

**INFLUENCE OF BRANDING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION OF AIRTEL
NIGERIA IN KEFFI METROPOLIS**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Dissertation has been written by me and it is the report of my research work. It has not been presented in any previous application for Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDBA) Degree. All quotations are indicated and sources of information specially acknowledged by means of Bibliography.

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CERTIFICATION

This Dissertation, titled the “**Influence of Branding on Consumer Purchase Decision of Airtel Nigeria in Keffi Metropolis**” meets the requirements governing the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDBA) Degree in Business Administration, of the School of Postgraduate Studies of Nasarawa State University, Keffi for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the loving memories of Father – Alhaji Abdullahi Kaka and my Mother Aishatu Sani. His dream and vision made this journey in life possible. He never dreamt in vain. While resting on eternally, He should be happy wherever he is today, His dream lives on. I remain eternally grateful to Him. May his soul rest in peace. Ameen!

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ABSTRACT

This study titled “Influence of Branding on Consumer Purchase Decision of Airtel Nigeria in Keffi” examined how branding strategies influence consumer purchase decision of Airtel products and services. This survey research sample 399 respondents drawn to represent the entire population of Keffi with the aid of seventeen item structured questionnaire designed to gather data for the study. Data presentation and analysis showed that quality of network, promotion/special offers, data packages/internet bundles, tariff, and retail visibility (banners, posters, boards) are key branding strategies Airtel used to influence consumer purchase decision in Keffi. The findings of this study revealed that there exist a significant relationship between branding strategies and consumer purchase decision. The study concluded that brands are powerful assets that must be carefully developed and accomplished, and branding as a marketing tool is vital to the survival of every organization. The study therefore recommends that to have a strong competing edge in the telecommunications market, Airtel service provider should be primarily concerned with delivering effective service quality, brand reputation and customer value in order to gain purchase of their products and sustainable loyalty.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The twenty first century age represents key changes in the marketing strategies employed by organizations and institutions in order to help them be very competitive and sustainable in the turbulent market they find themselves. Today's consumers live in a world where the purchase of products and services is enormous and continuous (Rindell, 2008).

The survival or success of companies is now dependent on the amount of information that is carefully gathered with regards to the purchasing habits displayed by consumers. In order to survive in the market, companies are keenly interested in developing strong brands that leads to long term and customer relationships (Hess, Story and Danes, 2011). Thus, brands represent key assets to companies (Rindell, 2008).

Branding is acknowledged to be one of the most fascinating marketing strategies used for the purpose of winning or overcoming competition (Ogbuji, Anyanwu and Onah, 2011). A product can be copied by a competitor, a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated, a successful brand is timeless (Quiston, 2004. p.345). It is known to have accounted for one-third to half of all consumers' expressions of intent to purchase (Joshi, 2013).

According to Kerin, Hartley and Rudelius (2009), branding is a basic decision in marketing in which an organization uses a name, phrase, design, symbols or combination of these to identify its product and distinguish them from those of competitors. It

represents consumer's perception and feeling about a product and its performance and everything that the product means to the consumer (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). Branding has been used extensively in all facets of business all over the world. Branding is the only tool that can change a buyer or consumer's behavior as it has become a status symbol.

Branding has emerged as part and parcel of modern day marketing strategies and now considered a key organizational asset (Kotler, 2000). In today's turbulent market place where consumers have an enormous amount of information with regards to products and services at their disposal, yelling louder is not a solution to making you heard or recognized in the market place (Ahuvia, 2005). From the consumers' perspective, brand is a guarantor of reliability and quality in consumer products (Roman, 2005).

In the telecommunication industry where consumers have many alternatives to choose from, importance of effective branding prevails. Companies are anxious to separate themselves from their competitors in a unique and inimitable way; brands play an enormous role in achieving these objectives and are almost invariably considered to be the most effective way to attain a strong position in the market. Companies such as MTN, AIRTEL, GLO and ETISALAT in the industry are therefore struggling for increase marketing and survival. Creating customer friendly, receptive and attractive image has become highly important and development of branding strategies has become a vital issue in the industry.

Competition in Nigeria's telecommunication industry has called for telecommunication firms to improve their corporate performance and not only in terms of teledensity (the

number of subscribers out of every 100 people), but also engage in intensive marketing activities such as branding.

The telecommunications industry has created the platform for new opportunities in terms of obtaining and sharing knowledge for different purposes. Families and friends have also been able to stay in touch. Effective branding efforts are considered a transition to success, which will continue to prevail on customer attitude towards the choice of brand in the industry. Hence, the need for branding by organizations such as Airtel is imperative, so as to influence the purchase decision of consumers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective branding strategies and its subsequent influence on consumer decision according to Davies (2000) depends on developing new organizational norms, so that the brand would report directly to the top of the organization; creating new organizational entities, such as responsible for branding; motivation and reward system for employees and effective internal communication.

Though many companies are able to have better products, yet they are sometimes unable to compete in the market due to poor branding activities. Thus, strong brands have the potential to generate long term and loyal customers, which would eventually lead to an increase in sales in the future, (Hess, Story and Danes, 2011). Therefore, Airtel Nigeria is a well-known brand that has made name and attracted a lot of customers, prior with the competition from the three other telecommunication operators; MTN, GLO and Etisalat (Katman, 2015). The brand has changed its company's name severally and has used a lot of branding strategies to attract customers (mobile subscribers). Against this background,

this study seeks to examine the effectiveness of AIRTEL brand strategies in influencing consumer purchase decision in Keffi.

1.3 Research Questions

In conducting this research, the following research questions will provide meaningful answers to the influence of branding on consumer purchase decision.

- i. To what extent is the use of Airtel mobile network in Keffi?
- ii. What is the perception of consumers towards Airtel brand strategies?
- iii. What are some of the branding strategies of Airtel Nigeria in influencing consumer purchase decision?
- iv. Which Airtel branding strategies do Airtel mobile subscribers in Keffi dislike?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to examine the influence of branding on consumer purchase decision of Airtel Nigeria in order to achieve the following objectives.

- i. To determine the usage of Airtel mobile network among the people of Keffi.
- ii. To assess consumers perception towards Airtel's brand strategies.
- iii. To assess some of the branding strategies of Airtel in influencing consumer purchase decision.
- iv. To ascertain branding strategies disliked by Keffi Airtel subscribers.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Branding is one of the areas in marketing in Nigeria. The findings from this study can provide an example of the role played by branding in creating and increasing consumers

purchase decision. It can also add to the literature in the area of branding effectiveness in building strong brands and creating and increasing consumer purchase decision. Also the outcome of the research would be beneficial to marketers especially Airtel Nigeria to understand the target consumer-whether branding affects their purchasing decision and to see their strengths and weaknesses in their use of branding strategies and can improve on their performance accordingly. The research can assist domestic marketers to adapt the knowledge in their marketing plan and activities to satisfy customers and provide the offerings based on the consumer's needs.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study on branding and its influence on consumer purchase decision will be conducted only in Keffi. The scope of the study will also cover Airtel service users in Keffi.

1.7 Definition of Operational Key Terms

The key terms used for the research are defined as follows;

Influence: influence refers to power, effect or the capacity that branding has on consumers' purchase decision

Branding: branding is seen as a process involved in creating a unique name and image for Airtel Nigeria in the consumers' mind with a consistent theme. It aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.

Consumer: a consumer is seen as an individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. A consumer is someone who can make the decision whether or not to make a purchase.

Purchase decision: purchase decision refers to the time the consumer may form an intention to buy the most preferred brand because he has evaluated the alternatives and identified the value that it will bring him.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter basically discusses literature directly related to the research topic. Review of literature is imperative in order to provide a clear understanding of the overall background of research topic. Discussion in this chapter covered sub-topics related to the influence of branding on consumer purchase decision. The chapter is further divided into review of concepts, review of related literature, as well as empirical studies and theoretical framework

2.2 Review of Concepts

2.2.1 Concept of Branding

Bennett (1995) defines brand as a “name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination of these, that is intended to identify the goods and services of one business or group of businesses and to differentiate them from those of competitors.

A traditional definition of a brand was, “the name, associated with one or more items in the product line that is used to identify the source of character of the item” Kotler (2000). The American Marketing Association (AMA) definition of a brand is a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design or combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. Within this view, as Keller (2003) says, “technically speaking, then,

whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand”.

