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EFFECTS OF BRAND AWARENESS, BRAND AUGMENTATION ON BRAND PURCHASE INTENTION OF MOBILE PHONE BRANDS: EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT FROM KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to empirically examine the relationship between brand awareness, brand augmentation and brand purchase intention of mobile phone brands in Kenya. The study sample consists of 322 respondents with a response rate of 71.74 per cent. Data were analyzed by employing correlation, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that brand awareness was negatively associated with consumer brand purchase intention and brand augmentation was positively associated with consumer brand purchase intention in Kenya. The generalizability of the findings is limited as the study focuses only on Kenya. Based on the findings, companies involved in branding of mobile phones should focus on improving the usefulness of the brand augmentation. The findings made a contribution in terms of allowing us to understand the factors that can contribute to the adoption of mobile phone brands.

KEYWORDS

perceived brand awareness, brand augmentation, Brand purchase intention, Kenya.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Branding builds an image on a product which allows consumers to quickly select efficiently from an array of products. The purpose of branding is to draw a consumer's attention to certain products which allows them to recognize familiar products and serves as a cue for retrieving stored information from memory about those products (Leighton, 2012). Brands are no longer supportive functions of marketing; rather, brands are the essence of marketing (Salzer-Morling and Strannegard, 2004), providing owners, investors and shareholders with greater financial rewards than unbranded products (Pahud de Mortanges and van Reil, 2003). Of concern is that a number of managers do not understand brand value other than through its economic origins, and so have no explicit value proposition, instead managing their brand by relying heavily on reputation without a meaningful point of value differentiation (Aaker, 2004). On the basis of perceptions about a brand's position, consumers may rank order competing brands from low to high, and assess brands as having different levels of status (McGoldrick, 1984; O'Cass and McEwan, 2004). There are various ways in which a consumer might assess a brand as having status, for instance, on the basis of a brand's exclusiveness (Kirmani, 1999) and/or the brand's technical superiority, and/or having a higher price than other brands, and/or being selectively available, and/or because the aesthetics of the brand symbolize style, wealth and prestige (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Essentially, consumers may perceive status as important to gain recognition (Goldsmith, Clark and Zboja, 2007), or because the status of the brand is associated with using better materials, and/or having lower variability of quality (McGoldrick, 1984). Brand-aroused feelings are defined as the conscious affective assessments a consumer experiences when encountering a brand (Frijda, 1991; Scherer, 1996). Though, brand-aroused feelings aren't always good, they can vary in direction (happy or sad) and vary in intensity from mild to strong (Edell and Burke, 1987; Escalas, Moore and Briton, 2004). Feelings in relation to a brand may be aroused directly (O'Cass and Lim, 2001; O'Cass and Grace, 2003) or indirectly through advertising or product placement (e.g. Batra and Holbrook, 1990; Escalas et al., 2004; Geuens, 1998). In the mobile industry in Kenya like many industries, severe concentration of selected brand is evident, which is an indicator of triumph of companies with the right brand value and disappearance of those without such strategies.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

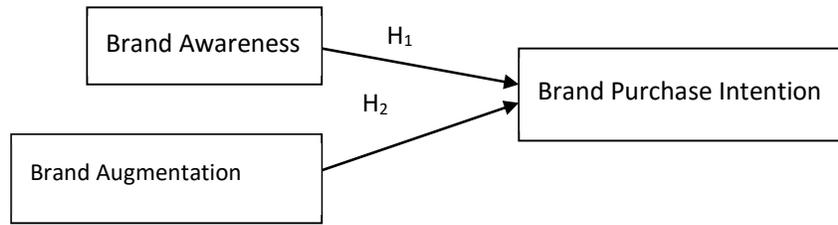
2.1 PURCHASE INTENTION

Halim and Hameed (2005) explain purchase intention as the number of patrons that has a proposal to buy the products in future and make repetition purchases and contact again to the specific product. In and Kang (2011) explains purchase intention relating four behaviors of consumers including the undoubted plan to buy the product, thinking unequivocally to purchase the product, when someone contemplate to buy the product in the future, and to buy the specific product utterly. Fandos and Flavian (2006) explain the phenomenon of purchase intention as the projected behavior of consumers on short basis about the repetition purchase of specific product i.e. when someone decided to buy the product whenever he/she will come again to the market. Arslan and Altuna (2010) defined brand image as the positive and negative feeling about the brand when it comes to the mind of the consumers abruptly or when they recall their memories. They have the view that there are three aspects of brand image which make the whole image of the brand which are; favorability, strength, and distinctiveness. Bian and Moutinho (2011) described the phenomenon by using marketing sense to explain it as the set of statements given to the target market to capture the purchase intentions of the targeted consumers.

