

Appraisal of Perception on Life Beer Branding Using Celebrity Endorsement among Agbani Residents, Enugu State

Charles Makata, Charity Ben-Enukora & Ogochukwu Nweze

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to appraise the perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement among Agbani residents. The study was anchored on diffusion of innovation theory. The study employed survey research method and relied on structured questionnaire as an instrument for the collection of primary data. A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from the population of 63,249 using Taro Yamane formula. The data collected were presented with frequency distribution tables and analyzed using simple percentage approach, with the aid of the computer through the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 Version) software for analysis. Based on the findings, the study discovered that the Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement has led to a very high increase in its brand loyalties. The study concluded that the branding using celebrity endorsement of the beer has led to eventual rise of the beer as a brand leader in the market. The study therefore, recommended among others that the Life beer brewery should occasionally conduct an objective marketing research in order to ascertain the current level of brand loyalty of its product and also, the management should ensure that the brewery's tanks should be well maintained and cleaned in order to avoid impurities which may be found in the beer; and consequently, affects its market share.

Keywords: Reputation Management, Product Branding, Consumer Behaviour, Advertisement and Perception

Introduction

Every industry strives to make its products acceptable and customers' friendly in today's complex business environment and competitive Nigerian market. This can be easily achieved through branding as a strategy. Planning for a brand is both exciting and risky but, it is a very necessary activity for any industry. It makes special contributions to the survival and progress of an industry, especially when matched with consumers' needs thereby offering opportunities for strengthening an industry's plan in existing product markets and a means to move into new ones. Branding is the process of identifying and differentiating one product from another. It is the use of a name, pattern, term, symbol or a collectivity of these means to identify a product. In other words, it involves the use of brand name, trade mark and other means to identify a product. Product is anything that has a reasonable value and can be exchanged for something or money in order to satisfy identified needs and wants of the consumers. Hence, a product can be tangible or intangible in nature.

The Life beer started getting and attracting the attention of the consumers when it was acquired by Chief Arthur Eze, a business mogul, who believed that the product can be revived if innovation is put to bear which can influence the consumers to switch over from their former brands to Life beer thereby making Life beer a new product. A new product could be innovative in nature and also, an improved but existing product. Thus, modification in an existing product like Life beer has a change in colour, package and quality.

The consequence of the newness is that the product has to be re-introduced into the beer market using intensive distribution and effective promotional strategies like using the celebrity endorsement pattern. This becomes necessary to create awareness and sensitize the beer consumers that something special and new had been added to Life beer and this attractive feature is used to position this product in the beer market. In other words, Life beer begins a new life cycle which starts from the introductory stage through growth, maturity (saturation)

decline and to abandonment stages. Each of these product stages demands a combination of selling mix in order to be successful and achieve the sales' objectives.

Makata, Okeke and Nweze (2021:74) maintained that in a competitive oriented market, organizations (industries) deliberately create in minds of consumers real or imagined differences between their former products and current products. They often rely on advertising (and branding) which help to shift emphasis from price competition to product competition and attention of consumers is arrested and held when an advertising (brand) that commands special interest is displayed. This makes the consumers to switch brands and continue to patronize the new ones.

Statement of the Problem

Life beer is one of the beer products in Nigeria which is being enjoy by many Nigerian consumers. At a point, the Life beer's market share started dwindling as a result of some factors which include: presence of impurities in the beer, non-application of modern technology in brewing the beer, inability of the management to compete favourably and effectively with other competitors and manage other uncontrollable environmental factors that affect the market. Consequently, the above mentioned factors led to the reduction of its product patronage by the beer consumers which resulted to low sale of the beer and loose of jobs among the staff.

Although, there are numerous research findings on branding or brand management, some of these researches only succeeded in establishing the critical importance and use of branding to re-introduce an old product to the market for attention and patronage. These studies did not however, dwell much on appraising the perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement among Agbani residents in Enugu State. It is against this background that it becomes pertinent to appraise the perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement among Agbani residents in Enugu State.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to appraise the perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement among Agbani residents in Enugu State. However, other objectives include to:

1. Determine the extent at which the celebrity endorsement of Life beer has increase its brand loyalties;
2. Discover the level at which the celebrity endorsement of Life beer has led to increase in the sale of the product;
3. Find out the nature of perception on Life beer branding among Agbani residents.