Brand can also be identified as an umbrella when several products or services are placed under a single, coherent brand (Hakenes and Peitz 2008). So, a brand, in short, can be defined as a seller’s promise to provide consistently a unique set of characteristics, advantages, and services to the buyers/consumers.

Branding for centuries has been a means to differentiate goods of one producer from that of another. Brand studies have always remained a key attention of marketers because of its importance and direct relationship with consumers. Brand holds a very significant place in the life of a consumer. Consumers choose brands and trust them to avoid uncertainty and quality related issues.

According to Kotler (2009), brand is a way of differentiating a company’s goods or services, from those of its competitors. A significant factor of company’s strategy to increase their market share and then profit is to strengthen their brand image thereby creating the proper product identity and customer loyalty. The emergence of brand equity underlies the importance of brand in marketing tactics and hence provides useful insights for managers and further research, Keller (2003).

Values, colours, name, symbols, words and slogans are most commonly recognized entities which a holistic brand image integrates. It has been argued, that once an organization establishes a favourable brand image its main task is to ensure consistency. (De Chernatony et. al 2003). The strength of brand is thus determined by the consistency of the different brand identity components (Burmamnn & Zeplin 2005). For a brand to

flourish, mature and evolve a constant, persistent input of the brand manager and also of employees is required; a brand needs to be lead and developed, or its strength will inexorably perish. In other words, for a brand to be strong, it needs to have more than just appealing advertising (Burmamann & Zeplin 2005).

Nowadays, consumers have a wide range of choice to choose from when they enter a shopping mall. It is found that consumers' emotions are one of the major determinants which affects their buying behavior, (Berry, 2000). Consumers are bombarded with variety of products and brands meeting the same need or functions. Branding provides a way for consumers to reduce their decisions to products or services they is relevant or have met their need before.

Hestad (2013) however, elaborates by stating that “brands help consumers to make decisions. Consumers recognize brands and buy them because they promise to fulfill a need, due to recommendations or based on earlier experiences with the brand. Consumers also buy brands because the brand story connects with them emotionally, it offers them a self – expressive benefit, or they find the brands relevant in certain cultural context”.

A Brand contains everything that makes a product more than just a product, Kapferer (2005, p.155). That is, it involves the emotional and mental assumptions that consumers have about brands, which increases the perceived value of a product or service (Ibid, 2008:10).

Consumers see a brand as an essential element of a product or service and it adds value to the service. Consumers do attach meanings and interpretations to a brand due to the services or satisfaction it promises to deliver. For example, most consumers often view

Apple products of high quality, prestige and expensive brand. They feel they will be recognized when seen using it hence will purchase it irrespective of the price factor.

Devendra (2013), opines that consumers are willing to pay more to buy product with quality brands because they believe that brands deliver outstanding & desirable benefits. Consumers also stay loyal with the brand because the brand equity is already established and there is no need for any promotional incentives.

2.2.1.1 Brand Strategy

An organization's brand strategy provides general guidelines on which brand elements it chooses to apply across the products it offers. Brand strategy decisions usually happen over time, as each brand develops further. Organizations can introduce line extensions, brand extensions, multi brands, new brands or cobranding.

Line extensions involve a successful brand name being used to introduce additional items in a given product category under the same brand name, such as new flavours, forms, colours, added ingredients or package sizes (Kotler and Armstrong, 2001:307). It is thus when an organization introduces additional offerings with the same brand. Firstly, line extensions involve a successful brand name being used to introduce additional offerings with the same brand (Du Plessis et al., 2001: 156). A company might introduce line extensions as a low-cost, low-risk way to introduce new products in order to meet consumer desires for variety, to utilize excess capacity, or simply to command more shelf space from resellers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:307).

Secondly, brand extensions apply when an existing brand name is assigned to a new product in the same product line or in a different product line (Bové et al., 1995:252) –

in other words, when a successful brand name is used to launch a new category (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:308). Brand extensions are also new products that are marketed with the brand name of existing products, often in a different product category (Solomon & Stuart, 1997:349). A brand extension gives a new product instant recognition and faster acceptance. It also saves the high advertising costs usually required to build a new brand name. However, if brand extensions fail this may harm consumer attitudes towards the other products carrying the same brand name (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:309). Another brand strategy option is multibrands. Multibrands are new brand names introduced in the same product category (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:306). Multibranding offers a way to establish different features and appeal to different buying motives. New brands follow on from multi-brands. A company may create a new brand name when it enters a new product category for which none of the company's current brand names is appropriate (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:309). Finally, co-branding refers to the practice of using the established brand names of two different companies on the same product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:305). Co-branding is the combination of two brands with complementary attribute levels and serves to have a better attribute profile in consumers' minds (Weitz & Wensley, 2002:168).

2.2.1.2 Roles of Branding to Consumers

Belch and Belch (2008) identify the following as the role of brands to final users (consumers) of products or services.

- (i) Source of product
- (ii) Delegating responsibility to the manufacturer of product

- (iii) Lower risk
- (iv) Less search cost
- (v) Quality symbol
- (vi) Deal or pact with the product manufacturer
- (vii) Symbolic device

For organizations and producers, the authors maintain that brands serves the following purposes:

- (i) Means of identification to simplify handling or tracing.
- (ii) Means of legally protecting unique features
- (iii) Signal of quality level to satisfied customers
- (iv) Means of endowing products with unique associations
- (v) Source of competitive advantage
- (vi) Source of financial returns.

2.2.1.3 The Power of Brands

Belch and Belch (2003), in today's marketplace the appeal of brand names is greater than ever, and marketers recognize that building and reinforcing the image of their brands is a key to profitability and growth. Many companies now know that brand equity is as important an asset as factories, inventory, and cash because strong brands have the power to command a premium price from consumers as well as investors. There are a number of reasons why brands are more important than ever before. Consumers have a tremendous

number of choices available in nearly every product and service category but have less and less time to shop and make selections. Well-known and trusted brand names are a touchstone for consumers and help simplify their decision-making process. Branding “guru” Larry Light notes that the key to all successful brands is that they stand for something and are much more than simply trademarks or logos. A brand is a promise to the customer.

The authors also maintain that, having a strong brand name and identity is also important to companies competing in the global economy as they must reach customers far from their home base. Companies such as Nokia, which is based in Finland, or Samsung, which is headquartered in South Korea, rely heavily on markets outside their home countries to sell their cellular phones and other electronic products. A strong brand name is also important for companies entering new markets or introducing new products.

Also, today, while many companies are avoiding the temptation to cut back on advertising and promotion to help meet earnings forecasts, others have shown less willingness to support their brands. Experts note that these firms run the risk of losing their pricing power and, more important, their connection with their customers. Moreover, they run the risk of losing market share to well-funded competitors that are eager to grab market share from weaker rivals. As marketing professor Kevin Keller notes, “People who starve their brands now will be paying in the future.”

2.2.2 Concept of Consumer Behaviour

Solomon (1999) quoted by Iwokwagh (2007:98) posits that “a consumer is generally thought of as a person who identifies a need or desire, makes a purchase of a product and

then disposes of a product during the three stages in consumption process, pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase”.

William L. Wilkie (1998) defines consumer behavior as “the mental, emotional, and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires. Also, consumer behaviour is a study of how individuals make decision to spend their available resources (time, money and effort) or consumption related aspects (What they buy? When they buy? How they buy? etc.).

The study of consumer behavior has become paramount in recent times as it enables marketers to understand and predict consumer behaviour in the market place; it is concerned not only with what consumers buy, but also inclusive of why, where, how and how often purchases are made. Often consumers themselves do not know exactly what influences their purchases. “The human mind does not work in a linear way” says Kotler (2009, p.160).

2.2.2.1 The Importance of Consumer Behaviour

The study of consumer behaviour is of utmost importance in a number of aspects. First of all consumer behaviour can influence the commercial health of an industry (Blackwell et al., 2006). Consumers would have their preferences in purchasing products from specific retailers and hence the remaining retailers are selected using the rule of ‘survival of the fittest’. Therefore, consumers’ decisions can provide a clue for which industry to survive, which companies to succeed, and also which products to excel. Second, through understanding the reasons for consumers to buy the products and their buying habits, the

firms can make use of such information to devise corresponding marketing strategies in response to the consumers' needs (Blackwell et al., 2006).