2.2 FACTORS AFFECTING THE BRAND PURCHASE INTENTION

Past studies included frameworks and models to clarify the effects of brand awareness, brand augmentation on brand purchase intention. Most of them are based on the theories such as TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and Consumer Utility theory. TPB also focused on social and individual factors (Khalifa and Shen, 2008). The theory of planned behavior stated that behavioral intention to perform an activity is determined by attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm (Ajzen, 1991; Fusilier and Durlabhji, 2005). Attitude is defined as a person's feelings about performing behavior. Perceived behavioral control is defined as "the perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a behavior" (Fusilier and Durlabhji, 2005,) and subjective norm is defined as "one's beliefs about whether significant others think that one should engage in the activity" (Fusilier and Durlabhji, 2005). Utility theory in consumer economics assumes that consumers will think about the choices in order to maximize the utility rationally. Consumer attains decisions account for perceived risks and consequences under conditions of uncertainty in purchase decision making (Baker, 2001). It broadly captures psychological concerns that people have but does not consider cost and benefit in terms of consumer attitudes. Utility theory in psychology states that consumer choice behavior is predicted whether it is rational or irrational (Fishburn, 1968).

FIGURE 1: THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Source: Research data, 2014

2.1.2 BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness plays an important role on purchase intention because consumers tend to buy a familiar and well known product (Keller, 1993; Macdonald & Sharp, 2000).According to Keller (2000), brand recall refers to consumers’ ability to retrieve the brand from memory, for example, when the product category or the needs fulfilled by the category are mentioned. Keller (2001) argued that “brand recognition may be more important to the extent that product decisions are made in the store.” Customer based brand equity occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in memory. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Brand Awareness has a negative effect on consumer brand purchase intention in Kenya.

2.1.3 BRAND AUGMENTATION

This concept derives from early work by Levitt (1969), who points out that competition is not between what companies produce in their factories but between ‘what they add to their factory output in the form of packaging, services, advertising, customer advice, financing, delivery arrangements and warehousing. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. Brand Augmentation has a positive effect on consumer brand purchase intention in Kenya.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

Instrument was developed for testing the hypothesis. In order to ensure the content validity of the scale, it is advised to largely adapt the items for each construct from prior researches (Luarn and lin, 2005). Hence, in this research, 24 items for three constructs in the questionnaire actually come from the prior empirical studies, and are modified to fit context of brand purchase intention. Table 3.0 shows the sources of where the questions were adapted from.

The target populations of this study are continuing post graduate students who are mobile phone brand sensitive. The reason why these users were considered was due to the fact that they were likely to adopt brand purchase intention in the future.

TABLE 3.0: CONSTRUCTS AND THEIR SOURCES

Constructs	Number of Items	Sources
Brand purchase intention	6	Paurav,2009
Brand Awareness	8	Franz R Esch and Tobias Langer, Bernd H. Schmitt, Patrick Geus (2006).
Brand Augmentation	10	Franz R Esch and Tobias Langer, Bernd H. Schmitt, Patrick Geus (2006).

Source: Research Data, 2014

The questionnaires for this study were distributed to continuing post graduate students of Masinde Muliro Univesity of Science and Technology in Kenya. A total of 322 hardcopy questionnaires were distributed among continuing post graduate students, 231 questionnaires were got back fully filled, which gave response rate of 71.7%, which is a sufficient sample size for analysis. Statements that were negatively stated were reversed coded during analysis.

3.2 VARIABLE MEASUREMENT

3.2.1 Independent variables

A total of 13 questions were developed to capture the two adoption factors under investigation. Each question was measured by five-point Likert Scale. For instance, “1” denoted as strongly disagreed, “2” denoted as disagree, “3” denoted as neutral, “4” denoted as agree and “5” denoted as strongly agree.

