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BRAND ASSETS AND CHOICE CRITERIA OF FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS AMONG UNERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

Branding is increasingly becoming important in organizations as a competitive strategy. Brand assets are perceived to influence the consumer choice of various brands, but the extent to which the various assets do this is not clear. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of brand assets on the choice criteria of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) among Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) students of the University of Nairobi. The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional research design, with the population being BCom degree students of the University of Nairobi. The study targeted 90 conveniently selected students, 30 in the regular programme, 30 in module 11 (day class) and 30 in module 11 (evening class) . Of the 90 students targeted, a total of 55 responded, mainly from module 1 and module 11(day) class, which was a response rate of 61 percent. Validity and reliability was done by first issuing the questionnaires to 4 students and checking their responses. The questions were also thoroughly checked to ensure that they were correct, before doing the final study. Descriptive analysis as well as factor analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The study found that brand assets, namely, brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and perceived quality have a positive influence on the selection criteria that a customer makes. Brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality have a positive influence on the selection criteria, while brand loyalty has a negative influence. The results of this study demonstrate that in making decisions, marketers need to always be guided by the various brand assets. It is therefore recommended that manufacturers and marketers consider these assets in marketing their products. Since this study was based on BCom students in one campus of the University of Nairobi, the findings may not be generalizable to all the students. A wider study focusing on several universities may therefore shed more light on the choice behavior of the students

Key words: *Brand assets, Brand awareness, Brand association, Perceived quality, Brand loyalty, Fast moving Consumer Goods*

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Introduction

Brands are considered to be the valuable assets of business. Brand equity has become an issue of increasing importance in recent years. It is defined as the difference in consumer choice between the branded product and an unbranded product given the same level of product features (Yoo&Donthu, 2001). In other words, it represents the utility difference in terms of positive marketing outcome, which is created by a branded product compared to that of the generic version of the same product. Because of the significant intangible value of brands, building and managing brand equity has become a priority for companies of all sizes in a wide variety of industries and markets (Lehmann, Keller, & Farley, 2008). Marketing of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) plays a critical role in the growth and development of a country irrespective of size and population. Although literature identifies several dimensions of brand equity from different other industries, existing literature on brand assets is still spare. The main Objective of this study was to establish the influence of brand assets on the choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

Concept of Brand Assets

When referring to the consumers of marketing perspective, brand assets are referred to as CBBE. According to Mackay (2001) this marketing approach, often stated as customer based brand equity, refers to the added value of the brand to the consumers. Subscribers to this approach tend to focus on the value created by marketing activities as perceived by customers.

Aaker (1991) conceptualized brand equity, as a set of assets (or liabilities), namely, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty and proprietary assets. From the consumer's perspective, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty are the four most important dimension of brand equity coined by Keller (1993) as consumer based brand equity. Keller (2003) defined CBBE as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand. The consumer based brand equity involves consumer's reactions to an element of marketing mix for the brand in comparison with their reaction to the same marketing mix element attributed to the fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product or service. CBBE occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong unique brand associations in their memory.

Hypotheses

H1: Brand assets do not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

H_1(a): Brand awareness does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

H_1(b):Brand loyalty does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

H_1(c): Brand association does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

H_1(d):Perceived Quality does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

Theoretical Perspective

This study was guided by two theories, namely; Theory of Reasoned Action and

Theory of Planned Behavior. The theory of reasoned action was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975. It is considered to be a general theory of behavior that was developed largely in response to the repeated failure of traditional attitude measures to predict specific behaviors. According to the theory, behavioral intention is explained by people's attitudes towards that behavior and subjective norm. Attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object (Chau and Hu, 2001). A person's attitude towards behavior is largely determined by salient beliefs about the consequences of that behavior and the evaluation of the desirability of the consequences (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Attitudes and subjective norms are measured on scales using phrases or terms such as like/unlike, good/bad and agree/disagree. The intent to perform a behavior depends upon the product of the measures of attitude and subjective norm. A positive product indicates behavioral intent (Glanz et al, 1997).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was developed by Ajzen (1985) and determines the impact of three factors: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior control on behavior intention. Perceived behavior control has been described as a construct which reflects user perceptions of both internal and external constraints of adopting an innovation. Recent empirical findings suggest that perceived behavioral control is comprised of two distinct components. Self–efficacy which is an individual's judgment of their capability to perform behavior and controllability which constitutes an individual's belief if they have the necessary resources and opportunities to adopt the innovation (Wang et al. 2006). This perception reflects past experiences, anticipation of upcoming circumstances and the attitudes of the influential norms that surround the individual