Moreover, present consumer behaviour studies regard consumers as important determinants of organizational success and it is found that the most successful organizations are customer-centric (Blackwell et al., 2006). The notion 'the consumer is king' should be deep-rooted in every business people's mind that they should try to please these kings using their innovative methods. Consumer behaviour is thus important to the firms in the mobile telecommunication industry. It will help them to develop tailor-made services which enhance customer value and thus facilitate repeat purchase. Considering the nature of competition in the industry understanding consumers will help the firms to devise corresponding marketing strategies in response to customer's needs.

2.3 Review of Related Literature

2.3.1 Factors Influencing Consumers Purchasing Decision

Purchase decision is a kind of decision-making that studies the reason to buy a particular brand by a consumer (Shah et al, 2012). Consumers purchase decision is a complex process. Purchase decision usually is related to the behaviour, perceptions and attitudes of consumers. Ghosh (1990) states that purchase intention is an effective tool to predict buying process. Purchase decision may be changed under the influence of price or perceived quality and value. In addition, consumers are affected by internal or external motivations during the buying process (Gogoi, 2013).

Consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of final consumer, individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption (Armstrong &

Kotler, 2009). Consumers around the world are different in gender, age, income, education level, living habits, and tastes, when they purchase the product they show an incredible difference, those consumer purchase behaviours could be influenced by many factors, such as cultural, personal, social and psychological (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009).

(1) Culture Factors: culture is an important factor in consumer purchasing decision.

Culture distinguishes one human group from others. A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behaviour, language, rituals, arts, art, technology, and style of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems (Kim and Ahn, 2006). Hofstede (2001) determined that culture is "mental programming" which each person has his or her own pattern of thinking, feeling or action which have learned through their lifetime. Culture can be best expressed in the complex interactions of values, attitudes, and behavioural assumptions of a society (Schwartz 1994). Culture differences is very important to understand, because if a company gets it wrong it could be a very costly exercise.

(2) Personal Factors: personal factors influence buying decisions, it includes economic, age, gender, occupation, lifestyle and situation, etc. (Linehan & Cadogan, 2000). Peoples buying habits and tastes change with age, we have different needs and different outlook on life as we grow older. As the different family cycle stages changes over time the needs also change. (Linehan & Cadogan, 2000). Armstrong and Kotler (2009) found out that people with a good secure job and regular income, tend to buy more expensive and even luxury product, where people with less income and less secure jobs tend to buy cheaper products. This can be expressed in hobbies, shopping, sports, social events, food,

fashion, etc. Linehan and Cadogan (2001) highlighted that: even though people have the same job, same social class, but their lifestyle maybe quite different. The basic concept is that our possessions select our identity we are what we are. Our personality will reflect our consumer behaviour as to which brand or design of product that we choose, not only will it provide function but also it can express the consumers' personality (Armstrong and Kotler, 2009).

(3) **Social Factors-** Armstrong and Kotler (2009) suggested that: people choose their product for their social status, when they buy product, it is not to enjoy them, but to let others know that they can afford them, they hope that product can reflect their status. Kim et al (2002) addressed consumers product choice for a particular brand are affected by a complex social influence, and Linehan and Cadogan (2000) proposed that social factor also influence consumers behaviour, like family, peer group and status. They also said in real life, individuals influence each other in different ways. The family is the most important buying organization in society, family members can strongly influence other family members on what product to purchase. Mothers have the most influence as they decide what to buy, when to buy and where to buy, marketers need to take this group in to account when any decisions are made in regards to the needs of the household (Armstrong and Kotler, 2009).

(4) **Psychological Factors:** A person's buying decisions are further influenced by their motivation, attitude and perception. Armstrong and Kotler (2009) point out that a person's needs could be biological, such as hunger, thirst, or discomfort. Other needs are psychological, such as need for recognition, esteem, or belonging,

but in fact, most of these needs will not be strong enough to motivate the person to act at a given point in time. A need becomes a motive, it has to be aroused to a sufficient level of intensity. The attitudes towards certain products or brands that people exhibit are very hard to change, for example the Ipod is the best portable music device in the world. Its hard for a company to compete against this product due to its advance technology, and also how to change the attitude and the beliefs of the consumer that there is another product which can do the same job just as effetely for a lesser price. The company should examine carefully why a consumer/household has chosen this product and try to satisfy the consumer needs rather than try to change them. Therefore, Airtel Nigeria subscribers or users in Keffi may likely be influence to be their customer because of the factors discussed above.

2.3.2 Role of Branding on Consumer Purchasing Decision

Branding plays an essential role in the success of a business, especially in a competitive environment where survival of a business depends on the customers' preferences (Kotler, 2000). In the mobile telecommunication industry where consumers have many alternatives to choose from importance of effective branding prevails (Hutch and Shultz 2002).

Companies, organizations and their products are anxious to differentiate themselves from their competitors in a unique and imitable way; brands play an enormous role in achieving these objectives and are almost invariably considered to be the most effective way to attain a strong position in the market (Levit, 1983; Kotler, 2000). In recent times, brand is not only used for differentiation but also used to justify the purchase decision

(Duncan and Moriarty 1997). The symbolic values associated with brand names have become the basis for product differentiation, with leading strategies attempting to emulate key factors that are conducive to key behaviours associated with consumer purchasing patterns (Aaker, 1991).

Consumers' behaviour has changed dramatically in the past decade (Schiffman & Kanuk 2009). Brands represent the customer's perceptions and opinion about performance of the product. A brand increases the value of a product or a service by differentiating them from the competition and creates positive associations and forms emotional relationship with the customer (Johns 2004). Brands provide businesses with the means to free themselves from constant price competition, to increase the value of their services and reduce their marketing cost (Reynolds, 2002). A powerful brand is one which resides in the mind of the consumer (Kotler 2001).

Brands play a very important role in the consumer decision making processes. It is really important for companies to find out customer's decision making process and identify the conditions, which customers apply while making decision (Cravens and Piercy, 2003). Customers follow the sequence of steps in decision process to purchase a specific product. They start realizing a requirement of product, get information, identify and evaluate alternative products and finally decide to purchase a product from a specific brand. When customers purchase a particular brand frequently, he or she uses his or her past experience about that brand product regarding performance, quality and aesthetic appeal (Keller, 2008).

Devendra (2013), posits that the basic purchase cycle depends on 4 P's (product, price, place and promotion), psychological factors & brand choice. Here branding influences

the psychological factors like motivation, learning, perception, belief & attitude. The author maintains that brands communicate a lot of different things to different people.

Today most successful organizations promote their corporate identity or the corporate company brand to retain, sustain and build their corporate image of the company while continuing with individual brand promotion of their products as well. In such cases we see that the corporate branding and promotions are trying to communicate a different set of messages to the customers while the product brand promotions convey a totally different message. The corporate branding tries to cultivate and nurture the corporate identity, values and the image while at the product level, the branding promotes the product and its value proposition to the target customers. Understanding of the different types of branding gives us the understanding that the brands carry a certain power which can be termed as perception combined with an image. Besides, the brand also carries many more components and messages that it tries to convey. Overall you will also note that the brands have the power to gain access to and remain in the sub conscious mind of the viewers. More importantly they use this power to help initiate and strengthen the relationship with the viewers as well as the customers. A brand connects the four crucial elements of an enterprise- customers, employees, management and shareholders. Brand is nothing but an assortment of memories in customers mind. Brand represents values, ideas and even personality. It is a set of functional, emotional and rational associations and benefits which have occupied target market's mind. Associations are nothing but the images and symbols associated with the brand or brand benefits. And these benefits are the basis for purchase decision.

Branding is also important for consumer purchasing decision because it serves as a source of product identification, risk reducer, search cost reducer, promise, bond or pact with maker of product, symbolic device and signal of quality.

2.3.3 Relationship between Consumers Perception of a Brand and their Purchasing Power

Branding is about certain consumers, not all consumers as they have different attitudes and behaviours toward brands. The first step of corporate learning about how to compete in the world market is to understand the consumer perceptions (Craig & Douglas, 1996). According to Guthrie and Kim (2009), the brand perception is subjected to customer's emotion reaction, faith and loyalty toward the product as well as product usage, expression and differentiation.

