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The Power of Persuasion: How Advertising and Brand Image Drive Consumer Purchases in Nigeria's Fuel Market

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Abstract

Background: This study addresses the gap in existing literature by investigating the impact of corporate brand image on consumer purchasing intentions within the highly competitive Lekki petroleum market in Lagos, Nigeria. While brand image is a known determinant of consumer behaviour, its specific influence on purchasing decisions in the Nigerian petroleum sector has not been adequately explored.
Objective: The primary objective of this research was to examine the relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intentions for petroleum products. **Methodology:** A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting customers of three major petrol stations in the Lekki area. A total of 520 questionnaires were distributed, yielding a robust response rate of 84.3%, with 437 valid responses. The data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), with linear regression analysis used to test the study's hypothesis.

Results: The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intention. The regression analysis revealed that corporate brand image is a significant predictor of consumer buying intention ($\beta = 0.338$, $t = 11.614$, $p < 0.001$),

accounting for 9.1% of the variance in consumer buying intentions. This suggests that a favourable brand image considerably strengthens a consumer's willingness to make a purchase. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that corporate brand image is a vital determinant of consumer buying intentions in the Lekki petroleum market. The findings hold significant implications for petroleum firms, recommending that they prioritise strategic branding, invest in consistent advertising campaigns, enhance service standards, and leverage corporate social responsibility to cultivate a positive brand image and, ultimately, boost consumer loyalty and sales.
Keywords: Corporate brand image, Consumer buying decisions, Energy generation, Petroleum production

Introduction

In today's fiercely competitive commercial landscape, a company's success is increasingly shaped by its corporate brand image, which serves as a vital psychological asset influencing consumer behaviour. This image, a cumulative impression formed by a brand's reputation, values, and public perception, is not merely an abstract concept but a powerful determinant of consumer choice. It is through advertising and multifaceted marketing communications that companies strategically craft and disseminate this image to their target audience. In sectors where product differentiation is minimal, such as the petroleum industry, a compelling brand image can be a decisive competitive advantage, fostering trust and consumer loyalty (Rifaldo & Wardi, 2021). For consumers, a strong brand image simplifies their decision-making process, acting as a mental shortcut that assures them of a product's quality and reliability.

The vibrant economic hub of Lekki, Lagos, presents a unique and dynamic market for this very reason. With its dense population, mix of residential and commercial activities, and increasing consumer demands, the petroleum market here is characterised by a multitude of players vying for market share. The way consumers perceive a brand, heavily influenced by its advertising campaigns, public relations, and social media presence, can significantly sway their purchasing decisions. While brand image can improve trust and dependability (Wahyuningtyas & Aquina, 2023), a weak or poorly communicated one can lead to consumer uncertainty, prompting them to turn to competitors. This is particularly critical in a market where consumers are increasingly conscious of factors such as environmental responsibility, corporate accountability, and service quality, making effective branding and advertising strategies paramount.

Despite numerous marketing and advertising initiatives by petroleum firms in the region, consumer purchasing intentions in Lekki have shown inconsistencies, possibly due to a disconnect between a company's advertised brand promise and the consumers' actual perception (Muhammed et al., 2023). This highlights a critical challenge: companies may be investing heavily in advertising, but if their brand image is not effectively managed, these investments may not translate into consistent consumer loyalty and repeat purchases. This uncertainty can directly impact a company's revenue and market share. In a diverse environment like Lekki, where the consumer base comprises a mix of long-time residents and a highly mobile workforce, understanding the influence of a consistently projected corporate brand image through advertising is crucial for maintaining and expanding market presence. The influence of corporate brand image, as shaped by advertising campaigns, goes beyond mere visuals; it represents the overall narrative a brand builds about itself. Advertising is the primary vehicle for this storytelling, conveying not only product features but also a company's ethical values, community involvement, and innovation (Thanabordeekij & Syers, 2020). For example, advertising campaigns that highlight a petroleum company's commitment to sustainable practices can build a positive brand image that resonates with environmentally conscious consumers (Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2020), directly influencing their purchasing preferences.

While a plethora of studies have explored the relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intentions across various industries (Huangfu et al., 2022; Hwang et al., 2022; Jamshidi & Rousta, 2021; Kaur et al., 2020; Liu & Hu, 2022), a significant gap remains in the literature concerning the specific context of the Nigerian petroleum market. The direct effect of corporate brand image on the purchase of petroleum products in Lekki, Nigeria, has not been adequately established. This is a critical oversight, as it prevents companies from formulating targeted and effective advertising and branding strategies that directly address the specific motivations and perceptions of consumers in this key regional market.