Brand Assets and the consumer purchase criteria

Brand awareness plays a fundamental role in most conceptualizations of brand equity (Young and Rubicam 2001). It is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category (Aaker, 1991). Keller (1993) argues that brand recognition may be more important to the extent that product decisions are made in the store. Rossiter et al., (1991) noted that brand attitude and intention to purchase a product can only be developed through brand awareness. Keller (1993) relates this ability to the strength of the brand node or trace in the memory. Brand awareness typically consists of different level, based on the different way consumers remember a brand. The lowest level of awareness, brand recognition, reflects familiarity gained from consumer's past exposure to the brand when given the brand cue. The next level of awareness is brand recall which reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve the brand when given a product category, the need fulfilled by that category or some other type of probe as cue, unlike brand recognition; brand recall reflects brand awareness without actually mentioning the brand name. The ultimate awareness level is brand dominance where, in a recall task, most consumers can only provide the name of a single brand.

Marketing researchers examining associations often use a variety of measures to gauge brand knowledge, and ultimately brand equity. Brand literature addresses the total number of association, the valence of associations, the origin of associations and the uniqueness of the associations attributed to the brand. Calculating the total number of association evoked by a brand name is one measure used to characterize brand knowledge (Krishnan, 1996). Assessing the strength of brand association is a second way to examine brand knowledge/equity (Keller, 1996). Brand association can be characterized by the strength of connection to the brand; the strength represents a critical determinant of what information will be recalled by consumers and therefore affects their brand decisions and preferences. The valence of brand associations (e.g. positive, negative and neutral) represents an indicator of brand knowledge/equity. Associations differ according to how favorable they are evaluated. The uniqueness of brand associations represents another indicator of brand knowledge, brand associations may or may not be shared with other competing brands (Keller, 1998); the unique associations give sustainable competitive advantage (Barney 1991).

Perceived quality is a perception by customers and is one of the most important components of brand equity (Konecnik& Gartner, 2007). It is an estimation of the customers' perceptions of the overall quality and their intentions (Mackay, 2001) Since the quality level is associated with a brand, their perception will be involved in their decision making process. A higher level of perceived quality increases the probability of choosing the brand instead of competitors' brand, supporting a premium price, which can in turn create more profits for the firm that can be reinvested in brand equity (Yoo et al., 2000). Consumer's perception of quality is highly subjective, as it will vary depending on the individual consumers' perception and judgment and attitudes towards brands. All consumers will have differing perceptions depending on their own needs, preferences and personalities (Aaker, 1991), thus making it hard to determine and measure. It is worth noting that perceived brand quality is different to customer satisfaction as customer can be satisfied because he or she has low expectations about the performance level.

Brand loyalty is regarded as the core dimension of CBBE for management, since it reflects a customer's deeply held commitment to re-buy a preferred product consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior (Oliver, 1997). The more positive attitude a consumer has towards a brand, the higher the resistance to change which is related to profitability. Oliver (1999) stated that brand loyalty can be measured through behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. Behavioral loyalty means the actual behavioral responses, getting the precise data from the company's operation; however it cannot identify the spurious and latent customers and attitudinal loyalty and behavior intent providing value to the company leading to the true behavior loyalty through the customer's survey. According to Chaudhuri and Holbrooks (2001), attitudinal loyalty can be referred to as the extent of dispositional promises with respect to some particular advantages connected with the brand while behavioral loyalty has to do with the intention to repeat a purchase. Brand loyalty is a qualitative dimension of brand equity, and is different from the other brand equity categories, as it is connected closely to the experience the customer has when they use the product/service.