Brand perceptions are shaped by functional experiences (i.e speed, quality, reliability, ease of use) as well as emotional experiences (i.e. make me feel better, improve my performance, make my life/job more gratifying or easier) the customer associates with the product and company. Brand experiences and perceptions are developed over time through a variety of sources, including: previous experience with the brand, interactions with sales, customer service, recommendations from friends and colleagues, reviews by reputable sources and advertising (www.infotrends.com).

Kotler and Keller (2009) and Asch and Wolfe (2001) conceptualized “perception” as a mind processing of consumer's selection, organization and information interpretation. Consumers have their previous knowledge of brands and products from their experience

and they like to observe stimulus that relate to their existing needs while they are conscious and purposeful allocation of attention

Asch and Wolfe (2001) claimed that human's situational perception does affect their action in deciding a purchase. This is due to the fact that different people can have different kind of brand perception of the same telecommunication service.

Blackwell, Engel and Miniard (2006) state that the process of perception has three sub stages:

1. Sensation– Attending to an object/event with one of five senses
2. Organisation – Categorizing by matching sensed stimulus with similar object in memory, e.g. colour
3. Interpretation– Attaching meaning to stimulus, making judgments as to value and liking, e.g. bitter taste

2.4 Profile of Airtel Nigeria

Airtel, formerly known as Vmobile and Inter Zain Nigeria, was established in 2000 by a group of institutional and private investors and three state governments. The company made history on August 5, 2001 by becoming the first telecoms operator to launch a commercial GSM service in Nigeria. In May 2006, following Celtel international's acquisition of majority stake in the company, it was re-branded Celtel and became an important part of Celtel's pan-African operations spanning 14 countries and serving 15 million customers. (www.redorbit.com/news/technology). On August 1, 2008 Celtel Nigeria was re-branded Zain Nigeria following the global acquisition of Celtel

International by MTC Group, which transformed into Zain group, a leading emerging market player in the field of telecommunication aiming to become one of the top ten mobile telecom groups in the world by 2011.

Airtel Nigeria, which currently covers over 1500 towns and 14000 communities across the six geopolitical zones of the country, scored a series of many other “firsts” in the highly competitive Nigeria telecommunications market including the first to introduce toll-free 24 hour customer care line-111; first to launch service in all the six geo-political zones in the country; first to introduce N500 recharge card, first to commence emergency service (Celtel 199); first to introduce monthly free SMS and monthly airtime bonus; and first to combine value creation and internal growth from existing operations with aggressive expansion into new geographies.

As at November 22, 2010 Zain Nigeria was re-branded as Airtel Nigeria. Bharti Airtel the giant global communications company which has operations in 19 countries across Asia and Africa unveiled Airtel brand in Nigeria and around the continent, finally lying to rest the Zain brand (www.itnewsafrika.com). With the brand reveal activity, the brand identity of the company changed from Zain Nigeria to Airtel Nigeria (www.itnewsafrika.com).

Zain now Airtel operates in 16 African countries; Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It has 40million subscribers on the African continent with the Nigeria network, which has over 15million subscribers contributing the most.

2.5 Review of Empirical Works/Studies

In the study Impact of a Brand on Consumer Decision making Process, a case study of Mtn Ghana, Abdul-Aziz (2014) examined the impact a brand has on the behaviours of consumers with special regards to their purchase behaviours. For the purpose of the study, a sample size of fifty (50) respondents was selected from Adabraka region of Accra in Ghana, through non-probability sampling technique. The results revealed that consumers are attracted to packaging and labelling as it enhances image and creates visual appeal. It was also found out that consumers are influenced by the quality of a product or service before making a brand selection. It was also evident that consumers are becoming more enlightened and fashionable and would therefore prefer well developed brand. Mtn's insurance brand lacks easy recognition and popularity in the minds of consumers. Bases on the findings, the author recommended that Mtn calls for massive improvement on the services rendered, innovation and differentiation and further research on how to improve its brand.

Shehzad, Ahmad, Iqbal, Nawaz and Usman (2014), conducted a research on The Influence of Brand Name on Consumer Choice and Decision. The purpose of their study was to examine the effect of brand name on consumer buying behaviour in university students of Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Lahore of Pakistan. In this study the researchers adopted the descriptive research design to conclude the inferences of hypothesized testing. A sample size of 300 respondents was selected through the non-probability convenient sampling technique. The findings show that brand image or brand name has a significant positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour. It also revealed that the university students are brand conscious and prefer branded products. Also, the

researchers found out that brand image plays a vital role for consumers while doing shopping or purchasing goods and students of Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Lahore are more and more conscious for branded products to show off themselves. The study concluded with the fact that brand image or brand name has strong positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour. The study recommended that companies should aim to create a brand name which relates to customers positively and organizations should better their marketing and promotional tools to capture the customers and increase their profit.

In another study titled Influence of Brands on Female Consumer's Buying Behaviour in Pakistan, Zeb, Rashid and Javeed (2011) examine Pakistani female consumer's buying behaviour and understand the key factors of branded clothing which influence female consumer's involvement towards trendy branded clothing. The survey was conducted from general female consumers aged between 20-35 to obtain empirical evidence by using questionnaire and statistical techniques. The total of 415 respondents filled the questionnaires. The results indicate that status branding, brand attitude, paying premium for branded clothing, self-concept and reference groups were found to have positive effects on female consumer buying behavior while increasing consumer involvement in fashion clothing. Also, there is a direct relationship between brand influence elements and consumer involvement in fashion clothing. The study finds that the female consumers who possess strong positive attitudes towards brands show high level of involvement in fashion clothing, along with that, self-concept is also the most important element as consumers use brand related product that matches with their own personality. The study recommended that sale is an important influence as it plays an important role to change consumer's attitude and perception, clothing brands can use sales promotions

to bring brand in decision phase from consumers holding state. Also, positioning of brands based on self-image and trust, reliability, perfect and friendly, emotional and creative personality traits automatically attract the extrovert female consumers to show their reliable characteristics (self-image). So it is important for marketing managers to position their brand accordingly.

Alamgir, Shamsuddoha and Nedelea (2010), studied Influence of Branding on Consumer Decision Making Process: An Empirical Study on Car Buyers. The purpose of this study was to create a deeper consideration of what influence a brand name can have, when people go for purchasing, choose the products between different brands, especially private vehicle like cars. It also tried to explore the relationship between brands and the consumer decision making process. The study adopted the survey method with questionnaire as the instrument of gathering data from 100 respondents using the simple random sampling.

The data revealed that when a consumer purchases a car, brand names do influence his/her choice. The study also revealed that branded cars have a great place in consumer mind, when customers go to purchase a car, they prefer to purchase a well-known branded car. Customers do not want to try new or unknown branded cars because they have not much information about the lesser known brand. Their study concluded that people are much attached to branded products, as majority of the people purchase the branded products with the belief that brands show their status and life style in the society. From the study it is clear that well known branded cars are very famous among the people because consumers trust the brand name. This also indicates that people often purchase well-known brand cars since they are aware of the brand performance or

perhaps they have a good past experience about the brands car. This makes customer's become loyal with the specific brand. However to achieve these the study recommended that automobile brand companies can become successful by getting close to the customers and designing their cars according to the customers' needs.

In the Same vein, Offeh, Addo and Antwi-Donkor (2013) examined the impact of branding on consumer behavior with respect to the movie industry in Ghana. The study entitle the Effect of Branding on Consumer Buying Behaviour in Local Ghanaian Movie Industry identified four aspects of brand equity, notably brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand association. The researchers employed two types of methodologies in the study; qualitative and quantitative methods. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents which include people from Kumasi metropolis specifically Adum and Kejetia area. SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Sciences) software, Microsoft Word and Excel were used to analyze data into meaningful information and graphs. The results showed that movies produced by Kumawood are preferred by majority of the people, on the prices of the two types of movies produced by Ghallywood and Kumawood, the analysis showed that the prices of Kumawood movies are far cheaper than that of movies produced by Ghallywood and a lot of people are satisfied with the brand of movie that they purchase.

The findings of the research suggests that policy makers have to consider branding as an important aspect of marketing to enhance a product and other marketing concepts like pricing, promotions can also be researched into.

