

Full Length Research

Branding as Competitive Edge in Multi-Product Alcoholic Drinks Markets in Nigeria

OKOROZOH, Ugochukwu Lawrence

Industrial Promotions, Information and Documentation Department, Projects Development Institute (PRODA) Enugu
PRODA Road (off Abakaliki Express way) Emene Industrial Layout, Emene , Enugu.
Correspondence: okorozoh@gmail.com or ugochukwu.okorozoh@proda.gov.ng. Tell: +(234)8137293249

Accepted 15 May 2024

The market place is not what it used to be, it is radically changing as a result of major societal forces such as technological advancements and globalization. These major forces have created new behaviours and challenges. Consumers are showing greater price sensitivity in their search for value and brand manufacturers are facing intense competition from the domestic and foreign brands which is resulting in brand promotion costs and shrinking profit margins. The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of branding on the competitiveness of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria which resulted to the formulation of research questions and hypotheses in line with the branding variables. The study adopted the survey design. Five selected multi-product alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria were used for the study. A sample size of 353 respondents was used. The source of data for the study was primary. The main instrument used for primary data was a questionnaire, which was structured on a five-point summated Likert scale. The instrument was checked for reliability and validity using discriminant validity and Cronbach alpha. The data generated from the field survey were presented and analyzed using a quantitative method of frequency distribution, tables, and simple percentages. Multiple linear regression analysis (MLR) was used to test the hypotheses because of its ability to summarize the nature of the relationship between variables. The findings show that positioning the brand statistically had a significant positive relationship with product differentiation. Communicating the brand message had a statistically significant positive impact on product differentiation. Delivering the brand performance had a significant positive effect on product differentiation. Leveraging the brand equity has no significant impact on product differentiation and Perceived brand quality has no significant effect on product differentiation. From the findings of this study, consistency of integrated communications and messages along the brand identity dimensions targeted towards customers is critical to the success of brand-building efforts by delivering a consistent, self-reinforcing brand image. Companies need to ensure that the brand remains strong even during difficult times and offers value that is consistent with the brand promise.

Keywords: Competition, Competitiveness, Consumers, Brand, Alcoholic beverage, Promotion

Citation: OKOROZOH, U.L. (2024). Branding as Competitive Edge in Multi-Product Alcoholic Drinks Markets in Nigeria. Inter. J. Econ. Bus. Manage. Vol. 12(3), pp. 107-139.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian alcoholic beverage market is today a highly competitive one, with many different brands vying for consumers' attention and loyalty. In order to stand out in this crowded market, it is essential to establish a strong brand identity that resonates with your target audience. This is because, brands are no longer supportive functions of marketing as it used to be rather brands are the essence of marketing (Salazermorning & Strannegard, 2017) providing owners, investors, and shareholders with great financial rewards than unbranded products (Pahud & Vanreil, 2018). Branding has a remarkable capacity to impact the way people perceive products with one of the most important aspects

of branding as consistency. Your brand should be instantly recognizable across all of your products, from packaging to advertising to in-store displays. This consistency helps to build brand awareness and familiarity, which in turn leads to greater trust and loyalty among consumers.

Consumers rarely just see a product or service; they see the product together with the brand. As a result, how they perceive a product is shaped by the brand. Ancient history provides evidence on the importance of branding and in those days, names were put on such goods as bricks in order to identify their maker (Farquhar, 1989). It is also known that trade guilds in medieval Europe used trademarks to assure the customer and provide legal protection to the producer.

Since the earliest times, producers of goods use branding to distinguish their products. Producers' pride in their products has no doubt played a part in branding and provided an edge which provides purchasers with a means of recognizing and specifying products and increasing desire to repurchase or recommend the products to others.

In recent times, almost everything has a brand: a company, a country, city, politician, an artist and so on. Marketing and advertising a brand is a form of sales. Brand is not what you say it is, it is what they say it is (Jones and Taylor, 2017). The main goal of any branding activities is to be able to create trust and loyalty which often leads to the possibility of charging a higher price for the product and branding is built to create action (Goward, 2015). The importance of branding has therefore been established as a success factor to modern business firms. More so, the beer industry in Nigeria in recent time is flooded with a vast variety and a number of brands which are struggling with each other to make their own mark in the industry and fighting the fierce competitors to win over consumers.

Anyanwu (2019) notes that despite the efforts Nigerian Breweries Plc had made to sustain its position as market leaders in the alcoholic beverage market in order to increase the sales fortune of some of its flagship brands through various channels of promotion which includes but not limited to multiproduct branding, cultural galas, advertising and sales promotion, the brand communication effectiveness had remained significant and therefore adopted by other alcoholic beverage marketers desirous of competing in the market thereby making the competitive landscape more intense especially for the five selected beverage companies in this study. Nigerian Breweries Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc, International Breweries Plc, Intafact Beverages Ltd and Consolidated Breweries Plc who are multiproduct alcoholic beverage manufacturers leading in one product category or the other in the lager beer market. While Nigerian breweries is leading the market with its premium brands of Heineken, Star, Gulder and other lower priced products like Life, Goldberg, "33" and others, International breweries, Guinness, Intafact Beverages are favorably competing with Harp, Hero, Trophy, Satzenbrau, while Guinness is leading the pack in the Dark ale (Stout) category, International Breweries Trophy Stout, Nigerian Breweries Legend Stout, Intafact Beverages Castel Stout and Consolidated Breweries Turbo King have provided a competition in that category.

Statement of the Problem

In the contemporary marketing environment, it has always been a difficult task to say exactly which factors motivate consumers to prefer a particular product to another. Most marketers have paid attention to factors that in their estimation determine consumers' preference for their products without giving due consideration to factors that influence consumers' buying decisions. Most have used numerous measures, which are not products of brand specifics to establish the relationship. The majority have attempted to study consumer preferences and choices based on personality, psychographics, and demographic characteristics. However, Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1978) pointed out that since world war 11, economic and demographic variables have become less determinant of products and brand preferences while personality variables have made minimal contributions to the understanding of consumer behavior.

The result is that marketing plans designed for a particular product may fail to attain the desired and targeted result for reasons that consumers are unpredictable in their behavior. Consumers also expect that firms will offer the right match of product, quantities, place, time, and price by the right appeal. This is because retailing in Nigeria has gone through a significant change in the last couple of years with a complete shift in shoppers' expectations and experiences. While the shoppers have remained the same, everything has changed and gone mega, ranging from the size of the outlet to the layout, ambiance, the experience, the service, the loyalty, incentives, to the way promotions are done (Ojasala & Olkkonen, 2008).

Accordingly therefore, creation and sustenance of competitive advantage was achieved through product differentiation in companies. Kibet and Chepkuto (2010) found out that companies strive to survive and succeed in competition by pursuing strategies that enable them to perform better than their competitors. Despite alcoholic beverage companies implementing competitive strategies, empirical study on the role of competitive advantage in the company has not been established.

It is against this background that some firms as alcoholic beverage manufacturing companies in Nigeria are still presently challenged about the right branding strategies to adopt as a core competitive strategy to avoid a reduction in market share and declining profitability and stiff competition due to product cannibalization (Roll, 2018).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of branding on the competitiveness of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria. Specific objectives include the following:

To ascertain the extent to which positioning the brand affects product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria.

Determine the extent communicating the brand message affects the product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies.

Determine the extent to which delivering the brand performance affects product differentiation.

Determine how leveraging the brand equity affects product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria.

Examine the extent perceived brand quality influences product differentiation in alcoholic beverage markets in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions will aid the study

To what extent does positioning the brand affect product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria?

To what extent can communicating the brand message affect the product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies?

To what extent does delivering the brand performance affect product differentiation?

To what extent can leveraging the brand equity affect product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria?

To what extent can perceived brand quality influences product differentiation in alcoholic beverage markets in Nigeria?

Hypotheses Formulation

The following hypotheses stated in their alternate forms were tested

Positioning the brand by alcoholic beverage companies has a positive effect on product differentiation.

Communicating the brand message has a significant effect on the product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria.

There is a significant relationship between delivering the brand performance and product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria.

The extent of knowledge of leveraging the brand equity has a positive influence on product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria.

The application of perceived brand quality has a significant effect on product differentiation in the alcoholic beverage markets in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Branding

According to American Marketing Association (AMA); *“a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition”* (Keller, 2013). The key to creating a brand is to be able to choose a name, logo, symbol, package design, and other characteristics that identify a product and simultaneously distinguish it from others. These different components of a brand that identify and differentiate it are recognized as brand elements (Keller, 2013).

The area of branding has emerged as a top priority for management in the last 20 years. This has therefore made brands to be no longer a supportive function as was originally intended to. It is today one of the most valuable intangible assets within a firm (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). The brand name encompasses the years of advertising, goodwill, quality evaluation, product experience, and other beneficial attributes the market associates with the product. Customers everywhere respond to images myths and metaphors that help them define their personal and national identities within the context of world culture and product benefits. Strong global brands play an important role in that process. One authority speculates that brands are so valuable that companies will soon include a statement of value addendum to their balance sheets to include intangibles such as the value of their brands.

The concept of the brand can be traced back to product marketing, where the role of branding and brand management has been primarily to create differentiation and preference for a product or service in the mind of the customer (Knox and Bickerton, 2003). For Srivastava and Gregory (2010) branding strategies are developed by the organization, for the product, to position and identify the brand with positive product benefits to attract potential customers, create brand awareness, and to increase profitability. Knox and Bickerton (2003) continued, "The development of product branding over the past 30 years is characterized by layers of added value built around the core functionality of the product or service to create and maintain a distinction in a particular market." In simple terms, brands are used as the communication between a product or service and its existing and prospective customers. De Chernatony and McDonald (2003) support the fact that both products attributes and brand trust can simultaneously be achieved when "viewed from a consumer perspective, branding at its most simple terms can be used to convey a product's functional qualities and associated benefits, and to establish trust and confidence in the product. A successful brand is an identifiable product, place, or person, augmented in such a way that the user or buyer can perceive the importance, sustainable added values, and uniqueness that match or satisfy their needs (Phipps et al., 2010). It has characteristics such as logos, names, colours, word of mouth, creating awareness of the brand through online mediums and also the traditional mediums. Branding has a critical role to play in terms of increasing the value and promoting a constructive dialogue between customers and companies. As branding is applied in more and more different settings, brand theory and best practice guidelines need to be refined to reflect the unique realities of those settings (Keller, 2002).

