

An Empirical Study of the Impact of Branding on Consumer Choice for Regulated Bottled Water in Southeast, Nigeria

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Abstract

Branding is one of the most intriguing marketing strategies used for the purpose of winning or over coming competition; its efficacy is not in doubt. This research work is therefore an investigation into the impact of branding on consumer choice for bottled water, with special focus on the contributory roles of its various elements in impacting consumer behavior. It was discovered among other things, that of all the elements of branding, company-of-make and packaging play a greater role than brand name and brand mark, in terms of influencing consumer choice for bottled water. It was against this backdrop that this research work proposed two models namely; **Review of Consumer Buying Behavior Process 1 and 2**. It equally recommended among other things that firms should focus more attention on the company name and packaging but should also integrate brand name and brand mark as supportive elements in fashioning an effective branding strategy for beating competition. More emphasis should equally be laid on institutional rather than brand advertising.

Keywords: Branding, Brand equity, Consumption complex, Regulated water

1. Introduction

Consider the chaos that would be at the point of purchase if manufacturers have no means of distinguishing their products from that of competitors. Consumers would definitely be put through the rigors and time consuming task of determining what product to choose from the list of unbranded products. The likely event of choosing the wrong product among the several unbranded products is there, given the unscrupulous behavior of some middlemen. This assertion is buttressed by (Okafor, 1995) quoting (Morden, 1987), who posited that, "Consumers seeing a favored brand (to which they may exhibit loyal behavior), may cut short the analysis of alternatives prior to the purchase decision, and proceed more rapidly towards the purchase.

Moreover, a realization of the fact that branding as a marketing tool affects other product management decisions, confronts one with the fact that its impact on marketing activities and consumers cannot be over emphasized. (Okafor, 1995) captures the very essence of branding when he opined that "apart from the herculean task that will be associated with trying to decide what manufacturers' product to buy from all the unbranded products, other product management decisions, based on market segmentation, promotion, product positioning, pricing etc, would have been practically impossible".

From the foregoing discussions on the importance of branding, marketers and producers alike are developing increasing interest in this strategy. The bottled water industry in Nigeria is not an exception to this increasing adoption of branding as a strategy for winning the heart of consumers. However, a lot still needs to be seen as to whether branding is the major factor influencing consumer choice.

In a study by (Smith and Brynjolfson, 2000) after analyzing 20 268 shopbot consumers who selected various books from 33 retailers over 69 days, they found that although each retailer offered homogenous products, brand was an important determinant of consumer's choice. They went further to state that, "the three most heavily branded retailers held a \$1.72 price advantage over more generic retailers in head-to-head price comparisons. In furtherance of their research, they found that consumers used brand as a proxy for retailer credibility in non-contractible aspects of the products and service bundle, such as shipping reliability".

Bottled water business in Nigeria is a child of necessity. Necessity stemming from the fact that there was lack of potable drinking water across the country at the time. In the words of (Baba Yaro, 2007), table water production can be said to be a new business in the Nigerian community. At the beginning, it started without serious consideration to ethical standards, and or strict adherence to the purity and hygiene of the water. But with the efforts put by the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), the fear being nursed in the past, by consumers of the product has now been allayed.

Suffice it to say that what is known as bottled water today, like any other product has passed through many stages in Nigeria including Cup method, Nylon method and sealing method which became fashionable at the dawn of 1990's (Up-Dike Industries Executive Brief 2005). This was the first time some doses of technology were incorporated into the mainstream industry in terms of purification, machinery and packaged materials. The regulation of the production and marketing of packaged water in Nigeria led to the product being termed regulated water. This was principally to eradicate the presence of unfit water in furtherance of NAFDAC's major function of regulation and control of the importation, exportation, manufacture, advertisement, distribution, sale and use of drugs, cosmetics, medical devices, bottled water and chemicals (NAFDAC 2005). Since then, water business in Nigeria had continued to experience a boom leading to the influx of many producers into the industry.

In Nigeria in general, and in the South East in particular, there is a proliferation of different brands of bottled/regulated water all fighting to build customer loyalty using branding strategy. Nigeria, with a total land area of 923X103 square kilometers has its water resources put at 267 billion cubic meters in surface water and 52 billion cubic meters in ground water. A further 30 billion cubic meters could be stored for multipurpose use in about 162 major dams constructed all over Nigeria (Up-Dike Industries Executive Brief 2005). Despite these water resources, most Nigerians still lack access to potable water. Research evidence has shown that 60% of households in rural areas depends on stream while 30% depend on private well and only 2% draw from borehole which was about 80,000 all together in Nigeria (Earth Conference on water, 2005). This problem of deficiency in potable water has earlier been identified as a contributory factor to the growth of bottled water business in Nigeria (Ogbuji, 2008).

In Imo and Abia States as well as some parts of Ebonyi State for instance, public water supply by state Water Boards were planned for less than 800 000 urban dwellers in the 1979 rolling plan when Abia State had not been created. In terms of water facility expansion, nothing had changed but for an increasing population put at over a million in the urban centers of Imo and Abia States (Up-Dike Industries Ltd Executive Brief, 2005). The scenario is not different in Ebonyi, Anambra and Enugu States of the South East, Nigeria.

This scenario has simply made the greater part of the elite population to be dependent on bottled and sachet water for drinking. This is a boom for the producing companies. Among these brands that are fighting for supremacy in the South eastern market include **Uzzi**, Obowo, **Crystal**, Owerri, **Mevok**, Owerri, **April**, Owerri **Davimore**, Owerri, **Tavila**, Uratta, **Ayaa**, Orlu, **Agad**, Emekuku, **Mifid**, Ifakala, **Constant**, Owerri, **Petrose**, Abakaliki, **Dejoan**, Abakaliki, **Unizik**, Awka, **Rock-tama**, Awka, **Aqua-Rapha**, Enugu, **Eva**, Enugu, **Osaks**, Enugu, **Quanta**, Enugu, **Ivy**, Enugu, **Biota**, Umuahia, **Humbel**, Umuahia.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Often, when asked the non-price reason behind their choice for a particular brand of product over another, most consumers will readily shout "Quality". However, one would accept this answer with a lot of ambivalence, given the fact that it is only on rare occasions that consumers would have what it takes to make an objective quality differentiation among alternative product brands. This category of consumers is highly informed and enlightened and their percentage is quite negligible in Nigeria.

Furthermore, quality status ascribed by consumers to certain product brands is not real but perceived. It is mostly a figment of their perception. It therefore follows that, those marketers who know how best to manipulate consumer perception and therefore better position their brand in the minds of the consumers will definitely emerge winners in the marketing warfare.

In the regulated bottled water industry in Nigeria, it may be expected that the issue of “better quality” should not arise. This is against the backdrop that the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) has stipulated and is seriously enforcing both production and marketing standards for all producers of bottled water thereby making every brand of bottled water of equal purity and quality, yet most consumers of this product would readily pay a premium price or are price insensitive when it comes to the purchase of a particular brand of regulated water say “Eva. This gets one wondering, could it be that consumers in making choice are merely responding to the outcome of their perception which is a function of such attributes like brand name, mark, package, company-of-make etc. A point to note is the fact that most producers strongly believe that branding has a very high influence on consumer’s choice (Ogbuji, 2008). However, given the fact that many elements constitute branding, one is not sure if these elements play equal role in influencing choice or if some play a higher role than others. This is the crux of the problem of this study.

1.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses stated in their null forms were tested in this study.