The key process in consumer decision making, however, is the integration process by which knowledge is combined to evaluate two or more alternative behaviors and select one. The outcome of this integration process is a choice, represented cognitively as a behavioral intention. A behavioral intention is a plan (sometimes called a decision plan) to engage in some behavior. All aspects of affect and cognition are involved in consumer decision making including the knowledge, meanings and beliefs activated from memory and the attention and comprehension processes involved in interpreting new information in the environment (Peter & Olson, 1999). During the buyer decision process the consumer usually searches his or her memory before seeking external sources of information regarding a given consumption related need. Past experience in considered an internal source the consumer is likely to need to reach a decision. Many consumer decisions are based on a combination of past experience, marketing and non-commercial information. (Schiffman&Kanuk, 2004). The buyer decision process consists of five stages; need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase decision behavior. Marketers need to focus on the entire buying process rather than on just the purchase decision.

Empirical Evidence

Bianchi, Kerr, and Patti (2010), investigated the effectiveness of a model of Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) for a country destination (Chile in Australia). Their CBBE model featured four dimensions, which represented latent variables: brand salience, brand associations, Brand quality, and brand resonance. The model was tested by using structural equation modeling with data from a large Chilean sample (n=845), comprising a mix of previous visitors and non-visitors. A confirmatory factor analysis was done by using Amos 16.0. The results of their study indicated that, Australia is a well-known but not compelling destination brand for tourists in Chile, which reflected the lower priority the South American market had been given by the Indian Tourism Office (ITO). A standard CBBE instrument could provide long-term effectiveness performance measures regardless of changes in Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) staff, advertising agency, other stakeholders, and budget. This study conceptualized brand equity differently from the current study.

Sietz, Razzouk and Wells (2010) study on the importance of brand equity on purchasing consumer durables: an analysis of home air-conditioning, found that having a brand name facilitate the communication of quality to the customers, but was not important choice criterion. Their results also indicated that consumers searched for product information from friends and family, manufacturers' websites and brochures. However, dealers were highly influential during the decision-making process by helping consumers to refine their choice criteria and choose systems that satisfied their end goals. This study asserted that if the consumers are better informed about the important attributes of a particular brand (reliability, serviceability and energy efficiency), they would be willing to pay more for it. They concluded that to raise brand awareness, manufacturers should use broadcast media that include television and radio frequently and seasonally, and supplement them with outdoor or print to gain brand awareness and knowledge, thus increasing the likelihood that brand becomes a criterion in the decision-making process. They also added that those consumers who are unaware of the different brands tend to assume homogeneity and shop for price. This study focused on consumer durables, thus there is a need to conduct more studies in other areas including the FMCG sector.

Park and Srinivasan (2010) in their study proposed new approach for measuring, analyzing, and predicting a brand's equity in adorable product market (cellular phone). The approach takes into account three sources of brand equity; brand awareness, attribute perception biases, and non-attribute. The survey-based study was conducted among 281 users of digital cellular phone users in Korea by a commercial research firm. Results of the study showed that among the three sources of Brand Equity, Brand Awareness contributes the most to Brand Equity, and it is the most important attributes for measuring Brand Equity, followed by non-attribute preference and to a smaller extent, enhanced attribute perceptions. They also found that, the impacts of a brand's equity on the leading brand's market share and contribution are substantial.

AtilganandAkinci (2009) examined the practicality and application of a CBBE model based on Aaker's well-known conceptual frame work of brand equity. The study employed structural equation modeling to investigate the causal relationships between the dimensions of brand equity. Specifically, it measured the way in which consumer's perceptions of the dimensions of brand equity affected the overall brand equity evaluations. Data was collected from a sample of university students in Turkey. The study concluded that brand loyalty was the most influential dimension of brand equity. Weak support was found for brand awareness and perceived quality dimensions. Subsequent to identifying that the brand loyalty was the most influential dimension of brand equity, there was naturally, a need to find the factors involved in the brand awareness and perceived quality in order to strengthen their influence on brand equity.