Keller (2008) takes a wider perspective on branding and adds tangible and intangible brand elements, rational and emotional brand elements, and symbolic brand elements, which differentiate and identify a brand. Hence, Keller's definition is taken from a more holistic point of view: "A brand is, therefore, more than a product, because it can have dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same needs" (Keller, 2008). Van Gelder (2003) recognizes the managerial interdependencies and argues that "a brand is the translation of the business strategy into a consumer experience that brings about specific behavior".

For Kapferer (2008), the brand is a source of influence; a system of interconnected mental associations (brand image) and relationships. According to Kapferer (2008), a brand as such exists when it has the power to influence the market acquired by its sources of cumulative brand experience. The dynamics of branding and the bi-directional contingencies between the brand and the market make the brand a living system built around three anchor points: (1) product and service, (2) name and symbols, (3) concept. (See figure 1).

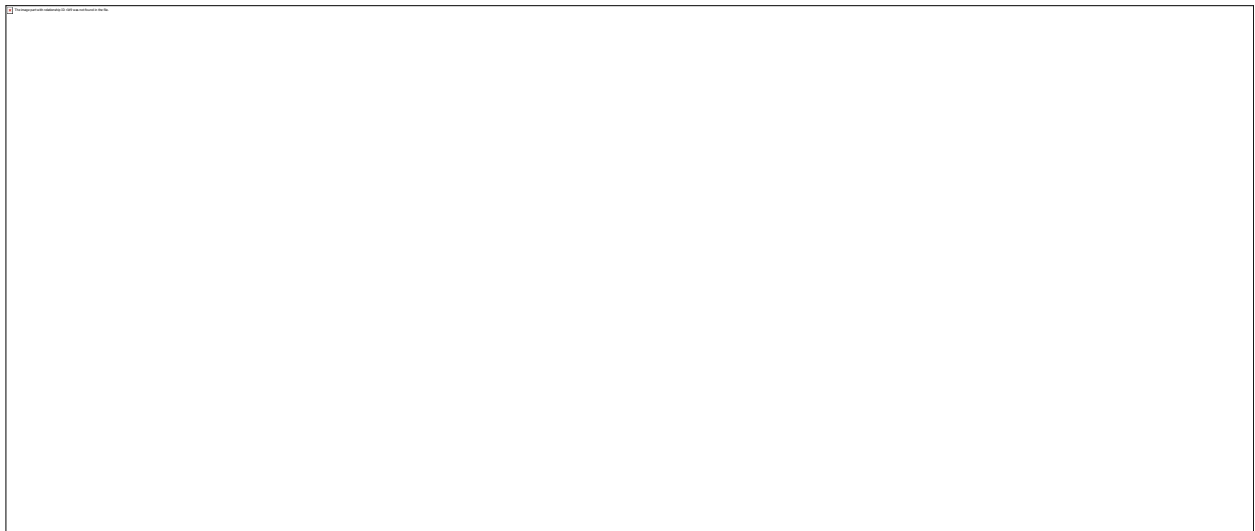


Figure 1.

Source: The brand system: power of influence. (Kapferer 2008)

Kotler and Pfoertsch (2006) adopted the holistic paradigm and argue next that a brand is a promise to the consumer at which the brand has formed a set of perceptions about a product, service, or business. It holds, therefore, a distinctive influential position in the customer's mind where the brand represents a short-cut of attributes, benefits, beliefs, and values based on past experiences, associations, and future expectations. Finally, it is the brand that differentiates, reduces complexity, and simplifies the decision-making process.

Brands vary in power they exercise in the marketplace - because, ultimately, their power resides in the minds of consumers (Kapferer 2008). Consumers are not passive recipients of marketing activity, and branding is not done to

consumers; rather, branding is something that customers do things with. The power of a brand can thus be understood in terms of its position in the minds of customers. At one extreme are brands that are unknown to most buyers in the marketplace. Then, there are brands about which buyers have a degree of awareness recall and recognition. Beyond such awareness, some brands have a degree of brand acceptability. Then, some brands enjoy a degree of preference. Finally, some brands command a degree of brand loyalty (Keller 2010;

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model for brand building in competitive markets, known as PCDL Model by (Ghodeswar, B.M. 2008) and brand equity theory developed by (Aaker, D. 1991) will be used in giving this work a direction which underpin the variables used in this study. The model is an attempt to present a direction that will facilitate an understanding of the system by revealing the critical components of the concepts of Building Brands (brand positioning, communicating the brand message, delivering brand performance, leveraging brand equity, and perceived brand quality) and how they relate to the competitive edge which was operationalized with differentiation. The dimensions include **positioning the brand, communicating the brand message, delivering the brand performance, leveraging the brand equity, and the perceived brand quality** from brand equity theory.

Conceptual Framework of the Study Branding

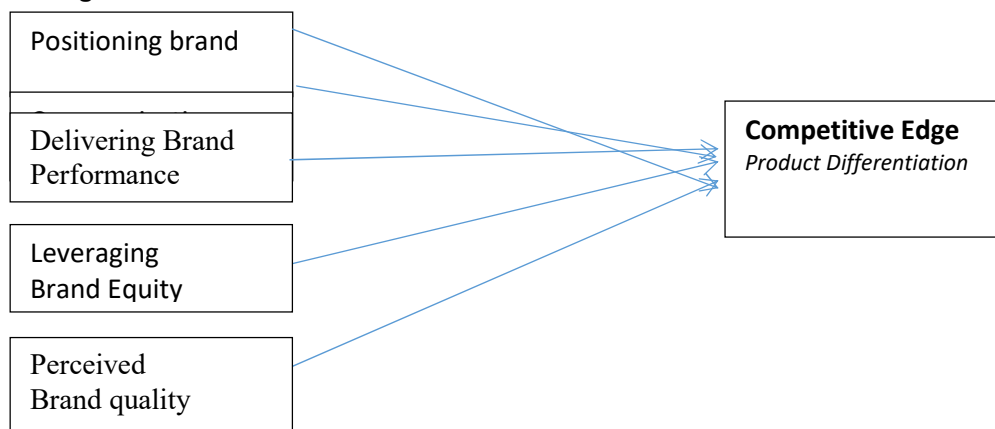


Fig 2.

Source: Adapted from Bhimrao M Ghodeswar, (2008), Building brand identity in competitive markets: a conceptual model. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol.17 Iss 1pp.4-12. DOI: 10.1108/10610420810856468

The conceptual framework indicates that brand positioning, communicating the brand message, delivering brand performance, leveraging brand equity, and perceived brand quality as the independent variables have a direct relationship with competitive edge operationalized with differentiation as the dependent variable.

Competitive Advantage of Multi-Product Firms

A competitive advantage is defined as a condition that enables a country or firm to operate in a more efficient or otherwise higher-quality manner than its competitors, and which results in benefits accruing. Competitive advantages usually originate in a core competency. A company's core competency is the one thing that a company can do better than its competitors. A competitive advantage can entail a variety of company characteristics, for example, customer focus, brand equity, product quality, research, and development focus. To be effective, competitive advantage must be; difficult to mimic, Applicable to multiple situations, Unique, Sustainable, and Superior to the competition (Porter, 2008).

At the heart of competitive advantage is a firm's positioning in the marketplace as defined by its marketing strategy. There are two basic types of competitive advantages: lower cost and differentiation. Lower cost is the ability of a firm to design, produce, and market a comparable product more efficiently than its competitors. At prices at or near competitors, lower cost translates into superior returns. Differentiation is the ability to provide unique and superior value to the buyer in terms of product quality, special features, or after-sale service. Differentiation allows a firm to command a

premium price, which leads to superior profitability provided costs are comparable to competitors (Porter, 1985). The competitive advantage of either type translates into higher productivity than that of competitors. The low-cost firm produces a given output using fewer inputs than competitors require. The differentiated firm achieves higher revenues per unit than competitors (Porter, 1985). These strategies can be seen in Figure 3. Michael Porter's generic strategies also take into account a firm's competitive scope or the breadth of the firm's target within its industry. A firm must choose the range of products it will produce, the distribution channels it will employ, the type of buyers it will serve, the geographic areas in which it will sell, and the array of related industries in which it will compete (Porter, 1985). The ultimate value a firm creates is measured by the amount buyers are willing to pay for its product or service.

A firm is profitable if this value exceeds the collective cost of performing all the required activities. To gain a competitive advantage over its rivals, a firm must either provide comparable buyer value but perform activities more efficiently than its competitors (lower cost), or provide activities in a unique way that creates greater buyer value and commands a premium price (differentiation) (Porter, 1985)

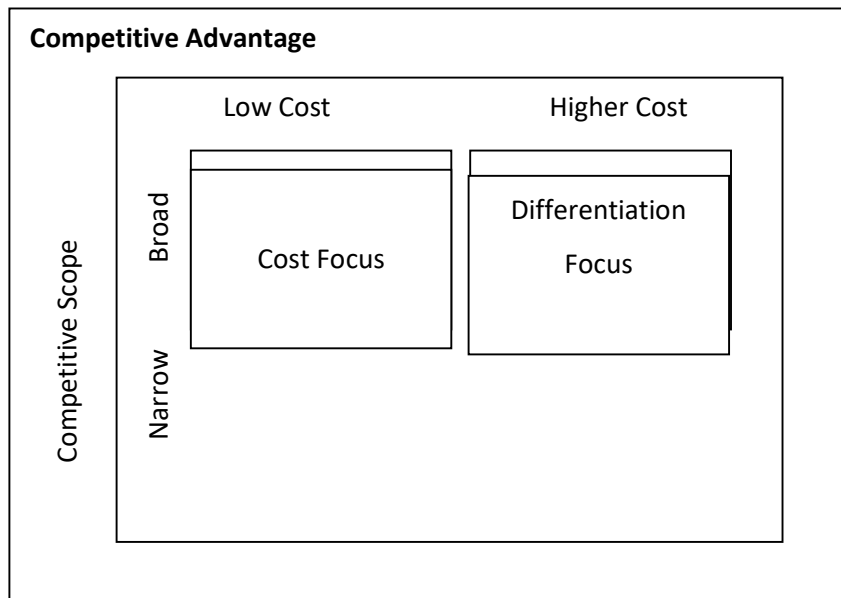


Figure 3. Porter's generic strategies for competitive advantage

Source: Porter, M (1985), *Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance*. New York: Macmillan.

