

EFFORTS AT ACHIEVING CUSTOMERS' BRAND LOYALTY: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIANS' PATRIOTIC CULTURE

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Abstract

This study was about manufacturers' efforts employed to achieve customers' loyalty of their brands of products and the commitment of Nigerian leaders to ensure that Nigerians imbibe patriotic culture to the Nigeria's nation. The study investigated the relationship between Nigerians' loyalty to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerians, and secondly, established that Nigerians' patriotic contributions determine the level of development of the country. Theoretical model of the learning curve developed by Howards and Irwin, 1963, was used alongside the theory of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, 1984, to draw home the learning attribute of consumers of goods and services. Two hypotheses were propounded at 0.5 significant levels; and tested with the use of correlation coefficient and regression analysis respectively. This study adopted a survey design. The population comprised all Nigerians from 18 years and above in the six geo-political zones of the country, which totaled 81,695,493. A multi-stage random sampling method was used to select the participants. A state was randomly selected from each of the six zones and the state capital was purposively chosen in the second stage. 134 participants responded to the questionnaire in each of the state capital selected. From the total of 804 participants, only 794 copies of questionnaire were used in the study. Validity and reliability of the instrument were measured at cronbach's alpha of 0.76 for internal consistency and alternative form validity of 0.69 to ensure accurate reliability via test re-tests. It was found that a significant negative relationship existed between loyalty of Nigerians to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerians. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected, that is, there is no significant relationship between Nigerians' loyalty to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerians to the country. Also it was revealed that Nigerians' patriotic contributions determine the level of development of the country. It was concluded that people learn about goods and services, etc overtime, hence efforts of marketers at achieving consumers' brand loyalty could be emulated by Nigerian leaders to ensure that Nigerians become loyalists to Nigeria's nation. It was recommended that Nigerian leaders should stand to be copied in all spheres of life. Also, governments of Nigeria should endeavour to appoint representatives of all labour force, including market women and students' bodies into the policy formulation committees for effective coverage of the population

Keywords: *Brand Loyalty; Corruption; Culture, Economy, Patriotism.*

Background to the Study

After fifty-two years of independence, 1960 to 2013, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is still bedeviled with various unpatriotic norms. As Africa's most populous country, 170.1 million people; according to Population Reference Bureau (2012), Nigeria is the seventh largest populated country in the world. Though, as much as our population gives us an advantage and earns the nation some prestige, it places us under a handicap; causing the country to be visited by a multiplicity of ills like corruption, ethnicity, favouritism, nepotism, and ineptitude of leadership, misappropriation of public funds, sit-tight syndrome of leadership, maladministration, parochialism, and conjugal dictatorship have been the orders of the day.

Literatures have been presented at places on these ills over the years, yet as reported by Olaleye, et al, (2013), Transparency International in 2012 ranked Nigeria the thirty-fifth most corrupt country in the world. The consequences of these are unpatriotic culture enveloping Nigerians of teenage to adulthood ages and Nigeria not measuring up economically, politically, socially and technologically in the committee of nations.

In today's intense competitive market, marketers are looking towards building a long term profitable business relationship with the consumers. The whole marketing orientation has changed from the production concept to the marketing and societal concepts. Marketers of products and services put so much commitment to ensuring that their brands of products penetrate the market places, win customers' patronage and remain on the consumer's priority whenever the need arises to purchase the particular products for a very long time to come. Incidentally, as many producers of similar and competing brands of a product struggle to ensure that the target population/consumers learn and conceive of the differences in their brands of a product. So many resources are committed to the brands until the eventual brand loyalty is achieved by the organizations. This study is out to justify the efforts being expended by manufacturers to the target markets. Hence, such efforts and traits could be emulated by Nigerian political and religious leaders to ensure followers' patriotism, while at the same time, the patriotic culture imbibed by the citizenry stands as total loyalty to Nigeria and all what the country stands for (Ben, 2005). **On the bases of the aforementioned challenges, the objectives of this paper are two folds**

- (I) To justify that there is significant relationship between Nigerians' loyalty to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerians to the country, and
- (ii) To establish that Nigerians' patriotic contributions determine the level of development of the country; in terms of improved political, socio-economic and technological growth.