Hawley (2009) conducted an empirical study to examine the practicality and applications of a CBBE model in the Chinese sportswear market. They measured the Brand Equity based on Aaker's well-known conceptual framework of Brand Equity, by using structural equation modeling to investigate the causal relationships among the four dimensions of Brand Equity and overall Brand Equity in the sportswear industry. In their study, they considered four hypotheses, H1. Perceived quality has a significant positive direct effect on Brand Equity, H2. Brand Awareness has a significant positive direct effect on Brand Equity, H3. Brand association has a significant positive direct effect on Brand Equity and H4. Brand Loyalty has a significant positive direct effect on Brand Equity. A sample size of 304 was selected for the final study having Age group 18 to 39 years, for the four brands Nike, Adidas, Puma and Reebok. They tested the hypothesis by using chi-square test. The results of their study showed that brand association and Brand Loyalty had a direct effect on CBBE but their study could not find any positive relation of Brand Awareness and perceived quality with CBBE. Further research need to be conducted to strengthen this analysis by adding performance measurement into the model.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive cross sectional research design, which seeks to determine the what, the when and how of a phenomena. The study targeted 90 conveniently selected students, 30 in the regular programme, 30 in module 11 (day class) and 30 in module 11 (evening class) . These were students on session at the time of the interview, comprising both module 1 (government sponsored) and module II (self sponsored) students. A semi structured questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument. A 5-point Likert type questions were used to get the respondents level of agreement with specific statements related to the four main brand assets examined, namely, brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, and perceived quality. Two research assistants were used to collect the data. Validity and reliability was done by first issuing the questionnaires to 4 students and checking their responses. The questions were also thoroughly checked to ensure that they were correct, before doing the final study. Descriptive analysis as well as factor analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data

Study findings

Of the 90 students targeted, a total of 55 responded, mainly from module 1 and module 11(day) class. This gave a response rate of 61 percent. The distribution per program is given in table 1

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

distribution by mode of study		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	module 1	25	45.5	45.5	45.5
	module 2 (day)	28	50.9	50.9	96.4
	module 2 (3vening)	2	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	
Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	26	47.3	47.3	47.3
	Female	29	52.7	52.7	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	
Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	less than 20	6	10.9	10.9	10.9
Valid	21-25	34	61.8	61.8	72.7
	26-30	14	25.5	25.5	98.2
	above 30	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	
	year of study	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	first year	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
	second year	22	40.0	40.0	41.8

	third year	17	30.9	30.9	72.7
	fourth year	15	27.3	27.3	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	
Source of finance		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	parents/guardian	36	65.5	66.7	66.7
	part-time job	12	21.8	22.2	88.9
	self employed	2	3.6	3.7	92.6
	buy and sell items	4	7.3	7.4	100.0
	Total	54	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.8		
Total		55	100.0		

From table 1 above, we realize that of the 55 respondents, only 3.6 were from the module 11 evening class, while the rest were either in the module 1(regular) class or module 11 (day) class. 52.7 percent were female while 47.3 were male. Majority 40 percent of the respondents were in 2nd year, while 30.9 percent were in3rd year. Only 1.8 percentwere in first year.

Age distribution showed that almost 62 percent were aged below 25 years, which is the typical age for undergraduate students. Only 1 student among the respondents was aged more than 30 years

In terms of sources of finance for their education and upkeep, 65.5 percent said that they got support from their parents/guardians, while 22.2 percent did part time jobs. It was also found that 7.4 percent of the students were in the business of buying and selling items. The items were not specified, and could range from airtime, mobile phones, clothing to stationery and other consumables. This is a survival tactic being adopted by many students in order to survive while on campus

A cross tabulation of the findings is given in Table 2

Table 2: Cross tabulations

Gender	Source of finance				Total
	parents/guardian	part-time job	self employed	buy and sell items	
Male	12	7	2	4	25
female	24	5	0	0	29
Total	36	12	2	4	54
Age	Source of finance				Total
	parents/guardian	part-time job	self employed	buy and sell items	
less than 20	5	1	0	0	6
21-25	21	8	1	3	33
26-30	10	3	0	1	14
above 30	0	0	1	0	1
Total	36	12	2	4	54
mode of study	Source of finance				Total
	parents/guardian	part-time job	self employed	buy and sell items	
module 1	16	7	0	2	25
module 2 (day)	18	5	2	2	27
module 2 (Evening)	2	0	0	0	2
Total	36	12	2	4	54

Form the cross tabulations, there were double the number of girls than men getting support from their parents/guardians. Of the 36 students who were getting support from parents/guardians, 24 (67 percent) were female, while 12 (33 percent) were male. There were more male than female that were doing part time jobs. No female student reported as either being on self-employment or buying and selling items.Of the 6 students aged below 20 years, only 1 (16.6 percent) was doing a part time job, while the rest 83.4 percent were supported by their parents/guardian. Among those aged between 25 - 30 years, 63.6 percent were supported by their parent/guardians, with the rest being either self employed, doing part time job or buying and selling items to support themselves

The only one student aged above 30 years was self employed. In terms of mode of study, 28 percent of the module 1 students were doing part time jobs, as compared to

18 percent of the module 2. In fact, 20 of the 29 module 11 students (69percent) of module 11 were being supported by parents, as compared to 64 percent of the module 1.

