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**CONSUMER-BRAND KNOWLEDGE AND RELATIONSHIP: DYNAMICS OF THE MARKETSPACE FOR BOURNVITA BEVERAGE DRINK****SANNI, Sekinat Arike**Department of Business Administration/AMREC  
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria  
sannisarika@funaab.edu.ng**ABSTRACT**

Understanding the drivers of consumer buying behavior in the highly dynamic globally mediated environment is a strategic marketing concern for contemporary firms. This study examined a model of brand knowledge and the effect of brand relationships on consumer behavior in the dynamic business environment. The study adopted a survey research design, and collected primary data from 223 consumers of Bournvita beverage in Ogun State, Nigeria, using a structured questionnaire. Regression statistic was utilized to analyze the data collected. The results show a positive significant influence of consumer perception of brands and branding on brand expectation at ( $R^2 = 0.744$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ); a positive significant effect of dynamism of brand value on consumer brand relationship at ( $R^2 = 0.630$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ); and a positive significant effect of globally meditated environments on contemporary ways brands gain and loose value at ( $R^2 = 0.157$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). The study concluded that the type of relationship consumers have with a brand influence their buying behavior. Therefore, effective relationship marketing and branding strategies should be deployed by firms to attract prospective customers as well as retain current ones for sustainable business and brand growth in the rapidly changing, globally mediated business environment.

**Keywords:** Brand relationship, brand expectation, brand value, consumer buying behaviour, dynamic business environment

**INTRODUCTION**

Individuals, groups, and organizations' ability to adapt to changing market conditions has been critical to their survival in the business world. Thus, studying producers and buyers has been pivotal to understanding the dynamics of market relations and operations research. The millennial consumer experiences complex consumption decision-making on account of being exposed to a wide range of products over time (Trifu & Mihaela, 2014). This reality and the importance of consumers as influencers of global market trends and structures has necessitated the need for brands (mostly borderless brands) to create a sense of symbiotic relationship (brand relationship) with consumers; and make their presence recognized in their economic, social, cultural, religious lives (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). Thus, brand knowledge may not influence consumer behavior in the absence of brand relationship factors. A brand is defined by the American Marketing Association as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify and differentiate the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers from those of competitors" (Noor & Mohammad, 2016).

The study of human behavior has grown in importance in recent years due to its relevance in predicting and influencing the success of subsequent phenomena involving such behavior. In essence, consumer behavior refers to a consumer's purchasing decision, which is a process that includes steps such as recognizing a need, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, selecting, and, finally, purchasing behavior (Sarwar, Aftab, & Iqbal, 2016). As a result, the

examination of brands, which has evolved from a standard manufacturing concept to consumer-oriented marketing, has resulted in consumer buyer behavior becoming an independent area of study. As a result, this study investigates a model of brand knowledge as well as the impact of brand relationships on customer behaviors in a dynamic business environment for Bournvita beverage drink in Ogun State, Nigeria.

When it comes to the definition and management of brands, they have gone from being developed and controlled by brand strategists in relatively stable, somewhat unifying and long-lasting ways to being constantly challenged by consumers and audiences (Aanand & Shachar, 2004; Ahmad & Thyagaraj, 2015). Today's consumers have the potential to influence brands, and even establish their own brands. Questions arise about how customers and brands may retain a mutually beneficial relationship as the marketplace evolves. There is no doubt that some companies will prosper while others will fail, but it is unclear how brands will exist and operate for consumers as a whole and what their future relationships with brands will be.

With this exciting dynamic causality in brand meaning and operations, this study proposes to analyze the knowledge and interaction between consumers and brands with the changing global market environment in response. Because of this, empirical research into the changing significance of consumer purchasing behavior and brand knowledge in the competitive market economy will be increasingly focused on consumer-oriented philosophies rather than producer-based systems of branding. To guide the study, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** Consumer perception of brands and branding do not significantly affect consumers brand expectation.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** Dynamism and negotiation of brand value in often competing sphere of influence does not affect consumer brand relationship.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** Globally mediated environments do not affect the contemporary ways brands gain and loose value.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies show that the market economy and company development focuses on consumer behavior and services (Vijay et al., 2018). In an era of globalization and online connectedness, brands must continually sense the changing desires and preferences of customers and brace-up to deliver value that aligns with those preferences (Ateke & Nwulu 2021). This tendency has led many multinational companies to watch and analyze customer buying habits in their target markets. The dynamic global market can be considered a real or virtual place where buyers (consumers) and sellers (brands) transact for any purpose; and consumers' behaviour is argued to determine whether they purchase of products or not (Rajesh & Anjali, 2017).