3.2.2 Dependent Variable: Brand Purchase Intention

The measurements for brand purchase intention were measured using items adapted from the original Paurav, (2009). The brand purchase intention item was measured using five-point Likert scale where 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree and 5 – strongly agree. The reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.879.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Table 4.0, which includes gender, age group, highest level of academic qualification and mobile phone brand. The total sample for the study consists of 231.

The gender distribution of the respondents is 47.2 per cent males and 52.8 per cent females. The results also indicated that the samples had age predominantly between 36 and 40 years, which is 34.6 per cent. Majority of the respondents had D.Phil. 49.3 per cent, masters had 30.3 per cent and degree had 20.3 per cent. Most of the respondents’ intend to use Samsung which had 43.3 per cent, followed by Nokia with 30.3 per cent.

TABLE 4.0: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC OF THE RESPONDENTS

Variables		Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	109	47.2
	Female	122	52.8
	Total	231	100
Age	21-25	26	11.0
	26-30	37	16.0
	31-35	73	31.6
	36-40	80	34.6
	41 and above	15	6.8
	Total	231	100
Highest level of education	D.phil	114	49.3
	Masters	70	30.3
	Degree	47	20.3
	Total	231	100
Mobile phone brand	Nokia	70	30.3
	Samsung	100	43.3
	LG	10	4.3
	Alcatel	22	9.5
	Any other	12.6	12.6
	Total	231	100

Source: Research Data, 2014

4.1 SCALE RELIABILITY AND FACTOR ANALYSIS

Cronbach’s Coefficient (α) was used to measure reliability of the scales. The reliability coefficients (α) of each independent variable are as follows: Brand awareness (0.538) and Brand augmentation (0.712). The reliability coefficients of all the independent variables are above 0.500, which concurs with the suggestion made by Lassar, (1995).

Construct validity measures “the degree to which a scale measures what it intends to measure” (Garver and Mentzer, 1999) and it is assessed by factor analysis in this study. In order to assess the construct validity, 24 items are examined by principal components extraction with varimax rotation. The Kaiser- Meyer – Olkin (KMO) has a measure of 0.867, which is above the threshold of 0.5 (Field, 2005). The Barlett’s test is significant in this study with $\chi^2= 2,170.244$ ($p\text{-value}<0.000$). Table 4.1 and 4.2 show the factor loading for each item, and they are sorted by size. Any item that fails to meet the criteria of having a factor loading value of greater than 0.5 will be dropped from the study (Liao *et al.*, 2007). Table 3 shows that 24 items are sorted and clustered into two components: Factor 1 (Brand Awareness and Factor 2 (Brand Augmentation). Table 4.2 shows that the dependent variables are clustered into 1 factor (Brand Purchase Intention). The eigenvalues for each factor is greater than 1.0 (2.348, 1.120, 2.884), which implies that each factor can explain more variance than a single variable. Based on above results, the construct validity is established.

TABLE 4.1: FACTOR ANALYSIS

Variables	Scale Items	Factor loading	Eigen values	Percentage of variance
Brand Awareness	I have difficulty in imagining this mobile brand in my mind	0.806	1.374	27.483
	I can recognize this mobile brand among competing brands	0.885	1.106	49.603
	This mobile phone brand is the only brand recalled when I need to make a purchase decision on the product	0.832	1.080	71.199
	This brand comes up first in my mind when I need to make a purchase decision on the product	0.788		
	I can quickly recall the logo of this mobile phone brand.	0.701		
Brand Augmentation	I intent to purchase a mobile phone brand which is package well	0.882	1.866	31.096
	I will purchase a mobile phone brand which has a good warehouse	0.769	1.169	19.478
	I purchase this mobile phone brand because of my colleagues advice	0.973	1.060	17.670
	This mobile phone brand is poor in level of technology	0.977	1.007	16.781
	The brand is excellent in level of technology	0.799		
	This brand is excellent in design styling	0.860		

Source: Research data, 2014

TABLE 4.2: FACTOR ANALYSIS

Variables	Scale items	Factor Loading	Eigen values	Percentage of variance
Brand Purchase intention	I feel good about my decision to purchase this mobile phone brand	0.979	2.706	67.653
	I will positively recommend this mobile phone brand to other people	0.948	1.160	29.007
	I intent to purchase this phone if the cost is reasonable for me	0.979		