Research Questions

For this study, the research questions include:

1. To what extent has the celebrity endorsement of Life beer led to increase in its brand loyalties?
2. What is the level at which the celebrity endorsement of Life beer has led to increase in the sale of the product?
3. What is the nature of perception on Life beer branding among Agbani residents?

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study will go a long way to strengthen the mass sales drives of industries for impulse sales using promotion tools. This is in order to improve market share with certain percentage by altering the perception of the consumers about the industry and its products.

Additionally, this study will enhance the enrichment of literature in Mass Communication, Marketing Communication and Brand management. It will enlighten the students and scholars in Mass Communication and Marketing communication on brand promise of value that is beyond the tangible and core products. This may account for consumers' continuous purchase and post purchase and equally, post purchase motivation and

satisfaction. Finally, it will provide the baseline information through its analysis and discussion to assist the manufacturers in articulating product developmental plans that will successful and positively have impact on society.

Brief Review of Literature

Reputation Management and Product Branding

Ehikwe (2005:249) stated that the sum of an industry's image and identity makes up the reputation which remains the last or benchmark of interests enjoyed by the industry in confidence building. Reputation is the prestige by an industry for consistently having a good image and corporate identity in the minds of the public for services and products offered. These may include quality, prompt services, contribution to the social goals of the community and society at large, consistent availability of products, leadership position in the sector of business operations and standard of operations in the products and services.

The reputation of an industry is the prestigious and prominent feature that is resilient, enduring, and attractive which could be enhanced or damaged only by the actions of the members of the industry. Public relations strive to improve and magnify the reputation of an industry, make it visible for public recognition in order to influence the patronage of the industry and its products. In other words, the reputation of an industry is a mark of positioning to show where the industry is placed in the hierarchy of competition in a particular industry.

Nworgu (2010: xv) observed that branding is another factor in creative advertising. It is an art of giving a distinct identity to a product in order to differentiate it from other products in the same product category. Brand name is a nametag that distinguishes a product from others. With branding, advertisers are in position to create distinction between brands in order not to create confusion in the minds of the consumers. Ehikwe (2005:176) insisted that brand is produced by marketing activities and brand is a creation of marketing. Branding is a fixation of special and unique image or attribute to a particular product which makes it to be exceptional among other products in the eyes and minds of consumers.

Consumer Behaviour and Advertisement

Agbonifoh *et al* (2007: 135) observed that consumer behaviour is used in two different but related senses. In one sense, it refers to those acts of individual and organization directly involved in obtaining and using economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts. This dynamic view of buyer's behaviour encompasses those purchase acts and decision processes of both final and intermediate users and buyers. Also, consumer behaviour is viewed as a body of knowledge or a discipline. Looking at it from this perspective, consumer behaviour means the study of the decision making processes and overt acts of both final but immediate users and buyers in the purchase and consumption of goods and services. It deals on final users both as buyers and consumers. Udiji and Nnabuko (2008:234) believed that making it easy for the customer to continue to deal with your industry is the best way to ensure repeat business. Buyers are humans that have all the human frailties.

Okoro (1998) cited in Makata *et al* (2021:75) opined that advertizing originated from the Latin word, "advertere" which means, "to turn the mind towards". Advertising as a persuasive communication can be utilized to turn the mind towards a product, idea or service. Nworgu (2010:12) stressed that the functions of advertising are determined by the advertising campaign objectives or strategies. At one time, the objective could be to inform the consumer about a product or service. The major role of every advertising message is to inform, persuade, educate and remind the consumer of the existence of goods and services. Therefore, advertising helps in building brand royalty or insistence. However, Nwosu and Uffoh (2005:47) counseled the industry to embrace the principles and strategies of Relationship Marketing which essentially, involves building and sustaining close and lasting relationship with customers, distributors, suppliers and other important or special stakeholders of the industry in order to maintain loyalty, co-operation and lasting respect and understanding. This can be quite an

expensive strategy but, the pay-off is worth it especially when properly applied and managed. Sinatra and Mason (2012) believed that perception is the interpretation of sensory information. Hence, perceiving is based on noticing separate defining features and assembling them into a recognizable pattern.

