IJAAR PUBLISHING®

International Journal of Advanced Academic Research | ISSN: 2488-9849
Vol. 10, Issue 5 (May, 2024) | www.ijaar.org

Perceived Brand Quality and Marketing Effectiveness of Quoted Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Companies in Rivers State

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Abstract

The study examines the empirical relationship between perceived brand quality and marketing effectiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. The study adopted a correlational investigation. The population of this study consists of twenty-one (21) quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State, using a census sampling techniques. Three (3) respondents were drawn from each of the companies making a total of sixty- three (63) respondents to whom copies of structured questionnaire were administered. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation with the aid of statistical packages of social science (SPSS) version 25.0. The study's findings revealed that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived brand quality and marketing effectiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. It is the recommendation of this study that managers of quoted fast moving consumer goods companies should be involved in activities that communicate, promote and educate the consumers on the quality of their products in order to improve the consumers' perception on their brand equity and should aim to further improve their perceived brand quality.

Keywords: Perceived Brand Quality, Marketing Effectiveness, Customer Retention, Competitive Advantage, Strategic Orientation

Harcourt, H. (2024). Perceived Brand Quality and Marketing Effectiveness of Quoted Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Companies in Rivers State. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research. 10*(5), 1-11. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.11117248

1 Introduction

As competition comes intensified and markets became global, quality has become a growing priority within organizations. It is vital for companies to manage the quality of their brands which are now considered as a tool for marketing effectiveness, this is because consumers have a perception of the products offered and these perceptions tend to be high (Wu, 2014). Many companies have improved the quality of their products in order to enhance effectiveness as well as competitiveness. A brand can signal a certain level of quality which makes it easier for consumers to know the level of satisfaction they will obtain when buying a given brand. It will also decrease time spent during shopping since a brand represents a given set of associations in the minds of the consumers (Aaker, 2014). Perceived quality is customer perception to the overall quality or superiority of a product with the intent to expect respect.

Perceived brand quality according to Agaba and Kanyesiime (2019) is the degree to which a brand is considered to provide good quality products and can be measured on the basis of the following five criteria: The quality offered by the brand is a reason to buy it; Level of differentiation or position in relation to competing brands; Price - as the product becomes more complex to assess, and status is at play, and consumers tend to take price as a quality indicator; Availability in different sales channels- consumers have a higher quality perception of the brands that are widely available; And the number of brand extensions- which tells the consumer that the brand stands for a certain quality guarantee that is applicable on a wide scale (Agaba & Kanyesiime, 2019). The quality of the experience provided to customers builds buying habits, even though competition is very competitive and there are various similar offerings (Mainardes et al., 2019).

The quality of a brand is that which satisfies the needs of users which may include different features and it enhances the effectiveness of the brand (Dunk, 2002). The brands offered by the company must have values in accordance with what is expected by the customer. Perceived brand quality ensures the organization defines and delivers the requisite levels of satisfaction desired by their various target customer segments. Perceived brand quality is therefore formed to judge the overall quality of a product. Consumers use the quality attributes to infer quality of an unfamiliar product, and it is therefore important to understand the relevant quality attributes with regard to brand equity.

Therefore, this study is intended to examine the relationship between perceived brand quality and marketing effectiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between perceived brand marketing effectiveness. The specific objectives are to examine the extent to which perceived brand quality relates to customer retention, competitive advantage and strategic orientation of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State.

2 Perceived Brand Quality

Perceived brand quality is the judgment of customers about a service and product’s total advantage or excellence.Aaker et al., (2013) opined that the impression of quality cannot be determined objectively, because impression of quality in itself is a summary of the construct.The perceived brand quality of products of strong brands add worthiness to purchase appraisals of consumers. Perceived brand quality can be referred to as the customer’s finding on the advantages, excellence, credibility and any differences of a brand that can be compared with other brands (Pham, Do, & Phung, 2016). Perceived brand quality is also a section of value of brand, which leads customers to choose a particular brand than another brand. The objective characteristics of a product include intrinsic as well as extrinsic signals of quality. Intrinsic signals lead to perceived quality and the perceived quality, increase the brand equity so managers should strive to reduce the gap between the expected perceived qualities and observed perceived quality (Sanyal & Datta, 2011). Perceived quality is the most influential element of brand equity towards consumer purchase decision (Siali *et al*., 2016). Perceived quality evaluates the customization and reliability of a given product or service (Turkylmaz *et al*., 2013). The higher customers' expectation to purchase a product belonging to a brand the higher their willingness to recommend that brand to others. When customers perceive high quality, the brand meets customer's needs, which, in turn, leads to their satisfaction and loyalty. Willingness to order is greater when there are tendencies toward perceiving higher quality.

