

## ATTRIBUTES POSITIONING AND REPEAT PURCHASE AMONG FOOD SPICES DEALERS IN PORT HARCOURT

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined attribute positioning and repeat purchase with a particular reference to food spices. The study adopted the correlational survey design and used a sample of 374 consumers in Port Harcourt. Data were collected from the consumers using a structured questionnaire. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The one hypothesis stated in the study was tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation. SPSS 21.0 version was used to correlate the data on the study variables. Results from the data analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between attributes positioning and repeat purchase. From the findings, it was concluded that attribute positioning significantly enhances customer repeat purchase. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that manufacturing companies in Nigeria especially those in the food spices should adopt product positioning strategies as it would enhance repeat purchase to their brand.*

**Keywords:** *Attribute Positioning, Repeat Purchase, Food Spices*

### INTRODUCTION

Product attribute positioning is the most powerful tool for achieving repeat purchase. This is due to the fact that positioning is something that happens in the minds of the customers (i.e. what customers think about a particular product in relation to their perceptions of competitors' offerings). The crucial aspect of positioning is that it expects the customers to compare and evaluate products in the market based on their features, quality, attributes, design, reliability, multiple uses, packaging, price and image. For a company's positioning strategy to be successful in the market, its products must occupy a proper and distinct place in the minds of the consumers. Once the brand has successfully achieved a strong position in the minds of the consumers, it becomes difficult to ease it from the consumers' minds, thereby increasing repeat purchase.

Repeat purchase is always leading to building and increasing customer 'satisfaction. That is why today successful business are starting loyalty programs to drive repeat purchase. One of the ways to increase repeat purchase and build up customers' loyalty is the integrated relationship. This is the guarantee of repeat purchase as the customers have to use the product again, whether they want it or not. FedEx is a great example of using integrated customer. The company installs computer terminals in businesses of their clients. It helps to define shipping requirements for the business and follow the shipments of goods. The integration is made even into the inventory, accounting and other components of management system of customer's business.

In recent times, there has been a growing interest in studying consumer behaviour particularly the aspect that has to do with repeat purchase. Repeat purchase is the willingness of a customer to continue patronizing a firm's goods or services over a long period of time, and voluntarily recommending the firm's products to friends and associates (Lovell, in Adeleke & Aminu, 2012). The strength of customer loyalty is directly proportional to the confidence customers have regarding how well the company will consistently deliver on the service promised. In other words, customers will remain loyal when they have confidence in the products and services offered by the company. Many companies strive to increase customer loyalty because they know that without loyal customers, the business will run out of cash due to decline in sales and market share and this means financial crisis which will consequently result in the inability of the firms to survive in the industry.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypotheses will be postulated in this study:

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between product attribute positioning and repeat purchase of food spices dealers in Port Harcourt.

### **Attribute Positioning**

A number of companies attempt to position their products in the market on the basis of their attributes (Kotler, 2006; Nazmul et al, 2012; Yednap, 2013). Product attributes include its physical features such as size, weight, color, speed, and components that affect the product's acceptance in the market (Yednap, 2013). Most products in the market have specific physical attributes which influence consumers buying decision. A product attribute is what makes it different from other competing brands. By designing products with distinct attributes, companies try to attract consumers to their brands. Kamau, & Wafula (2015) noted that consumers usually pay attention to product attributes when making purchase decision. They evaluate the attributes of various brands in the market and used them to decide which brand to buy. The product or brand whose attributes meet the customer's satisfaction is then purchased.

Considering the fact that most consumers attach importance to product attributes while making purchase decision, some companies have responded by positioning their product on the basis of attributes. Kongalla (2013) posited that some companies have attribute to gain a strong position in the market. For instance, Amazon's one-click check-out process is an example of a positioning attribute. Tylenol does not sell online, but provides useful one-to-one features for pain relief and health information (Yednap, 2013; Kotler, 2006). Begum & Sarala (2016) stated that a company that positions its product on the basis of attributes tends to set its brand apart from other competing brands by showcasing specific characteristics of their product. For example, Knorr spices emphasized that its brand contains nutritious ingredients which is beneficial to human health; Knorr spices, also a spices, emphasizes that its brand has a newly improved formula containing vitamins, which differentiate it from other competing brands.

Sometimes a product can be positioned on the basis of two or more attributes depending on what the marketer feels are the most important criteria consumers use to make a purchase decision (Shivashankar & Uma, 2017). However, it is important for marketers to decide how many attributes to build into the product, how much

quality to include in each attribute, and how to put the attributes together to gain a competitive advantage (Bagozzi, Rosa, Celly & Coronel, 1998). Some marketers may decide to select those attributes that are crucial to customers when making purchasing decision and use them as a basis of positioning (Lauga, 2011). Lauga stated that once marketers have decided on the positioning attributes, it is important for them to carry out a market survey after some period of time to determine the position of their product in the minds of the target customers. During this exercise, the marketers should list all the possible attributes relating to their product and ask the customers to rate them on a five point rating scale. This information would not only enable the marketer determine the position of the product in the market but would also aid them in the formulation of more effective marketing and positioning strategies.

### **Repeat Purchase:**

Purchases made by consumers that replace purchases that have been consumed is called Repeat purchase. Repeat purchase maybe seen as an example of brand loyalty, if a consumer purchases and is happy with a particular brand for example, they may purchase the same brand or a related product of the same brand when the time comes to replace or replenish it. A repeat purchase may also be referred to as a sales replacement or repurchase (Fournier 2018). Repeat purchases are to repeat sales, and. are related to repeat customers. Repeat purchases may involve the purchase of the same item from a different seller. Repeat customers are consumers who always or frequent the same seller and/or make repeat purchases of the same or brand-related items. A key tenet in gaining repeat purchases is to take better care of consumers than the competition. Several literature have been written and developed to teach sales executive how to secure repeat purchases, either as an individual sales person or as a corporation looking to increase profit, making a repeat purchases is an important task (Fornell.& Lareket, 2016).