H₁: Branding has no significant effect on consumer perception bias and choice for regulated bottled water.

H₂: Company-of-make, brand name, brand mark and packaging do not play equal role in influencing consumer choice for regulated bottled water

2. Summary of Related Studies

It is believed that branding or re-branding, with a new name or logo does not come cheap and should therefore be handled with utmost care and precision lest it amounts to a total waste of money and other resources. (Lead Edge, 2005) asserts, based on the result of its survey that the value of a strong brand lies in the impression left with anyone who comes into contact with the organization. They further opined that the most compelling reasons for effective branding is to achieve customer loyalty and support a premium price because purchasers rely on experience and their long held attitudes about a brand; and that successful brands are often focused on one specific market segment.

For another authority (Beyond Marketing Thought, 2007), a most effective branding, entails a memorable name and a ubiquitous slogan combined with an instantly recognizable and unique logo. It recommended a simple and straight forward logo or potentially, an elaborate design of a simple idea, such as a silhouette of a person or an object. It further identified the brand name as another crucial element of branding which should be both simply memorable and is particular to a firm or product

(Daye, VanAuken and Asacker, 2008) identified color as a critical element in developing a branding strategy. They opined that a firm needs to be wise in considering what they called the psychology of color when designing their marketing materials. They asserted that colors not only enhances the appearance of the item they also influence customer behavior. They further said that the color of your brand may make or mar our branding strategy while pointing out that effect of colors differs; from culture to culture. (Roll, 2008) recommends that firms should rather concentrate on having a brand portfolio which usually refers to the firms set of related brands and/or products. According to him, the traditional logic behind having a portfolio of brands rather than a single brand has been possible diversification and risk minimization. He however advised that the days of a firm having one leading star brand and others of low quality merely following have gone and that all brands in the portfolio must be made to compete for leadership.

In the words of (Lindstrom, 2008), there are three pronged approaches to developing an effective branding strategy namely, determine which audience to focus on, determine what message your brand should convey and finally, determine what creates the brand. He further opined that a brand must have a clear audience focus, value focus and tone-of-voice focus with which to deliver its well-honed message.

(Kim and Chung, 1997) researching on **brand Popularity, Country Image and Market Share** believes is that competition among brands has become more complicated as the number of brands originating from foreign countries increases. They identified two concepts (brand popularity and country-of-origin-image) as being key variables for the long-term success of brands or firms in global markets. They strongly believe that these two factors interact with other marketing variables in influencing brand performance and by extension acceptance by consumers. Suffice it to say here that what country-of-origin image does for brand performance in the global

market is what company-of-make-image does in the domestic market. Again, brand popularity is an important factor in market performance both in the global and domestic market.

(Okpara, 2007), studying brand popularity and company-of-make cognitions of major consumer brands in the Nigerian youth market, had its main objective as finding the impact of popularity and company-of-make on consumer choice. The research surveyed a total of 1200 respondents (students) chosen from universities in the southeast, Nigeria and came to the conclusion that 100% of the respondents do not know all the manufacturers of even their favorite brands, with females being more brand loyal than males. This research went further to observe that majority of first choice brands in the market are from Multinational companies. On the strength of this finding, the study recommended that corporate bodies should intensify promotional campaigns on the company more than on the individual brands (institutional as against brand advertising).

(Adirika, Ebue & Nnolim, 200) recorded the outcome of a study on branding carried out on Taiwanese manufacturers who produce a great amount of the worlds clothing, consumer electronics and computers but not under Taiwanese brand names. **The result of the study showed that marketing Power lies with the brand-name companies and not with actual manufacturers. This is because brand name companies can replace their Taiwanese manufacturing sources with cheaper sources in Malaysia and elsewhere and still retain their market shares.** This study only goes to portray the fact that consumers are more susceptible to brand names rather than quality.

(Okpara, 2008) studying the Attitudinal Dimensions to Home brands of shoes as compared to foreign brands discovered the presence of what he termed Consumption Complex Syndrome (CCS) as being responsible for local consumers preference for foreign branded shoes over the local branded counterparts. Okpara's model suggests that once consumers are exposed to the awareness and knowledge of a brand of product, they either like or dislike it. Allusion to Consumption Complex Syndrome suggests that when a consumer asserts preference for a particular brand of shoe (foreign) and cannot in a blind brand experiment clearly pick out that brand, then he possesses the syndrome. This simply suggests that what consumers buy most times is name and not quality. This, one believes may equally be true of consumers of regulated bottled water who cannot determine in a blind brand experiment their choice brand.

3. Research Methodology

The population of study included senior staff of tertiary institutions in the southeast, Nigeria, with at most two institutions per city. The senior staff were categorized into Academic (2 950) and Senior non-teaching (2 837) making them a total of 5 787. (Yameni, 1973) formula three as contained in (Alugbuo, 2005) was adopted to arrive at a sample size of three hundred and seventy-four (374). This sample size was therefore distributed amongst the categories of staff and the institutions proportionally.

The probability sampling technique of Stratified Random Sampling was adopted in this study. The population elements were divided into two (2) strata namely, academic and non-teaching staff. The strength of each stratum determined the proportion of the sample elements that were drawn from it, after which the sample elements were selected in a raffle, based on the list of different category of staff provided by the registry of each institution. A set of questionnaire with two sections was administered to sample consumers of regulated bottled water by hand. The questionnaire contained both open-ended, dichotomous as well as Likert types of questions.

Our experiment entailed a further study of select respondents who claimed to have objective criteria behind their choice for a brand of bottled water and therefore pay a premium price for it. Select samples of different bottled water brands were poured into clean and transparent glasses and respondents were asked to drink and determine their choice brand. The glasses were marked specimen A to F and contained samples of six brands of bottled water, which were used in the experiment namely, Eva, Ragolis, Constant, Aqua- Ralpha, Ivy, and Biota. The first two were premium priced brands and sold at N70 while the others sold at N60. A pro premium priced consumer who was not able to determine the premium priced brand, either by sight or by taste was considered to be suffering from Perception Bias and by extension Consumption Complex.

For the purpose of data presentation, simple percentages, bar charts and pie charts were used. However, in our test of hypotheses and analysis/interpretation of data, simple and stepwise multiple regression techniques in the SPSS were applied.

4. Data Analyses, Interpretation and Hypotheses

4.1 Brand Name and Influence on Consumer Choice

In the case of brand name, 122(36.42%) of the respondents were always influenced by it, 135(40.30%) said sometimes, 22(6.57%) said rarely while 56(16.71%) said not at all. Given the data above, it could be concluded

that brand name ($36.42\% + 40.30\% = 76.72\%$), is a strong factor influencing consumer choice for regulated bottled water.

4.2 Brand Mark and Influence on Consumer Choice

As it pertains to the influence of brand mark on consumer choice, 72(21.50%) of the respondents asserted that it influences their choice always, 140(41.79%) said sometimes while 53(15.82) said not at all.

Although, the above data points to the fact that brand mark ($21.50\% + 41.79\% = 63.29\%$) has a strong influence on consumer choice of bottled water, its influence is however, not as strong as that that of brand name ($36.42\% + 40.30\% = 76.72\%$).

4.3 Company-of-Make and Influence on Consumer Choice

The data gathered here is a confirmation of the strong relationship between a brand name and company-of-make. This is against the backdrop that in certain cases, the brand name of a product cannot be separated from the company name and vice-versa. Again, in some other extreme cases, the company name and brand name are one and the same thing (i.e. family branding).