The above empirical review is relevant to this study because they provide a guide to acknowledged scholars work on branding and its influence on consumers purchase

decision. Also the empirical review is relevant to this study because research methods and instrument of data collection used by the researchers can be adopted to aid this research on the influence of branding on consumers purchase decision.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on persuasion theory and supported by multi-attribute attitude models.

2.6.1 Persuasion Theory

Edward Bernays propounded persuasion theory in 1952 on the ability to control human behavior. Persuasion theory according to Ashiekpe (2007:22) is based on the idea of the celebrated Greek philosopher, Aristotle and his rhetorical theory of communication. Ashiekpe quoted Mckee as saying: the rhetorical theory was Aristotle's land mark explanation concerning people in social relationship. He maintained that, Aristotle observed that factors that played a role in determining the persuasive effects were its content, arrangement and the manner of delivery, while not obvious of the audience.

As Merton (1979, p. 60) rightly points out human co-operation can be actually sought in three basic ways; power, purchase and persuasion. Of the three, persuasion is most strongly desirable.

Folarin (1998, p.76) quoted Bradley saying persuasion is a process whereby an attempt is made to induce changes in attitude and behaviours through involvement of a person's cognitive and affective process.

According to Sambe (1998, p.68) the theory of persuasion implies that human behaviour can be controlled. Simons, cited in Uganda (2001) suggests that the concept of persuasion can be adopted more as a communication campaign strategy. According to him, persuasion is human communication designed to influence others, by modifying their beliefs, values and attitudes. The persuasive message must however be well structured, laden with facts and figures, logical reasoning and must be statistically tested and proven so as to produce the desired effect else, it would be rightly constructed as mere empty rhetoric.

The focus of any persuasive campaign therefore has to be on individual psychological factors (mind or emotion) persuasive messages are thus able to activate an attitude change that can modify behaviour of individuals in general. Defleur (1989, p. 2735) opines that; persuasion must focus on either emotional or cognitive factors; they continued that, it is obviously impossible to modify an inherited biological factor (height, weight, race, sex etc.) with mass communicated messages. It is possible to use mass communicated messages to arouse an emotional state such as anger or fear, which can then be important in shaping a response. Motives and motivation are important concepts in understanding persuasion.

Persuasion theory focuses on the audience and content of messages. Messages have to be designed to capture people's attention (audience). To be able to capture audience attention the following must be considered:

1. Selective Exposure: People are most interested in a message if it supports the same opinion and ideas they already have.

2. Selective Perception: audience tends to select messages or information that is right for them and a message can be voluntarily misunderstood if audience hasn't chosen to receive such message.
3. Selective Memorization: Opinions transmitted by a message will be better memorized if they are coherent with those of the receivers. There is also a link between the length and its memorization in a receiver's mind, the longer a message is, the more effective the persuasion on the receiver. This is true because a longer message requires more time for a receiver to research and select opinions coherent with his mindset (www.12manage.com/description-persua).

The tenets of persuasion theory are;

- (a) The mass media can be used to elicit specific form of action from the audience. That is to say that, messages can be deliberately designed after pains taking efforts to make the audience act in a way desired by the communicator.
- (b) Persuasion is an attempt to convince but not to confuse or compel the audience to change his belief, values or motives or attitude. It could also be an attempt to make the audience see the reason why they have to change or accept the communicator's view point.

2.6.2 Multi-attribute Attitude Models

This model has been in use by consumer researchers and marketing practitioners for over two decades to study consumer attitudes. A multi-attribute attitude model views an attitude object, such as a product or brand, as possessing a number of attributes that provide the basis on which consumers form their attributes. According to this model,

consumers have beliefs about specific brand attributes and attach different levels of importance to these attributes (Belch & Belch, 2008. P.124).

Using the multi-attribute attitude model approach, an attitude towards a particular brand can be represented as

$$A_B = \sum_{i=1}^n B_i \times E_i$$

Where A_B = attitude toward a brand

B_i = Beliefs about the brand's performance or attribute

E_i = Importance attached to attribute

n = Number of attributes considered.

For example, a consumer have beliefs (B_i) about various brands of telecommunication network on certain attributes. One brand (Airtel Nigeria) may be perceived as having wider coverage, reach and strong network. Another brand say (Mtn Nigeria) may not be perceived as having these attribute, but consumers may believe it performs well on other attributes such as moderate tariff and customers' friendly.

Multiattribute attitude models therefore holds that consumers may hold a number of different beliefs about brands in any product or service category. However, not all of these beliefs are activated in forming an attitude. Beliefs concerning specific attributes or consequences according to proponent of the Model Fishbein 1963 that are activated and form the basis of an attitude are referred to as Salient beliefs (Belch & Belch 2008,

p.125). Companies, organizations and their marketers should identify and understand these salient beliefs.

The above model is important to this study because Airtel Nigeria need to identify and understand the salient beliefs of their customers (network users). Also Airtel Nigeria need to recognize that the saliency of beliefs varies among different market segments, overtime, and across different consumption situation, and hence the need to understand attribute and attitudinal beliefs of Keffi Airtel network users towards branding of the telecommunication network becomes necessary.

Multi-attribute attitude models is useful because it helps marketers understand and diagnose the underlying basis of consumer's attitudes. The models also help in the evaluations of a brand and the importance of various attributes or consequences, the marketer is able to develop communication strategies for creating, changing, or reinforcing brand attitudes.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides solid foundation or perspective to acknowledge previous researchers on the influence of branding on consumer purchase decision. The chapter opened with an introduction which was followed by review of concepts. Other major headings in the chapter underscore the relevance of consumer purchase decision, and the role of branding on consumer purchase decision. The review was anchored on persuasion theory and supported by multi-attribute models of Fishbein.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and techniques for the design of instruments and the collection of data by the researcher. The chapter includes research design, the population, sample, sampling technique, research instruments, data collection procedures and the method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this study is survey research. Wimmer and Dominick (2006, p.180) say survey research allows researchers to examine many variables (demographic, and lifestyle information, attitudes, motives, intentions and so on) and to use a variety of statistics to analyze the data. The strength of survey research is that it tends to be cost effective since the materials needed are readily available. The choice of the survey method for the study is thus, for the fact that it involves collecting and analyzing data from a few people considered to be representative of a larger group. The survey involved a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about opinions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behavior of Keffi people about the branding strategies of Airtel through observation and administration of questionnaire to a relatively representative sample of the population interest.

3.3 Population of the study

The population of this study takes into consideration the entire population of Keffi Nasarawa state. This includes male and female, young and old, educated students, lecturers, business people and civil servants. According to 2006 National Population Commission (NPC), the population of Keffi is 92,664.

3.4 Sample Size

Sampling, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2003) is an act of taking a limited number (sub-set) from a large population, studying the characteristics of these few items and using the findings as a basis of reaching conclusion about the population. Therefore the sample size of this research is 399 respondents which is the representative of the entire population 92,664 of Keffi.

According to Uzoagulu (1998:66) the sample size can be determined using Yaro Yamene formula as seen below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample Size

N = Total Population

e = Margin of error the researcher was willing to accept (5%)

1 = Unity or constant

Using this formula to determine the sample size of 146,889 population of this study, we have:

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{92,664}{1+92,664(0.05)^2} \\
 &= \frac{146889}{368.223} \\
 &= 398.913
 \end{aligned}$$

Approximately 399

Hence the sample size statistically determined is 399.

