

THE INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE BRANDING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE PREFERENCE IN THE NIGERIA MOBILE COMMUNICATION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how corporate branding affects subscriber loyalty and retention in the Nigerian mobile communication sector. A survey of 100 mobile subscribers conveniently selected from five local government area of Bayelsa state were the object of this study. A five point likert scale type questionnaire was used to appeal for relevant evidence to achieve the objectives of this study. The findings of the study reveals the corporate branding do influence mobile subscribers retention and loyalty in the Nigeria mobile communication industry.

KEY WORDS: Mobile Subscribers, Subscriber's Retention, Loyalty, Mobile Communication Industry

INTRODUCTION

Brands may have been in existence for well over a thousand years. However, no civilization has ever before experienced the power of branding as we do now: Every element of daily life involves brands, including manufacturing, consumption, food and clothing, personality and lifestyle; and from pop culture to politics (Ying: 2005). Branding is no longer just about adding value to a product; branding represents and promotes lifestyles and brands themselves become a kind of culture. In the words of (Hazel: 1999) in Hall, brands are now gunning for a share of consumers' inner lives, their values, their beliefs, their politics; yes, their souls. The impact of brands and branding is far beyond the field of marketing and advertising (Ying: 2005). Branding is a social construct as well as an economic construct. Brands have been investigated as an economic entity from the marketing and financial angles. Due to a lack of academic research in this area, brands as a social construct are still not fully understood (Ying: 2005). Advertising is probably the most visible element of marketing but branding is at the centre of any marketing communications. The majority of advertising issues may be traced back to branding tactics. One well-known instance is the stunning advertising by Benetton in the 1990s (Ying: 2005). However, little is known about the impact of branding (not advertising) on the stakeholders other than brand owners and users, and about the link between branding and corporate reputation (Ying: 2005). This paper aims to raise the awareness of ethical issues in corporate branding.

Brand is a simple but very confused word with multiple meanings. The American Marketing Association defines a brand as: a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from those of competitors (Kotler: 2003). A brand may have many other meanings depending on the role it plays, the value it has and more importantly, to whom it is related. For brand owners, a brand primarily serves as a tool for product differentiation: the living legacy and the future of its products (Kapferer: 1997). To brand users, a brand may create an emotional bond with them which turns the brand into an icon. In the most developed role, brands represent not only the products or services a company provides but the firm itself, the brand is the company and brands become a synonym of the company's policy (Goodyear: 1996; de Chernatony and McDonald: 2003). A brand is no longer just the interface between the company and its customers; to whom and to the general public, it is the face of the company.

Branding is a key function in marketing that means much more than just giving a product a name. Branding at corporate level is essentially about developing and managing the relationship between the organization and its various stakeholders as well as the general public. (Ying: 2005)

Corporate brand is defined as "where all product/service value shared by a common and over all brand identity (Xie& Boggs: 2006). During the introduction era, corporate branding processes were initiated by top management of the organization, while execution responsibility for the corporate branding strategies was more a function of marketing, as marketing plays an important role in defining organizations place in the market, but the problem with this myth is that corporate branding becomes fixed into short term and tactical focus and thus organization loses long term, strategic focus (Xie& Boggs: 2006). The goal of corporate branding is to standardize and streamline organization's communication process, but visionary companies don't agree with this, they say that being consistent in your communication is not essential instead all functions of the organization should be loyal to underlying vision and values of the organization (Xie& Boggs: 2006).

In the Nigerian mobile phone industry there are quite a number of competitive brands using both code division multiple access (CDMA) and Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) technology. Recent deregulation of the communication sector of the Nigeria economy have brought in many players in the industry such as MTN Nigeria, Airtel, Globacom, and Etisalat etc. Use of mobile phones have soared, and have mostly replaced the unreliable services of the Nigerian Telecommunications Limited ([NITEL](#)). The current estimate of mobile phones in Nigeria as at October 2011 is about 88 million with most Nigerian having more than one mobile phone. (Global mobile statistics: 2012)

The GSM product market is dominated by brands like MTN, Globacom, Airtel, and Etisalat. In the market, these brands have been very competitive (Ying: 2005). As a service provider in the market they try to gain competitive edge over one another by promoting their brands in order to gain popularity in the market and recognition. The focus of this study is to ascertain the influence of corporate branding on mobile subscribers.

Objectives of the Study:

This study is specifically focused to achieve the following objectives:

1. To establish the relationship between corporate brand and customer retention behaviour in the Nigeria mobile communication industry..
2. To determine the relationship between corporate brand and mobile subscriber's loyalty.

Research Hypothesis

H₁: There is no positive relationship between corporate branding and customer retention behaviour in the Nigeria mobile communication industry.

H₂: There is no positive relationship between corporate branding and mobile subscriber's loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this study, the population of the study consist made up of mobile communication subscribers in Nigeria. Since it will be nearly impossible to reach all members of the population in Nigeria, a sample of one hundred mobile subscribes in Bayelsa where selected using quota sampling method from the five selected local government Area in the state. The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured with closed and open ended question types. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure relevant variables of interest. Data collected where transformed into various indicators and scores that are reflective of the various variables. SPSS version 16 was then used to analysis and test the hypothesis formulated.

