

**THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE AND PROMOTIONAL MIX ON
CONSUMER BUYING DECISION- A STUDY OF BEVERAGE CONSUMERS IN
LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *The objective of the study was to evaluate the influence of brand image and promotional mix on consumer buying decision. Descriptive survey research design was adopted as the study guide. Judgemental and purposive sampling techniques were used in which four hundred (400) copies of the research instrument were administered to beverage consumers in Lagos State, Nigeria, out of which three hundred and eighty four (384) copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to analyse the data generated from the respondents. The findings revealed that brand image, advertising, sales promotion and personal selling have significant influence on consumer buying decision at .01 level (2-tailed). The study concluded that the way a product is promoted coupled with the brand integrity of such product encourages consumers to purchase it and make repeat purchase of it, and as well enhances the referral of such product to other prospects. The study therefore recommended to the organizations, especially those that engage in the marketing of the fast-moving consumer goods, to focus on distinct promotional mix, as the study empirically proved that perception of brand image is capable of influencing consumer buying decision on sustainable basis. It is also recommended that each marketing company should adopt a combination of promotional mix that can bring about distinct outcomes in terms of turnover, improved market share, customer retention, profitability, and productivity among others.*

KEYWORDS: *Advertising, Brand Image, Consumer Buying Decision, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion.*

INTRODUCTION

Branding has emerged as a top management priority in the last decade due to the growing realization that brands are one of the most valuable intangible assets that firms have. Brands serve several valuable functions. At their most basic level, brands serve as markers for the offerings of a firm. For customers, brands can simplify choice, promise a particular quality level, reduce risk, and/or engender trust. Brands are built on the product itself, the accompanying marketing activity, and the use (or non-use) by customers as well as others. Brands thus reflect the complete experience that customers have with products (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). In the modern age, Brand plays an important role to boost up the economy of any country. Brand is the only tool that can change the buyer's behaviour.

Today, people are more conscious about the brand than the past. There are number of cues present in environment that guide public in selection. One of them is branding. It is considered more powerful mental shortcut in selection. A brand can influence whether consumer notice the products or not. Moreover branding can influence how consumer quickly buys the product (Umer, Salman, Kashif, Muhammad, and Saqib, 2014). However, brand positioning sets the direction of marketing activities and programs - what the brand should and should not do with its marketing. Brand positioning involves establishing key brand associations in the minds of customers and other important constituents to differentiate the brand and establish (to the extent possible) competitive superiority (Keller, Sternthal and Tybout, 2002 as cited in Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

Positioning and the creation of brand personality are becoming more and more important to companies as they try and reach out to customers. Building of strong brands is one of the ways in which a company can develop and sustain an advantage over its market share. Branding is a powerful and effective tool for business and organizations (Hankinson and Cowking, 1993 as cited in Olsson and Catalina, 2006). If brand owners use their products correctly, the payoffs can be substantial. However, if brands are mismanaged, the results can be damaging. Successful brand-building strategies create a distinctive market position for a company protecting it against the five basic competitive forces: rivalry among existing firms, the bargaining power of suppliers, the bargaining power of buyers, the threat of substitutes, and the threat of new entrants. Branding is a technique to build a substantial, differential advantage by playing on the nature of human beings (Olsson and Catalina, 2006).

Choice of preference for opportunity cost of products by individuals and groups enlarges so much in time and occasionally individual interests clash. The wasted time in decision making by individuals and groups and their willingness to part with their money resources is a big setback on sales and performance. The major decision a buyer makes in a group and how his or her choice influences others is a problem in consumer behaviour. To undertake and investigate a study of how purchase decisions are taken in individuals and group structure or settings and how this affects volume of sales and profits of the marketer/producer is still a major problem to researchers. And at the same time, lack of information devices by the marketer/producer in reaching the individuals and groups at the right time and place, to fasten purchase is an issue in ascertaining the attitude of customers (Ajibola and Njogo, 2012).

According to Onah (1988), Ayozie (2012), and Kotler (2008) as cited in Ayozie (2013), it is completely misleading and untrue that promotional mix provide inadequate product information and deceptive selling practices that have led to clear-cut abuses and infringement upon the rights of consumers. Also, mass production and mass marketing have put more products on the market than the consumer is willing to take. This has often led to wild claims by advertisers and even the itinerant sales people about what products can do and the use of sophisticated psychological devices in radio and television programmes to get the consumer to buy the product.