Samaila (2012: 76) added that a business should take steps to build customer loyalty and make customers feel valued, thus decreasing customer defection. Ewa (2015: 28) believed that advertising involves the efficient and professional packaging of the communicated messages which must be paid for by an identified sponsor(s) in an effective way and manner with a view to lure, attract and motivate buyers to see the product as not only the best but also capable of meeting their interest. This, therefore, requires some elements of planning, research, packaging and proper channeling, which must be conveyed through creativity.

Ngong (2014) observed that persuasion in advertising is one of the yardsticks in attitude formation and change in the consumer's behaviour towards advertised products. From the outset of attitude research, it was believed that the effective use of persuasion in advertising would cause a change in attitude which will be followed by a change in behaviour. Nwite (2012: 148) maintained that advertising is a promotional tool and it is within that context that it performs a marketing function like other promotional tools. It is used primarily to promote the brand to the target market. It is by far the most significant of all the tools.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on diffusion of innovation theory. This is because its basic tenets are fundamental to the understanding of the subject under study. Bittner (1989) cited in Okunna (2002) but, quoted in Makata, Okeke and Nweze (2021:77) stated that diffusion of innovation theory recognizes that the media can lead someone into getting aware of the existence of an item. From there, he gets interested, makes an attempt to evaluate it, and gives it a trial before making up his mind to acquire it. Hence, this study centred on product branding and consumers' perception in a competitive oriented market which industry often rely on advertising tool that helps to shift emphasis from price competition to product competition. Here, the attention of consumers is arrested and held when an advertising brand that commands special interest is displayed for acceptance in the market. To sum it all, the tenets and postulations of the diffusion of innovation theory support this study.

Methodology

Research Design

For this study, survey research method was used for this task. Nworgu (1991) averred that survey is the study which aims at collecting data on, and describing them in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. Justifying this method, Owuamalam (2012) stated that survey research method enables the researcher to deal with the characteristics of the chosen set of people whose opinion, behaviour and attitude are essential for the collection of information required by the study. Hence, survey research method is appropriate for this study because it focuses on opinions, behaviours and attitudes of selected Agbani residents.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on Appraisal of Perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement among Agbani residents.

Area of Study

The area of study was Agbani in Nkanu-West Local Government Area, Enugu State.

Population of the Study

The population of study consists of the total number of Agbani community which is 41,832 (Source: **National Commission Population, 2006**)

Bearing in mind that the last national census was conducted in 2006 which is too far a time, the researcher aligned himself with Owuamalam (2012), which maintained that the population of Nigerians has increased significantly since the last census which was held in 2006, and did a projection of 16 years (2006- 2022= 16) using an annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent (UNDP cited in Owuamalam, 2012). The projection formula provides that $P_p = G_p \times P_i \times T$

Thus, $P_p = 41,832$, $P_i = 3.2\%$ or 0.032

$T = 2022 - 2006 = 16$

$P_p = 41,832 \times 0.032 \times 16 = 18,740.736$

When added to the population of the community, the current projected population shall be: $41,832 + 21,417 = 63,249$

Sample Size

Based on the above outcome, the sample size was determined using Taro Yamane Simplified formula (Israel, 2012) which stated as follows:

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

$$n = \frac{63,249}{1 + 63,249(0.0025)}$$

$n = 400$. Thus, 400 served as the sample size for this study.

Sample Technique

The study used purposive sampling technique. This method of sampling, Nwodu (2006) observed that it is often called judgmental sampling. Here, the respondents were selected on condition that they meet certain criteria.

Sources of Data

The study used primary and secondary sources of data.

Instrument of Data Collection

Instrument for primary data collection were structured questionnaire. The copies of structured questionnaire were administered with the help of research assistants to the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were presented with frequency distribution tables and analyzed using simple percentage approach with the aid of computer through the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

In this study, as noted earlier, 400 copies of the structured questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. However, a total of 397 copies of structured questionnaire were returned. two (2) copies were not returned while a copy was mutilated. Hence, 397 copies of questionnaire constituted the actual number of validly returned questionnaire used in the analysis.

Table 1: Respondents' Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	127	31.99	31.99	31.99
Female	270	68.01	68.01	100.0
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 shows that 127 respondents representing 31.99% were males while 270 respondents representing 68.01% were females.