However, the data still show that the company-of-make plays a greater role in influencing consumer choice for bottled water than the brand name. This could be seen from the fact that, out of a total of 335 respondents, 133(39.70%) opined that company-of-make influences their choice always, 132(39.40%) said sometimes, 22(6.57%) said rarely while 48(14.33%) said not at all. The always and sometimes column is thus, ($39.70\% + 39.40\% = 79.10\%$).

4.4 Consumer Belief that their Choice Brand is better in Quality than Others

With reference to the data collected, more than half, 170(50.75%) of the respondents believed that their choice brand is better in quality than other alternative brands, 91(27.16%) said No while 74(22.09%) said they didn't know. Though this assertion of better quality is obviously a figment of consumer perception, it is nevertheless a guide in their choice of bottled water.

4.5 Consumers Ability to Identify Their Choice Brand in a Blind Brand Test

As to whether consumers can identify their choice brand in a blind brand test, the data shows that 144(42.99%) of the respondents said yes while 191(57.01%) said no.

Comparing the data as contained in 4.4 and 4.5 readily shows that while 170(50.75%) of the respondents believed that their choice brand is better in quality than other alternatives, only 144(42.99%) asserted that they can identify their choice brand in a blind brand test. This is a revelation that at least 26 (7.76%) are suffering from consumption complex which has been earlier observed among consumers of foot wears in Nigeria (Okpara, 2007). A further confirmation of this assertion was done through the laboratory blind brand experiment that was conducted. In the experiment conducted, with ten (10) consumers of premium priced brands (i.e. Eva and Ragolis), 100% of the experimental group failed to identify their choice brand in a blind brand test, either by sight or by drinking from the glass. Interestingly, one loyal consumer of Eva water, who claimed to have consumed Eva on a daily bases, over a period of 5 years, picked up the transparent glass containing Eva and declared that it is of a lower quality than others and equally has taste, only to be confronted with the fact that it was her choice brand she was referring to.

At the end of the experiment, all participants came to the conclusion that their attachment to their choice brand has to do with the company-of-make and brand name. The following brands of bottled water were used in the experiment namely, Eva, Ragolis, Constant, Ivy, Aqua Rapha and Biota.

This revelation goes further to show that branding rather than product quality is the stronger determinant of consumer choice for bottled water in Nigeria.

4.6 Consumer Ranking of the Different Elements of Branding as they Affect their Choice

When respondents were asked to rank/assign scores to the different elements of branding including advertisement, as they affect their choice of bottled water, company-of-make came first with a total of 1,833, brand name followed with a score of 1,672, packaging 1,465, brand mark 1,194, colour of label 903, while advertisement took the last position with 888.

The scoring supports the earlier conclusion that was drawn between company-of-make and brand name. See appendix for pie chart.

4.7 Packaging and Influence on Consumer Choice for Bottled Water

For the purpose of ascertaining the influence of packaging on consumer choice for bottled water, the data showed that 98 (29.25%) of the respondents were influenced always, 147(43.88%) were influenced sometimes, 32(9.56%) were rarely influenced while 58(17.31%) were not influenced at al. The above is a pointer that packaging is a strong influence on consumer choice for particular brands of bottled water.

This is most evident when the always and sometimes columns are added thus, $(29.25\% + 43.88\% = 73.13\%)$

5. Test of Hypotheses

5.1 Hypothesis One

H₀: Branding has no significant effect on consumer choice for regulated bottled water.

H₁: Branding has a significant effect on consumer choice for regulated bottled water.

In conducting this test of hypothesis, the Simple Linear Regression Model was used. The result of the analysis showed a very high significant level of 0.013 at 5%, t-value of 2.489 and an f-ratio (model specification) of 6.193. This shows that branding has a significant effect on consumer choice for regulated bottled water. Therefore, the better the branding strategy the more likely that consumers will choose a particular brand of bottled water over others.

All of the empirical studies explored in this work supported the outcome of this analysis in one way or the other. From the conclusion of (Lead Edge, 2005) that branding influences customer loyalty; (Daye, VanAuken & Asacker, 2008) assertion of the impact of color psychology on consumer choice, (Roll, 2009) advise that a wrong brand name can kill a product; (Kim & Chung, 1997) proposal that the popularity and company-of-make of a brand gives it an advantage and finally, (Smith & Brynjolson, 2006) profession that effective branding confers price advantage on a product, are all pointers to the fact that branding is an influencing factor on consumer choice.

5.2 Hypothesis Two

H₀: Company-of-make, packaging, brand name and brand mark as elements of branding do not have equal effect on consumer choice for regulated bottled water.

H₁: Company-of-make, packaging, brand name and brand mark as elements of branding have equal effect on consumer choice for regulated bottled water.

For the purpose of testing this hypothesis, the Stepwise Multiple Regression Method was used. The result of the analysis shows that company-of-make had the most significant effect of 0.012 at 5% t-value of 2.527 and f-ratio (model specification) of 6.384, followed by packaging, brand and brand mark in that order.

This means that “Company-of-make, packaging, brand name and brand mark as elements of branding do not have equal effect on consumer choice for regulated bottled water. The implication of this is that, consumers of bottled water, most often than not consider the company-of-make in making their choice than other elements of branding. The result is supported by (Lindstrom, 2008), (Kim & Chung, 2008), and (Okpara, 2007).

6. Summary of Findings

Having successfully concluded this research work, a summary of the findings is hereby presented below.

- 1) Branding is a veritable tool for positively influencing consumer choice and its influence is stronger than product quality.
- 2) All elements of branding do not have equal effect on consumer choice for bottled water. Company-of-make and packaging play a greater role while brand name and mark play a supportive role.
- 3) Packaging, with all its attendant elements plays a great role in determining consumer choices for bottled water.
- 4) Consumption complex which is a function of consumer perception bias, could be manipulated by marketers for competitive advantage of a firm over others through the instrumentality of branding.

6.1 Managerial Implication of the Findings

There are many bottling companies in Nigeria which translates to severe competition among them. Water by its nature is generic and once produced under hygienic conditions has similar physical and chemical features.

One major distinguishing characteristic is the brand name. The study had established that branding (brand name) had stronger influence than product quality. The implication of the finding to the managers is the need to develop captivating brand names which can then be supported by good quality water.

In the second finding, the company-of-make and packaging were discovered to play primary role in influencing consumer choice for bottled water. In Nigeria, there are instances where known companies in the minerals drinks industry have introduced bottled water. An example is the Nigerian Bottling Company which introduced the brand of bottled water known as EVA. EVA water automatically gained market share due to the reputation of the producers. Managers are advised to create and sustain favorable goodwill among the various public who will be encouraged to patronize their new products in the future.

Packaging is the platform upon which branding expresses itself. The implication is that managers must endeavor to produce unique packages and labels that would attract and sustain the consumer's attention.

The full appreciation of the import of consumption complex by the consumers would also enable managers to position their various water brands in the market by creating packages and communications that will guarantee them reasonable shares of the market.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

The fact that this study is concentrated on senior staff in selected tertiary institutions is a limitation of its own. There is no doubt that coverage of all consumers would have produced a better result. This limitation is however moderated by the fact an in depth study was made of the selected respondents and that consumers of bottled water share certain behavioral characteristics in common (e.g. willingness to part with more money for safe water).

The dearth of data and lack of current related studies with respect to the Nigerian market of bottled and branding also constituted a limitation of this study. Efforts at accessing recent related studies for review, even through the internet, did not yield expected level of dividends.