In an attempt to get rich quick some businessmen and women indulge in unscrupulous business practices. For example, many expired drugs/canned foods are on widespread sale in our markets in Nigeria. Currently, food poisoning has been incessant in our households and educational institutions. This is because spoilt tinned foods, dirty sachet water, adulterated products and dirty food items, find their way in to our markets instead of being destroyed. The

consumer has become helpless in the hands of some businessmen and women in the country (Onah, 1988 as cited in Ayozie, 2013).

However, based on the research conceptual model, the following null hypotheses were stated to guide the study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between brand image and consumer buying decision.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between advertising and consumer buying decision.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between sales promotion and consumer buying decision.
- iv. There is no significant relationship between personal selling and consumer buying decision.

This paper investigated the influences of brand image and promotional mix on consumers' buying decisions. For this purpose, this paper is structured into five sections: first section focuses on the general introduction; second section focuses on the review of literature; the third section focuses on the methodology; the fourth section focuses on the data analysis, results, and discussion; while the last section presents the conclusion and recommendations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptual Clarification

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. A brand is, thus, a product or service that adds dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products services designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be functional, rational, or tangible – related to product performance of the brand. They may also be more symbolic, emotional or intangible – related to what the brand represents (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

Brands today play a number of important roles that improve consumers' lives and enhance the financial value of firms. Brands identify the source or maker of a product and allow consumers either individuals or organizations to assign responsibility to a particular manufacturer or distributor. Consumers may evaluate the identical product differently depending on how it is branded. Consumers learn about brands through past experiences with the product and its marketing programme. They find out which brands satisfy their needs and which ones do not. As consumers' lives become more complicated, rushed, and time-starved, the ability of the brand to simplify decision making and reduce risk is invaluable.

Brand positioning plays a key role in the building and managing of a strong brand by specifying how the brand is related to consumer's goals (Tybout and Calkins, 2005). Brand position is part of the brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience and that demonstrates an advantage over competing brands (Aaker, 1996). The essence of positioning is that the brand has some sustainable competitive advantage or unique selling proposition. Such a selling proposition gives consumer a compelling reason why they should buy a particular product. Thus one critical success factor for the brand is that it has some strongly held, favourably evaluated associations that function as a point of differentiation and are unique to the brand and imply superiority over other competing brands (Keller, 1998).

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas or products by an identifiable sponsor. People react to the same advertisement differently and make decisions on how to spend their available resources on consumption related items. The whole essence of advertising is to make customers to be loyal to the products advertised (Kenechukwu, Ezekiel, and Edegoh, 2013). However, sales promotion is a form of indirect advertisement, designed to stimulate sales mainly by the use of incentives. Examples of such incentives include free sample, twin-pack bargain, temporary price reduction, special discount bonus, etc. (Adebisi and Babatunde, 2011). Blythe (2006) as cited in Idris, Asokere, Ajemunigbohun, Oreshile, and Olutade (2012) describes sales promotion as any activity intended to generate a temporary boost in sales. This includes several communications activities pursued in an attempt to provide added value or incentives to customers, wholesalers, retailers, or other organizational customers to stimulate immediate sales. Such efforts are usually geared towards stimulating product interest, trials or purchase. It is specifically designed to boost quick sales and ultimately create loyalty.

Sales promotions include techniques that organizations can use as part of their marketing effort (Jobber and Lancaster, 2006). The importance of sales promotions has increased since 1960, as has the sophistication of methods used. It is sometimes implied that sales promotion is a peripheral marketing activity, but companies increasingly realise the importance of a well-planned and co-ordinated programme of sales promotion. However, advertising agencies branched out into sales promotions with the aim of offering an all-inclusive package to clients in an attempt to combat competition from emerging sales promotion agencies. They began to pay more attention to the effectiveness of sales promotions and adopted a more integrated approach to advertising. There was a move towards fee-based sales promotional agencies, which implied a longer term relationship between agency and client, rather than the existing ad hoc commission structure. As a result of increased competition from sales promotional agencies, advertising agencies have tended since the mid-1980s to take sales promotion seriously and now offer sales promotion alongside advertising as an integrated communications package (Fill, 2009).