Repurchase in marketing practice is a valuable force to improve an organizational profit level and sustainable growth. In today's marketing operations repurchase entails the individual's judgment about buying again a designated service from the same organization, considering consumer's current situation and likely circumstances. Repurchase refers to the probability or chance of patronizing the previous service provider again in the future. Repurchase is customer's propensity to purchase products from the exact producer over period of time. Therefore the concept of repurchase, is the process of purchasing goods and services from one particular store (Bilgili, &.Ozkul, 2015).

### **Research Design**

The design of the study was correlational survey research. According to Price, Jhangiani & Chiang (2010), correlational survey research is a type of non-experimental research in which the researcher measures two variables and assesses the statistical relationship between them with little or no effort to control extraneous variables. The present study was correlational research because the researcher intends to measure the relationship between product positioning and repeat purchase.

### **Population of the study**

The population of this study consisted of customers of food spices in Port Harcourt. The population of Knorr spices customers in Port Harcourt is unknown as such there is no available record to show the exact number of Knorr spices customers in Port Harcourt. Hence an estimated population was used for the study. According to Brian in Nwankwo (2013), if the population is unknown, the researcher should provide a marginal estimate of that population.

Marginal estimate of a population according to Brian in Nwankwo (2013) is a population size (in figures) which may differ from the exact population size by being either very slightly higher or lower than the exact population size. Following Brian's advice, we provided a marginal estimate population of 5,852 Knorr spices customers within the age bracket of 18-40 years. The population was drawn from Port Harcourt city where the product is in large circulation.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size of this study consisted of 374 loyal customers of Food spices in Port Harcourt. The sample size was determined mathematically using the Taro Yamen's formula. The sample size was drawn from Port Harcourt City using random sampling technique. The simple random sampling is a probability sampling method that gives every sampling unit in a population an equal chance of being selected among the sample to be used for the study (Baridam, 2001). By adopting the simple random sampling, it meant that each of the sampling unit in the population have equal chance of being selected. This method of sampling is considered appropriate because it ensured that all the Knorr spices customers had equal opportunity of being selected among the sample (374 respondents) to be used for the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The main instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A elicited personal information such as the respondents' sex, marital status, age, occupation, educational qualification, etc, while section B sought information on the variables of interest. Section B have 327 items of which item 1-7 elicited information on attributes positioning; item 8-13 sought information on quality positioning; item 14-19 obtained information on benefit positioning; item 20-26 gathered information on price positioning; while item 27-32 sought information on customer loyalty. The questionnaire was structured on four (4) points Likert-type scale such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Numerical values were also assigned to each of the scale to show their weight such as Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The idea that was used in developing the instrument was derived from literature based on the demands of the research questions and hypotheses.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Marketing, School of Post Graduate Studies, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. These experts evaluated the content of the instrument with respect to its relevance to the topic, ambiguity of the statements, clarity of language

as well as adequacy of the items to ensure the authenticity of the instrument. Their comments and suggestions was carefully effected in the final draft before subjecting the instrument to further reliability test.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was applied. The instrument was administer to a sample of twenty (24) loyal customers to food spices who were not part of the research sample but were part of the study population. After a period of two (2) weeks, the same copies of the instrument was re-administered to the same persons. Their responses at the two intervals was correlated using the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation statistic.

**Administration of the Instrument**

The researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents (loyal customers to food spices) in Port Harcourt. Before the administration process, the respondents was educated on the objective of the exercise and the reasons why they should offer sincere opinion on the subject matter. After which the researcher proceeded to produce 374 copies of the instrument (questionnaire) which was administered to the respondents.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

The data gathered from the questionnaire was analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation and the Spearman Rank Correlation. Mean and Standard Deviation was used to analyze the questionnaire items with respect to the study variables. A criterion mean of 2.50 was set.

**Results**

**Hypothesis one**

Ho1: There is no positive and significant relationship between attributes positioning and repeat purchase.

**Correlation between attributes positioning and repeat purchase**

			Attributes Positioning	Repeat purchase
Spearman Rank (rho)	Attributes Positioning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.725*
		Sig. (2 tailed)		.001
		N	374	374
	Repeat purchase	Correlation Coefficient	.725*	1,000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	
		N	374	374

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table above shows the result of SPSS correlation analysis carried out on attributes positioning and repeat purchase. The result of the correlation indicated that attributes

positioning is positively correlated to repeat purchase ( $\rho = .725^*$ ) and that this correlation is significant at 0.050 level. As a result of this, the null hypothesis is rejected. By rejecting the null hypothesis, we therefore accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is positive and significant relationship between attributes positioning and repeat purchase.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study examined product attributes and using food spices as a case study. The empirical results succinctly demonstrate that with respect to food spices, attributes positioning was found to have a positive and significant relationship with repeat purchase.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

That, food spices making companies including those producing spices should work on the attributes and features of their products such as 'the size, weight, colour and other components as this would not only help to position their product in the minds of the consumers but would also increase repeat purchase.

That, marketers of spices such as Knorr spices, maggi cube, royco, onga etc. should attach a fair price to their products as this would not only enable them compete favourably on the basis of price but also help to position their products in the minds of the consumers and increase repeat purchase.

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