The significance of this study stemmed from the objectives highlighted above as follows:

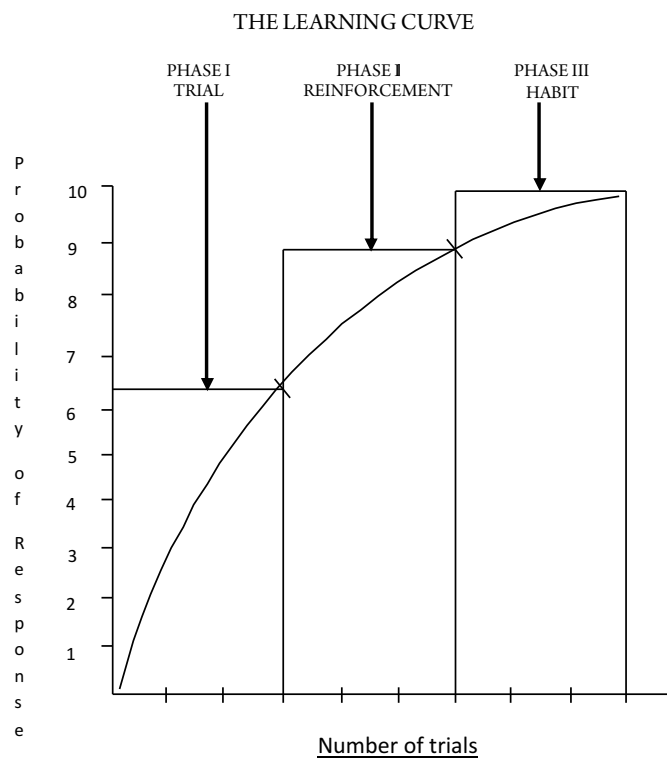
- (i) Positive patriotic culture of Nigerians will engineer and attract development and growth of the nation; just as ardent loyalty of consumers enables a brand of a product remains so long on the product life-cycle, hence keeping the organization in business
- (ii) The political leaders will appreciate the opportunity to serve in any capacity as a privilege; contributing in their respective areas of disciplines and portfolio, and not to defraud the nation
- (iii) All Nigerians, children, youths, and aged will cultivate and imbibe the culture and spirit of patriotism toward Nigeria as a nation. Lastly, Nigeria will bounce back to the admiration of the committee of nations.

Literature Review/Conceptual Framework

Customers' Brand Loyalty

Junjun (2010) was of the view that faithful purchasers tend to pay money for the same brand of merchandise, and speak highly of its values, hence, they believe that their choice is better than others. Rowley (2005) in Junjun (2010) asserted that there are four types of loyalty: captive, convenience-seekers contented and committed. Captive customers prefer repeatedly purchasing the same product, service and brand because of lack of opportunities to substitute for alternatives. Convenience-seekers may not respect the brand itself, but look on the convenience that can carry. Contented consumers, however, have a positive attitude to a brand, but they won't attempt to some extra consumption. The perfect one is the committed; they are active both in attitude and behavior.

Dick and Kunal (1994) claimed that brand loyalty consists of a consumer's commitment to repurchase or otherwise continue using the brand and can be demonstrated by repeated purchase of a product or service or other positive behaviors such as word of mouth advocacy. Also Kevin, et al, 2005 corroborating, claimed that brand loyalty is a favourable attitude towards and consistent purchase of a single brand over a period of time. Hoffman (2000) in Robbins and Miller (2004) argued that customer loyalty is most often considered as an asset; given its link to profitability and other general benefits. Marketers of goods and services, using promotional elements particularly, take consumers through the following four learning stages to achieve customers' brand loyalty: (i) knowledge of the existence of the product, at the base of phase One, (ii) experience, positive or negative, having purchased and used the product, at the end of phase One (iii) belief, having used and enjoyed the benefits accruing from the product, at phase Two, and (iv) attitude formation, that is, phase 3, loyalty stage to a product. At the loyalty stage, the product is already a house-hold name among consumers (Howards and Irwin, 1963). Figure 1 below is the learning curve of Howards and Irwin, 1963 showing the four learning stages.