Sales promotion can be divided into three main areas of activity: consumer promotions, trade promotions, and personnel motivation. According to Jobber and Lancaster (2006), consumer promotions are often referred to as pull techniques, since they are designed to stimulate final demand and move products through the sales channel, with consumers providing the impetus. The most widely used consumer promotion is the price reduction or price promotion (Metha, Rosenbloom and Anderson, 2000). The aim of the trade promotions, however, is usually to push products through the channel towards the customer (Jobber and Lancaster, 2006). Similar to consumer promotions, incentives are offered through extra rewards like discounts, increased margins on sales, dealer competitions, exhibitions, provision of demonstrators and free holidays (often in the guise of a conference or product launch). Personnel motivation are the promotions to the salesforce, but some apply to distributors and retailers. The most widely used salesforce promotion is the sales incentives scheme. Rewards are offered to participants on an equal basis which are over and above normal sales compensation.

Personal selling, according to Jobber (2001), is the marketing task involving face-to-face contact with a customer. Unlike advertising, promotion, sponsorship and other forms of non-personal communication, personal selling permits a direct interaction between buyer and seller.

This two-way communication means that the seller can identify the specific needs and problems of the buyer and tailor the sales presentation in the light of this knowledge. The particular concerns of the buyer can also be dealt with on a one-to-one basis. However, the nature of the personal selling function is changing. Organizations are reducing the size of their salesforces in the face of greater buyer concentration, moves towards centralized buying, and recognition of the high costs of maintaining a field sales team. The concentration of buying power into fewer hands has also fuelled the move towards relationship management often through key account selling. This involves the use of dedicated sales teams who service the accounts of major buyers.

Consumer buying decision is a series of choices made by consumer before making a purchase. Pride and Ferrell (2012) as cited in Sagala, Destriani, Putri, and Kumar (2014) stated that to understand consumer buying decision, the marketer should understand the consumption process and the utility of products in consumers' perceptions. They also declared that when purchasing products unconsciously, consumer gets through several steps in the making of purchase decision, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. The first step decision is problem recognition where the consumers are able to differentiate between their needs and wants. Marketers usually use advertising, sales person, and packaging to stimulate recognition of the needs or wants. The second step is information search where the consumer seeks the information from their memory about the products, seeking the information from outside sources, such as from friends, relatives, government reports, publication, sales person, website, packaging label, and display, or by repetition. The third is evaluation of alternatives where the consumer will establish criteria which consist of characteristic that are important for them. The fourth step is the purchase decision where the customer decides to buy the product after evaluating among alternatives. The last step is the post-purchase decision where the consumer decides to keep purchasing the product if he is satisfied or stop purchasing the product if he is dissatisfied.

Empirical Review

Brand image is argued as the most sustainable source of competitive advantage (deChernatony and Harris, 2000). A strong positive brand image does not only help a firm to achieve a competitive advantage but also encourages repeat purchases (Porter and Claycomb, 1997). Silvia and Alwi (2008) found that brand image does not only enhance consumer buying decisions, but it also has a direct positive relationship with customer loyalty. However, Moon, Joo and Jeon (2009) also investigated the sequential relations among service quality, customer satisfaction and customer buying decisions, using brand image as a moderating variable between satisfactions and buying decisions. The finding reveals that some of the dimensions of service quality have positive effect on customer buying decisions, though brand image fails to show a moderating effect. Nevertheless, it is also important for the product to have a positive brand image. It is against this backdrop that Kim, Song and Byun (2009) argue that brand image and brand management are key factors of success in the contemporary marketplace as consumers are showing greater interest in brands than ever before.

Kim, Song and Byun (2009), on the contrary, positioned brand image not as a moderating variable but as an independent variable, and brand image positively influences consumer brand preference and loyalty. However, a strong brand image is the starting point for subsequent customer loyalty-building (Nguyen and LeBlanc, 1998). Partly inciting this study, Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell (2000) argue that brand image is the value perceived and accumulated in

the customers' mind and that when a brand has loyal customers, it gains positive word-of-mouth marketing, which is both free and highly effective.