Hypothesis testing

In order to identify the main factors for each category to examine, factor analysis was done and in ache category, 3 factors identified using the Principal Component Analysis Extraction Method. For brand awareness, the factors extracted were Easy to recall brand name (0.851), uniqueness of product packaging (0.743) and Information from friends (0.615). For brand loyalty, the factors extracted were how well brand serves its functions(0.781), Extent of information I have about (0.694), and : level of advertisement (0.636)For brand association, the factors extracted were distribution channels used (0.878), benefits from use (0.880), and country of origin (0.830), while for perceived, quality, the factors extracted were information levels about brand (0.765), Price of Brand (0.85), and brand name (0.0.601). Details of the extraction tables are in the appendix

Hypothesis 1 was tested by carrying out multiple regression analysis and checking the F and t values for the various indicators of Brand Awareness. The hypothesis tested was

H1(a): Brand awareness does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

The results are shown for the model summary, ANOVA and coefficients in table 3a,3b,and 3c.

Table 3a: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.088[a]	.008	-.052	1.17303

a. Predictors: (Constant), Easy to recall brand name, Information from friends, uniqueness of product packaging

Table 3b: Model ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.533	3	.178	.129	.942[b]
	Residual	68.801	50	1.376		
	Total	69.333	53			

a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs

b. Predictors: (Constant), Easy to recall brand name, Information from friends, uniqueness of product packaging

Table 3c: Model Coefficients

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.566	.827		1.895	.064
	Information from friends	.071	.155	.069	.459	.648
	uniqueness of product packaging	-.040	.178	-.039	-.225	.823
	Easy to recall brand name	.030	.152	.034	.195	.846
a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs						

From the table, we get an R square value of 0.008 and F value of 0.129 , Specific coefficients for the three factors selected for awareness are 0.069, -0.039 and 0.034 respectively for information from friends ,uniqueness of product and easy to recall brand name .This shows that although not significant, brand awareness has a positive influence on the choice criteria. The hypothesis is therefore rejected and we conclude that brand awareness influences the choice criteria of fast moving consumer goods. As of perceived Loyalty , the hypothesis tested was

H1(b):Brand loyalty does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

Regression analysis was done for the indicators of brand loyalty, and the model summary, ANOVA and model coefficients are given in Table 4a,4b and 4c

Table 4a: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.102[a]	.010	-.049	1.17147
a. Predictors: (Constant), Extent of information I have about brand, Frequency of repeat purchase, how well brand serves its functions				

African Journal Of Business And Management
Special Issue: Volume 4, Issue 3, October 2018 http://aibumaorg.uonbi.ac.ke/content/journal
Pgs 35 - 52

Table 4b: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.717	3	.239	.174	.913[b]
	Residual	68.617	50	1.372		
	Total	69.333	53			
a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Extent of information I have about brand, frequency of repeat purchase, how well brand serves its functions						

Table 4c: Model Coefficients

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.526	1.113		2.269	.028
	frequency of repeat purchase	-.115	.188	-.088	-.611	.544
	how well brand serves its functions	-.043	.220	-.032	-.195	.846
	Extent of information I have about brand	-.019	.202	-.016	-.092	.927
a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs						

In this case, we get an R square value of 0.010 and F value of .174, Specific coefficients for the three factors selected for Brand loyalty all negative, demonstrating that loyalty tends to affect choice criteria negatively. Customers who are loyal to certain brands therefore react negatively in selection of other brands. The Hypothesis is therefore rejected and we conclude that brand loyalty affects the choice criteria

Hypothesis H1(c) was stated as

H1(c): Brand association does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi.

