brand image are important factors to yield an increase in purchase intension.

The R value of 0.761 supports this result and it indicates that consumer brand perception has a strong positive relationship with purchase intension of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State Nigeria. The coefficient of multiple determination $AdjR^2 = 0.573$ indicated that about 57.3% variation that occurs in the purchase intension in selected fast-moving consumer goods can be accounted for by the components of consumer brand perception while the remaining 42.7% changes that occurs is accounted for by other variables not captured in the model. The predictive and prescriptive multiple regression models are thus expressed:

PI = 2.650+0.082BA+0.133BAtt+0.108BP+0.235BAss+0.318BBI+U_i---Eqn(i) (Predictive Model)

PI =2.650+0.133BAtt+0.108BP+0.235BAss+0.318BIss+ U_i---Eqn(ii) (Prescriptive Model)

Where:
  PI = Purchase Intension
  BA = Brand Awareness

Batt = Brand Attractiveness
BP = Brand Positioning
BAss = Brand Association
BI = Brand Image

The regression model shows that holding consumer brand perception to a constant zero, consumer reviews would be 2.650 which is positive. In the predictive model it is seen that of all the variables only brand awareness is positive and insignificant so the management of the company can downplay that variable that is why it is not included in the prescriptive model. The results of the multiple regression analysis as seen in the prescriptive model indicated that when all other variables of consumer brand perception (brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association, and brand image) are improved by one unit consumer reviews would also increase by 0.133, 0.108, 0.235, and 0.318 respectively and vice-versa. This implies that an increase in brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association, and brand image would lead to an increase in the rate of purchase intention of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. Also, the F-statistics (df = 4, 425) =106.412 at p = 0.000 (p<0.05) indicated that the overall model is significant in predicting the effect of consumer brand perception on purchase intension which implies that consumer brand perception variables except brand awareness are important determinants in purchase intension of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The result suggests that such fast-moving consumer goods companies in Lagos State Nigeria should pay more attention towards developing the components of the consumer brand perception especially brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association, and brand image to increase purchase intension. Therefore, the null hypothesis ($H_0$1) which states that consumer brand perception variables has no significant effect on the purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria was rejected.

Discussion of Findings
The aggregated results of multiple regression analysis for hypothesis one showed that consumer brand perception variables have positive and significant effect on purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria (*Adj. R^2* = 0.573; *F* (4, 425) = 106.412, *p* < 0.05). Thus, the combination of the independent sub variables was significant in predicting purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. This indicated that the combination of brand awareness, brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association and brand image has been found to have a statistically significant effect on purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria

Conceptually, Ifediora et al. (2017), opined that brand perception is how customers view a brand because of their interactions and experiences with the brand, either directly (e.g., first-hand experiences) or indirectly (e.g., word-of-mouth). Also, Brand Perception is what customers believe a product or service represents, not what the company owning the brand says it does. Brand Perception comes from customer use, experience, functionality, reputation, and word-of-mouth recommendations (Ajeyalemi & Dixon-Ogbechie, 2020).

Sharma et al. (2020) opined that brand perception refers to a consumer's knowledge, perception, or impression of a product. Perception is a crucial process through which an individual gathers information about their surroundings and infers this knowledge based on their needs, behaviours, and perspectives. Consumer brand perception is defined as the way consumers view a particular brand. This can include factors such as the brand's reputation, image, and overall customer satisfaction (Liu et al., 2019. Brand perception is important because it can impact a company's sales, profitability, and even its ability to attract and retain customers. While a consumer's perception can be influenced by their previous experiences, beliefs, habits, likes, dislikes, and sentiments, it can also be influenced by advertising and marketing messages. External stimuli provided through marketing communication can be used by businesses to impact customer mental processes.

The study aligned with the brand equity theory. Brand equity theory is relevant to the results of purchase intention as it helps to explain the relationship between consumers' perception of a brand and their willingness to buy products associated with that brand. Brand equity refers to the value a brand adds to a product, which goes beyond its functional benefits. It encompasses the brand's reputation, perceived quality, emotional appeal, and other intangible factors. According to brand equity theory, a strong brand creates a positive impression in the minds of consumers, which in turn influences their purchase intention. For instance, consumers are more likely to choose a product associated with a brand that they perceive as being of high quality, innovative, trustworthy, and reliable. In contrast, they may be less inclined to purchase products associated with a brand that has a poor reputation or negative associations (Huang & Liu, 2022). Empirical studies have confirmed that there is a positive relationship between brand equity and purchase intention. Stronger brand equity can lead to higher purchase intention among consumers, which translates to increased sales and revenue for the brand. Therefore, by building and managing a strong brand, companies can enhance their customers' perceptions of their products, increase their purchase intention, and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Brand equity theory is thus a valuable tool for businesses looking to optimize their marketing strategies and improve their bottom line (Boukis & Christodoulides, 2020).

Empirically, the results of this study align with different studies. Akhtar and Ahmed (2016) studied the impact of packaging, price, and brand awareness on brand loyalty: a reseller perspective in the mobile sector of Pakistan. Through regression analysis, it was found that packaging and brand awareness had a strong positive significant relationship with brand loyalty whereas price had a weak relationship with brand loyalty. This study found that product attributes have a positive relationship with brand loyalty.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The study examined consumer brand perception as measured using brand awareness, brand attractiveness, brand positioning, brand association and brand image as independent variable and components and purchase intention as dependent variable. From the empirical result, it was revealed that consumer brand perception variables have significant effect on the purchase intention of selected fast-moving consumer goods firms in Lagos State, Nigeria *(Adj. R^2 = 0.573; $F(4, 425) = 106.412, p < 0.05$).*

Based on the conclusion and result, it is recommended that management of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms should prioritize the development and maintenance of strong brand perception among consumers. This can be achieved through consistent branding and marketing efforts, including advertising, promotions, and social media campaigns that focus on building brand awareness, attractiveness, positioning, associations, and image. If this is done, the consumer purchase intention should be enhanced.

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