Theoretical Framework

Brand Identity Theory of Product Branding by Hatch and Schultz (2000)

Brand identity is the visible elements of a brand such as colour, design, logo that identifies and distinguishes the brand in consumers mind as consistent marketing and messaging lead to consistent brand identity and therefore consistent. Building brand identity must have a strong visual image to link the brand. A brand identity is compiled of various branding elements. When put together, the identity in many ways is the mascot of a brand. This is because, a strong brand identity strengthens a company's popularity in a competitive market

Personality Theory of id, ego, and superego by Freudian (1939)

Freud in 1939 propounded the personality theory to needs, wants, and values that are from an individualistic point of view; it is something, which has physiological and psychological needs. Physiological needs are of infinite variety, such as the need for food, warmth, etc, but psychological needs are restricted to three main types. They are ego bolstering, ego defensive, and affect oral. Thus, these are instinctive needs- the idea of Freud, which supported the claim that an individual also possesses five senses, intelligence, and a personality. In addition to this, Freud identified individual goal-needs satisfaction processes and presented a need-want transfiguration mechanism, which he linked to the desired value. Thus, Freud identified this value as a super-ego influencing parameter towards goals attainment.

Resource Advantage Theory by Barney 1993

During the 1990s, the resource-based view (also known as the resource-advantage theory) of the firm became the dominant paradigm in strategic planning. RBV can be seen as a reaction against the positioning school and its somewhat prescriptive approach which focused managerial attention on external considerations, notably industry structure. The so-called positioning school had dominated the discipline throughout the 1980s. In contrast, the resource-based view argued that sustainable competitive advantage derives from developing superior capabilities and resources.

Porter's Theory on Competitive Behaviour

Porter (1986) examined the nature of competitive behaviour among industrial organizations when assumptions about homogeneous firms and customers are relaxed. According to him, this branch of economics recognizes that all firms are not alike and that customers are not the same. The dominant industrial organizations paradigm is the structure – conduct – performance linkage. The paradigm suggests that a firm's performance results from competitive interactions and that conduct are determined by the structure of the industry in which the firm competes. Within industrial organizations, performance is defined as providing benefits to consumers. Some aspects of social performance are allocating resources efficiently across firms, minimizing costs, and providing innovations.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey approach and a five point likert scale questionnaire was used to elicit response from 353 respondents from the selected alcoholic beverage companies using quota sampling technique which was used to ensure full representation of each of the breweries under study. The respondents were selected based on the level of their understanding of the concept under study. Data gathered which was mainly primary generated through the use of structured questionnaire was analyzed using simple percentages and tables. The population of the study therefore comprised of all the employees of the direct marketing and operational participants such as top executives of the selected alcoholic beverage companies, the marketing managers, the sales managers, the brand and promotion managers of the various brands of the five selected alcoholic beverages companies who naturally are involved in building brands and formulation of marketing policies in their respective organization. Others are sales representatives, depot managers and key distributors who seem to be in touch with the people and know exactly what consumers want on-behalf of their companies though they are clustered in population but known to exist and scattered in various locations of Nigeria. The Human Resource Department of all the companies under study provided accurate numbers of the categories of participants studied.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency and tables were used to analyze the bio-data of the respondents and the research questions while multiple linear regression analysis (MLR) was used to test the hypotheses. The analysis will be executed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS, 23.0 versions).

Data Analysis

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The table explained the demographic representation of the respondents.

Table 1. Gender of Respondents

| GENDER | | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|--------|-----------|---------|
| Valid | FEMALE | 89 | 32.8 |
| | MALE | 182 | 67.2 |
| | Total | 271 | 100.0 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 3.1.2 contains analysis of the gender characteristics of the respondents which shows that 182 (67.2%) of the respondents are males while 82(32.8%) are females.

Table 2. Age Distribution of Respondents
AGE

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| 50 AND ABOVE | 34 | 12.5 |
| 40-49 | 63 | 23.2 |
| Valid 20-29 | 81 | 29.9 |
| 30-39 | 93 | 34.3 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

On age bracket, 81(23.2%) are within 20-29 years age bracket; 93(34.3%) fall within 30-39 years age bracket; 63(35.8%) fall within 40-49 years age bracket; while the remaining 34(12.5%) are above 50 years of age. This means that majority of the respondents are within the middle age and are mature enough to give valid and useful information for the study.

Table 3. Educational Distribution of Respondents
EDUCATION LEVEL

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| FLSC | 40 | 14.8 |
| POST GRADUATE DEGREE | 44 | 16.2 |
| Valid WAEC AND EQUIVALENT | 71 | 26.2 |
| FIRST DEGREE | 116 | 42.8 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

On education, 40 (14.8%) of the respondents have first leaving school certificate; 71(26.2%) have WAEC/Equivalent; the majority of 116 (42.8%) are holders of first degree certificates; while 44(16.2%) have post-graduate qualifications. This implies that the majority of the respondents have a reasonable education to understand the import of the study and to give valid information.

Table 4. Marital Status of Respondents
MARITAL STATUS

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| DIVORCE | 10 | 3.7 |
| WIDOWERD | 25 | 9.2 |
| Valid MARRIED | 109 | 40.2 |
| SINGLE | 127 | 46.9 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

On the marital status analysis of the results show that 127(46.9%) of the respondents are single; 109(40.2%) are married; 10(3.7%) are divorced; while 25(9.2%) were widow/widower. Sizeable numbers of respondents are single and responsible to give valid information on the required answers.

Table 5. Respondents Years of Work
YEARS OF WORKING IN THE COMPANY

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| 21YEARS AND ABOVE | 39 | 14.4 |
| 1-5YEARS | 63 | 23.2 |
| Valid 6-11YEARS | 76 | 28.0 |
| 12-21YEARS | 93 | 34.3 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

As shown in Table 5, 76(28.0%) had 6-11 years' experience; 63(23.2%) have 1-5 years' experience; while 93(34.3%) have worked for 12-21 years. Furthermore, 39(14.4%) have 21 years and above work experience. So the majority of our respondents have long work experience.

Table 6. Responses on Positioning Brand Items

| S/ N | Questionnaire Items Positioning Brand | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---------|---|-------------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------------|------|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| BP 1 | Placing the brand in the mind of customers will help my company to compete favorably | 65 | 24.0 | 72 | 26.6 | 33 | 12.2 | 46 | 17.0 | 55 | 20.3 |
| BP 2 | Promoting the brand will create acceptance by consumers | 77 | 28.4 | 89 | 32.8 | 29 | 10.7 | 33 | 12.2 | 43 | 15.9 |
| BP 3 | Having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge | 102 | 37.6 | 76 | 28.0 | 21 | 7.7 | 30 | 11.1 | 42 | 15.5 |
| BP 4 | Overall, brand positioning improves sales volume | 51 | 18.8 | 90 | 33.2 | 42 | 15.5 | 51 | 18.8 | 37 | 13.7 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

On item 1, Placing the brand in the mind of customers will help my company to compete favorably, 65(24.0%) strongly agree; 65(24.0%); 72(26.6%) agreed on the statement. 46(17.0%) and 55(20.3%) disagree and strongly disagree on the statement, while 33 (12.2%) were neutral. On item 2, Promoting the brand will create acceptance by consumers 43(15.9%) strongly disagree, 33(12.2%) disagree, 29(10.7%) were undecided, 89(32.8%) agree, while 77(28.4%) strongly agree. On item 3, having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge. 102(37.6%) and 76(28.0%) respondents supported the statement while 30(11.1%) and 42(15.5%) did not agree with the assertion, 21(7.7%) were neutral. Furthermore, 51(18.8%) and 90(33.2%) respondents supported this statement Overall, brand positioning improves sales volume while 51(18.8%) and 37(13.7%) did not agree with the assertion, 42(15.5%) were neutral.

Table 7. Responses to Communicating Brand Message Items

| S/N | Questionnaire Communicating Brand Message | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|-----|---|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| BM1 | Brand attributes communicates positively to the customers | 85 | 31.4 | 107 | 39.5 | 22 | 8.1 | 38 | 14.0 | 19 | 7.0 |
| BM2 | Due to the message communicated by the brand, customers are retained | 90 | 33.2 | 61 | 22.5 | 32 | 11.8 | 41 | 15.1 | 47 | 17.3 |
| BM3 | The message our brand portray, gives us competitive edge | 97 | 35.8 | 99 | 36.5 | 28 | 10.3 | 24 | 8.9 | 23 | 8.5 |
| BM4 | The brand message was designed to communicate the quality of the product. | 71 | 26.2 | 90 | 33.2 | 32 | 11.8 | 41 | 15.1 | 37 | 13.7 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 7, above shows that 85(31.4%) and 107(39.5%) respondents agreed with the statement that Brand attributes communicates positively to the customers and 22(8.1%) were neutral while 38(14.0%) and 19(7.0%) totally disagree with the statement. However, the statement: Due to the message communicated by the brand, customers are retained 90(33.2%) and 61(22.5%) respondents supported the statement. 32(11.8%) were indifference while 41(15.1%) and 47(17.3%) respondents did not agree with the statement. On the statement, The message our brand portray, gives us competitive edge, while 97(34.8%) and 99(36.5%) strongly agreed 24(8.9%) and 23(8.5%) disagreed on the statement and 32(11.8%) were indifference. 71(26.2%) and 90(33.2%) respondents agreed, and 41(15.1%) and 37(13.7%) respondents did not agree while 32(11.8%) was indecisive on the statement that The brand message was designed to communicate the quality of the product.