Finding and discussion of findings

Table 1: Level of agreement on the influence of corporate name, colour, and logo * level of agreement that providers name, logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription Cross tabulation

Count	level of agreement that providers name, logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription					Total
	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree	
level of agreement on strongly the influence of agree corporate name, agree colour, and logo	4	6	0	4	0	14
undecided	13	21	6	3	0	43
disagree	3	3	10	0	0	16
Total	0	3	0	18	3	24
	20	33	16	25	3	97

From the table above, 4 respondents who strongly agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the mobile provider’s corporate name, colour, and logo, also strongly agree that providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image influence them to retain subscription. 13 respondents agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo; they also strongly agree that providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription. 3 respondents are undecided on their choice of mobile provider being influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo, but strongly agree that providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription.

Also, 6 respondents strongly agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo; they also agree that providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription. 21 respondents agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo; they also agree that providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription. 3 respondents are disagree on their choice of mobile provider being influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo, but agree that providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription.

Also, 6 respondents agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo, but undecided about providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image making them retain subscription. 10 respondents are undecided on their choice of mobile provider being influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo; they are also undecided about providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image making them retain subscription.

Also, 4 respondents strongly agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo, and they also disagree with providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription. 3 respondents agree that their choice of mobile provider was influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo; they also disagree with providers’ name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription. 18 respondents are disagree on their choice of mobile provider being influenced by the corporate name,

colour, and logo, they also disagree with providers' name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription.

Also, 3 respondents are disagree on their choice of mobile provider being influenced by the corporate name, colour, and logo, they also strongly disagree with providers' name, and logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription.

Table 2

Statement	strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
Your choice of mobile provider was influenced by corporate colour, and logo.	14	43	16	24	0
The providers name, logo, colour, and image relative to others will certainly make me retain my subscription with them	20	33	16	25	3

From the table above, majority of the respondents representing 44.3% agree that their choice of mobile subscriber was influenced by their name, corporate colour, and logo, while 24 respondents representing 24.7% disagree that their choice of mobile subscriber was influenced by their name, corporate colour, and logo, and only 14 representing 14.4% strongly agree.

Majority of the respondent representing 34% agree the provider's logo, colour, and image relative to others will certainly make them retain their subscription, while 25 representing 25.8% of the respondents disagree, and 3 representing 3.1% of the respondent strongly disagree.

Hypothesis ONE:

H₀: there is no positive relationship between the influence of corporate branding on the consumer and customer retention behaviour in the Nigeria mobile communication industry.

H₀₁: there is a positive relationship between the influence of corporate branding on the consumer and customer retention behaviour in the Nigeria mobile communication industry.

Table 6: Correlations

	level of agreement on the influence of corporate name, colour, and logo	level of agreement that providers name, logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription
level of agreement on the influence of corporate name, colour, and logo	1	.562**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	97	97
level of agreement that providers name, logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription	.562**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	97	97

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

From the table above, the pearson correlation test result is 0.562 and statistically significant at 0.000 level. This means that there is indeed a positive relationship between the influence of corporate brand on consumer and the influence on consumer retention behaviour in the Nigeria mobile communication industry. Therefore; the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternative is rejected.

Hypothesis TWO:

H₀: There is no positive relationship between the influences of corporate brand on subscriber's loyalty.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between the influences of corporate brand on subscriber's loyalty.

Table 7: Correlations

		level of agreement on the influence of corporate name, colour, and logo	level of agreement that providers name, logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription
Spearman's rho	level of agreement on the influence of corporate name, colour, and logo	Correlation Coefficient 1.000 Sig. (2-tailed) . N 97	.527** .000 97
	level of agreement that providers name, logo, colour, and image will make the customer retain subscription	Correlation Coefficient .527** Sig. (2-tailed) .000 N 97	1.000 .000 97

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

From the table above, the correlation coefficient test result is 0.527 and statistically significant at 0.000 levels. This means that there is indeed no positive relationship between the influences of corporate brand on subscriber's loyalty. Thus, this means that we accept the null hypothesis.

CONCLUSIONS

This research was conducted to know the role of corporate branding on subscribers brand choice (providers choice) in the Nigeria mobile communication industry from different perspectives. This study enables to understand the different views of corporate brand in this industry and also focuses how corporate brand capture the mind of consumers. This research was conducted with selected number of Nigeria university students with limited income level and they knew about their brand and reason they choose their current provider. It was found that corporate branding had much to do with the purchase decision of the customers and it does communicate to consumers. Corporate brand promotes different factors and these different factors were considered important for customer's purchase. This study can be helpful for brand managers in a way that instead of putting more efforts on corporate branding, they must also put more effort in investigating factors which influence customer buying behaviour. As corporate branding provides information to the customers about services, it is also an influencing factor for the customers.

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