3 Concept of Marketing Effectiveness

Marketing effectiveness may be characterized as the function of improving the process where marketers go to market with the goal of optimizing their own marketing resources spent to achieve even better results for both of the short- and long-term strategic marketing objectives (Frantisek & Iveta, 2015). According to Solcansky and Iveta (2010), marketing effectiveness is the quality with which managers go on the market to optimize their spending in order to achieve a good result in short-term and long-term period. Marketing effectiveness as concept has been strongly associated with many valuable organizational outcomes, which should be long-term growth, stable, enhanced customer satisfaction, a competitive advantage and a strong marketing orientation. Managers are under pressure, and they put not only marketing investments under examination, but the main results of the examination are reflected in financial expressions - profit, sales or turnover, as the effect of realized marketing activities (Gijsenberg, 2014; Lamberti & Noci, 2010). Marketing effectiveness calls for managers to have sufficient information for the purposes of planning and effective resource allocation to varying markets, products and territories. Marketing effectiveness depends on the ability to implement marketing plans successfully at various levels of the organization and it isreliant upon the adeptness of managers to delivering profitable strategies from their philosophy, organization and information resources.

Organizations that have high marketing effectiveness are those that are close to their consumers with common set of values that demonstrate an external market orientation (Nwokah, 2006). However, not only does the improved visibility into marketing effectiveness helps companies to better prioritize their efforts, but it also has improved the quality and precision of the marketing resources demanded by the sales force. Marketing effectiveness, according to KPI, uses many kinds of metrics, divided into financial and non-financial variables. From the financial point of view, marketing effectiveness could be defined as a return on investment in marketing activities in the company (Milichovsky & Simberova, 2011). There is an affinity between corporate objectives, metrics and a performance system. The metrics and performance system could be taken as subordinate to corporate objectives. Marketing effectiveness is operationalized as merge of five components designed (Kotler, 1977 cited in Frantisek & Iveta, 2015). These five components are customer philosophy, integrated marketing organization, adequate marketing information, strategic orientation, and operational efficiency. Ali (2018) operationalized marketing effectiveness into two dimensions of customer satisfaction and customer retention. In this study, marketing effectiveness was presented as; customer retention, competitive advantage and strategic orientation.

a. Customer Retention

Customer retention is more than giving the customer what they expect; it involves exceeding their expectation that results to loyal advocacy for brands. Customer retention can also mean the number of customers who stay with the provider in the course of an established period, such as a year (Ioanna, 2013). Customer retention is used as a driver to increase market share and revenue (Buttle, & Maklan, 2015). Customer retention is the capacity to maintain standing customers by forming profitable and friendly relationships while providing superior quality services. It is a deeply held commitment to rebuy or patronize a preferred product consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior. Customer retention is the way in which organizations focus their efforts on existing customers in an effort to continue doing business with them (Danish *et al*., 2015). Customer retention is the continuity of the business relations between the customer and company. Customer retention has a direct impact on long term value, which is a more profitable for firms that seek to pursue growth and sustainability or those that seek to protect themselves from market shrinkage resulting from a contracting economy (Gee *et al*., 2008). In the retention of customer, it is important for firm to know who to satisfy and how to effectively satisfy their customers.

b. Competitive Advantage

Naatu (2016) defined competitive advantage as the tool that enables a company to take a bigger market share and generate more sales. Competitive advantage is the company's ability to make superior benefits and values in facing various competitions to get maximum profit. Competitive advantage is a competitive strategy that is difficult for competitors to imitate, namely making products that truly have regional unique values and are carried out sustainably, so that competing products do not have the opportunity to attract consumers’ attention (Correia, Dias, & Teixeira, 2020). Kotler and Keller (2016) described competitive advantage as the ability to work in one or more ways that cannot or will not be matched by competitors. Competitive advantage stems from a company’s strategic choices to seize market opportunities. Competitive advantage is the development of the value that the company can create for its buyers. Barney and Hesterly (2012) states that, a company has a competitive advantage when it is able to create more economic value from a rival company. It is an advantage gained over competitors by offering customers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing additional benefits and services that justify similar or possibly higher prices. A firm has competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential player. Thus, competitive advantage is a position in which the organization is still working to beat competitors.