Table 8. Responses on Delivering Brand Performance Items

| S/N | Questionnaire Items on Delivering Brand Performance | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|-------|--|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| BPE 1 | Over other competitors, our brand has given us competitive edge | 105 | 38.7 | 79 | 29.2 | 23 | 8.5 | 44 | 16.2 | 20 | 7.4 |
| BPE 2 | Our company is satisfied with the performance of the brand in the market | 61 | 22.5 | 80 | 29.5 | 42 | 15.5 | 41 | 15.1 | 47 | 17.3 |

Table 8. continuation

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|
| BPE 3 | The customer retentions rate is attributed to the brand performance | 92 | 33.9 | 66 | 24.4 | 31 | 11.4 | 40 | 14.8 | 42 | 15.5 |
| BPE 4 | Overall, our brand has competitive edge over other competing brands | 55 | 20.3 | 82 | 30.3 | 43 | 15.9 | 55 | 20.3 | 36 | 13.3 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows that respondents strongly agreed on the statement over other competitors, our brand has given us competitive edge 105(38.7%) and 79(29.2%) respectively while 44(16.2%), 20(7.4%) respondents disagree with the statement, 23(8.5%) respondents were indifferent. Again, 61(22.5%) and 80(29.5%) respondents agreed on the statement our company is satisfied with the performance of the brand in the market 42 (15.5%) were indecisive, however, 41(15.1%) and 47(17.3%) disagreed with the assertion.

The customer retentions rate is attributed to the brand performance, 92(33.9%) and 66(24.4%) respondents respectively agreed on the statement while 40(14.8%) and 42(15.5%) respondents did not support the statement but 36(8.6%) respondents were neutral.

The statement Overall, our brand has competitive edge over other competing brands was supported by 116(27.3%) and 154(36.2%) respondents while 28(6.6%) and 72(16.9%) respondents did not support it and 31(11.4%) were not sure of the answer to give.

Table 9. Responses on Leveraging Brand Equity Items

| S/N | Questionnaire Items on Leveraging Brand Equity | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---------|---|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------------|------|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| BE 1 | My companies' brand reputation is a competing edge over other competitors | 72 | 26.6 | 91 | 33.6 | 32 | 11.8 | 47 | 17.3 | 29 | 10.7 |
| BE 2 | Competitive branding and positioning strategies have aided our organization in managing competition | 69 | 25.5 | 101 | 37.3 | 28 | 10.3 | 34 | 12.5 | 39 | 14.4 |
| BE 3 | Having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge | 88 | 32.5 | 70 | 25.8 | 44 | 16.2 | 50 | 18.5 | 19 | 7.0 |
| BE 4 | Multiproduct branding as a core product strategy has significant effect on competition | 68 | 25.1 | 89 | 32.8 | 29 | 10.7 | 40 | 14.8 | 45 | 16.6 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 9. Shows that respondents supported the statement my companies' brand reputation is a competing edge over other competitors. 72 (26.6%) and 91(33.6%) respectively while 47(17.3%) and 29 (10.7%) disprove the statement but 32 (11.8%) respondents were indifferent. 69 (25.5%) and 101(37.3%) respondents agreed on the statement Competitive branding and positioning strategies have aided our organization in managing competition. While 34(12.5%) and 39 (14.4%) did not agree with the statement, however, 28(10.3%) respondents were indifferent. On the statement having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge was strongly supported

by 88 (32.5%) and 70(25.8%) respondent respectively while 50 (18.5%) and 19 (7.0%) did not support it, but 44(16.2%) respondents were neutral. Furthermore, 68(25.1%) and 89(32.8%) respondents supported this statement Multiproduct branding as a core product strategy has significant effect on competition while 40(14.8%) and 45(16.6%) did not agree with the assertion, 29(10.7%) were neutral

Table 10. Responses to Perceived Brand Quality Items

| S/ N | Questionnaire Items on Perceived Brand Quality | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---------|---|-------------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------------|------|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| BN 1 | Strong brand names is the single most important factor that differentiates competing brands from the competition | 97 | 35.8 | 51 | 18.8 | 44 | 16.2 | 33 | 12.2 | 46 | 17.0 |
| BN 2 | Understanding competition, studying customer needs, evaluating their strengths and weakness are all important aspects of branding strategy | 80 | 29.5 | 81 | 29.9 | 38 | 14.0 | 30 | 11.1 | 42 | 15.5 |
| BN 3 | The symbolic uses of brands association help a strong brand name to communicate quality and leverage competition | 84 | 31.0 | 65 | 24.0 | 29 | 10.7 | 40 | 14.8 | 53 | 19.6 |
| BN 4 | Brands are essential patterns of familiarity meaning, fondness, and reassurance that exist in the minds of consumers that help to influence competition | 77 | 28.4 | 98 | 36.2 | 35 | 12.9 | 22 | 8.1 | 39 | 14.4 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows that 97(35.8%) and 51(18.8%) respondents agreed on the statement Strong brand names is the single most important factor that differentiates competing brands from the competition while 33(12.2%) and 46(17.0%) respondents did not support the statement but 44(16.2%) were indifferent. Understanding competition, studying customer needs, evaluating their strengths and weakness are all important aspects of branding strategy 80(29.5%) and 81(29.9%) respondents supported the assertion while 30(11.1%) and 42(15.5%) did not but 38(14.0%) respondents were indecisive. Again the statement The symbolic uses of brands association help a strong brand name to communicate quality and leverage competition was agreed by 84(31.0%) and 65(24.0%) respondents. 40(14.8%) and 53(19.6%) did not support the assertion while 29(10.7%) respondents were indifferent.

Furthermore, 77(28.4%) and 98(36.2%) respondents agreed on the statement, Brands are essential patterns of familiarity meaning, fondness, and reassurance that exist in the minds of consumers help to influence competition while 22(8.1%) and 39(14.4%) did not agree with the assertion, meanwhile, 35(12.9%) respondents neither agree nor disagree.

Table 11. Responses on Product Differentiation Items

| S/ N | Questionnaire Items on Product Differentiation | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | | Strongly Disagree | |
|---------|--|-------------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------|------|----------------------|------|
| | | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| DF 1 | Differentiation strategies have aided our organization in managing competition | 109 | 40.2 | 66 | 24.4 | 30 | 11.1 | 48 | 17.7 | 18 | 6.6 |
| DF 2 | Branding strategy brings your competitive positioning to life in the minds of customers | 81 | 29.9 | 78 | 28.8 | 41 | 15.1 | 30 | 11.1 | 41 | 15.1 |
| DF 3 | Our organization's relationship with customers contribute positively to your organization's competitive edge | 90 | 33.2 | 55 | 20.3 | 27 | 10.0 | 51 | 18.8 | 48 | 17.7 |
| DF 4 | Our companies brand management is a key factor that gave us competitive edge | 72 | 26.6 | 82 | 30.3 | 33 | 12.2 | 35 | 12.9 | 49 | 18.1 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 11 Depicts that respondents 109(40.2%) and 66(24.4%) respectively agreed on the statement Differentiation strategies have aided our organization in managing competition but 49(17.7%) and 18(6.6%) did not support the assertion but 30(11.1%) were indifferent. On the statement Branding strategy brings your competitive positioning to life in the minds of customers, 81(29.9%) and 78(28.8%) respondents supported the statement while 30(11.1%) and 41(15.1%) respondents did not agree with the statement but 27(10.0%) respondents were undecided. Again, the statement our organization's relationship with customers contribute positively to your organization's competitive edge was supported by 90(33.2%) and 55(20.3%) respondents agreed with the assertion but 51(18.8%) and 48(17.7%) did not support the assertion while 27(10.0%) respondents were indifferent. The table also shows that respondents agreed on the statement our companies brand management is a key factor that gave us competitive edge. 72(26.6%) and 82(30.3%) agreed, 35(12.9%) and 49(18.1%) respondents did not agree while 33(12.2%) respondents were indifferent.

Descriptive Statistics

A preliminary analysis of the data collected from the field was conducted using several descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics were employed to check the behavior of the data and to ready the data for inferential statistics analysis

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Positioning Brand | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.1697 | 1.47848 | -.226 | .148 | -1.394 | .295 |
| Positioning Brand | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4576 | 1.42109 | -.580 | .148 | -1.026 | .295 |

Table 12. continuation

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|------|------|--------|---------|--------|------|--------|------|
| Positioning Brand | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.6125 | 1.46606 | -.714 | .148 | -.950 | .295 |
| Positioning Brand | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.2472 | 1.32837 | -.329 | .148 | -1.115 | .295 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.7417 | 1.23516 | -.852 | .148 | -.360 | .295 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3911 | 1.50128 | -.404 | .148 | -1.317 | .295 |
| Communicating Brand message | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.8229 | 1.24647 | -1.001 | .148 | -.014 | .295 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4317 | 1.37772 | -.520 | .148 | -1.030 | .295 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.7565 | 1.31646 | -.759 | .148 | -.723 | .295 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.2472 | 1.40954 | -.334 | .148 | -1.211 | .295 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4649 | 1.46997 | -.488 | .148 | -1.207 | .295 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.2399 | 1.34083 | -.269 | .148 | -1.169 | .295 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4797 | 1.33283 | -.523 | .148 | -.976 | .295 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4686 | 1.37097 | -.629 | .148 | -.895 | .295 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.5830 | 1.29940 | -.475 | .148 | -1.012 | .295 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3506 | 1.42426 | -.458 | .148 | -1.169 | .295 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4428 | 1.49426 | -.446 | .148 | -1.243 | .295 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4686 | 1.41354 | -.570 | .148 | -.996 | .295 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3210 | 1.52154 | -.358 | .148 | -1.379 | .295 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.5609 | 1.35912 | -.754 | .148 | -.653 | .295 |
| Product Differentiation | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.7380 | 1.32553 | -.662 | .148 | -.905 | .295 |
| Product Differentiation | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.4723 | 1.40836 | -.560 | .148 | -.991 | .295 |
| Product Differentiation | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3247 | 1.52683 | -.296 | .148 | -1.445 | .295 |
| Product Differentiation | 271 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.3432 | 1.45180 | -.446 | .148 | -1.201 | .295 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 271 | | | | | | | | |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 12 present the information requested for each of the items used to measure the variables of the study. The next two columns show the minimum and maximum and the highest under maximum is 5 while the least under minimum is 1. This is a confirmation that the variables were measured with a five-point scale coded one to five. Also from the table, all the items have mean above 3; while most of the standard deviation values are above one. Standard deviations measure variability hence standard deviation above one is an indication that the respondents are varied in their opinions.