Furthermore, we discovered that most of the institutions selected in south east either did not have an updated list of their staff strength or they were afraid to give it out for reasons best known to them. Finally, the fact that some copies of our questionnaire were not returned, equally constituted a limitation of the study not minding the fact that we had an acceptable return on the questionnaires.

6.3 Conclusion

There is no gainsaying the fact that branding is one of the most sought after strategies in marketing for the purpose of influencing consumer choice positively. This research work, aside laying a confirmation to this assertion, went further in introducing a new dimension to the importance of branding in influencing consumer choice by dissecting the anatomy of it and thereby isolating its various elements to determine their individual contribution in determining consumer choice.

Against this backdrop, this research work determined the fact that company-of-make and packaging are of greater influence on consumer choice than brand name and mark. In the light of this, this research proposes a review of the existing models of consumer buying behavior models to take into consideration the issue of consumer perception bias and consumption complex. See figures 7 and 8

6.4 Recommendations

In the aftermath of the research findings, the following recommendations are hereunder proffered;

- 1) Branding should play the lead role among the product related strategies in fashioning out a marketing strategy for bottled water.
- 2) Firms employing the tool of branding should lay more emphasis on company-of-make and packaging in devising a branding strategy.
- 3) A firm's branding strategy should be an integration of all the elements with none isolated but each playing a complementary role to others.
- 4) Firms should manipulate the possibility of consumption complex in getting customers to choose their brand through proper perception management and by the instrumentality of branding.
- 5) Positioning and repositioning of products should be carried on with branding as the leading strategy.
- 6) Efficient distribution strategy is a supportive function to branding, therefore firms must ensure that their distribution network is effective and efficient.

- 7) In as much as branding had been confirmed to be an important choice influencing factor, excessive brand extension strategy should be avoided to forestall boring consumers and de-marketing them.
- 8) In carrying out promotion for bottled water brands, firms should concentrate more on institutional or corporate advertising rather than product advertising. Again, social cause promotion should be of particular note to the firms.

The figure above depicts a review of the simple model of consumer buying behavior process model with the introduction of Consumer Perception Bias and Consumption Complex Syndrome.

The figure begins with the consumer recognizing the existence of a need. If this need is a new task, it is likely that the consumer might not have any perception about any brand, in which case he goes through the long and rigorous process of search for information on available brands, evaluation of alternatives and then choice/Purchase of a particular brand. At consuming the brand, the consumer is likely to exhibit post purchase behavior. If this behavior is negative, then the long and rigorous process may likely be repeated again, but if it is positive, the consumer develops a perception bias for that brand and therefore avoids the rigorous process by choosing/purchasing that particular brand anytime a corresponding need is recognized. By so doing, the consumer exhibits Consumption Complex Syndrome.

However, marketers can equally employ the instrument of promotion to influence Consumer Perception Bias towards their brands even when it is a new task.

This proposed model is simply another view of the proposed model in figure 7 because it bothers solely on re-buy and not on a new task. The model depicts the fact that consumers who are used to a particular brand(s) or possesses adequate information about them may likely have formed a perception about them, either positive or negative/indifferent.

If the perception is positive, then the consumer exhibits a Perception Bias towards the product. After consumption at any point in time, the positive or negative disposition of the consumer towards that particular brand, in terms of the post purchase behaviour would determine if the consumer retains the Perception Bias for that brand or seeks information on alternative brands.

On the other hand, if the perception is negative or indifferent, the consumer would go through the rigorous and time consuming task of information search, alternative evaluation, and then possibly choice/purchase of the product.

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Table 1. Distribution and Collection of Questionnaire

| Institutions | Distributed | % | Collected | % |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| ABSU | 54 | 14.44 | 50 | 13.37 |
| ALVAN | 25 | 6.69 | 21 | 5.61 |
| EBSU | 69 | 18.45 | 67 | 17.91 |
| IMSU | 46 | 12.30 | 44 | 11.76 |
| IMT | 26 | 6.95 | 19 | 5.08 |
| MOUAU | 33 | 8.82 | 32 | 8.56 |
| UNEC | 41 | 10.96 | 36 | 9.63 |
| UNIZIK | 80 | 21.39 | 66 | 17.65 |
| Total | 374 | 100.00 | 335 | 89.57 |

Table 2a. Sex of Respondents

| Institutions | Male | % | Females | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 38 | 11.34 | 12 | 3.58 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 16 | 4.78 | 05 | 1.50 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 39 | 11.64 | 28 | 8.36 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 32 | 9.55 | 12 | 3.58 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 15 | 4.48 | 04 | 1.19 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 14 | 4.18 | 18 | 5.37 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 24 | 7.16 | 12 | 3.58 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 38 | 11.34 | 28 | 8.36 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 216 | 64.48 | 119 | 35.52 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 2a. Age of Respondents

| Institution | 25 to 34 | % | 35 to 44 | % | 45 to 54 | % | 55 and Above | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 12 | 3.58 | 25 | 7.46 | 12 | 3.58 | 01 | 0.30 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 01 | 0.30 | 11 | 3.28 | 08 | 2.39 | 01 | 0.30 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 20 | 5.97 | 30 | 8.96 | 14 | 4.18 | 03 | 0.90 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 06 | 1.79 | 25 | 7.46 | 08 | 2.39 | 05 | 1.49 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 02 | 0.60 | 03 | 0.90 | 09 | 2.69 | 05 | 1.49 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 10 | 2.99 | 15 | 4.48 | 07 | 2.09 | 00 | 0.00 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 05 | 1.49 | 10 | 2.98 | 16 | 4.77 | 05 | 1.49 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 07 | 2.09 | 35 | 10.45 | 17 | 5.07 | 07 | 2.09 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 63 | 18.81 | 154 | 45.97 | 91 | 27.16 | 27 | 8.06 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 2b. Respondents Marital Status

| Institution | Sing. | % | Mar | % | Div | % | Sep. | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| ABSU | 05 | 1.49 | 44 | 13.13 | 00 | 0.00 | 01 | 0.30 | 50 | 14.94 |
| ALVAN | 01 | 0.30 | 20 | 5.93 | 00 | 0.00 | 00 | 0.00 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 11 | 3.28 | 53 | 15.82 | 02 | 0.60 | 01 | 0.30 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 08 | 2.39 | 36 | 10.75 | 00 | 0.00 | 00 | 0.00 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 01 | 0.30 | 18 | 5.37 | 00 | 0.00 | 00 | 0.00 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 08 | 2.39 | 24 | 7.16 | 00 | 0.00 | 00 | 0.00 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 06 | 1.79 | 29 | 8.66 | 00 | 0.00 | 01 | 0.30 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 14 | 4.18 | 52 | 15.52 | 00 | 0.00 | 00 | 0.00 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 45 | 16.12 | 276 | 82.38 | 02 | 0.60 | 03 | 0.90 | 33 | 100. |

Table 2d. Respondents Academic Qualifications

| Institutions | 1 st Deg. | % | Master | % | Ph.D | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|------------|
| ABSU | 19 | 5.67 | 20 | 5.97 | 11 | 3.28 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 06 | 1.79 | 15 | 4.48 | 00 | 0.00 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 23 | 6.87 | 33 | 9.84 | 11 | 3.28 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 09 | 2.69 | 26 | 7.76 | 09 | 2.69 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 10 | 2.98 | 09 | 2.69 | 00 | 0.00 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 13 | 3.88 | 14 | 4.18 | 05 | 1.49 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 10 | 2.98 | 19 | 5.67 | 07 | 2.09 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 22 | 6.57 | 30 | 8.96 | 14 | 4.18 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 112 | 33.43 | 166 | 49.55 | 57 | 17.01 | 335 | 100 |