Contrary to the previous studies, there is no indirect relationship between brand image and consumer buying decisions, even through satisfaction (Hanzaee and Farsani, 2011). Bloemer, deRuyter and Peeters (1998) also express that image does not have a direct positive effect on consumer buying decision and loyalty. It is in favour of this background that Kim, Ma and Kim (2006) inferred that branding does not automatically promote loyalty; however, this study confirms the role of branding as one of the components of brand image contribution to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The study of Chakraborty, Hossain, Azad, and Islam (2013) found that sales promotion and advertising positions a product or service strongly in the mind of the consumer in order to encourage repeat purchase of the product. It was also discovered that advertising makes consumer less price sensitive which is a problem often associated to motivate consumer's mind by sales promotion. The results of the study of Soni and Verghese (2013) found that sales promotion and personal selling play significant role in consumer purchase decision. Offer, premium, and contest are the most significant tools in influencing consumer's purchase decisions while price and rebate have insignificant influence on consumer's purchase decision. Rizwan, Javed, Khan, Aslam, Anwar, Noor, and Kanwal (2012) discovered that while free samples and coupons have no significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour hand price discount, buy-one-get-one-free and physical surrounding have significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour.

The study of Muthukrishnaveni and Muruganandam (2013) revealed that sales promotion schemes play a very important role in influencing the consumer's purchase decision. More than 50% of the respondents see sales promotion as an important factor to be considered when purchasing personal care products. Matthew, Ogedebe, and Ogedebe (2013) found that web advertising influences consumers' purchase decision in Maiduguri Metropolis, Nigeria. The study revealed that majority of the respondents have positive disposition towards web advertising.

METHODOLOGY

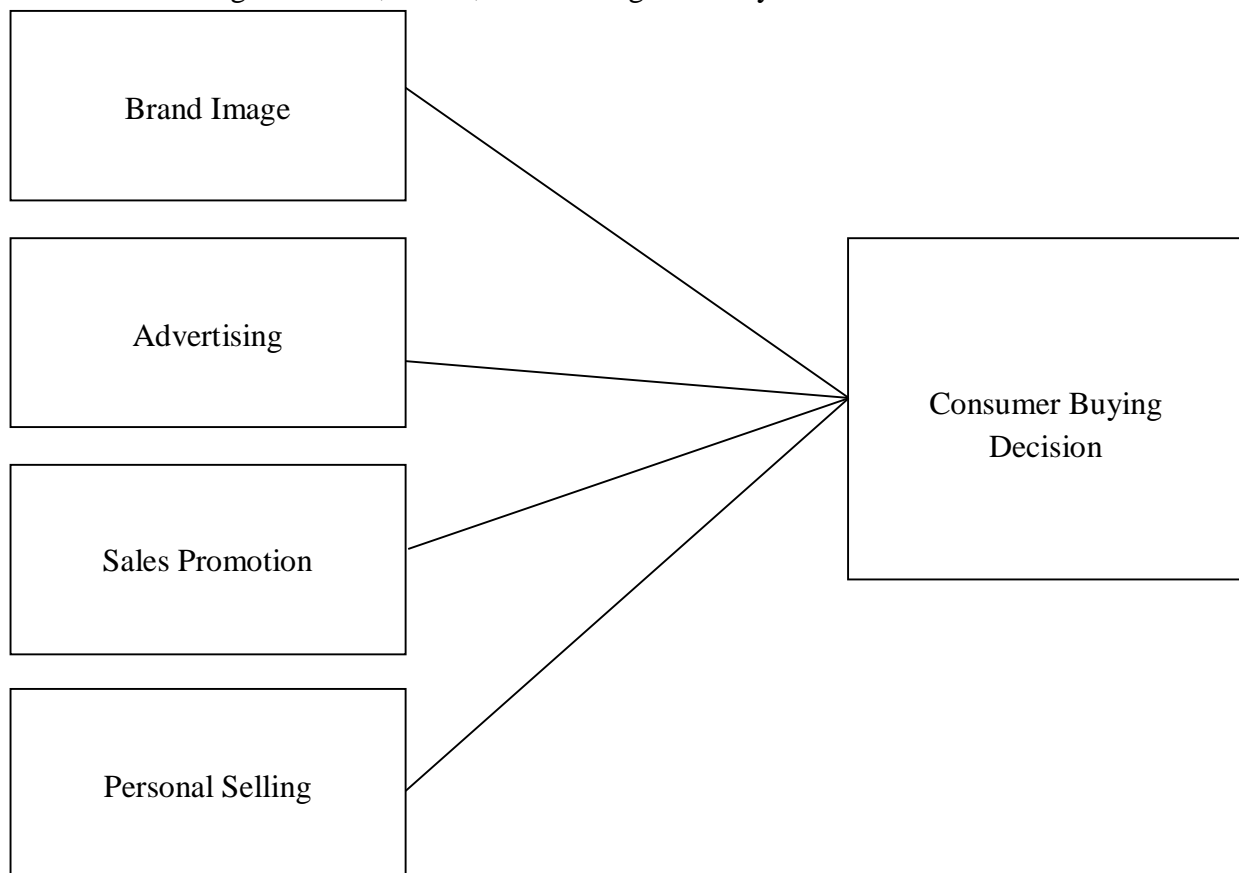
Descriptive survey research design was adopted as the study's guide and this was done for three reasons. First, it is capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population. Second, it is well suited in gathering demographic data that describe the composition of the sample (McIntyre, 1999). Third, it is inclusive in the types and number of variables that can be studied; while it requires minimal investment to develop and administer, and is relatively easy for making generalizations (Bell, 1996 as cited in Glasow, 2005). The population of the study comprised of consumers of beverages in Lagos State, Nigeria. The judgemental and purposive sampling techniques were used in the study. Judgemental sampling technique was used based on the researchers' belief that a particular sample will provide the information needed for their study. Hence, consumers of Bournvita, Peak Milk, Milo, Cowbell, Nido, Nescafe, Miksi, Loya, and Amila in Lagos State, Nigeria form the sampling frame for this study. These consumers of these beverage brands were chosen for the study's sample frame because these brands are among the top fifty (50) top brands consumed in Nigeria (www.top50brandsnigeria.com). On the other hand, purposive sampling technique was used based on the fact that the researcher