Economists and social scientists have tried to define consumer behavior. Consumer behavior is the search for, purchase, use, appraisal, and disposal of goods and services (Rajesh & Anjali, 2017). This is the study of how individuals, communities, and organizations satisfy their needs by obtaining, utilizing, and disposing of products and services, as well as the effects these actions have on consumers and society (Ramesh, 2013). In the view of Nwulu and Ateke (2014), consumer behaviour described the activities that individuals engage in when searching for, evaluating, selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products to satisfy their needs and desires, including the decision processes that precede and determine them. In the West and parts of Europe, government systems influenced consumer buying attitudes and product knowledge.

After WWII, especially in the 1960s, buyers were considered smart. Consumers were studied to make purchases based on option and desire to attain balance. In the era of consumer rights and production shift, brand efforts in manufacturing consumer-driven goods drove irrational buying.

After the 1960s market segmentation economy, experts devised economic, sociological, psychoanalytic, and learning models to predict customers' conservative buying habits before (Kahneman & Richard, 2006). The 2008 global economic crisis forced consumers to buy less than in decades past (Le & Shu-Yi, 2017). Postmodern consumers have many options, hence complicated consumption decision-making and buying behavior (Trifu & Mihaela, 2014). Organizations must understand consumer behavior and buying decisions (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, Armstrong, 2005) in terms of culture, purchase patterns, family and peers (Claudiu & Andreea, 2014). Consumers interact through perception, motivation, learning, attitudes, and beliefs. Brands may meet consumer needs through understanding feelings, evaluating data, and conveying ideas (Bigné, Isabel, & Sánchez, 2001).

Branding connects a firm's product to consumers' emotions and differentiates them from competing offers as well as establishes loyalty. Dynamic markets make brand maintenance a crucial aspect of marketing. Brand influences customer purchasing behavior in both the online and offline environments (Bhayani and Nishant, 2018) and makes a product more recognizable. Brand loyalty is a key aspect of shifting market dynamics that can benefit firms if carefully monitored and promoted (Holt, 2015). According to a consumer survey, the main goal of most brands is to develop or impact consumer's perception and attitude toward the brand itself and its products, establish an image in customer's mind, and boost sales, market share, and brand equity (Zhang, 2015). Brand awareness is an early indicator of brand strength; it influences consumers' perception and purchase intention (Ateke & Didia, 2018; Ateke & Nwulu, 2017).

### **EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK**

Various concepts, theories and models have been introduced to explain how consumers build brand relationships (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). In consumer-brand relationship research, concepts like self-brand connection (Cheng, White & Chaplin, 2012; Escalas & Bettman, 2005), brand love (Albert & Merunka, 2013), and brand trust (Ong, Salleh & Yusoff, 2016; Albert & Merunka, 2013) are common. In the 1980s and 1990s consumer-brand relationship was based on the triangular theory of love and interpersonal relationship. Kim, Lee, and Ulgado (2005) developed consumer-brand relationship measures for satisfaction, self-connective attachment, trust, behavioral commitment, and emotional intimacy. Brands have different consumer-brand relationship proportions. Veloutsou (2007) opined that brand relationship dimensions measure the strength of consumers' relationships with a brand, which indicate consumer-based brand equity.

Ateke and Didia (2018) studied consumer knowledge and purchase intention of healthcare product consumers using expertise, experience and familiarity as dimensions of consumer knowledge; and found that a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between consumer knowledge and purchase intention, with expertise showing the strongest relationship with purchase intention. Likewise, the study of Alimen and Guldem Cerit (2010) reported that students in fashion-related departments had more fashion brand knowledge. Liu et al. (2012) studied brand personality congruity (BPC), user imagery congruity, and usage imagery congruity in consumers' attitude and brand loyalty toward two luxury fashion brands. Consumer and use

imagery congruity are better predictors of brand attitude and brand loyalty than BPC, and both have major effects on brand attitude and brand loyalty.