Table 2e. Respondent Monthly Income in Naira

| Institution | 40 to 80th | % | 81 to 120th | % | 121 to 160th | % | 161th and Above | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 23 | 6.86 | 11 | 3.28 | 07 | 2.09 | 09 | 2.69 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 09 | 2.69 | 07 | 2.09 | 02 | 0.60 | 03 | 0.90 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 41 | 12.23 | 17 | 5.07 | 06 | 1.79 | 03 | 0.90 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 20 | 5.97 | 11 | 3.28 | 08 | 2.39 | 05 | 1.49 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 10 | 2.99 | 02 | 0.60 | 02 | 0.60 | 05 | 1.49 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 15 | 4.48 | 13 | 3.88 | 03 | 0.90 | 01 | 0.30 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 10 | 2.99 | 10 | 2.99 | 06 | 1.79 | 10 | 2.99 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 24 | 7.16 | 20 | 5.97 | 07 | 2.09 | 15 | 4.48 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 152 | 45.37 | 91 | 27.16 | 41 | 12.24 | 51 | 15.23 | 335 | 100.00 |

* th = thousand naira

Table 2f. Category of Staff of Respondents

| Institutions | Academic | % | Non-Teaching | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| ABSU | 28 | 8.36 | 22 | 6.57 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 09 | 2.69 | 12 | 3.58 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 36 | 10.75 | 31 | 9.26 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 24 | 7.16 | 20 | 5.97 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 08 | 2.39 | 11 | 3.28 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 13 | 3.88 | 19 | 5.67 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 17 | 5.07 | 19 | 5.67 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 37 | 11.04 | 29 | 8.66 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 172 | 51.34 | 163 | 48.66 | 335 | 100 |

Table 3. Brand Name and Influence on Consumer Choice

| Institutions | Always | % | Some Times | % | Rarely | % | Not At All | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 13 | 3.88 | 21 | 6.27 | 04 | 1.19 | 12 | 3.58 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 02 | 0.60 | 11 | 3.28 | 02 | 0.60 | 06 | 1.79 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 22 | 6.57 | 27 | 8.06 | 03 | 0.90 | 15 | 4.48 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 14 | 4.18 | 19 | 5.67 | 04 | 1.19 | 07 | 2.09 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 06 | 1.79 | 08 | 2.39 | 00 | 0.00 | 05 | 1.49 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 16 | 4.78 | 09 | 2.69 | 04 | 1.19 | 03 | 0.90 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 17 | 5.07 | 11 | 3.28 | 02 | 0.60 | 06 | 1.79 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 32 | 9.55 | 29 | 8.66 | 03 | 0.90 | 02 | 0.60 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 122 | 36.42 | 135 | 40.30 | 22 | 6.57 | 56 | 16.71 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 4. Brand Mark and Influence on Consumer Choice

| Institutions | Always | % | Some Times | % | Rarely | % | Not At All | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 09 | 2.69 | 20 | 5.97 | 07 | 2.09 | 14 | 4.18 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 04 | 1.19 | 09 | 2.69 | 04 | 1.19 | 04 | 1.19 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 13 | 3.88 | 28 | 8.36 | 06 | 1.79 | 20 | 5.97 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 07 | 2.09 | 14 | 4.18 | 08 | 2.39 | 15 | 4.48 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 06 | 1.79 | 06 | 1.79 | 02 | 0.60 | 05 | 1.49 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 03 | 0.90 | 19 | 5.67 | 07 | 2.09 | 03 | 0.90 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 16 | 4.78 | 11 | 3.28 | 04 | 1.19 | 05 | 1.49 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 14 | 4.18 | 33 | 9.85 | 15 | 4.48 | 04 | 1.19 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 72 | 21.50 | 140 | 41.76 | 53 | 15.82 | 70 | 20.89 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 5. Company-of-Make and Influence on Consumer Choice

| Institutions | Always | % | Some Times | % | Rarely | % | Not At All | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 12 | 3.58 | 22 | 6.57 | 04 | 1.19 | 12 | 3.58 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 06 | 1.79 | 12 | 3.58 | 01 | 0.30 | 02 | 0.60 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 29 | 8.60 | 19 | 5.67 | 04 | 1.19 | 15 | 4.48 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 16 | 4.78 | 14 | 4.18 | 05 | 1.49 | 09 | 2.69 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 07 | 2.09 | 07 | 2.09 | 01 | 0.30 | 04 | 1.19 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 15 | 4.48 | 15 | 4.48 | 00 | 0.00 | 02 | 0.60 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 23 | 6.86 | 10 | 2.99 | 01 | 0.30 | 02 | 0.60 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 25 | 7.46 | 33 | 9.85 | 06 | 1.79 | 02 | 0.60 | 6 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 133 | 39.70 | 132 | 39.40 | 22 | 6.57 | 48 | 14.33 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 6. Consumers Belief of Whether their Choice Brand is better in Quality than Others

| Institutions | Yes | % | No | % | Don't Know | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 23 | 6.87 | 08 | 2.38 | 19 | 5.67 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 08 | 2.38 | 01 | 0.30 | 12 | 3.58 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 44 | 13.13 | 16 | 4.78 | 07 | 2.09 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 22 | 6.57 | 09 | 2.69 | 13 | 3.88 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 08 | 2.38 | 08 | 2.38 | 03 | 0.90 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 19 | 5.67 | 09 | 2.69 | 04 | 1.19 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 10 | 2.99 | 20 | 5.97 | 06 | 1.79 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 36 | 10.75 | 20 | 5.97 | 10 | 2.99 | 6 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 170 | 50.75 | 91 | 27.16 | 74 | 22.09 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 7. Consumers Ability to Identify their Choice Brand in a Blind Brand Test

| Institutions | Yes | % | No | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 21 | 6.27 | 29 | 8.66 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 06 | 1.79 | 15 | 4.48 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 38 | 11.34 | 29 | 8.66 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 24 | 7.16 | 20 | 5.97 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 07 | 2.09 | 12 | 3.58 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 10 | 2.99 | 22 | 6.57 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 17 | 5.07 | 19 | 5.67 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 21 | 6.27 | 45 | 13.43 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 144 | 42.99 | 191 | 57.01 | 335 | 100.00 |

Table 8. Consumer Ranking Different as they affect their Choice

| Elements of Branding | ABSU | ALVAN | EBSU | IMSU | IMT | MOUAU | UNEC | UNIZIK | Row Total |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| COMPANY-OF-MAKE | 332 | 76 | 404 | 246 | 47 | 195 | 135 | 398 | 1,833 |
| BRAND MARK | 252 | 67 | 298 | 136 | 29 | 110 | 73 | 229 | 1,194 |
| BRAND NAME | 272 | 79 | 316 | 215 | 29 | 155 | 114 | 285 | 1,465 |
| PACKAGE | 338 | 90 | 293 | 249 | 59 | 180 | 142 | 321 | 1,672 |
| COLOUR OF LABEL | 194 | 51 | 230 | 131 | 22 | 65 | 64 | 146 | 903 |
| ADVERT | 183 | 73 | 177 | 153 | 23 | 73 | 65 | 141 | 888 |
| Column Total | 1,571 | 436 | 1,718 | 1,130 | 209 | 778 | 593 | 1,520 | 7,955 |