The purpose of this study is therefore to empirically assess the relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intentions for petroleum products in Lekki, Lagos. By evaluating the key factors that shape a brand's image—including advertising and corporate social responsibility—this research will provide invaluable insights for petroleum firms aiming to optimise their marketing efforts and boost sales. The findings will offer practical, evidence-based strategies for developing advertising campaigns that genuinely connect with consumers, thereby strengthening brand loyalty and enhancing market share. Ultimately, cultivating a strong corporate brand image through strategic advertising is not just a marketing objective; it is a fundamental requirement for sustained growth and competitiveness within the dynamic Lekki petroleum market.

Literature Review

Corporate Brand Image

Corporate brand image refers to the holistic set of perceptions and mental associations that consumers, stakeholders, and the public hold about a company and its brand. This image is a comprehensive construct, encompassing the values, attributes, and emotional connections people associate with the brand, all of which are influenced by a firm’s communication strategies, product quality, customer service, and overall reputation. A robust and positive brand image is a critical asset for any business, as it fosters consumer trust and loyalty by signalling reliability, quality, and credibility (Liang & Lai, 2023). Companies actively shape their brand image through consistent messaging, strategic branding initiatives, and responsiveness to customer feedback, which helps to align public perception with their desired brand identity (Baalbaki, 2024). Ultimately, a favourable corporate brand image provides a significant competitive advantage by making a company more attractive to consumers, attracting top talent, and fostering goodwill among stakeholders, thereby promoting customer retention and long-term profitability (Özcan & Elçi, 2020).

A strong corporate brand image is particularly advantageous for petroleum service stations, as it directly influences customer attitudes and cultivates loyalty in a highly competitive market

(Grimm & Wagner, 2021). When a petrol station possesses a positive brand image associated with reliability, fuel quality, competitive pricing, and outstanding customer service, consumers are more likely to choose it consistently over other options (Wahyuningtyas & Aquina, 2023). This favourable perception builds trust, allowing customers to feel secure about the station's fuel quality and safety standards, which is vital for repeat business. An established brand image also enhances the effectiveness of marketing and promotional efforts, as consumers are more receptive to messages from brands they already know and respect (Nazarani & Suparna, 2021). Furthermore, a positive brand image can attract customers to a station's supplementary services, such as convenience stores or car washes, thereby improving overall revenue. Over time, a solid corporate brand image enables service stations to build a loyal customer base, generate positive word-of-mouth referrals, and strengthen their competitive position within the industry (Lukitaningsih & Lestari, 2023).

Customer Buying Intentions

Consumer buying intention is a metric that reflects the probability or willingness of a consumer to purchase a specific product or service in the future (Chandra & Indrawati, 2023). This concept serves as a key indicator of consumer readiness, representing the cognitive state that drives an individual from mere consideration to a final purchase decision (Tan et al., 2022). It is a complex construct influenced by various factors, including brand reputation, perceived product quality, pricing, and promotional activities. A high level of buying intention signifies a strong alignment between consumer needs and a company's product offering, often correlating with increased sales and market demand. Companies rigorously examine buying intentions to refine their marketing strategies, optimise product positioning, and enhance customer engagement (Armawan et al., 2023). Gaining insight into this consumer disposition allows businesses to tailor their strategies to resonate with their target audience, ultimately boosting customer acquisition, sales, and brand loyalty.

For petroleum service stations, understanding consumer buying intention is paramount, as it directly informs marketing and operational strategies by indicating the likelihood of customers choosing their station over competitors (Paramitha, 2022). Strong buying intentions toward a particular station increase the likelihood of consistent fuel sales and greater utilisation of supplementary services like convenience stores and car washes (Rybaczewska et al., 2020). By analysing buying intentions, stations can more effectively design loyalty programs, targeted advertising, and personalised promotions to encourage repeat patronage and cultivate long-term customer relationships (Ningsih & Pradanawati, 2021). Furthermore, understanding consumer intent enables stations to optimise inventory and staffing, leading to reduced costs and enhanced service efficiency (Martadina & Anwar, 2023). Ultimately, nurturing strong buying intentions is foundational to fostering customer loyalty, increasing overall sales, and securing a sustainable competitive advantage.

Theoretical Framework

The David Aaker Brand Equity Model serves as a foundational framework for examining how corporate brand image influences consumer purchasing intentions for petroleum products. Aaker’s model posits that brand equity, or the value a brand holds in the minds of consumers, is comprised of four key dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations. These four elements collectively shape the overall brand image as perceived by the consumer (Sarwar & Siddiqui, 2021). In the context of the petroleum industry, a strong and favourable brand image—cultivated through high brand awareness and positive brand associations—is crucial for influencing consumer purchasing intentions. It fosters trust and confidence in a product's quality and reliability, which are paramount for securing repeat purchases in a market where product differences can often be minimal (Ahsan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, a company can build brand loyalty through consistent service and customer satisfaction, which strengthens consumer preferences and repeat buying behaviour. Perceived quality, another key dimension, serves as a primary standard that consumers use to differentiate one brand from another in a highly competitive environment. Consequently, Aaker's model offers a comprehensive lens for evaluating how the various facets of a brand's image converge to influence consumer decisions. This framework is particularly relevant in sectors such as the petroleum market, where reputation and reliability are crucial for establishing lasting consumer trust and loyalty (Robertson, 2023).