Source: Questions and Answers: Behavioural Aspects of Marketing, Studentaid Notebooks, CIM. (1986). Sheffield, England (Modified from Marketing Management: Analysis and Planning, by John A. Howard and Richard D. Irwin, 1963)

On the horizontal axis is shown the number of times an article is tried in terms of purchase while the probability of a given response is plotted on the vertical axis. Thus, in the example, there is about a 0.65 probability that the consumer will buy the brand again after the third purchase and a probability of about 0.85 of a repeat purchase after six trials. After the tenth purchase, the decision on the brand is habitual, that is, loyalty, a purchase habit has been formed.

Learning Theory:

Kolb (1984) believes that “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” The theory presents a cyclical model of learning, consisting of four stages. One may begin at any stage, but must follow each other in the sequence as follows:

- I. concrete experience (or “DO”)
- II. reflective observation (or “OBSERVE”)
- III. abstract conceptualization (or “THINK”)
- IV. active experimentation (or “PLAN”)

Kolb's four-stage learning cycle shows how experience is translated through reflection into concepts, which in turn are used as guides for active experimentation and the choice of new experiences. The first stage, *concrete experience* (CE), is where the learner actively experiences an activity such as a laboratory session or field work. The second stage, *reflective observation* (RO), is when the learner consciously reflects back on that experience. The third stage, *abstract conceptualization* (AC), is where the learner attempts to conceptualize a theory or model of what is observed. The fourth stage, *active experimentation* (AE), is where the learner is trying to plan how to test a model or theory or plan for a forthcoming experience.

Nigeria as a Nation:

Clark (1990) expressed the view that nationality is a delineation of individuals belonging to a large group exhibiting somewhat similar characteristics, and national character reflects a stable set of personality traits that are common to population of the same nation. If this is really the case, then the concept of perception of the Nigeria's nation as a serious brand with product characteristics has implications on citizens' brand loyalty, as this could be very useful in developing marketing strategies. Amine & Shin (2002) demonstrated that nationality is a key classification indicator of willingness to buy. A previous study identified cultural differences between these two national groups. American society is found to be much more individualistic than Japanese society. Americans will look after their own interests and those of their families. Japanese will protect the interests of the members of one or more groups, believing that it leads to harmony with the environment and national unity (Hofstede, 1984)

Patriotic Culture in Nigeria:

Dawodu (2006), Ashimolowo (2010) expressed the views that patriotism to Nigeria's nation, by all classes of its citizenry, is lopsided. Against the background of many ethnic groups and complex nature of Nigeria are perhaps the reasons for its many challenges; among which are bribery and corruption, lack of unity among the heterogeneous ethnic groups, armed robbery, smuggling, low patronage of local manufactured products, nepotism, tribalism, as well as lack of respect for national heritage. Ogunmefun (2007) asserted that patriotism is a sense of national responsibility which should not be a short, frenzied outburst of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a life time. He expects that all Nigerians take the interest of the nation above personal and group interest.

Leadership and Corruption

The importance of leadership in an organization's effort is a world-wide phenomenon. Organization of all kinds and types spend a lot of time, money and efforts training men and women who will offer leadership. Though people abound who can fill executive positions as “heads,” it is not always easy to find people who

can assume leadership roles. In Nigeria, there have been stories of failures of many public sector organizations which in the recent past have led to the privatization of many government-owned parastatals/organizations due to the absence of political and administrative leadership that could make for success in the public sector. Corruption has subjected itself to so many definitions because of the multi-dimensionality of corruption; hence, corruption is better described rather than defined as definition may limit the concept. (Osborne, 2001)

Denis (2001) defined corruption in a very simple language as: "Giving something to someone with power so that he will abuse his power and act favouring the giver." Obasi (1988) defined corruption as a behaviour which deviates from accepted norm(s) and pattern(s) of proper conduct in order to serve private or parochial interest. Such behaviour includes bribery, nepotism, misappropriation of funds, misapplication of funds, abuse of power and strategic spending. This makes majority of the youths not being loyal to the nation saying; it is the product that satisfies a need that receives more patronage. They even claim that after all; out of the much they have offered to the government in terms of civic obligations and duties, only little or nothing is what accrues to them. That is why Agbakoba (2003) said that leadership is not for everybody but for certain persons who possess the quality of meeting the needs of the citizenry. From the above literature reviewed, two hypotheses were formulated as follows:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between Nigerians' loyalty to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerians to the country, and