includes the respondents who are readily available and agree to participate in a study (Latham, 2007). However, four hundred (400) consumers of the selected beverage drinks in Lagos State, Nigeria constitute the sample size for the study.

The research instrument adopted for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire enabled the respondents to understand the intention of the study. It also enabled the researcher to elicit information from the respondents easily (Asika, 2004). The questionnaire comprised of two major sections: Section A (Demographic profile of the respondent) and Section B (Research construct items). The questionnaire comprised of Twenty (20) major construct items. However, modified Likert's interval rating scale with options ranging from strongly agree, agree, partially agree, partially disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree were used as the response patterns on the construct items. The study adopted some of construct items as used by Kehinde (2009). Seventy seven (77) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents at pilot stage. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the research instrument was 0.705. A value of 0.6 and above shows a satisfactory level of internal consistency and reliability of the research instrument (Cozby, 2003). This shows that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment correlation were used for empirical data analysis with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17.

Research Model

A research conceptual paradigm was developed to show the determinants of consumers' buying decision in the Nigerian food, drinks, and beverage industry.



Source: *Researchers' Conceptual Model (2015)*

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Copies of questionnaires were administered to 400 consumers of beverage drinks in Lagos State, Nigeria; out of which only 384 copies were filled and returned.

Table 1: Analysis of Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval Rate

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Retrieved	384	96
Not Retrieved	16	4
TOTAL	400	100

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey (2015)*

The table 1 above shows that 384 (96%) of the respondents filled and returned the questionnaire, while 16 (4%) of the respondents did not return the questionnaire. Thus, the percentage of questionnaires returned is high enough for the generalization of the outcome of this research work.

Table 2: Analysis of the Respondents' Demography

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
Male	204	53.1
Female	180	46.9
Total	384	100
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	301	78.4
Married	83	21.6
Total	384	100
AGE		
20 and below	187	48.7
21-30	116	30.2
31-40	47	12.2
41-50	21	12.2
51 and above	13	3.4
Total	384	100
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		
WASSCE	218	56.8
NCE	0	0
OND	26	6.8
HND	9	2.3

Bachelors' Degree	84	21.9
Masters' Degree	33	8.6
Doctorate Degree	14	3.6
Total	384	100
BEVERAGE DRINKS OF RESPONDENTS		
Bournvita	58	15.1
Peak	81	21.1
Milo	125	32.6
Cowbell	33	8.9
Nido	9	2.3
Nescafe	27	7.0
Miksi	17	4.4
Loya	31	7.8
Amila	3	0.8
Total	384	100