Descriptive also provide information concerning the distribution of the scores on continuous variables, skewness, and kurtosis (Pallant, 2013). These are necessary if the variables are to be used in parametric statistical techniques (eg. Pearson correlation, t-tests, among others) which is the situation in this study. The skewness value indicates the symmetry of the distribution. Kurtosis, on the other hand, provides information about the "peakedness" of the distribution. Positive skewness values indicate scores clustered to the left at the low values. Negative skewness indicates a clustering of scores at the high end (right-hand side of a graph). Kurtoses values below 0 indicate a distribution that is relatively flat (too many cases in the extremes). With reasonably large samples, skewness will make a substantive difference in the analysis (Pallant, 2013). In Table 4.12, the skewness of the items is mixed with very high values and very low values. Also the kurtosis show very high and very low or values below zero. This implies that there is a mix of peakedness and flattened values in the items. Tabachinick and Fidell (2013) maintain that with reasonably large samples (200+ cases) skewness 'will not make a substantive difference in the analysis.' The captive sample for this study is 271 respondents hence skewness will not make a serious impact on the analysis.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to identify the latent factors driving observable variables. This is because, with factor analysis, the best solution is the one that yields a simplification that represents the true nature of the data, with minimum loss of precision.

Table 13. KMO and Bartlett's Test

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | .966 |
| Approx. Chi-Square | 22453.681 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Df | 276 |
| Sig. | .000 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Factor analysis was to check for the accuracy of the data and the internal consistency of the individual items used to measure the constructs. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is .966 which is far above the .5 benchmark while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has approximate Chi-Square value of 22453.681 with a degree of freedom (df) of 276 and p -value of .000 which well below the .05 margin of error. This means that the factor analysis is reliable and dependable hence we proceed with the test. We look at the list of communalities.

Table 14. Communalities

| | Initial | Extraction |
|------------------------------|---------|------------|
| Positioning Brand | 1.000 | .944 |
| Positioning Brand | 1.000 | .975 |
| Positioning Brand | 1.000 | .959 |
| Positioning Brand | 1.000 | .942 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 1.000 | .923 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 1.000 | .971 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 1.000 | .908 |
| Communicating Brand Message | 1.000 | .972 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 1.000 | .938 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 1.000 | .959 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 1.000 | .975 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | 1.000 | .938 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 1.000 | .964 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 1.000 | .964 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 1.000 | .957 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | 1.000 | .971 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 1.000 | .967 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 1.000 | .977 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 1.000 | .965 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | 1.000 | .954 |
| Product Differentiation | 1.000 | .942 |
| Product Differentiation | 1.000 | .976 |
| Product Differentiation | 1.000 | .953 |
| Product Differentiation | 1.000 | .973 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Communalities refer to the amount of variance in a variable that is accounted for by the factors taken together. The size of the communality is a useful index for assessing how much variance in a particular variable is accounted for by the factor solution. Higher communality values indicate that a large amount of the variance in a variable has been extracted by the factor solution (Hair, et al. 2013). All the items in our analysis load above .5 hence more than 50 % of variance have been extracted for each item. The next is the table of total variance extracted.

Table 15. Total Variance Explained

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 22.966 | 95.693 | 95.693 | 22.966 | 95.693 | 95.693 |
| 2 | .303 | 1.263 | 96.957 | | | |
| 3 | .162 | .675 | 97.632 | | | |
| 4 | .118 | .492 | 98.124 | | | |
| 5 | .071 | .298 | 98.421 | | | |
| 6 | .066 | .273 | 98.694 | | | |
| 7 | .056 | .233 | 98.928 | | | |
| 8 | .047 | .196 | 99.124 | | | |
| 9 | .037 | .155 | 99.279 | | | |
| 10 | .026 | .108 | 99.387 | | | |
| 11 | .022 | .093 | 99.480 | | | |
| 12 | .018 | .076 | 99.556 | | | |
| 13 | .015 | .064 | 99.621 | | | |
| 14 | .015 | .062 | 99.683 | | | |
| 15 | .014 | .057 | 99.740 | | | |
| 16 | .011 | .048 | 99.787 | | | |
| 17 | .009 | .036 | 99.823 | | | |
| 18 | .008 | .034 | 99.857 | | | |
| 19 | .008 | .032 | 99.889 | | | |
| 20 | .007 | .030 | 99.919 | | | |
| 21 | .006 | .025 | 99.943 | | | |
| 22 | .006 | .024 | 99.967 | | | |
| 23 | .004 | .019 | 99.986 | | | |
| 24 | .003 | .014 | 100.000 | | | |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

The total variance extracted is based on achieving a specified cumulative percentage of total variance extracted by successive factors. It is not uncommon to consider a solution that accounts for 60 percent of the total variance as satisfactory. The total variance extracted is 95.693 which is very acceptable showing that the data has internal consistency. After the factor analysis, we did scale summation and with that, we tested the hypotheses.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 16. Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .986 ^a | .972 | .971 | .22527 | .505 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Brand Quality, Communicating Brand Message, Positioning Brand, Leveraging Brand Equity, Delivering Brand Performance

b. Dependent Variable: Product Differentiation

The first information from the MLR analysis is the model summary and from this the coefficient of multiple correlation R is .986. i.e. simple correlation value representing the correlation between the actual scores of the dependent variable and the scores for the dependent variable predicted by the regression equation. The coefficient of multiple determination R^2 is .972 (which is simple squared correlation value that if multiplied by 100 can be understood as a percentage to indicate that the independent variables account for 97.2% of the variance in the scores of the dependent variable). This means that between 97% and 97.2% of variations in the dependent variable, adoption are accounted for by the five independent variables. While the adjusted R^2 which adjusts the R^2 downwards taking care of error is .971 and the Standard Error of the Estimate is .22527. The Durbin Watson is .505 which indicates that the data has no redundant variables.

Table 3.4.2. ANOVA^a

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------|----------------|-----|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 Regression | 460.951 | 5 | 92.190 | 1816.657 | .000 ^p |
| Residual | 13.448 | 265 | .051 | | |
| Total | 474.399 | 270 | | | |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

a. Dependent Variable: Product Differentiation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Brand Quality, Communicating Brand Message, Positioning Brand, Leveraging Brand Equity, Delivering Brand Performance

The next information from the MLR is the regression analysis of variance ANOVA which has a value of 1816.657 and is highly statistically significant at .000 below the .01 margin of error. This means that the model was a good fit and that the coefficient of multiple correlations R is significantly different from zero. The next information is the coefficients

Table 3.4.3 Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|-------------------------|--------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | .185 | .050 | | 3.688 | .000 | | |
| 1 Positioning Brand | .148 | .036 | .166 | 4.136 | .000 | .067 | 14.975 |
| Communicating Brand Message | -.081 | .045 | -.075 | -1.813 | .071 | .062 | 16.090 |
| Delivering Brand Performance | .816 | .045 | .811 | 18.048 | .000 | .053 | 18.867 |
| Leveraging Brand Equity | .055 | .044 | .055 | 1.247 | .213 | .055 | 18.207 |
| Perceived Brand Quality | .037 | .042 | .042 | .892 | .373 | .049 | 20.470 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

a. Dependent Variable: Product Differentiation

The coefficients show that 3 out of the 5 variables have significant relationship on product differentiation and therefore, hypotheses should be accepted in the alternate form. Positioning brand was significant hence the hypothesis on that should be accepted in alternate form. ($\beta = .166$; $t = 4.136$; $P < .000$) communicating brand message has high significant influence on product differentiation with ($\beta = -.075$; $t = -1.813$; $P < .071$). Delivering brand performance was found to have significance relationship with product differentiation ($\beta = .811$; $t = 18.048$; $P < .000$). However, leveraging brand equity and perceived brand quality were found not to have significant relationship with product differentiation ($\beta = .055$; $t = 1.247$; $P < .213$), ($\beta = .042$; $t = .892$; $P < .373$) respectively. Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) measure collinearity. For Tolerance the closer to .1 the below while for VIF 5 is the threshold. The values of both the tolerance and VIF are within acceptable range as they did not show any problem of collinearity.

Results and Discussions

The results of multiple linear regression analysis revealed that positioning the brand ($\beta = .166$; $t = 4.136$; $P < .000$) statistically has a significant relationship with product differentiation. Therefore, H1 was fully accepted in the alternate form which supports the work of Lead and Edge (2015) who are in line with the result of their study that the value of a strong brand lies in the impression left with anyone who comes in contact with the organization. They further stated that the reasons behind effective branding are to achieve customer loyalty and support a premium price because purchases rely on experience and their long-held attitudes about a brand and that successful brands are often focused on one specific market segment.

The second hypothesis, communicating the brand message has a significant effect on the product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria. The results revealed that the variable communicating the brand message has a statistically significant impact ($\beta = -.075$; $t = -1.813$; $P < .071$) on product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria. Therefore, H2 is fully accepted in the alternate form and rejected in the null form.

The third hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between delivering the brand performance and product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria. The hypothesis was fully supported and accepted in the alternate form since the results suggested that this variable had a significant effect ($\beta = .811$; $t = 18.048$; $P < .000$) on

product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria.

The fourth hypothesis, which suggests that the extent of knowledge of leveraging the brand equity has a positive influence on product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria which result of findings revealed that this variable has no statistically significant impact ($\beta = .055$; $t = .1.247$; $P < .213$) on product differentiation of alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria and therefore, H4 was rejected in the alternate form

The fifth hypothesis indicates that the application of perceived brand quality has a significant effect on product differentiation in the alcoholic beverage markets in Nigeria. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis showed that this construct has no significant relationship ($\beta = .042$; $t = .892$; $P < .373$) on product differentiation in the alcoholic beverage markets in Nigeria and therefore, H5 was rejected in the alternate form and concluded that perceived brand quality has a significant positive relationship with product differentiation.

Summary of findings

The results of the findings reveal the following:

Positioning the brand statistically has a significant positive relationship with product differentiation ($\beta = .166$; $t = 4.136$; $P < .000$).