Esmaeilpour (2015) examined the effects of functional (perceived quality) and symbolic (personality congruence, user imagery congruence, brand prestige, and brand tribalism) brand associations on Generation Y's attitude and brand loyalty towards two luxury fashion brands. Perceived quality is a better indicator of brand attitude and loyalty than actual quality. Personality congruence (mediated by brand quality), brand prestige (mediated by brand quality and attitude), and brand tribalism influence brand loyalty (mediated by brand attitude). This fits Plummer, 1984; Ambroise, 2006; Gouteron, 2008; Govers et al., 2005). Peng et al. (2014) analyzed branded adoption from brand relationship and consumption values perspectives. Brand attachment, brand identification, and perceived overall consumption values influence brand adoption. The overall perceived value by the consumer is a key factor in consumers' use intention of branded app, they said. Hsieh (2016) also examined consumption value, brand image, and perceived value. Consumption value boosted brand image, the study found. Perceived value positively affected a brand's image and purchase intention. Brand image didn't affect purchase intention, but consumption value did. Value was unaffected by brand image.

## METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is to assess the impact of consumer brand knowledge on consumer buying behaviour. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The reason for adopting this approach was based on nature, purpose, and to ascertain the degree of the relationships among the variables hypothesized. The study concentrated on Cadbury PLC's Bournvita. It is thus a case study. The justification for the brand is because of its availability in the market and its visibility in the food and beverage industry. The study was conducted in Abeokuta in the Southwestern region of Nigeria. Abeokuta was selected for the study because of its population density and proximity to Lagos, the commercial hub and economic centre of Nigeria. The total working population for the study is made up of all the users of Cadbury PLC's Bournvita. The major source of data for this study is primary data garnered through a well-structured questionnaire used to draw information from respondents. The choice of questionnaire as instrument of data collection was anchored on the conviction that it is widely viewed as a reliable way of getting data from respondents. The study adopts statistical techniques of both descriptive and inferential. SPSS package was used to analyze the data generated from the survey carried out.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that 59.6.4% of the respondents were male; while 40.4% were female. It shows that most of the respondents were male. Notwithstanding, the study is not gender-bias, it cuts across all gender. Table 1 also reveals that 41.7% of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 20-29 years; 19.3% were between 30-39years; 16.1% were within 40-49yrs; 20.2% were between 50-59 years while 2.7% were within the age bracket of 60years and above. On educational qualification, 0.9% of the respondents were SSCE holders; 4.0% were OND/Diploma holders; 50.7% were HND/B.Sc. holders and 44.4% were postgraduate degrees holders. It revealed that most of the respondents were educated enough to know the relevance and implication of the study. In terms of employment status, 29.6% of the respondents are civil servants, 49.3% are self-employed; 10.3% are unemployed; 1.8% are retirees and 9.0%

signified other employment status. It indicates that majority of the respondents were engaged in their respective fields and can provide data relevant to the context of this study. Concerning monthly income range of the respondents, 13.5% of the total respondents reported earning less than #20,000 monthly; 13.0% earned between #20,000-#50,000 monthly; 19.3% earned between #50,000-#100,000 monthly; 22.9% earned between #100,000-#150,000- monthly; and 31.4% earned #150,000 and above monthly. This implies that the majority of the respondents can afford to purchase the product (Bournvita). Examining the usage rate of the product (Bournvita), 4.5% of respondents use the product on a daily basis; 4.0% of use it once a week; 8.5% use it twice a week; 59.6% use it occasionally; and 23.3 do not use the product at all. This implies that majority of the respondents only make use of the product as occasion demands.

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		133	59.6
		90	40.4
		223	100.0
<b>Age</b>	20-29	93	41.7
	30-39	43	19.3
	40-49	36	16.1
	50-59	45	20.2
	60 and above	6	2.7
	Total	223	100.0
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	SSCE	2	.9
	OND/Diploma	9	4.0
	HND/BSc	113	50.7
	Postgraduate Degrees	99	44.4
	Total	223	100.0
<b>Employment Status</b>	Civil Servant	66	29.6
	Self-Employed	110	49.3
	Unemployed	23	10.3
	Retired	4	1.8
	Others	20	9.0
	Total	223	100.0
<b>Monthly Income Range</b>	Less than #20,000	30	13.5
	Between #20,000-#50,000	29	13.0
	Between #50,000-#100,000	43	19.3
	Between #100,000-#150,000	51	22.9
	#150,000 and above	70	31.4
	Total	223	100.0
<b>Frequency of Use of Bournvita</b>	Everyday	10	4.5
	Once Per Week	9	4.0
	Twice Per Week	19	8.5
	Occasionally	133	59.6
	Not At All	52	23.3
	Total	223	100.0