Source: *Researchers' Field Survey (2015).*

From the analysis of respondents' demography, 204 (53.1%) of the respondents are male while 180 (46.9%) are female. The marital status shows that 301 (78.4%) of the respondents are single while 83 (21.6%) are married. The age distribution of respondents shows that 187 (48.7%) are within the age of 20 and below, 116 (30.2%) are within the age of 21-30 years, 47 (12.2%) are within the ages of 31-40 years, 21 (5.5%) are within the age of 41-50 years, and 13 (3.4%) are within the age of 51 years and above. The educational qualification shows that 218 (56.8%) of the respondents are SSCE holders, none is an NCE holder, 26 (6.8%) are OND holders, 9 (2.3%) are HND holders, 84 (21.9%) are Bachelors' degree holders, 33 (8.6%) are Masters' degree holders, and 14 (3.6%) are Doctorate degree holders. The table also shows that 58 (15.1%) of the respondents consume Bournvita, 81 (21.1%) consume Peak, 125 (32.6%) consume Milo, 33 (8.9%) consume Cowbell, 9 (2.3%) consume Nido, 27 (7.0%) consume Nescafe, 17 (4.4%) consume Miksi, 31 (7.8%) consume Loya milk, and 3 (0.8%) consume Amila.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment correlations

		Consumer Buying Decision	Brand Image	Advertising	Sales Promotion	Personal Selling
Consumer Buying Decision	Pearson Correlation	1	.397**	.445**	.536**	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384
Brand Image	Pearson Correlation	.397**	1	.538**	.577**	.446**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	.445**	.538**	1	.469**	.526**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384
Sales Promotion	Pearson Correlation	.536**	.394**	.524**	1	.449**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	384	384	384	384	384
Personal Selling	Pearson Correlation	.394**	.564**	.428**	.522**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	384	384	384	384	384

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the Pearson Product Moment correlation for the 3 ordinal scaled variables. The significant level is 0.01.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between brand image and consumers' buying decision. From the table, it can be seen that the correlation of brand image is 0.397** and the significant level is 0.01. The table shows that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than ($<$) 0.01. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that brand image has a significant influence on consumer buying decision. This result is in congruence with the findings of Porter and Claycomb (1997), Nguyen and LeBlanc (1998), deChernatony and Harris (2000), Lafferty and Newell (2000), Silvia and Alwi (2008), and Kim et al. (2009) that there is a significant relationship between brand image and consumer buying decision. However, the findings also contradict a number of empirical studies, such as Bloemer et al. (1998), Kim et al. (2006), Moon et al. (2009), and Hanzaee and Farsani (2011) which established no significant relationship between brand image and consumer buying decision.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between advertising and consumers' buying decision. From the table, it can be seen that the correlation of advertising is 0.445** and the significant level is 0.01. The table shows that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than ($<$) 0.01. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that sales promotion has a significant influence on consumer buying decision. This result is in congruence with the findings of Chakraborty et al. (2013) and Matthew et al (2013) that advertising plays a very important role in influencing the consumer purchase decision.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between sales promotion and consumers' buying decision. From the table, it can be seen that the correlation of sales promotion is 0.536** and the significant level is 0.01. The table shows that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than ($<$) 0.01. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that sales promotion has a significant influence on consumer buying decision. This result is in congruence with the

findings of Chakraborty et al. (2013), Muthukrishnaveni and Muruganandam (2013), and Soni and Verghese (2013) that sales promotion schemes play a very important role in influencing the consumer's purchase decision.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between personal selling and consumers' buying decision. From the table, it can be seen that the correlation of personal selling is 0.394** and the significant level is 0.01. The table shows that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than ($<$) 0.01. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that sales promotion has a significant influence on consumer buying decision. This result is in congruence with the findings of Rizwan et al. (2012) and Soni and Verghese (2013) that personal selling plays a very important role in influencing the consumer purchase decision.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings revealed that all of brand image, advertising, sales promotion and personal selling have significant influence on consumer buying decision at .01 level (2-tailed). The study concluded that the way a product is promoted coupled with the brand integrity of such product encourages consumers to purchase it and make repeat purchase of it, and as well enhances the referral of such product to other prospects. From this study, the findings have shown that brand image and promotional mix exert great influence on consumer buying decision thereby affirming that promotional mix are veritable marketing communication tools for influencing consumer buying decisions on sustainable bases.

The study therefore recommended to the organizations, especially those that engage in the marketing of the fast-moving consumer goods, to focus on distinct promotional mix, as the study empirically proved that perception of brand image is capable of influencing consumer buying decision on sustainable basis. It is also recommended that each marketing company should adopt a combination of promotional mix that can bring about distinct outcomes in terms of turnover, improved market share, customer retention, profitability, and productivity among others. Finally, beverages consumers must see to the adoption and implementation of consumer orientation as an operational philosophy that must permeate the entire organization, most especially in this contemporary regime of fairer trade in goods and services.

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