This hypothesis was tested through regression analysis and the model summary, ANOVA and model coefficients are given in Table 5a,5b and 5c

Table 5a: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.311[a]	.097	.043	1.11905

a. Predictors: (Constant), distribution channels used, Benefits from use, country of origin

Table 5b: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.720	3	2.240	1.789	.161[b]
	Residual	62.613	50	1.252		
	Total	69.333	53			

a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs

b. Predictors: (Constant), distribution channels used, Benefits from use, Country of origin

Table 5c: Model Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.030	1.168		-.026	.980
	Benefits from use	.233	.226	.152	1.032	.307
	Country of origin	-.093	.202	-.085	-.461	.647
	Distribution channels used	.358	.183	.378	1.962	.055

a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs

In this case, we get an R square value of 0.097 and F value of 1.789, Specific coefficients for the three factors selected for Brand association are respectively 0.152,-0.085 and 0.378 for - benefits from use , country of origin, and distribution channels used. The hypothesis is therefore rejected and we conclude that Brand

African Journal Of Business And Management
Special Issue: Volume 4, Issue 3, October 2018
Pgs 35 - 52

association thus has a positive influence on the choice criteria

Finally, the choice criteria was regressed against the Perceived Quality in order to test the hypothesis that

H1(d):Perceived Quality does not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi

To test this hypothesis, regression analysis was done and the model summary, ANOVA and model coefficients are given in Table 6aand 6b

Table 6a. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.117[a]	.014	-.045	1.16945

a. Predictors: (Constant), Information levels about brand, Price of Brand, Brand name

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.953	3	.318	.232	.873[b]
	Residual	68.380	50	1.368		
	Total	69.333	53			

a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs
b. Predictors: (Constant), Information levels about brand, Price of Brand, Brand name

Table 6b: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.384	.981		1.411	.164
	Price of Brand	.118	.193	.088	.611	.544
	brand name	.056	.158	.054	.352	.727

	information levels about brand	-.080	.160	-.075	-.499	.620
a. Dependent Variable: FMCGs						

In this case, we get an R square value of .014and F value of .232, Specific coefficients for the three factors selected for Brand association are respectively .088, .054 and -.075for Price of Brand, brand name, and information levels about brand. This means that perceived quality, though not significantly, has a positive influence on selection criteria. The hypothesis is therefore rejected and we conclude that perceived quality influences the choice criteria of FMCGS among Bcom students

In summary, the general hypothesis that Brand assets do not influence choice criteria of FMCG products among Bcom students of the University of Nairobi, cannot therefore be supported, and it is safe to argue that brand assets positively influence the choice criteria of FMCGS among Bcom students

Discussion

In summary, brand assets, namely, brand awareness, brand association, brand loyalty and perceived quality have a positive influence on the selection criteria that a customer makes. Brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality have a positive influence on the selection criteria, while brand loyalty has a negative influence. This shows that marketers should enhance customer awareness in order to influence the choice criteria. Customers will make choices faster when they are made aware of the brand's existence and its key features. Ease of recall of name is very important, just as is information from friends. Another factor identified is uniqueness of product packaging. Packaging is important and can act as a key differentiating factor. Brand association has also been found to positively influence consumer choice criteria. The main indicators of association that came out were distribution channels used, benefits from use and country of origin. These indicators are important as they will influence the choice that a consumer makes

For Brand loyalty, it was found that factors such as extent of information one has about the brand, frequency of repeat purchase, and how well brand serves its functions may have a negative influence on the choice criteria. This may be because as one gets more loyal to a brand, his choice criteria is limited to that brand to which he/she is loyal. Customers who are loyal to certain brands therefore react negatively in selection of other brands .Finally, perceived quality as demonstrated by information levels about brand, price of the brand, and brand name tend to influence consumer choice criteria positively.

Implications

This study has brought to the fore the influence of various brand assets on consumer behavour. The results of this study demonstrate that in making decisions, marketers need to always be guided by the various brand assets. Brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty are all very important in guiding the consumer on the choice criteria. Marketers should therefor always take these into consideration

Recommendations

This study has established that brand assets do influence consumer brand selection criteria. It is therefore recommended that manufacturers and marketers consider these assets in marketing their products. Secondly, this study established that brand assets do not have the same effect on consumer choice criteria Perceived quality has the most important factor. It is therefore recommended that decision makers consider the various brand assets when dealing consumers

Suggestions for further research

This study was based on Bcom students in one campus of the University of Nairobi. Findings may therefore not be generalizable to all the students. A wider study focusing on several universities may shed more light on the choice behavior of the students.

Secondly, the study targeted only undergraduate students whose demographic characteristics are largely similar. A similar study targeting both undergraduate as well as graduate students may provide a broader understanding of the choice behavior

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