3.5 Research Instruments and Administration

For the purpose of collecting requisite data for the study, questionnaire was employed. The questionnaire as an instrument of data collection involves drawing sets of questions based on the objectives and research questions of the study. The questionnaire is divided into two parts; the first part focuses on demographic data of respondents, while the second part centered on proffering solution to study research questions. The questionnaire contains a total number of 17 questions which are close ended to aid the researcher in collating data. The questions were asked alone or asked in conjunction with the previous one to elicit more response. The researcher administered the questionnaire to respondents with the aid of a research assistant.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

In this research, primary data was collected through the administration of questionnaire. This is because questionnaire design ask a specific question and a specific response is provided. The questions were specifically designed to illicit information necessary to achieve the purpose of the research. This research instrument was used because it is the best through which accurate information can be collected whereby the research topic under investigation requires statement of facts and personal (customers) opinions. While few secondary data was obtained through the internet and information brochures of Airtel Nigeria and library source.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis of data was done using simple percentages, tables and frequencies.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

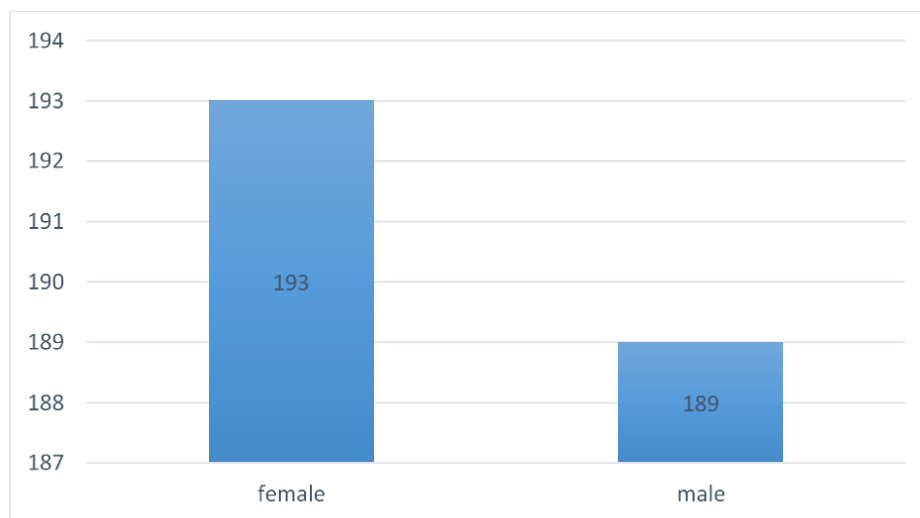
4.1 Introduction

This chapter involves presenting and analyzing of data collected from respondents. The data is presented using tables, charts and simple percentages. The analysis is done based on the research questions and discussion of findings.

Seventeen item questionnaire was designed, produced and administered to 399 respondents. However, not all copies of the questionnaire were correctly filled and returned. 17 (4.3%) questionnaire were not returned and that formed the mortality rate, while 382 (95.7%) were returned. Therefore, presentation and analysis of data is done on 94.7% copies of questionnaire.

4.2 Data presentation and Analysis

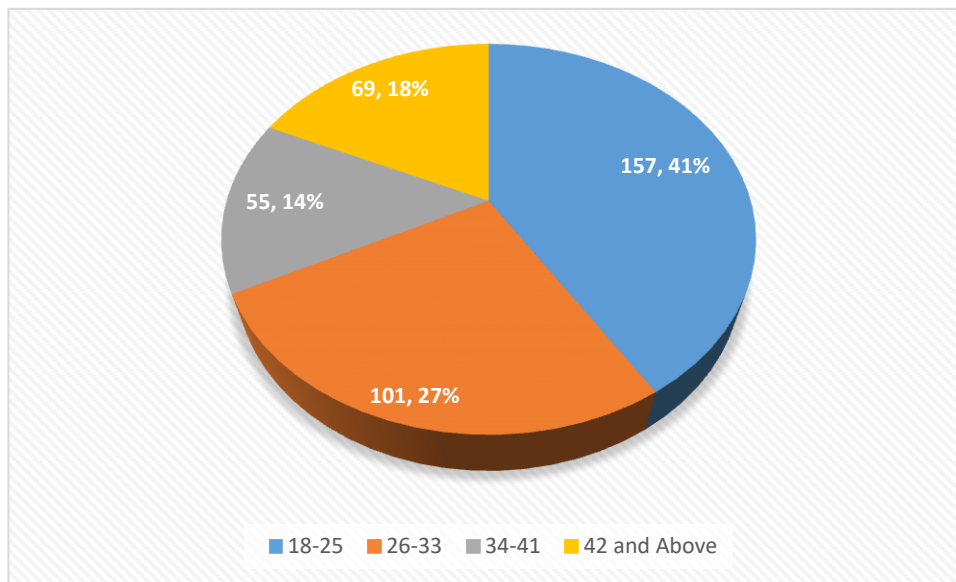
Fig. 1 Sex Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure one shows the sex distribution of respondents out of the 382 respondents, 193 were females and 189 were males. This shows that the females were more active in the exercise.

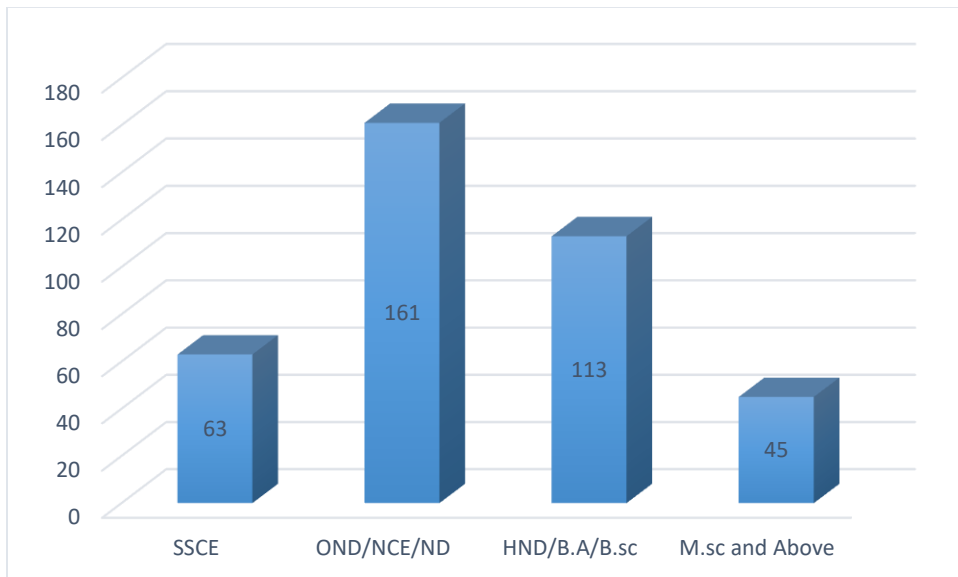
Fig. 2 Age Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure two shows that 157 (41%) were between the age brackets of 18-25, 101 (27%) were between 26-33 years, those within 34-41 years were 55(14%), while those from 42 and above were 69 (18%). This indicates that those within the age range of 18-25 years were the majority.

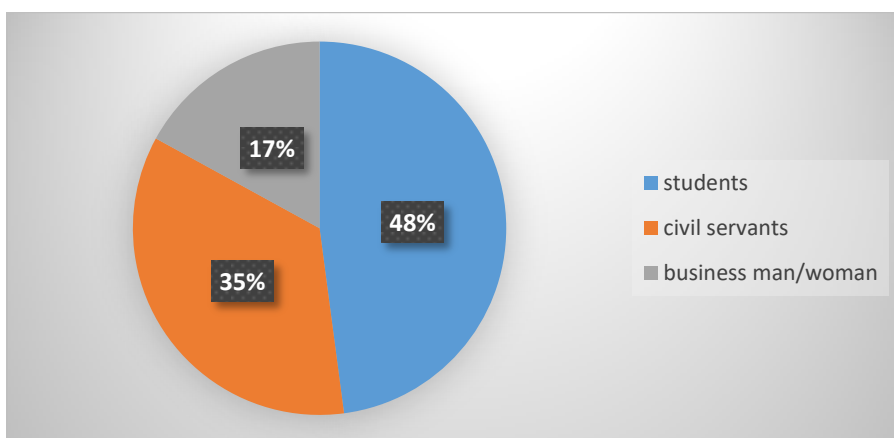
Fig.3 Educational Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Figure 3, shows that majority of the respondents 161 (42.2%) were OND/NCE/ND holders, 113 (29.5%) were HND/B.A/B.sc holders, 63 (16.5%) were SSCE holders while M.sc and above formed the least with 45 (11.8%).

Fig.4 Occupational Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey, 2019

Formed a total of (35%) and (17%) were business man/woman. These students were either from secondary or tertiary institutions in the state, meanwhile the civil servants were primarily lecturers and staff of the two universities.

The result implies that majority of Airtel subscribers in Keffi are students in higher institution.