Table 9. Packaging and Influence on Respondents Choice of Bottled Water

| Institutions | Always | % | Some Times | % | Rarely | % | Not At All | % | Row Total | % |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| ABSU | 13 | 3.88 | 22 | 6.57 | 07 | 2.09 | 08 | 2.38 | 50 | 14.93 |
| ALVAN | 06 | 1.76 | 09 | 2.69 | 03 | 0.90 | 03 | 0.90 | 21 | 6.27 |
| EBSU | 19 | 5.67 | 24 | 7.16 | 08 | 2.38 | 16 | 4.77 | 67 | 20.00 |
| IMSU | 14 | 4.18 | 20 | 5.97 | 00 | 0.00 | 10 | 2.99 | 44 | 13.13 |
| IMT | 05 | 1.49 | 07 | 2.09 | 01 | 0.30 | 06 | 1.79 | 19 | 5.67 |
| MOUAU | 13 | 3.88 | 12 | 3.58 | 02 | 0.60 | 05 | 1.49 | 32 | 9.55 |
| UNEC | 11 | 3.29 | 20 | 5.97 | 01 | 0.30 | 04 | 1.19 | 36 | 10.75 |
| UNIZIK | 17 | 5.07 | 33 | 9.85 | 10 | 2.99 | 06 | 1.79 | 66 | 19.70 |
| Column Total | 98 | 29.25 | 147 | 43.88 | 32 | 9.56 | 58 | 17.31 | 335 | 100.00 |