Hypothesis Two: Nigerians' patriotic contributions do not determine the level of development of the country; in terms of improved political, socio-economic and technological growth.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey design. Survey design was adopted because the sample elements and the variables studied were observed as they were without making any attempt to control or manipulate them. The population for this study comprised all Nigerians from 18 years and above in the six geopolitical zones of the country, which totaled 81,695,493, that is (40,883,340 male + 40,812,153 female) (NPC, 2009). A multi-stage random sampling method was used to select the participants. In the first stage, the population was delimited by geo-political zones. A state was randomly selected from each of the six (6) zones, and the state capital was purposively chosen in the second stage. The states selected are Oyo, Abia, Akwa Ubom, Plateau, Kaduna, and Niger. One hundred and thirty-four, (134) participants responded to the questionnaire in each of the state capitals selected. However, from the total of 804 participants that took part in this study, only 794 copies of questionnaire were usable and used in the study. The questionnaire administered dealt with questions on respondents' Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics; Nigerian products and Brand loyalty; Nigeria's economy and policies; National loyalty, and Nigeria's leadership culture and ethics. Validity and reliability of the instrument were measured at cronbach's alpha of 0.76 for internal consistency and alternative form validity of 0.69 to ensure accurate reliability via test re-tests. Descriptive analyses were used in analyzing the data collected with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study made use of correlation coefficient and regression analysis to test the two hypotheses appropriately.

Discussion of Findings:

A. On the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, the 795 eventual participants in the study cut across 18years of age and above. 306(38.5%) respondents were ages 18-30 years, 267(33.6%) respondents were ages 31-40 years, 180(22.6%) respondents were 41-50 years, and 42(5.3%) respondents were 50 years and above. Educationally, 222(27.9%) respondents possessed West African School Certificate, 336(42.3%) respondents possessed National Certificate of Education/Ordinary National Diploma, and holders of Higher National Diploma/Bachelor of Science degree were 183 (23.0%), while 54(6.8%) respondents possessed Master of Science/Doctor of Philosophy degrees. On working experience, 231(29.1%) respondents had 1-5 years working experience, 306(38.5%) respondents had 6-10 years working experience, 234(29.4%) had 11-15 years working experience, and 24(3.0%) respondents had 15years and above working experience.

On the objectives of the study that there was relationship between customers' brand loyalty and national patriotism of Nigerians, of the 795 respondents, 288(36.2%) respondents strongly agreed, 351(44.2%) respondents agreed. Whereas 96 (12.1%) respondents were undecided, 54(6.8%) respondents disagreed and 6 (.8%) respondents strongly disagreed. On efforts at achieving customers' brand loyalty as applicable to Nigerian leaders for patriotic culture, 421 (53.0%) respondents strongly agreed, 203 (25.5%) respondents agreed, 17 (2.1%) respondents were undecided, 105 (13.2%) respondents disagreed and 49 (6.2%) respondents strongly disagreed.

On whether Nigeria's economic policies were not favourable, 180(22.6%) respondents strongly agreed, 279(25.1%) agreed. But 93 (11.7%) respondents were undecided, 141 (17.7%) respondents disagreed, while 102 (12.8%) respondents strongly disagreed that Nigeria's economic policies were not favourable. On bad leadership and corruption; having effect on national loyalty, majority, 195 (24.5%) respondents strongly agreed, and 240(30.2%) respondents agreed, 96 (12.1%) respondents were undecided, while 186 (23.4%) respondents disagreed and 78(9.4%) respondents strongly disagreed that bad leadership and corruption had effect on national loyalty.

On the question that Nigerians' unpatriotic attributes have negative effect on the economic growth, 264(33.2%) respondents strongly agreed, 408(51.3%) respondents agreed, 93(11.7%) % respondents were undecided, while 21 (2.6%) respondents disagreed and 9(1.1%) respondents strongly disagreed that Nigerians' unpatriotic attributes have effect on the economic growth,

B. On hypothesis 1, that there is no significant relationship between Nigerians' loyalty to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerians to the country. Table 1 below gives the summary of the analysis.