Table 1 Respondents Use of a Mobile Phone

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	382	100
No	0	0
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

Table 1 Shows that 100% of the respondents do make use of a mobile phone. It means that the use of mobile phone is absolute among the residents of Keffi

Table 2: Respondents Use of Airtel

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	382	100
No	-	-
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 shows that 382 (100%) of the respondents make use of Airtel while 0 says no. It means that the use of Airtel service is absolute among the residents in Keffi.

Table 3: Duration of Respondent Use of Airtel

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	176	46
6-10years	121	32
11-15years	57	15
16 years-Above	28	7
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

In table 3, 46% of the respondent use Airtel from 1-5 years, 32% for 6-10 years, and 15% for 11-15 years while 7% were for 16 years and above. This indicates that respondents that have used Airtel for 1-5 years were actively engage in the research.

Table 4: Factors that Influence Respondents use of Airtel

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quality of network	27	7
Promotions/special offers	58	15
Data packages/internet bundles	87	23
Tariff	11	3
All of the above	194	51
None of the above	5	1
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4, shows the factors that influence the respondent use of Airtel network. 27 respondents representing 7% were for quality of network, 58 (15%) were for promotions/special offers, 87 (23%) were for data packages/internet bundles, 11 (3%) were for tariff, 194 (51%) were for all of the above while 5 (1%) were for none of the above. This indicates that majority of the respondents believe that quality of network, promotions/special offers, data packages/internet bundles and tariff (all of the above) influence that use of Airtel.

Table 5: Brand Strategies of Airtel Preferred by Respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Change of names	53	16.5
Retail visibility (banners, posters, boards)	91	23.8
Customer service centres	84	22
Extra credit request	75	19.6
Slogan/logo	69	18.1
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 5 says that 53 (16.5%) of the respondents were for change of names, 91 (23.8%) were for retail visibility (banners, posters, boards), 84 (22%) were for customer service centres, 75 (19.6%) were for extra credit request while 69 (18.1%) were for slogan/logo. The result indicates that consumers prefer retail visibility (banners, posters, boards) as a brand strategy of Airtel than the others.

Table 6: Most Used Branding Strategy by Airtel in Influencing Subscribers

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Availability of service	57	14.9
Cheap call rates	65	17
Data packages	203	53.1
Transit advertising	35	9.2
Outdoor events	22	5.8
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 6 shows 57 (14.9%) that availability of service mostly influence subscribers, 65 (17%) were for cheap call rates, 203 (53.1%) were for data packages, 35 (9.2%) were for transit advertising while 22 (5.8%) were for outdoor events. This indicates that Airtel Nigeria influences Keffi mobile subscribers by the use of data packages.

Table 7: Respondents Interest of Airtel Company Name

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	317	83
No	65	17
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 7 indicates that 317 respondents representing 83% says yes they are interested in the company name of Airtel while 65 respondents (17%) says no.

Table 8: Respondents Stimulant to Recharge Airtel

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Data packages	203	53.1
Availability of service	44	11.5
Low cost tariff	79	20.7
Bonuses/special offers	56	14.7
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 8 shows what makes respondents to recharge their Airtel line often which are 203 (53.1%) for data packages, 44 (11.5%) were for availability of service, 79 (20.7%) were for low cost tariff while 56 (14.7%) were for bonuses/special offers.

Table 9: Respondents level of satisfaction with Airtel Network

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	108	28.3
Satisfied	159	41.6
Not really satisfied	65	17
Not satisfied	50	13.1
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 9 shows the level of respondents satisfaction of Airtel network as 108 (28.3%) were very satisfied, 159 (41.6%) were satisfied, 65 (17%) were not really satisfied while,

50 (13.1%) not satisfied. Thus, 159 (41.6%) respondents making the majority are satisfied of the Airtel network as a brand.

Table 10: What Respondents Detest about Airtel Brand

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SMS alert	169	44
Calls	112	29
Promotions	10	3
Inconsistency in name change	27	7
Voice mail services	10	3
Poor network	54	14
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 10 indicates what the respondent detest about Airtel brand as 169 (44%) of the respondents detest SMS alert sent regularly by the service provider, 112 (29%) dislike the level of calls by Airtel, 10 (3%) says promotions, 27 (7%) says inconsistency in name change, 10 (3%) says voice mail services while 54 (14%) detest the poor network service in Keffi

Table 11: Ways By Which Airtel Subscribers Will Continue To Use The Network

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Dropdown of call rate	117	30.6
Consistency of network	126	33
Improved customer services	15	3.9
Extra talk time benefits	37	9.7
Increased promotions/special offers	6	1.6
Moderate tariff and data plans	81	21.2
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 11 shows the means in which Airtel subscribers will continue to make use of the network. 117 (30.6%) were for dropdown of call rate, 126 (33%) were for consistency of network, 15 (3.9%) were for improved customer services, 37 (9.7%) were for extra talk time benefits, 6 (1.6%) were for increased promotions/special offers while 81 (21.2%) were for moderate tariff and data plans. This results indicates that the mobile subscribers in Keffi will continue to use Airtel when the network becomes consistent.

Table 12: Do Airtel Mobile Subscribers Dislike Its Brand Strategies

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	295	77
No	87	23
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 12 shows that 295 of the respondents representing (77%) said yes they dislike some brand strategies of Airtel Nigeria, while 87 (23%) says no.

Table 13: Airtel Brand Strategies That Respondents Dislike

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Change of brand name	53	14
Logo	17	5
Colour	18	5
Slogan	41	10
SMS alert	253	66
Total	382	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 13 shows that 53 (14%) of the respondents dislike Airtel change of brand name, 17 (5%) were for logo, 18 (5%) were for colour, 41 (10%) were for slogan while 253 (66%) were for SMS alert. This reveals that majority of the respondents dislike the SMS alert.

4.3 Answering Research Questions

Four research questions were evolved to guide this study research:

1. To what extent is the use of Airtel mobile network in Keffi?
2. What is the perception of consumers towards Airtel brand strategies?
3. What are some of the branding strategies of Airtel Nigeria in influencing consumer purchase decisions?
4. Which Airtel branding strategies do Airtel mobile subscribers dislike?

Research question 1: To what extent is the use of Airtel mobile network in Keffi?

Table 2, 3 answer this question.

Table 2 reveals that 382 of the respondents representing 100% agree that they use Airtel mobile network. Table 3 shows that 176 (46%) agreed that they use Airtel for 1-5 years, 121 (32%) agreed they use the network for 6-10 years, 57 (15%) represent 11-15 years while 28 (7%) represent 16 years and above. This is to say that the use of Airtel is vast in Keffi.

Research question 2: What is the perception of consumers towards Airtel brand strategies?

Table 7, 8, 9, 11 answer this question.

Table 7 indicate that 317 (83%) says yes they are interested in Airtel while 65 (17%) says no. Table 8 shows what makes respondents to recharge their Airtel line often which are 203 (53.1%) for data packages, 44 (11.5%) were for availability of service, 79 (20.7%) were for low cost tariff while 56 (14.7%) were for bonuses/special offers. Branding is

important for consumer purchasing decision affirming this assertion Guthrie and Kim (2009), opines that the brand perception is subjected to customer's emotion reaction, faith and loyalty toward the product as well as product usage, expression and differentiation. Table 9 shows the level of respondents satisfaction of Airtel network as 108 (28.3%) were very satisfied, 159 (41.6%) were satisfied, 65 (17%) were not really satisfied while, 50 (13.1%) not satisfied. Table 11 shows other means which Airtel can continue to sustain subscriber of the network. 117 (30.6%) were for dropdown of call rate, 126 (33%) were for consistency of network, 15 (3.9%) were for improved customer services, 37 (9.7%) were for extra talk time benefits, 6 (1.6%) were for increased promotions/special offers while 81 (21.2%) were for moderate tariff and data plans.

Research question 3: what are some of the branding strategies of Airtel Nigeria in influencing consumer purchase decision?

Table 4, 5, 6 answers the question.

Table 4 shows the factors that influence the respondent use of Airtel network 27 respondents representing 7% were for quality of network, 58 (15%) were for promotions/special offers, 87 (23%) were for data packages/internet bundles, 11 (3%) were for tariff, 194 (51%) were for all of the above while 5 (1%) were for none of the above. Table 5 says that 53 (16.5%) for change of names, 91 (23.8%) were for retail visibility (banners, posters, boards), 84 (22%) were for customer service centres, 75 (19.6%) were for extra credit request while 69 (18.1%) were for slogan/logo. Table 6 shows 57 (14.9%) that availability of service mostly influence subscribers, 65 (17%) were for cheap call rates, 203 (53.1%) were for data packages, 35 (9.2%) were for transit advertising while 22 (5.8%) were for outdoor events.