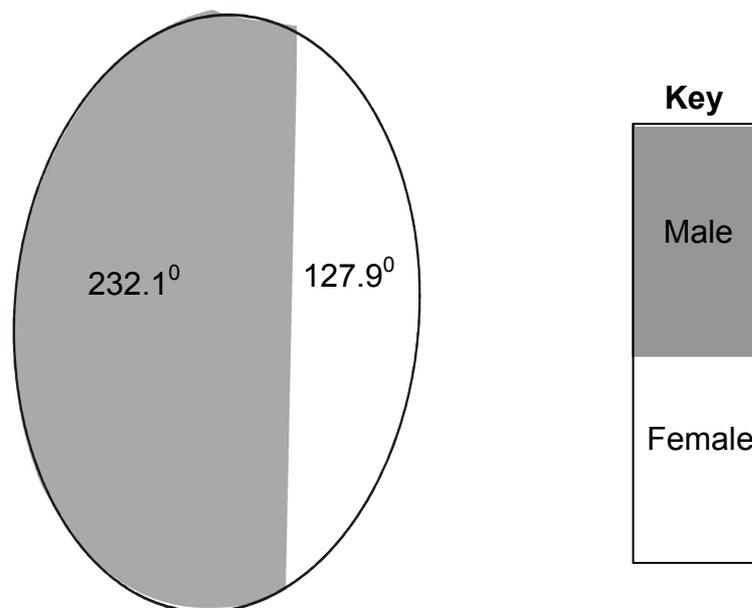


Figure 1. Sex of Respondents

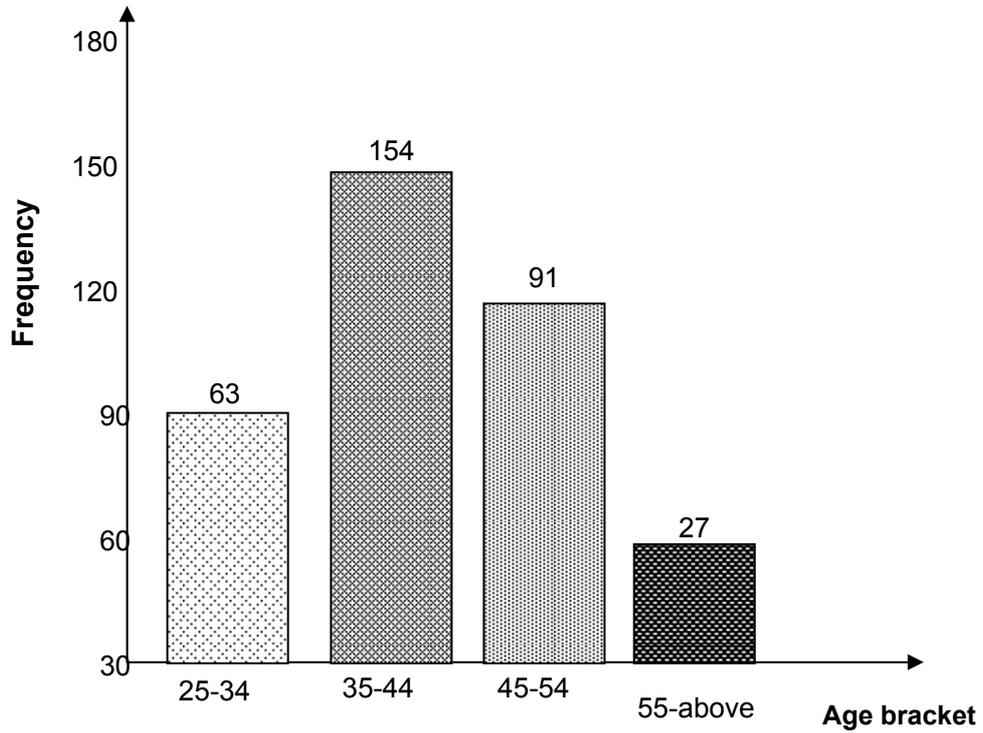


Figure 2. Age of Respondents

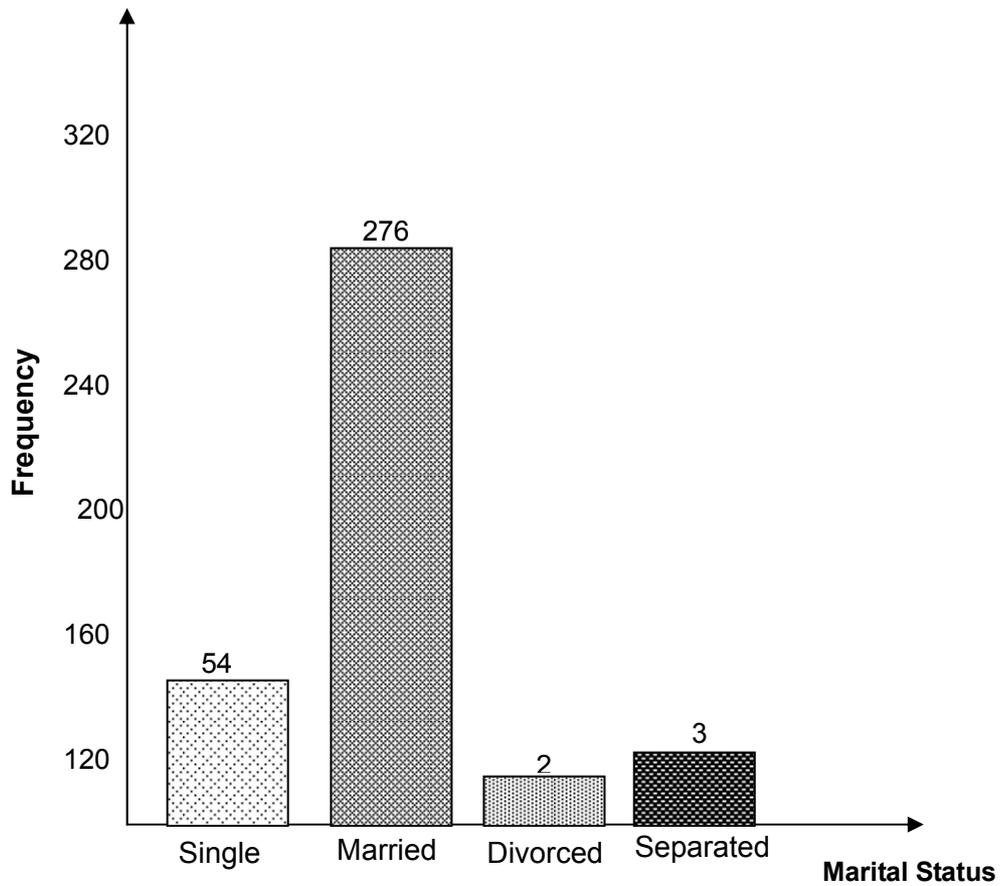


Figure 3. Respondents Marital Status

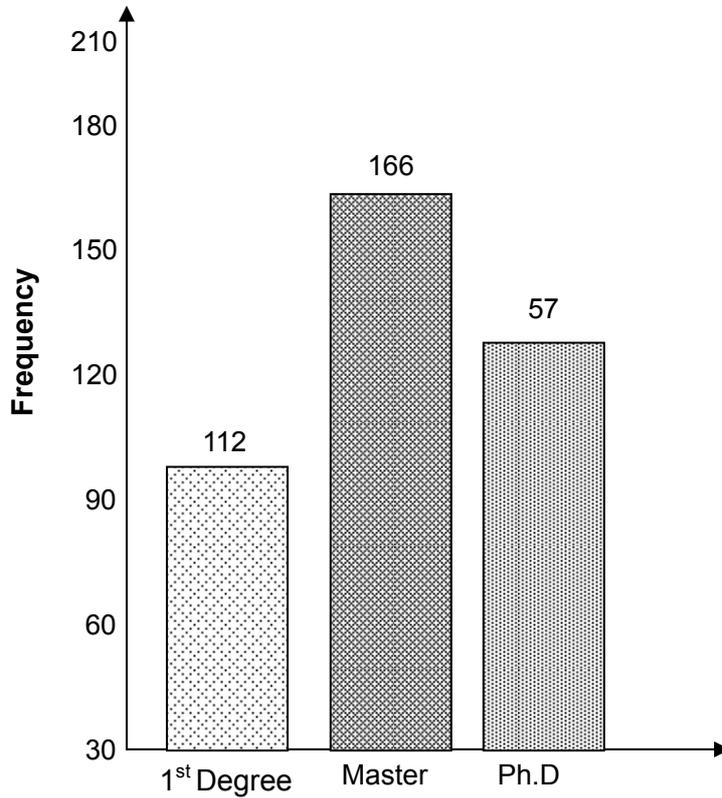


Figure 4. Respondents Academic Qualifications

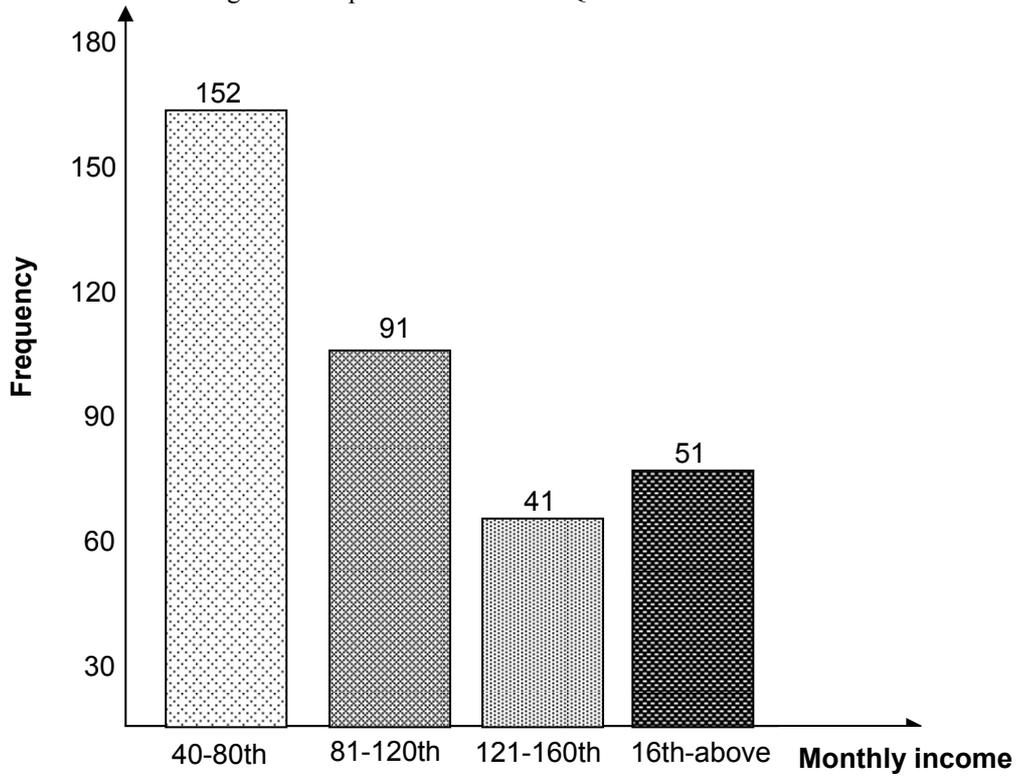


Figure 5. Respondent Monthly Income in Naira

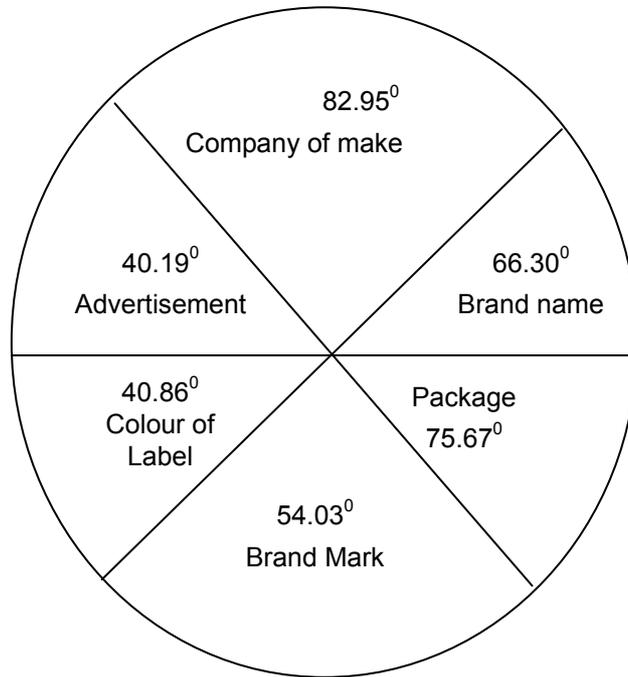
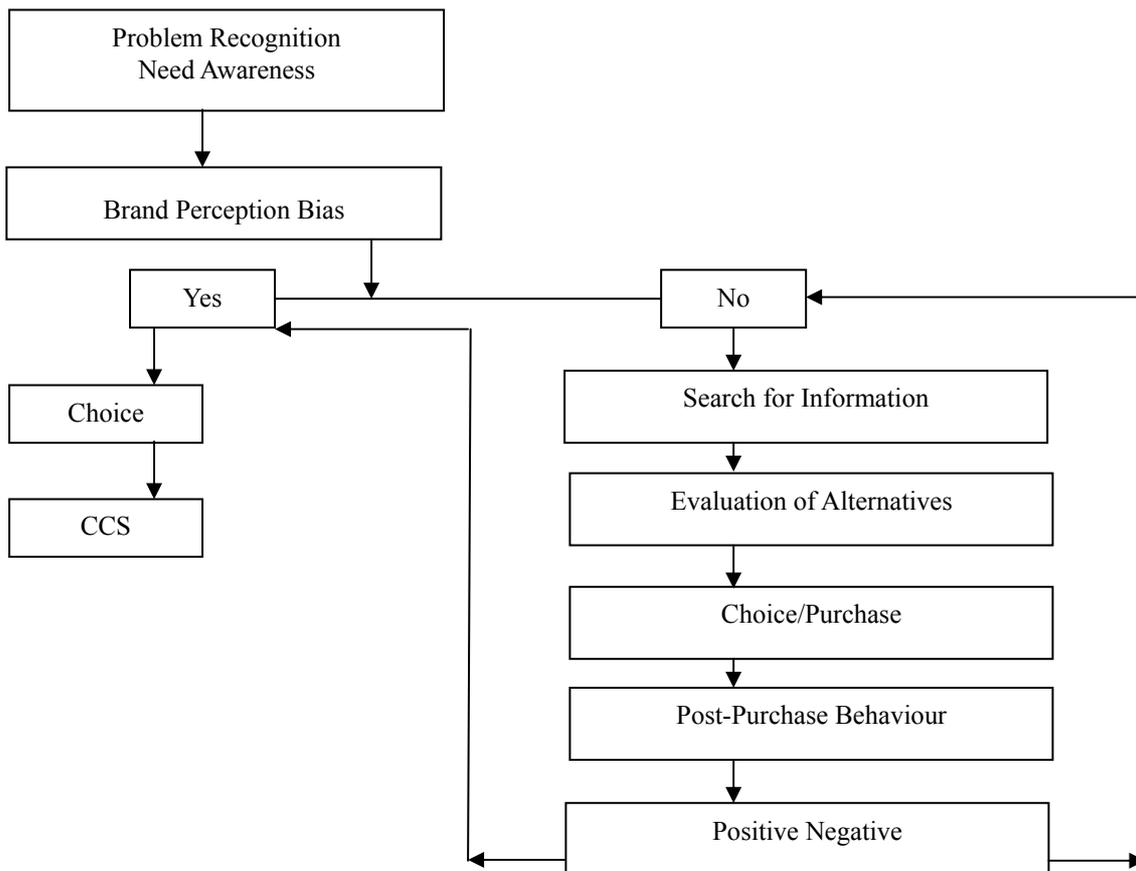


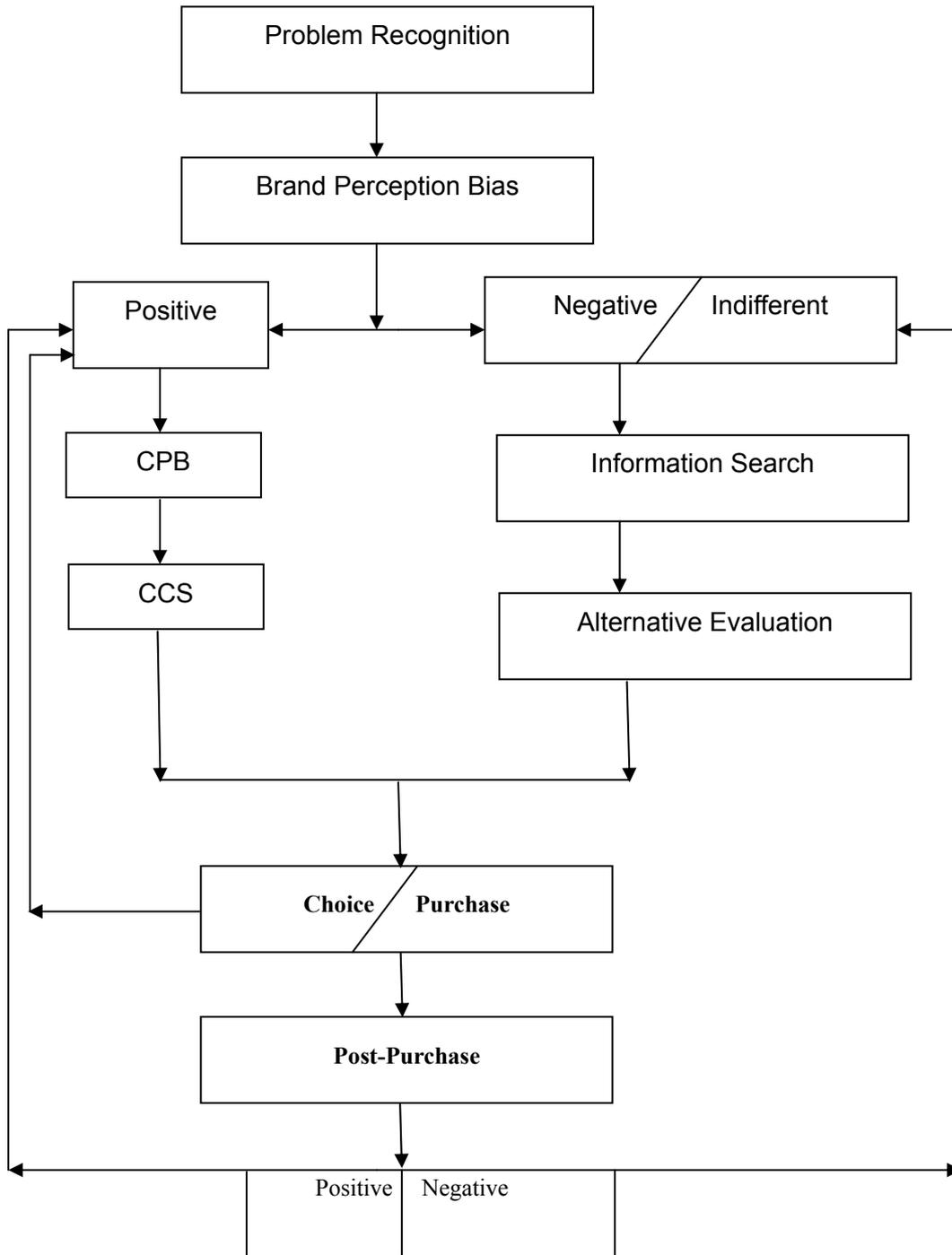
Figure 6. Consumer Ranking Different as they Affect their Choice



CCS = Consumption Complex Syndrome

Source: Ogbuji, C.N. (2009), "Impact of Branding on consumer choice for Regulated Bottled Water in Southeast, Nigeria, Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of marketing, Abia State University Uturu, Nigeria.

Figure 7. Proposed Model Review of Consumer Buying Behavior Process -1



CPB = Consumer Perception Bias

CCS = Consumption Complex Syndrome

Sources: Ogbuji C.N (2009), "Impact of Branding on Consumer Choice for Regulated Bottled Water in South east, Nigeria" – Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Department of Marketing, Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

Figure 8. Proposed Model Review of Consumer Buying Behavior Process-2