Source: Research data,2014

4.2 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Since a single construct in the questionnaire was measured by multiple items, the average score of the multi-items for a construct was computed and used in further analysis such as correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis (Wang and Benbasat, 2007). Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables (Wong and Hiew, 2005; Jahangir and Begum, 2008). However, according to Field (2005), correlation coefficient should not go beyond 0.8 to avoid multicollinearity. Since the highest correlation coefficient is 0.368 which is less than 0.8, there is no multicollinearity problem in this study.

TABLE 4.3: CORRELATION

Items	Brand purchase intention	Brand Awareness	Brand augmentation
Brand Purchase Intention	1		
Brand Awareness	.196**	1	
Brand Augmentation	.368**	.243**	1

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

All the independent variables had a positive correlation with the dependent variable with brand awareness with highest a correlation of ($r=0.196$ $p<0.05$) and then brand awareness with a correlation of ($r=0.368$ $p<0.05$). This indicates that all the variables are statistically significant at the 99% confidence interval level 2-tailed. This shows that all the variables under consideration have a positive effect on the dependent variable.

4.3 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the impact if two independent variables named brand awareness and brand augmentation on brand purchase intention, as presented in table 4.4. The table showed that 22.3% variances in brand purchase intention, was accounted for by the model containing brand augmentation and second independent variable (Brand awareness) was excluded from the model because of its non significance in model.

TABLE 4.4: TEST OF INDIVIDUAL REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Predictor variables	β	t-value	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.806	1.692	0.092		
Brand awareness	0.119	1.933	0.055	0.931	1.074
Brand prestige	0.135	2.004	0.046	0.776	1.288
Overall model F= 15.671; P<0.000; R²=0.223; adjusted R²=0.207					

Source: Research data, 2014

In order to test for multicollinearity among the predictor variables, variance-inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance were applied. The multicollinearity statistics showed that the tolerance indicators for brand awareness and brand augmentation are all greater than 0.2, and their VIF values are less than 10. The result indicates that no multicollinearity problem has occurred in this study (Neter et al., 1996; Ott and Longnecker, 2001).

The F-statistics produced (F = 15.671), thus confirming the fitness for the model. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between the brand awareness, brand augmentation and brand purchase intention.

The results indicated that brand augmentation was positive and significantly associated with brand purchase intention ($\beta= 0.227, P<0.05$), supporting H₂. The relationship between brand awareness and brand purchase intention was insignificant ($\beta=0.119, P>0.05$), not supporting H₁.

5.0 DISCUSSION

Brand awareness was found to be insignificant determination to predict brand purchase intention in Kenya. This result coincides with the findings of Hakala et al., (2012) who concluded that brand awareness plays a positive role in consumer choice and purchase decisions. Although the results agree with Kim et al., (2003) that brand awareness influences consumer choice, the results of the study do not assert that it is the strongest predictor among the brand value elements. Keller, (1993); Macdonald & Sharp, (2000), brand awareness plays an important role on purchase intention because consumers tend to buy a familiar and well known product. Brand awareness can help consumers to recognize a brand from a product category and make purchase decision (Percy & Rossiter, 1992).

Brand augmentation was also found to be significant to predict brand purchase intention in Kenya. These findings agree with Kotler and Armstrong (2006) who noted that another way to add customer value is through distinctive product style and design. He indicated that design is a larger concept than style. Style simply describes the appearance of a product. Styles can be eye-catching or yawn producing. A sensational style may grab attention and produce pleasing aesthetics, but it does not necessarily make the product perform better. This premise has been confirmed by the study as according to the research, the post graduate students were influenced largely by design or style when choosing the preference of the mobile phone.

5.1 IMPLICATION

Competition is not between what companies produce in their factories but between what the companies add to their factory output in the form of packaging, services, customer advice, delivery arrangement and warehousing. The concept of value for the customer is very much viewed as an inherent part of the product or service. Its special contribution lies in a recognition that additional elements, beyond that of the product itself, have a profound impact on the value that be added for customers.

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