Communicating the brand message has a statistically significant positive impact on product differentiation ($\beta = -.075$; $t = -1.813$; $P < .071$)

Delivering the brand performance has significant positive effect on product differentiation ($\beta = .811$; $t = 18.048$; $P < .000$)

Leveraging the brand equity has no significant impact on product differentiation ($\beta = .055$; $t = .1.247$; $P < .213$)

Perceived brand quality has no significant effect on product differentiation ($\beta = .042$; $t = .892$; $P < .373$)

CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of branding on the competitiveness of multi-product alcoholic beverage companies in Nigeria which was revealed to be in the affirmative.

Consistency of integrated communications and messages along the brand identity dimensions targeted towards customers is critical to the success of brand-building efforts by delivering a consistent, self-reinforcing brand image. Companies need to ensure that the brand remains strong even during difficult times and offers value that is consistent with the brand promise. The four stages suggested in PCDL model namely, positioning the brand, communicating the brand message, delivering the brand performance, and leveraging the brand equity can enable companies to build strong brands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The under-listed recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

We recommend that business organizations especially multi-product alcoholic beverage companies should position their brands on the attributes that happen to be the customer's priorities in building superiority over their brands in the minds of their customers. Such attribute positioning or benefit positioning can enable companies to leverage current resources to the extent possible as the brand has to move to higher or expected levels of performance/benefits to sustain itself in dynamic markets.

Based on the outcome of the study, we recommend that business organizations need to position their brands in the minds of consumers emphasizing their uniqueness in product design, features, performance, and others. To achieve the desired goal of their communication strategy, companies will have to break the clutter by evolving innovative ways to attract the attention of the target audience using traditional and new media to minimize the impact of competition on their brands.

Business organizations need to monitor consistently the progress of brands in terms of purchasing, consumption, brand recognition, brand recall, advertising awareness, etc. this will help the managers to adjust their strategies of marketing to achieve the desired performance of their brands. This performance audit can also enable the company to measure its brand strength vis-à-vis competing brands.

Brand loyalty should be used in reducing the vulnerability of the customer base to competitive action and can directly translate into future sales and profits. Brands that have established desired brand equity in the marketplace can have

the potential to leverage their equity through line extension, brand extension, ingredient branding, co-branding, brand Alliances, and/or social goodwill.

These approaches together with others will enable companies to leverage the parent brand associations to new categories of products and chart a new growth path for their brand

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is hereby given to my dear wife Lady Umoh Alodia, Okorozoh who painstakingly proof read this work and provided language assistance

Declarations of Interest

None Funding Sources

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. However, Projects Development Institute (PRODA) Enugu may undertake to pay for costs associated with the publication if any as a source of motivation to the researcher to contribute more in the field of marketing.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. (1996) Measuring Brand Equity across Products and Markets. *California Management Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 102-120.
- Aaker, D. A., & Joachimsthaler, E. (2000). *Brand leadership: Building assets in an information economy*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Aaker, D. A., (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. New York; Free Press.
- Aaker, D. and Biel, A. (1993) *Brand Equity and Advertising*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Aaker, D.A. (1991), Managing Brand Equity, The Free Press, New York, NY, pp. 7, 39, 61,
- Aaker, D.A. and Joachimsthaler, E. (2000), *Brand Leadership*, The Free Press, New York,
- Adedayo. O. A. (2000) *Understanding Statistics*. Lagos, JAS Publishers
- Ambler and Barrow, (1996), *The Employer Brand*; Journal of Brand Management, 4, 3, pp. 186-206.
- Ali Johnester M (2014) Factors influencing marketing of alcoholic beverages in Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, No 2, pp 122 -153
- American Marketing Association, (1960), *Marketing Definitions: A Glossary of Marketing Terms*, Chicago, AMA.
- Anderson, V. (2004), Research methods in Human Resource Management, London, *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development*.
- Anyanwu A., (2000), *Promotional Strategy*, Benin; Barloz Publishers
- Arnold David, (1992), *The hand book of Brand Management*, Century Business; The Economist Books.
- Balmer, J. M. T., (1995), Corporate Branding and Connoisseurship; *Journal of General Management*, Vol. 21, pp. 24-46.
- Balmer, J.M.T., Gray, E.R. (2020), Corporate Brands: What are they? What of them? *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(8), 972-997.
- Barney, J. (2016), Firms' Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage; *Journal of Management*, Vol. 17, pp. 99-120.
- Barney, J.B. (2017) *Gaining and Sustaining Competitive Advantage*, 3rd edition, Pearson Education, New Jersey, U.S.A.
- Barone, M.J. and T.E. DeCarlo (2003). "Emerging forms of competitive advantage: Implications for agricultural producers." *Midwest Agribusiness Trade Research and Information Center Research Paper 03-MRP 5*.
- Bei and Chaio (2016) *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*; Provo Vol.14 p121-139
- Bennett, P. D., (1988), *Dictionary of Marketing Terms*, AMA, Chicago; IL.
- Beyond Marketing Thought (2007) Brand Management. [Online] Available: <http://www.beyondmarketingthought.com/ourservices/consulting.html>. (9 July, 2007)
- Bhimrao M Ghodeswar, (2008), Building brand identity in competitive markets: a conceptual model. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 17 Iss 1pp.4-12. DOI:10.1108/10610420810856468
- Bowley, A.L. (1937) *Elements of Statistics*, London, P.S. Kings, and Staples Ltd.

- Bradford, R. (2019), "Brand is a competitive advantage: Seen and heard. White Papers. Available from: <http://www.cssp.net/>.
- Broadbent, S. (2000) What Do Advertisements Really Do For Brands? *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 19, No.2, available at <http://www.integral.ms/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/80ADBRAND.pdf>.
- Chovancova, M. (2012), "Building a strong brand to support company competitiveness. www.sbc.org.pl/content/50647
- Crainer, Stuart, (2015), *The Real power of brands: Making brands work for competitive advantage*, London; Pitman Publishing.
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods*
- Davis, J. A. (2010). *Competitive Success: How branding adds value*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- De Chernatony, L. (1999), Brand management through narrowing the gap between brand identity and brand reputation; *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15, pp. 157-179
- De Chernatony, L. and McDonald, M. (2003) *Creating Powerful Brands in Consumer, Industrial and Service Markets*, 3rd Edition. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Douglas and Isherwood, (1989). *Managing Brand Equity*, New York: Basic Books, Inc
- Ehmke Cole (2005) Strategies for competitive advantage: *Western Center for Risk Management Education*.
- Famura Wole and Orekoya Temitayo (2008) Nigerian Breweries Plc: Beer for the bear market, *Equity Research Report*.
- Farguhar, P., Han J., and Ijiri Y. (1991) Recognising and Measuring Brand Assets. *Marketing Science Institute Working Papers Series*. Cambridge: Report No. 91-119.
- Farquhar, P.H., (1989), *Managing Brand Equity*, *Marketing Research*, September, pp. 24-33.
- Fiona Harris, Leslie de Chernatony (2001), "Corporate branding and corporate brand performance. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 35 Iss 3/4pp.441-45
- Goodyear, Mary (2003), Reviewing the concepts of brands branding. *Marketing and Research Today*, 21, 2, pp. 75-79.
- Gossen, R., Gresham, S. (2001), *Branding as the foundation of sustainable competitive Advantage*. Available from: http://www.Brandchannel.com/papersreview.asp?sp_id=146
- Hatz, M.J., Schulthz, M. (2019), Are the strategic stars aligned for your corporate brand? *Harvard Business Review*, 28-34. Available from: <http://www.harvard.edu/product/cases>
- Hem, L. and Iversen, N. (2003) Transfer of Brand Equity in Brand Extension: The Importance of Brand Loyalty. *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 72-79..
- Hitt et al (2013) *Strategic Management: Competitiveness and globalization* New York; Dryden Press
- Hitt, M., Hoskisson, R. (1997), *Brand Building in a Contemporary World*, Ireland; R. Hoskisson West Publishing.
- Hsu, L, & Srinivasan, S (2015) Brand architecture strategy and firm value: How leveraging, separating, and distancing the corporate brand affects risk and returns. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44 (2), 261-280.doi10.1007/1511747-014-0422-5
- Hsu, L, Fournier S. and Srini-vasan, S (2010) Brand Portfolio Strategy [effect on firms value and risks working paper#10-001, *Boston University School of Management*, July 2010, p.9
- Jackson, C. P. (2012) *Research methods in social relations*, New York: Rinehart and Winston
- John M.T. Balmer, (2008), "Identity based views of the corporation: Insights from corporate identity, organizational identity, social identity, visual identity, corporate brand identity and corporate image. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42 Iss 9/10 pp. 879-906
- Kahn, B.E. (2015), The power and limitations of social relational framing for understanding consumer decision processes. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15(1), 28-34.
- Kapferer et al (eds) *Advances in luxury brands management. Journal of Brand Management: Advanced Collections DOI 10.1007/978-3-319*
- Kapferer, J. (2008) *The New Strategic Brand Management: Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, 4th Edition. London: Kogan Page.
- Kapferer, J.N. (2004), "Brand new world, brand equity. *The Economic Times*, June 30, Mumbai.
- Kapferer, J. N., (1992, 1997). NY. Free Press London page.
- Kay, M.J. (2006). Strong brands and corporate brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 742-760.
- Keller, K. (2008) *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, 3rd Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Keller, K. and Lehmann D. (2006) Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities. *Marketing Science*, Vol. 25, No.6, pp. 740-759, available at
- Keller, K. L. (2013). *Strategic Brand Management-Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity*, Global Edition, 4. Auflage, Harlow.
- Keller, K.L. (2000), "The brand report card. *Harvard Business Review*, January-February, pp.
- Keller, K.L. (2002). Branding and Brand Equity. In B. A. Weitz and R. Wensley (eds) *Handbook of Marketing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Keller, K.L. (2003a), "Brand synthesis: The multidimensionality of brand knowledge. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 29 No. 4.
- Keller, K.L. (2003b), *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring and managing brand equity*, 2nd ed., Harlow, Pearson Education, p. 351.
- Keller, K.L., (1993), Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer based brand equity; *Journal of Marketing*, 57, pp. 1-22
- Klaus, S. and Ludlow, C. (2002), *Inclusive Branding*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan
- Knox S. and D. Bickerton (2003) The Six Conventions of Corporate Branding. *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 37, No.7/8, pp. 998–1016.
- Knox, S. (2014), Positioning and branding your organization. *Journal of Brand and Product Management*, 13(2), 105-115.
- Kollat D., et al, (1970), Current problems in consumer behaviour research; *Journal of Marketing Research*, 7, pp. 327-332.
- Kotler P. and Armstrong G. (1997), *Principles of marketing. 7th Edition*, India; Prentice Hall Inc.
- Kotler, P. & Gertner, J. (2002). Country as brand, product and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 9. (4-5), 249-261.
- Kotler, P. & Pfoertsch, W. (2016). *B2B Brand Management*. Berlin. Springer
- Kotler, P., and Pfoertssch, W., (2010). *Ingredient Branding: Making the Invisible Visible*. 6th Edition. Mosby Yearbook: Bolton.
- Kotler, P., Armstrong, G. (2016), *Principles of marketing*. 17th ed. New Jersey, USA; Pearson Education
- Lead Edge. (2005). Developing an Effective Branding Strategy. [Online] Available: <http://www.leadedge.co.uk>. (29 December, 2005)
- Macrae C. S. Parkinson, & J. Sheerman, (1995), Managing marketing's DNA: The role of branding; *Irish Marketing Review*, Vol.8, pp. 13 - 20.
- McCracken, L. (2012), "*Differentiation: win new business with less effort*", Principal's Report, Vol. 2 No.4, pp.1.
- McPherson (2013) Four brand positioning strategies for multi-product categories. *Hanover Research.com*
- Mitchell, I. S. and Tomo, A. (2015) Brand preference factors in patronage and consumption of Nigeria beer. *Columbia journal of world business* 20(1), 55-62
- Moore, L., Stone, B., Briggs, L. (2019), "*Building your Brand*". Available from: <http://www.ClientService@klmnc.com>.
- Morton, J. (1994), "Predicating brand preference", *Marketing Management*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 32 44
- Ndofor, H. A., & Levitas, E. (2004). Signaling the strategic value of knowledge. *Journal of Management*, 30: 685-702.
- Ojasalo, J., Nätti, S. & Olkkonen, R. (2008). Brand building in software SMEs: An empirical talk and costly market monitoring. *Journal of Finance*, 63: 1399-1436.
- Olusi, Olawole (2014) "Breweries sector report. *Equity Meristem Research Report*
- Owojori, A. A. (2002) *Managerial research*. Ado-Ekiti, Kaycee Publishers
- Parameswaran, M.G. (2001), *Brand Building Advertising: Concepts and Cases*, Tata McGraw-Hill, Noida, pp. 2-3
- Park.,C.S., Srinivasan, V., (1994), A survey based method for measuring and understanding brand equity and its extendibility, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 31, pp. 271-288.
- Peteraf MA, (1993),The cornerstones of competitive advertising: A Resource-Based view, *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol.14, pp. 179-191.
- Polonsky, M.J., Carlson, L., Fry, M.L. (2003). The harm chain: A public policy development and stakeholder perspective. *Marketing Theory*, 3(3): 345-364.
- Porter, (1985), *Competitive Advantage*, New York; Free Press.
- Porter, M. (1985). *Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance*. New York: Macmillan.
- Porter, M. (1998). *The Competitive advantage of nations*. New York: The Free Press
- Porter, M. E., (1987), *From Competitive Advantage to Corporate Strategy*, Harvard Business Review, May - June, pp.43-58.
- Porter, M.E. (2008), The Five Competitive Forces that shape strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, 2008, 79-93.
- Ries, A. and Ries L. (2000) *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding*. London: Profile Books Ltd.
- Roll, M. (2018), Asia brand strategy. [Online] Available: <http://www://page2googlesyndication.com>. (29 December, 2005)
- Roper, S. & Davies, G. (2017). The corporate brand: Dealing with multiple stakeholders. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 23(1-2), 75-90. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 17(2), 92-107.
- Royo-vela, M (2005). Emotional and informational content of commercials: Visual and Auditory circumflex spaces, product information and their effects on audience evaluation. *Journal of cultural issues and research in advertising* 27(9), 13-38.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, L., Thornhill, A. (2007), *Research Methods for Business Students*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