c. Strategic Orientation

Strategic orientation indicates the manner in which an organization adapts to its external environment. It is the tendency to utilize, coordinate resources, and direct a firm's managerial activities in specific ways to achieve a competitive advantage, build network ties and improve business performance (Cadogan, 2012). Strategic orientation is related to the decisions that businesses make to achieve superior performance. Strategic orientation is an organization's direction for reaching a suitable behavior in order to attain superior performance.The core of any strategic orientation is to achieve the right level of performance returns that allows firms to be competitive and to survive over time (Abuhashesh *et al*., 2019). A firm's strategy influences its structure, investment, activity, relations with the market, and performance. Al-Ansaari *et al*. (2015) stated that firms can utilize their strategies as a way to create new capabilities and solve problems, while a strategy could provide the framework to help the firm and its managers to deploy required assets, identify new opportunities for providing customers with acceptable products and services, and deliver and sell such products or services in the marketplace with higher profits through strategic orientation.

4 Perceived Brand Quality and Marketing Effectiveness

Salim and Rodhiah (2022) empirically examined the effect of perceived quality, customer satisfaction, corporate image and customer experience on customer loyalty. The population of their study were users of the LINE Webtoon application in Jakarta. Their study employed a sample with a non-probability method. The sample selection technique is purposive sampling with a sample size of 100 respondents, who use the LINE Webtoon application. The study used a structural equation modelling with smartPLS as its analytical tool to test the stated hypothesis. The results of the study indicate that perceived quality and customer experience have a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty. Anwar and Andrean (2020)empirically carried out a study to determine the influence of perceived quality, brand image, and price perception on the decision to purchase airline tickets online at traveloka.com customers. The study adopted a samples size 200 respondents, who uses traveloka.com website to purchase plane tickets online in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Purposive sampling was employed as a sampling technique.Multiple regression analysis was utilized as a method of analysis to determine the influence of the variables involved. The result of the study found simultaneously that perceived quality, brand image, and price perception positively and significantly influenced purchase decisions. Again, it was found that perceived quality positively and significantly affected purchase decisions partially.

Agaba and Kanyesiime (2019) empirically investigated the effect of perceived quality on competitive advantage in beer products in Kabale district, South Western Uganda. The study used a descriptive survey research design to study a target population of 1783 customers. The study adopted both Multistage sampling techniques and simple random sampling technique in selecting alcoholic beer products and producers. The sample size comprise 324 respondents using the Slovene's formula. The inferential analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis and the t-statistic and the p-value were adopted to test the hypotheses of the study. The study findings revealed that perceived quality has positive effect on competitive advantage in alcoholic beer products in Kabale district, South Western Uganda.

Prasadh (2018) examined empirically the effect of perceived quality on customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction of e-banking operation. The adopted a population of 450 customers using e-banking services and a sample size of 334 respondents. Data for the study were analysed with inferential statistics and it was found that perceived quality directly affects customer loyalty and that perceived quality mediated by customer satisfaction also has a positive influence on customer loyalty. Mozhdeh et al., (2016) carried out am empirical investigation on the relationship between brand perceived quality and brand awareness on brand loyalty in Carbonated drinks in Iran. The research adopted a survey research design with descriptive attribute to study a sample size of 200 customers as respondents of carbonated drinks in Iran country and were randomly selected. Data for this study were analyzed using inferential statistical tool and it was found among other, that perceived quality significantly impacts on customer loyalty. Again, customer satisfaction showed a positive influence on the relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty.Based on the foregoing, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between perceived brand quality and customer retention.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation.

5 Methodology

The study adopted a correlational investigation to assess the extent to which perceived brand quality relates to the marketing effectiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods companies operating in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population for this study comprises the twenty- one (21) quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State, obtained from the business directory of the Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and industry. A census study was adopted by using the entire population as the sample size. However, three (3) copies of structured questionnaire were distributed to three managers of each of the 21 companies that made up the study population totaling sixty-three (63) respondents. These managers include the marketing managers, sales managers, and production managers, as they are knowledgeable about the issues discussed in this study. The study adopted aPearson Product Moment correlation (PPMC) to examine the relationship between perceived brand quality and the measures of marketing effectiveness of the quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State.