Research Question 1: To what extent has the celebrity endorsement of Life beer branding led to increase in its brand loyalties?

Table 2: The Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement and increase in its brand loyalties

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very high	135	34.00	34.00	34.00
High	47	11.84	11.84	45.84
Low	123	30.98	30.98	76.82
Very low	92	23.18	27.18	100.0
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 shows that 135 respondents representing 34.00% indicated that Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement led to a very high increase in its brand loyalties; 47 respondents representing 11.84% indicated high; 123 respondents representing 30.98 % indicated low while 92 respondents representing 23.18% indicated very low.

Research Question 2: What is the level at which celebrity endorsement of Life beer has led to increase in the sale of the product?

Table 3: The celebrity endorsement of Life beer and the level of the increase in the sale of the product.

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very high	158	39.79	39.79	39.79
High	43	10.83	10.83	50.62
Low	144	28.73	28.73	79.35
Very low	82	20.65	20.65	100.0
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The table 3 shows that 158 respondents representing 39.79% believed that there were very high level at which Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement led to increase in sale of the product; 43 respondents representing 10.83% believed that the level were high; 144 respondents representing 28.73% believed that the level were low; while 82 respondents representing 20.65% indicated that the level were very low.

Research Question 3: What is the nature of perception on Life beer branding among Agbani residents?

Table 4: The nature of perception of Agbani residents

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favourable	324	81.61	81.61	81.61
Unfavourable	42	10.58	10.58	92.19
Neutral	31	7.81	7.81	100
Total	397	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 shows that 324 respondents representing 81.61% indicated that the nature of perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement were favourable; 42 respondents representing 10.58% indicated that the perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement were unfavourable; while 31 respondents representing 7.81% were neutral.

Summary of Findings

Based on data gathered, presented and analyzed so far, the following findings emerged:

1. It is quite glaring from the findings in table two (2) that 135 respondents representing 34.00% indicated that Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement led to an increase in its brand loyalties very high; 47 respondents representing 11.84% indicated high; 123 respondents representing 30.98% indicated low while 92 respondents representing 23.18% indicated very low.
2. The findings from table three (3) revealed that 158 respondents representing 39.79% believed that there was a very high level at which the Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement led to an increase in the sale of the product; 43 respondents representing 10.83% believed that the level was high; 144 respondents representing 28.73% believed that the level was low; while 82 respondents representing 20.65% indicated that the level was very low.
3. The findings from table four (4) showed that 324 respondents representing 81.61% indicated that the nature of perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement was favourable; 42 respondents representing 10.58% indicated that the perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement was unfavourable while 31 respondents representing 7.81% were neutral.

Discussion

In order to build an acceptable brand, some industries use event marketing through sponsorships, media relations and celebrity endorsement to achieve brand loyalty. For Agbani residents, the Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement led to a very high increase in its brand loyalties. Many industries like Life beer brewery, use product features, pricing which may be penetrating, the sales promotions, personal selling, advertising, direct marketing and strategic distribution to ensure brand loyalty. Agbani residents believed that brand recognition and insistence enhanced brand preference which led to brand loyalty. This result supports the findings of Ehikwe (2005), which observed that branding is a fixation of special and unique image or attribute to a particular product which makes it to be exceptional among other products in the eyes and minds of consumers. Also, Agbani residents accepted the fact that the consumers are the valid court of last resort in the sale of products. No wonder, they affirmed that there is a very high level of sale of Life beer because of the branding using celebrity endorsement. This may be as a result of customers' brand acceptance which caused brand preference that led to the eventual rise of Life beer as a brand leader in the market. This result supports the findings of Uduji and Nnabuko (2008), which maintained that producing an acceptable and standardized product; and making it easy, for the consumers to continue to deal with a product is the best way to ensure repeat patronage.

Meanwhile, the Agbani residents believed that the nature of their perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement were favourable. Perception is the process by which the sensory information is actively organized and interpreted by the brain. Sensation is the raw material of human experience while perception is the finished product. The residents accepted the fact that perception is the impression that the consumers have about the Life beer. It is usually based on consumers' dealing with the brand and such impression or dealing may be favourable or unfavourable. This result supports the findings of Sinatra and Mason (2012), which discovered that perception is the interpretation of sensory information. Hence, perceiving is based on noticing separate defining features and assembling them into a recognizable pattern.