- Shiffman, L.G., Kanuk, L.L. (2014), *Consumer behaviour*. 9th ed. New Jersey USA; Pearson Education Inc.
- Schiffman, L.G and Kanuk, L.L (2009). *Consumer behaviour*. New Delhi: Prentice hall of India.
- Scocker, A., R. K. Srivastava & R.W. Ruekert, (1994), Challenges and opportunities facing brand management; An Introduction to the special issue, *Journal of Marketing Research*; Vol. XXXI, May, pp. 149-158.
- Shocker, A. D. & V. Srinivasan, (1974), A Consumer based methodology for the identification of new product ideas; *Journal of Management Science*, Vol. 20, n. 6, (February), pp. 921-937.
- Spangenberg, E. R., Voss, K. E., Crowley, A. E., (1997), Measuring the Hedonic and Utilitarian Dimensions of Attitude: A Generally Applicable Scale, *Advance in Consumer Research*; *Journal of Marketing Management* 24, pp. 235-241.
- Srivastava, R. and Gregory, T. (2010) Managing Brand Performance: Aligning Positioning, and Experience. *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 17 (July), pp. 465–471.
- Stuart, (2005), *The real power of brands: Making brands work for Competitive advantage*; London, Pitman Publishing.
- Temporal, P. & Lee, K.C. (2011). *Hi-tech hi-touch branding: Creating brand power in the age of technology*. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons Asia.
- Temporal, P. (2000), *Branding in Asia*. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 11, 25-6, 33.
- Thomas, M. (1996). Commentary in Brownlie, D., Saren, M., Wensley, R., Whittington, R. (Eds.). *Rethinking Marketing*. Sage: London.
- Thompson, J., & Frank, M. (2005). *Strategic Management, Awareness and Change (5thed.)*. Thomson Publishers, London
- Uncles M., (1995), Branding, the Marketing Advantage; *The Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 3, No 1.
- Urde M., (1997), *Brand orientation*, PhD Thesis, Lund University Press.
- Urde, M. (2013). Core value-based corporate brand building. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), 1017-1040.
- Whitley, B. E. (2002). *Principals of Research and Behavioural Science*, Boston, McGraw-Hill.
- William Y., Kumju H., Seonaidh M., & Caroline J. O., (2011) Sustainable Consumption: Green Consumer Behaviour when Purchasing Products Published online in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI:10.1002/sd.394. DOI:10.1007/s10551-012-1317-3
- Zeithaml, V.A. (1988), "Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: a means-end model and synthesis of evidence", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 52, No. 2 pp. 2-22.

WEB APPENDIX A10th January, 2024.

Dear Sir /Madam,

REQUEST TO FILL A QUESTIONNAIRE

I am currently conducting a research on Branding as a Competitive Edge in Multi-product Alcoholic Drinks Markets in Nigeria.

The study is a pure a scholarly exercise to enrich the field of branding and competitiveness with particular regards to Multi-product alcoholic beverage sector in Nigeria through an empirical investigation about the above mentioned topic.

The data obtained will enable me make a sound analysis and offer recommendations where necessary. Your response would be used only in the analysis and I assure you that all information giving will be treated in strict confidence.

Please, spare me a few minutes and fill out the attached questionnaires.

Your co-operation will be very much appreciated.

The Research Instruments

Please tick in the box provided and in case where a written answer is required, please answer as precisely as possible.

Part One

1. What is your Gender? (a) Male (b) Female
2. Identify your Age? (a) 20-29 (b) 30-39 (c) 40-49 (d) 50 and above
3. What is your Level of Education? (a) FSLC (b) WAEC and Equivalent
(c) First degree (d) Post Graduate Degree
4. Marital Status? (a) Married (b) Single (c) Divorce (d) Widowed
5. For how long now have you worked for your organization? (a) 1-5yr (b) 6-11yrs (c) 12-21 yrs (d) 21yrs and above

Part Two

Please tick the box that best indicates your feelings about each statement.

Tick (✓) your preferred responses whether you “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Undecided”, “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”.

| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| | BRAND POSITIONING | | | | | |
| BP1 | Placing the brand in the mind of customers will help my company to compete favorably | | | | | |
| BP2 | Promoting the brand will create acceptance by consumers | | | | | |
| BP3 | Having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge | | | | | |
| BP4 | Overall, brand positioning improves sales volume | | | | | |
| | COMMUNICATING BRAND MESSAGE | | | | | |
| BM1 | Brand attributes communicates positively to the customers | | | | | |
| BM2 | Due to the message communicated by the brand, customers are retained | | | | | |
| BM3 | The message our brand portray, gives us competitive edge | | | | | |
| BM4 | The brand message was designed to communicate the quality of the product. | | | | | |
| | DELIVERING BRAND PERFORMANCE | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| BPE1 | Over other competitors, our brand has given us competitive edge | | | | | |
| BPE2 | Our company is satisfied with the performance of the brand in the market | | | | | |
| BPE3 | The customer retentions rate is attributed to the brand performance | | | | | |
| BPE4 | Overall, our brand has competitive edge over other competing brands | | | | | |
| | LEVERAGING BRAND EQUITY | | | | | |
| BE1 | My companies' brand reputation is a competing edge over other competitors | | | | | |
| BE2 | Competitive branding and positioning strategies have aided our organization in managing competition | | | | | |
| BE3 | Having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge | | | | | |
| BE4 | Multiproduct branding as a core product strategy has significant effect on competition | | | | | |
| | PERCEIVED BRAND QUALITY | | | | | |
| BN1 | Strong brand names is the single most important factor that differentiates competing brands from the competition | | | | | |
| BN2 | Understanding competition, studying customer needs, evaluating their strengths and weakness are all important aspects of branding strategy | | | | | |
| BN3 | The symbolic uses of brands association help a strong brand name to communicate quality and leverage competition | | | | | |
| BN4 | Brands are essential patterns of familiarity meaning, fondness, and reassurance that exist in the minds of consumers that help to influence competition | | | | | |
| | DIFFERENTIATION | | | | | |
| DF1 | Differentiation strategies have aided our organization in managing competition | | | | | |
| DF2 | Branding strategy brings your competitive positioning to life in the minds of customers | | | | | |
| DF3 | Our organization's relationship with customers contribute positively to your organization's competitive edge | | | | | |
| DF4 | Our companies brand management is a key factor that gave us competitive edge | | | | | |