6 Results and Interpretation

Table 1: Univariate distribution for the variables

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived Brand Quality	Our company offers a complete range of products to customers.	58	3.6207	1.08946
	Our company is innovative	58	3.5000	1.09625
	Our company informational materials (websites, advertisements, brochures etc.) are visually appealing	58	3.3621	1.29369
	Our company has up to date facilities and equipment	58	3.8276	1.04526
Customer Retention	Our customers are satisfied with the price offered by us	58	3.2069	1.33454
	Our products have boosted customer trust and patronage	58	3.7586	.92358
	With our products, our company easily get referrals from customers	58	3.6207	1.02303
	We offer cheap and affordable products as compared to other companies	58	3.4310	1.35222

Competitive Advantage	Our company has advantages through low price	58	3.6379	1.02081
	Our company has advantages through improved quality.	58	3.2241	.99195
	Our company has advantages through delivery dependability	58	3.3793	1.29544
	Our company has advantages through reduced time to market	58	3.5000	1.03024
Strategic Orientation	We have built capacity to react to market changes	58	3.5000	.88357
	We constantly monitor our level of commitment and orientation to serve customer's needs	58	3.3793	1.54270
	We actively seek innovative ideas	58	3.9655	1.05905
	Our business objectives are driven primarily by customer satisfaction	58	3.9138	1.14378
	Valid N (listwise)	58		

Source: Research Data, 2024.

Presented on the table 1, is the distribution for the indicators for the variables of the study. The analysis indicates that majority of the participants identify related properties as evident and as characterizing their context. This follows the substantiality of mean ($x > 3.0$) distributions for the indicators, suggesting the affirmation of such attributes and behavior within various organizations. These further demonstrate the extent to which these organizations reflect or express features such as brand quality, customer retentions, competitive advantage and strategic orientation.

Bivariate Data Analysis

The data analysis involved the test of 3 hypotheses to ascertain the relationship between perceived brand quality and marketing effectiveness. The three hypotheses intended to show the extent to which perceived brand quality relates to measures of marketing effectiveness (customer retention, competitive advantage, and strategic orientation)

Where:

PBQ = Perceived Brand Quality

CR = Customer Retention

CA = Competitive Advantage

SO = Strategic Orientation.

Table 2: Relationship between perceived brand quality and customer retention

		PBQ	CR
PBQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.966**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58

Table 2 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.966 between perceived brand quality and customer retention, indicating a very strong positive relationship between perceived brand quality and customer retention. More so, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong and statistically significant relationship between perceived brand quality and customer retention. This further implies that perceived brand quality can be used to achieve customer retention among the quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between perceived brand quality and customer retention of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong significant relationship between perceived brand quality and customer retention of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State.

Table 3: Relationship between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage

		PBQ	CA
PBQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.969**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58

Table 3 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.969 between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage, indicating a very strong positive relationship between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage. The probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong and statistically significant relationship between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage. This further implies that perceived brand quality can be used to achieve competitive advantage among the quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong significant relationship between perceived brand quality and competitive advantage of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State.

Table 4: Relationship between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation

		PBQ	SO
PBQ	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	58	58

Table 4 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.895 between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation, indicating a very strong positive relationship between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation. Moreso, the probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that there is a very strong and statistically significant relationship between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation. This further implies that perceived brand quality can be used to achieve strategic orientation among the quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong significant relationship between perceived brand quality and strategic orientation of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State.

7 Discussion of the Findings

This study focused on examining the relationship between perceived brand qualityand marketing effectiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State. The result of the statistical analyses conducted showed that perceived brand quality bears strong positive and statistically significant connection with marketing effectiveness in terms of customer retention, competitive advantage, and strategic orientation. These findings corroborate the empirical position of Salim and Rodhiah (2022), who foundthat perceived brand quality has apositive and significant effect on customer loyalty. The present study validates the report thatperceived brand quality enhances the performance and effectiveness of companies. The result is also in line with the findings of Agaba and Kanyesiime (2019), who found that producers of high-quality beer brands have a competitive edge over those that produce poor quality beer products. Anwar and Andrean, (2020) found that the adoption of perceived brand quality positively impact purchase decisions. Furthermore, the current findings align with the findings of Prasadh (2018) who found perceived brand quality to have positive relationship with customer loyalty. Customers form their perception of quality through assessing the performance, features, conformance, reliability, durability, serviceability, and style or design of the product and these elements of product can affect subconsciously customer’s attitudes and behavior towards a brand either positively or negatively.

8. Conclusion and Recommendation

In view of the evidence presented in this study, the study concludes that the adoption and practice of perceived brand quality enhances operational processes in ways that substantially drive outcomes of marketing effectiveness of quoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State in terms of customer retention, competitive advantage and strategic orientation. It is recommended that managers of thequoted fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, should aggressively engage in activities that communicate, promote and educate the consumers on the quality of their products in order to improve the consumers’ perception on their brand equity and should aim to further improve their perceived brand quality. They must position their brands to target customers through the attributes of high quality, high prestige, functional and emotional benefits.

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