Conclusion

This study focused on appraisal of perception on Life beer branding using celebrity endorsement among Agbani residents in Enugu State. The findings drawn from the empirical data showed that the residents believed that the celebrity endorsement of Life beer has led to a very high increase in its brand loyalties. This may be as a result of the usage of product features, pricing which may be penetrating, the sales promotions, personal selling, advertising and celebrity endorsement to ensure brand loyalty. The implication is that the Life beer's brand loyalty has led to a very high level of patronage of the beer in the market. But sincerely, the Life beer brand recognition and insistence enhanced its brand preference which must have aided in achieving brand loyalty.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Life beer brewery should occasionally conduct an objective marketing research in order to ascertain the current level of brand loyalty of its product. This is to ensure that its beer continue to maintain the brand leader in the market.
2. Also, the management should ensure that the brewing tanks should be well maintained and cleaned in order to avoid impurities which may be found in the beer. This certainly will affect its market share and may lead to low sale of the beer.
3. Furthermore, the management and distributors of the beer should create easy but accessible channels of communication with the beer consumers which will improve and enhance the relationship marketing strategy that may be adopted by the brewery.

References

- Agbonifoh, B; Ogwo, O; Nnolim, D & Nkamnebe, A. (2007). *Marketing in Nigeria: Concepts, Principles & Decisions*. Aba: Afritowers Ltd,
- Ehikwe, A. (2005). *Advertising and Other Promotional Strategies*. Enugu: Precision Publishers.
- Ewa, S. (2015). Creativity, Advertising and National Development: An Assessment of An Interface. In *Journal of Contemporary Communication, Vol. 1, No.4*.
- Israel, G. (2002). *Determining Sample Size: Agricultural Education and Communication Department*. Florida: Institute of Food and Agricultural Science.
- Makata, C; Okeke, N & Nweze, O. (2021). Evaluation of Awareness and Knowledge of Planned Obsolescence Technique in Product Advertising Among 9th Mile, Ngwo Residents, Enugu State. In *Renaissance University Journal of Management and Social Sciences, Vol. 7, No. 1*.
- Nwite, S. (2012). Effective Advertising Techniques and Strategies for Enhanced Profitability in Marketing Goods and Services,; In *Journal of Contemporary Communication, Vol. 1, No. 1*.
- Nwodu, L. (2006). *Research in Communication and Other Behavioural Sciences*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.
- Nworgu, B. (1991). *Educational Research: Basic Issues & Methodology*. Ibadan: Wisdom Publishers.
- Nworgu, K. (2010). *Creative Advertising: Tactics & Strategies*. Owerri: Ultimate Books.

- Nwosu, E & Uffoh, V. (2005). *Environmental Public Relations Management: Principles, Strategies, Issues and Cases*. Enugu: Institute for Development Studies.
- Nyong, S. (2014). Effectiveness of Persuasive Techniques in Print Advertisements: An Exploration of GLO Mobile Network's Infinito Advertising. In *Journal of Contemporary Communication, Vol. 1, No. 1*.
- Okunna, S. (2002). *Teaching Mass Communication: Multi-Dimensional Approach*. Enugu: New Generation Books.
- Owuamalam, E. (2012). *Data Analysis & Research Project Writing*. Owerri: Top Class Agencies Ltd.
- Samaila, M.(2012). Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Strategies: Panacea for Effective Campaign Planning in Aliede(eds). *Today's Readings in Mass Communication: Issues, Insights and Perspectives*. Enugu: Prime Targets Ltd.
- Sinatra, G & Mason, L. (2012). Beyond Knowledge: Learner Characteristics Influencing Conceptual Change. In Vosniadou, S(eds). *International Handbook of Research on Conceptual Change*. Nahwah: Erlbaum.
- Uduji, J & Nnabuko, J. (2008). *Strategic Salesforce Management*. Enugu: New Generation Books.

Charles Makata (Ph.D), Department of Mass Communication, Renaissance University, Ugbawka, Enugu State. ccmakata@gmail.com.
08061541945

Charity Ben-Enukora (Ph.D), Department of Mass Communication, Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Kwara State
Ogochukwu Nweze, Department of Mass Communication, Renaissance University, Ugbawka, Enugu State