Research question 4: which Airtel branding strategies do Airtel mobile subscribers dislike? Table 10, 12, 13 answer this question.

Table 10 indicate what the respondent detest about Airtel brand as 169 (44%) says SMS alert, 112 (29%) says calls, 10 (3%) says promotions, 27 (7%) says inconsistency in name change, 10 (3%) says voice mail services while 54 (14%) says is poor network service. Table 12 says 295 (77%) yes they dislike the brand strategies while 87 (23%) says no. Table 13 shows what the dislike about Airtel brand strategies as 53 (14%) were for change of brand name, 17 (5%) were for logo, 18 (5%) were for colour, 41 (10%) were for slogan while 253 (66%) were for SMS alert.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

Data presentation and analysis showed that data packages/internets bundles, promotions/special offers, quality of network and tariff (all of the above), and retail visibility (banners, posters, boards) were among the branding strategies that Airtel Nigeria use in influencing consumer purchase decision of Airtel product and service. Over half of the respondents 65% agreed that these strategies are what Airtel uses in influencing consumers purchase decision. This reveals that branding strategies are paramount to the achievement of organizations like Airtel Nigeria. The above finding agreed with work Cravens & Piercy (2003) that branding plays an important role in marketing a product and making a product to be unique from its competitors as cited in the review of literature. Also, business organizations like Airtel must continue to use branding strategies in carrying out their business operations for increase performance.

The importance of brands provides organizations and businesses with the means to free them from constant competition.

The second major finding was that the mobile subscribers are satisfied with the Airtel network and the name of the company (Airtel) interests them. The results also revealed that data packages, low cost tariff, bonuses and special offers enables Airtel mobile subscribers to recharge their line often. In relations to the literature, branding plays an essential role in the success of a business, especially in a competitive environment where survival of a business depends on the customers' preferences (Kotler, 2000).

The third finding reveals that unsubstantiated SMS alert and calls sent by Airtel service provider is disliked by most of the respondents with other factors like poor network, voice mail services, inconsistency in name change and promotions.

Also, the respondents were carefully selected users of Airtel and most of them have used it for duration of 1-5 years and 6-10 years. This finding shows and also reveals the fact that the use of Airtel network is vast and also popular among the mobile subscribers in Keffi.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study, was set to examine how the use of branding strategies do influence consumer purchase decision of Airtel products and services. A survey of Airtel mobile subscribers was conducted in Keffi.

Data presented and analyzed shows that quality of network, promotion/special offers, data packages/internet bundles, tariff, (all of the above) and retail visibility (banners, posters, boards), were among the branding strategies that influence consumer purchase decision to Airtel services. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between branding strategies and consumer purchase decision. 60% of the respondents agree these strategies are what influence consumer decision. In table 6, 53.1% of the respondents agree that data packages influenced consumers purchase decision and in Table 5, 23.8% reveals that retail visibility (banners, posters, boards) is preferred.

Table 4, 5, 6 and 8 pointed out some of the branding strategies used by Airtel Nigeria to influence purchase and this shows the branding of products and services is fundamental and essential to the growth of every organization increases the consumer base and purchase of Airtel products and services.

Also, table 10, 12 and 13 showed the branding strategies that the respondents or consumers dislike. 44% of the respondents in Table 10 indicated that they dislike the SMS alert sent by the network.

Product branding strategies can strengthen relationship between an organization and its consumer purchase decision of its brand. Also branding can be used to influence and stimulate consumer purchase decision.

5.2 Conclusion

Brands are powerful assets that must be carefully developed and managed and branding is vital to the survival of every organization such as Airtel. In this study, it has been found that there exist a relationship between a brand and the behaviour displayed by consumers with regards to their purchase decision. Therefore, Airtel Nigeria should make use of branding strategies so as to enable purchase. Promotions, special offers, data packages, internet bundles, retail visibility as well as cheap tariff are branding strategies that Airtel makes use of to influence subscribers in Keffi.

Branding influences consumers of Keffi and attracts them to the products and services of Airtel. The study equally established that aggressive marketing and branding strategy of Airtel of calling subscribers and sending SMS is disliked among the subscribers.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Airtel telecommunication network should try to reduce their level of SMS alert as many of her subscribers seem not to be pleased with their SMS alerts, that is subscribers are not pleased with the amount of messages or notifications sent daily.
- ii. Airtel service provider should improve on her service/network quality as respondents are not satisfied with the level of service provided.

- iii. Consumers agree to the fact that data packages influence their usage of Airtel, therefore Airtel should also invest in other branding activities such as transit advertising, outdoor events, and cheap call rates e.t.c. to increase the level of patronage.
- iv. To have a strong competing edge in the telecommunications market, Airtel service provider should be primarily concerned with delivering effective service quality, brand reputation and customer value in order to gain purchase of their products and sustainable loyalty.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Studies

This study was unable to establish whether the aggressive marketing strategies of Airtel sending unsubstantiated SMS and calls is capable of frustrating subscribers to deviate from Airtel to competing telecommunication network.

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APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS
QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please tick [] in the box that provides the most applicable option.

1. Sex of respondent:
(a) Female [] (b) Male []
2. Age of Respondent:
(a) 18-25 [] (b) 26-33 [] (c) 34-41 [] (d) 42 and above []
3. Educational Qualification:
(a) SSCE [] (b) OND/NCE/ND [] (c) HND/B.A/B.sc []
(d) M.sc and above []
4. Occupational Distribution of Respondent:
(a) Student [] (b) Civil Servant [] (c) Business man/woman []

SECTION B:

5. Do you have a mobile phone?
(a) Yes []
(b) No []
6. Do you use Airtel?
(a) Yes ()
(b) No ()
7. How long have you been using the above network?
(a) 1-5 years ()
(b) 6-10 years ()
(c) 11-15 years ()
(d) 16 years and above ()
8. Which of the following influenced your usage of Airtel?
(a) Quality of network ()

- (b) Promotions/special offers ()
 - (c) Data packages/internet bundles ()
 - (d) Tariff ()
 - (e) All of the above ()
 - (f) None of the above ()
9. What specific strategies of Airtel do you prefer to others?
- (a) Change of names ()
 - (b) Retail visibility (banners, posters, boards) ()
 - (c) Customer service centres ()
 - (d) Extra credit request ()
 - (e) Slogan/logo ()
 - (f) Data bundles ()
10. Which of the following is mostly used by Airtel in influencing subscribers?
- (a) Availability of network service across the country ()
 - (b) Cheap call rates ()
 - (c) Data packages ()
 - (d) Transit advertising ()
 - (e) Fast internet connection ()
 - (f) Call/ weekend bonus ()
 - (g) All of the above ()
11. Does the name of the company interest you?
- (a) Yes ()
 - (b) No ()
12. Which of the following makes you recharge your Airtel line often?
- (a) Data packages/bundles ()
 - (b) Availability of service/steady network ()
 - (c) Low cost tariff()
 - (d) Bonuses/special offers ()
 - (e) Fast internet connection ()
13. How satisfied are you of Airtel network?

- (a) Very satisfied ()
 - (b) Satisfied ()
 - (c) Not really satisfied ()
 - (d) Not satisfied ()
14. Which of the following do you detest about the Airtel brand?
- (a) SMS alert ()
 - (b) Calls ()
 - (c) Promotions ()
 - (d) Inconsistency in name change ()
 - (e) Voice mail services ()
 - (f) Poor network service ()
15. By which other means will you continue to be a subscriber of the Airtel network?
- (a) Dropdown of call rate ()
 - (b) Consistency of network ()
 - (c) Improved customer services ()
 - (d) Extra talk time benefits ()
 - (e) Increased promotions/special offers ()
 - (f) Moderate data plans ()
16. Do you dislike any Airtel Nigeria brand strategies?
- (a) Yes ()
 - (b) No ()
17. If yes which attribute of the Airtel brand strategies do you dislike?
- (a) Change of brand name ()
 - (b) Logo ()
 - (c) Colour ()
 - (d) Slogan ()
 - (e) SMS alert ()