Table 1: Summary of Correlation coefficient

Variations	N	Mean	SD	r-observed	Sig
Consumer brand loyalty	795	4.92	0.904	-0.478	<0.05
Patriotic Culture	795	2.46	1.334		

Correlation used to analyze this hypothesis, (often measured as a correlation coefficient), indicates the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two random variables. In general, correlation or co-relation refers to the departure of two variables from independence. The finding of this study revealed a significant negative relationship between loyalty of Nigerians to indigenous brands of products and patriotism of Nigerian to the country at $r = -0.478$, $df = 794$ and $p < 0.05$ significant level. The finding implies that Nigerians' loyalty to indigenous brands of products increases, while the patriotism of Nigerians to the country decreases. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected because the r -observed is greater than r -critical. This result was corroborated by Beinart (2008) reporting when critics challenged Barack Obama's patriotism. Obama's supporters had a ready reply that true patriotism has nothing to do with little flags on politicians' lapels, nor it is about symbols; but it's about actions, and about the citizen's deep and abiding faith in the country one loves. Also, Budhia (2013) contributed that patriotism is the love for one's country and the willingness to defend it. That patriotism inspires the people for the noble deeds, and patriots rejoice in the glory of their country, nurturing fellow feeling and brotherhood among the people.

On hypothesis 2 which states that Nigerians' patriotic contributions do not determine the level of development in the country. Table 2 below gives the summary of the regression analysis.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.718 ^a	.516	.515	.903

a. Predictors: (Constant) patriotism

The model summary table provides helpful information about the regression analysis. First, the 'R' column is the correlation between the actually observed independent variable and the predicted dependent variable (i.e, predicted by the regression equation) which is 0.718. This implies that a positive relationship existed between patriotism and development. 'R square' is the square of R and is also known as the 'coefficient of determination'. It states the proportion (or percentage) of the (sample) variation in the dependent variable that can be attributed to the independent variable. In this study, 51.6 % variation in development could be accounted for by the level of patriotism of citizens. Further explanation is given under the table 3 below.

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA

Model	Sources of variation	Sum of square	df	Mean Square	F- ratio	Sig
	Regression	689.245	2	344.623	422.233	.000
	Residual	646.423	792	0.816		
	Total	1335.668	794			

The second hypothesis which states that Nigerians' patriotic contributions do not determine the level of development of the country was rejected at $R=0.718$, $R^2=0.516$, $F_{(2, 794)}=422.233$; $p<.05$, because the f -observed is greater than f -critical; while the alternative was accepted; that is, that Nigerians' patriotic contributions determine the level of development of the country. Substantiating this finding, Adoliba (2011), Chinyere (2013) unanimously addressed that patriotism was a strong force that could unite and promote the socio-economic development of a community; saying that social vices such as nepotism and discrimination only divide towards conflicts and poverty; that most of the developed countries of the world today attained greatness, partly as a result of the patriotism shown by their citizens.

Conclusion from the Findings

- (i) Very strong relationship between customers' brand loyalty and national patriotism was revealed, (80.4%); signifying that efforts being expended by marketers at achieving customers' brand loyalty; if spent on over 170 millions Nigeria's population by the leaders, will influence majority of Nigerians to develop patriotic culture towards the nation, what it stands for, patronizing the locally made goods and materials and talking well about the country.
- (ii) Policies and programmes of successive governments since 1967, after the civil war, have not been able to curb or eradicate corruption in Nigerian society. Neither have political nor other leaders in the society assisted in setting good examples for the followers to emulate.
- (iii) The low level of patriotism by Nigerians to the nation informed the country's low and slow rate of development in all sphere of life. The effect is backwardness in issues of economy, politics, social and technology.

Recommendations from the Findings

- (i) It was suggested that Federal government of Nigeria should endeavor to appoint representatives of all labour force, including market women and students' bodies into the policy formulation committees of Nigeria for effective coverage of the population.
- (ii) On (i) above, leaders at all sectors of the economy and levels are enjoined to put up new orientation; judging by American experience, exhibit positive thinking, selfless service and innovativeness to the development of the communities and nation generally.
- (iii) On (ii) above, it is suggested therefore that government can work out modalities in advancing on leadership capabilities by offering of social amenities and other facilities that make life befitting for the people as to get the real patriotism of citizens that will make the nation develop better since patriotism also affects economic growth.
- (iv) Finally while the government endeavors to be service-oriented to the people they govern in order to get unlimited patriotism of the people, the academics, researchers and professionals need to do more to assist the government in policy formulation, execution, monitoring and supervision of programmes.

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