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022

### Test of Hypothesis I

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Consumer perception of brands and branding do not significantly affect consumers brand expectation

**Table 2: Effect of perception of brands on brand expectation**

Regression Result						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.915	.153		5.984	.000
	Perception of Brands	.714	.043	.744	16.570	.000

Dependent Variable: Brand Expectation  
 $R = 0.744$ ;  $R^2 = 0.554$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.552$ ; F Stat. = 274.577

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022

The result in Table 2 showed that perception of brands has a significant effect on brand expectation at ( $R^2 = 0.744$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.552$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). These indicate that perception of brands accounted for variation in brand expectation (55.4%). Also, the F-values statistics (274.577) reveal that the overall equation is significant at (Sig. level = 0.000;  $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that states that consumer perception of brands and branding do not significantly affect consumers brand expectation is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

### Test of Hypothesis II

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Dynamism and negotiation of brand meaning in often competing sphere of influence does not affect consumer brand relationship

**Table 3 Effect of dynamism of brand value on consumer brand relationship**

Regression Result						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.820	.131		6.258	.000
	Dynamism of Brand Value	.817	.042	.794	19.410	.000

Dependent Variable: Consumer Brand Relationship  
 $R = 0.794$ ;  $R^2 = 0.630$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.629$ ; F Stat. = 376.735

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022

The result in Table 3 showed that dynamism of brand value has a significant effect on consumer brand relationship at ( $R^2 = 0.630$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.629$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). These indicate that Perception of Brands accounted for the variation in consumer brand relationship (63%). Also, the F-values statistics (376.735) reveal that the overall equation is significant at (Sig. level = 0.000;  $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis that dynamism and negotiation of brand meaning in often competing sphere of influence does not affect consumer brand relationship is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

### Test of Hypothesis III

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Globally meditated environments do not affect the contemporary ways brands gain and lose value

**Table 4: Effect of globally meditated environments on the ways brands gain and lose value**

Regression Result						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.292	.207		11.058	.000
	Globally Meditated Environments	.364	.057	.396	6.415	.000

Dependent Variable: Contemporary Ways Brands Gain and Lose Value  
 $R = 0.396$ ;  $R^2 = 0.157$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.153$ ; F Stat. = 41.149

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022

The result in Table 4 showed that globally meditated environment has a significant effect on contemporary ways brands gain and lose value at ( $R^2 = 0.157$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.153$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). These indicate that globally meditated environments accounted for the variation in contemporary ways brands gain and lose value (15.7%). Also, the F-values statistics (41.149) reveal that the overall equation is significant at (Sig. level = 0.000;  $P < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis that globally meditated environments do not affect the contemporary ways brands gain and lose value is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Adequate information about brands enhances their propensity to attract prospective customers and retain current customers. This is because necessary brand information availed to the customers will enable them make informed purchase decisions in a rapidly-changing business environment. In addition, brand knowledge aids firms in adequately positioning themselves in the mind of customers in the midst of various brand options in the dynamic marketplace. This is particularly created via robust brand awareness campaigns and offering quality brand value, which can be intrinsic or extrinsic or both, coupled with assemblage of unmistakable branding to foster consistency in customer brand relationship.

This study examined brand knowledge and the effect of brand relationships on customer behavior in the dynamic business environment. The findings of the study are in consonance with the results of Safer et al (2021) that customer experience of a brand influences customer loyalty positively. The finding of the current study also align with that of Ateke and Didia (2018) that consumer knowledge has positive and statistically significant relationship with purchase intention. Likewise, the present result supports the findings of Ong, Lee and Ramayah (2018) that each customer's true brand loyalty is influenced by different types of prior brand experience. The study concludes that the variables of brand knowledge with brand relationship adopted (consumer perception of brands and branding, dynamism and negotiation of brand value and globally mediated environments) have a significant positive influence on customer buying behaviors in a dynamic business environment. Firms that prioritize high level of customer brand relationships will enjoy improved customer loyalty in the changing business environment; hence achieve sustainable business growth and competitive advantage.

In order for firms to harness the aforementioned benefits, the following recommendations are given: (1) Firms should craft suitable and appealing branding to meet the expectations of customers and improve their perception of the brand. (2) Firms should stay abreast of trends in

the industry as they bring out innovative brands that help to further sustain consumer-brand affinity in the market. (3) Firms should endeavor to inculcate digital marketing tools to always scan the market for brand ideas and opportunities, and then adopt global best branding strategies to endear their brands to gain more value.

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