WEB APPENDIX B

**Reliability Test
Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|------------------|------------|
| .951 | 24 |

Cronbach Alfa Output of Reliability Test of Individual Items

| Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|------------------|
| Placing the brand in the mind of customers will help my company to compete favorably | .946 |
| Promoting the brand will create acceptance by consumers | .947 |
| Having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge | .947 |
| Overall, brand positioning improves sales volume | .946 |
| Brand attributes communicates positively to the customers | .947 |
| Due to the message communicated by the brand, customers are retained | .947 |
| The message our brand portray, gives us competitive edge | .946 |
| The brand message was designed to communicate the quality of the product | .947 |
| Over other competitors, our brand has given us competitive edge | .948 |
| Our company is satisfied with the performance of the brand in the market | .947 |
| The customer retentions rate is attributed to the brand performance | .948 |
| Overall, our brand has competitive edge over other competing brands | .947 |
| My companies' brand reputation is a competing edge over other competitors | .947 |
| Competitive branding and positioning strategies have aided our organization in managing competition | .947 |
| Having a cohesive brand strategy helps improve brand familiarity to create sustainable competitive edge | .947 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Multiproduct branding as a core product strategy has significant effect on competition | .946 |
| Strong brand names is the single most important factor that differentiates competing brands from the competition | .947 |
| Understanding competition, studying customer needs, evaluating their strengths and weakness are all important aspects of branding strategy | .947 |
| The symbolic uses of brands association help a strong brand name to communicate quality and leverage competition | .997 |
| Brands are essential patterns of familiarity meaning, fondness, and reassurance that exist in the minds of consumers that help to influence competition | .947 |
| Differentiation strategies have aided our organization in managing competition | .947 |
| Branding strategy brings your competitive positioning to life in the minds of customers | .948 |
| Our organization's relationship with customers contribute positively to your organization's competitive edge | .947 |
| Our companies brand management is a key factor that gave us competitive edge | .947 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

WEB APPENDIX C
Correlation Test Output

POSITIONINGBRAND1

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 55 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 20.3 |
| D | 46 | 17.0 | 17.0 | 37.3 |
| U | 33 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 49.4 |
| A | 72 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 76.0 |
| SA | 65 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

POSITIONINGBRAND2

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 43 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 15.9 |
| D | 33 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 28.0 |
| U | 29 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 38.7 |
| A | 89 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 71.6 |
| SA | 77 | 28.4 | 28.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

POSITIONINGBRAND3

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 42 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| D | 30 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 26.6 |
| U | 21 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 34.3 |
| A | 76 | 28.0 | 28.0 | 62.4 |
| SA | 102 | 37.6 | 37.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

POSITIONINGBRAND4

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 37 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 13.7 |
| D | 51 | 18.8 | 18.8 | 32.5 |
| U | 42 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 48.0 |
| A | 90 | 33.2 | 33.2 | 81.2 |
| SA | 51 | 18.8 | 18.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE1

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 19 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| D | 38 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 21.0 |
| U | 22 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 29.2 |
| A | 107 | 39.5 | 39.5 | 68.6 |
| SA | 85 | 31.4 | 31.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE2

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 47 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 17.3 |
| D | 41 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 32.5 |
| U | 32 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 44.3 |
| A | 61 | 22.5 | 22.5 | 66.8 |
| SA | 90 | 33.2 | 33.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE3

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 23 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 8.5 |
| D | 24 | 8.9 | 8.9 | 17.3 |
| U | 28 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 27.7 |
| A | 99 | 36.5 | 36.5 | 64.2 |
| SA | 97 | 35.8 | 35.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 37 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 13.7 |
| D | 41 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 28.8 |
| U | 32 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 40.6 |
| A | 90 | 33.2 | 33.2 | 73.8 |
| SA | 71 | 26.2 | 26.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE1

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 20 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 7.4 |
| D | 44 | 16.2 | 16.2 | 23.6 |
| U | 23 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 32.1 |
| A | 79 | 29.2 | 29.2 | 61.3 |
| SA | 105 | 38.7 | 38.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE2

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 47 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 17.3 |
| D | 41 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 32.5 |
| U | 42 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 48.0 |
| A | 80 | 29.5 | 29.5 | 77.5 |
| SA | 61 | 22.5 | 22.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE3

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 42 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| D | 40 | 14.8 | 14.8 | 30.3 |
| U | 31 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 41.7 |
| A | 66 | 24.4 | 24.4 | 66.1 |
| SA | 92 | 33.9 | 33.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE4

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 36 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| D | 55 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 33.6 |
| U | 43 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 49.4 |
| A | 82 | 30.3 | 30.3 | 79.7 |
| SA | 55 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY1

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 29 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 10.7 |
| D | 47 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 28.0 |
| U | 32 | 11.8 | 11.8 | 39.9 |
| A | 91 | 33.6 | 33.6 | 73.4 |
| SA | 72 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY2

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 39 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.4 |
| D | 34 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 26.9 |
| U | 28 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 37.3 |
| A | 101 | 37.3 | 37.3 | 74.5 |
| SA | 69 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY3

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 19 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| D | 50 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 25.5 |
| U | 44 | 16.2 | 16.2 | 41.7 |
| A | 70 | 25.8 | 25.8 | 67.5 |
| SA | 88 | 32.5 | 32.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY4

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 45 | 16.6 | 16.6 | 16.6 |
| D | 40 | 14.8 | 14.8 | 31.4 |
| U | 29 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 42.1 |
| A | 89 | 32.8 | 32.8 | 74.9 |
| SA | 68 | 25.1 | 25.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY1

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 46 | 17.0 | 17.0 | 17.0 |
| D | 33 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 29.2 |
| U | 44 | 16.2 | 16.2 | 45.4 |
| A | 51 | 18.8 | 18.8 | 64.2 |
| SA | 97 | 35.8 | 35.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY2

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 42 | 15.5 | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| D | 30 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 26.6 |
| U | 38 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 40.6 |
| A | 81 | 29.9 | 29.9 | 70.5 |
| SA | 80 | 29.5 | 29.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PERCEIVED BRAND QUALITY3

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 53 | 19.6 | 19.6 | 19.6 |
| D | 40 | 14.8 | 14.8 | 34.3 |
| U | 29 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 45.0 |
| A | 65 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 69.0 |
| SA | 84 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PERCEIVED BRAND QUALITY4

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 39 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 14.4 |
| D | 22 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 22.5 |
| U | 35 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 35.4 |
| A | 98 | 36.2 | 36.2 | 71.6 |
| SA | 77 | 28.4 | 28.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION2

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 41 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 15.1 |
| D | 30 | 11.1 | 11.1 | 26.2 |
| U | 41 | 15.1 | 15.1 | 41.3 |
| A | 78 | 28.8 | 28.8 | 70.1 |
| SA | 81 | 29.9 | 29.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION3

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 48 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 17.7 |
| D | 51 | 18.8 | 18.8 | 36.5 |
| U | 27 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 46.5 |
| A | 55 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 66.8 |
| SA | 90 | 33.2 | 33.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION4

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| SD | 49 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 18.1 |
| D | 35 | 12.9 | 12.9 | 31.0 |
| U | 33 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 43.2 |
| A | 82 | 30.3 | 30.3 | 73.4 |
| SA | 72 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 271 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Component Matrix^a

| | Component |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| | 1 |
| POSITIONINGBRAND1 | .972 |
| POSITIONINGBRAND2 | .987 |
| POSITIONINGBRAND3 | .979 |
| POSITIONINGBRAND4 | .970 |
| COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE1 | .961 |
| COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE2 | .985 |
| COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE3 | .953 |
| COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE | .986 |
| DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE1 | .969 |
| DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE2 | .979 |
| DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE3 | .988 |
| DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE4 | .968 |
| LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY1 | .982 |
| LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY2 | .982 |
| LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY3 | .978 |
| LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY4 | .986 |
| PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY1 | .983 |
| PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY2 | .988 |
| PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY3 | .982 |
| PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY4 | .977 |
| PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION1 | .971 |
| PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION2 | .988 |
| PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION3 | .976 |
| PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION4 | .987 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Variables Entered/Removed^a

| Model | Variables Entered | Variables Removed | Method |
|-------|---|-------------------|--------|
| 1 | PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY1, COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE1, POSITIONINGBRAND1, LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY1, DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE1 ^b | | Enter |

a. Dependent Variable: PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION1

b. All requested variables entered.

CollinearityDiagnostics^a

| Model Dimension | Eigenvalue | Condition Index | Variance Proportions | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | (Constant) | POSITIONINGBRAND1 | COMMUNICATINGBRANDMESSAGE1 | DELIVERINGBRANDPERFORMANCE1 | LEVERAGINGBRANDEQUITY1 | PERCEIVEDBRANDQUALITY1 |
| 1 | 5.852 | 1.000 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| 2 | .119 | 7.024 | .48 | .01 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .01 |
| 3 | .014 | 20.320 | .39 | .39 | .11 | .08 | .00 | .00 |
| 4 | .007 | 28.562 | .09 | .01 | .04 | .03 | .44 | .49 |
| 5 | .005 | 35.360 | .03 | .58 | .10 | .15 | .46 | .43 |
| 6 | .004 | 40.109 | .00 | .01 | .75 | .73 | .10 | .08 |

a. Dependent Variable: PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION1

Residuals Statistics

| | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|----------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|-----|
| Predicted Value | 1.0801 | 5.0642 | 3.7380 | 1.30661 | 271 |
| Residual | -.87229 | .91993 | .00000 | .22318 | 271 |
| Std. Predicted Value | -2.034 | 1.015 | .000 | 1.000 | 271 |
| Std. Residual | -3.872 | 4.084 | .000 | .991 | 271 |

a. Dependent Variable: PRODUCTDIFFERENTIATION1