Conceptual Model

Based on the theoretical framework and literature review, this study proposes a conceptual model to illustrate the hypothesised relationship between the key variables. As shown in Figure 1, the model conceptualises Corporate Brand Image as the independent variable that is posited to influence Consumer Buying Intention as the dependent variable. The model suggests that a favourable corporate brand image is a critical determinant that positively affects a consumer's willingness to purchase petroleum products. This conceptualisation will serve as the guiding framework for the empirical investigation of this study.

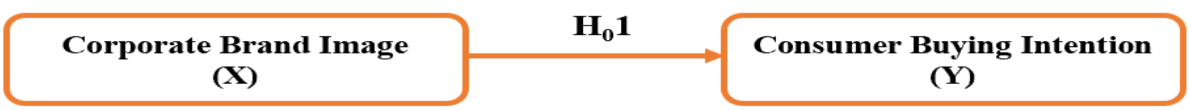

Figure 1: Conceptual Model Showing the Relationship Between Corporate Brand Image and Consumer Buying Intention

Source: Researcher's Conceptualisation (2025)

Methodology

This research employed a descriptive survey design, selected for its effectiveness in collecting quantitative data and assessing the relationship between variables within a defined population. This approach was particularly suitable for describing the perceptions and intentions of the target consumers. The target population for the study comprised customers of three prominent petrol stations in the Lekki region of Lagos State: Rainoil, Northwest, and Petrocam. The population was estimated at 10,500 based on daily customer volume data from 2018, which was obtained from the respective station managers and attendants. Specifically, the estimated customer volumes were 3,000 for Rainoil, 4,000 for Northwest, and 3,500 for Petrocam.

A simple random sampling method was employed to select the participants. The sample size for the study was determined using a standard statistical formula for a finite population, which yielded a sample of 520 respondents. This sample size was deemed sufficient to ensure the findings were generalizable to the broader population with a 95% confidence level. A proportionate allocation approach was used to distribute the questionnaires among the three petrol stations, ensuring that each station's customer base was represented in the sample in proportion to its share of the total population.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that was developed and validated for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections: Section A captured the demographic information of the respondents, while Section B consisted of questions designed to measure the key variables, corporate brand image and consumer buying intention, using a five-point Likert scale.

Before the full-scale data collection, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. A small, representative sample of 30 respondents, who were similar to the main study's target population, was selected for this purpose. The primary objective was to pre-test the questionnaire's clarity, comprehensibility, and psychometric properties.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) to measure the internal consistency of the multi-item scales. The pilot test yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.75 for the "corporate brand image" scale and 0.81 for the "consumer buying intention" scale. Both values exceeded the widely accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of reliability and internal consistency among the questionnaire items.

Additionally, the instrument's validity was established through a two-step process. First, content validity was confirmed through expert review; the questionnaire was reviewed by two academic researchers in the field of marketing to ensure that the questions comprehensively covered all aspects of the study's variables. Second, construct validity was assessed to confirm that the items were accurately measuring the intended constructs. Based on the positive results from both the reliability and validity assessments, the questionnaire was confirmed to be a suitable and robust tool for the primary data collection phase.

The collected data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The analysis included both descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to summarise the demographic data and the key variables, as well as inferential statistics. Linear regression analysis was specifically used to test the hypothesis and determine the extent to which corporate brand image influenced consumer buying intention. All ethical considerations, including voluntary participation and confidentiality of the respondents' information, were strictly observed throughout the data collection process.

Data Analysis and Results

The research utilised a rigorous data collection approach. Of the 520 questionnaires distributed, 437 were fully completed and returned, resulting in a high response rate of 84.3%. A response rate above 70% is considered very good. Therefore, the achieved rate of 84.3% is statistically robust and more than sufficient for drawing reliable conclusions from the study.

Restatement of Research Hypothesis

The study's primary hypothesis was formulated to examine the relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intention.

- **H_{01}:** Corporate brand image does not have a significant impact on the purchasing intentions of consumers at selected petrol service stations in the Lekki area of Lagos State.

Table 1: Regression Analysis on the Influence of Corporate Brand Image on Consumer Buying Intention

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	34.599	0.959		36.097
Corporate Brand Image	0.338	0.029	0.302	11.614
$R = 0.302$;	$R^2 = 0.091$;	$F(1,435) = 134.886$	$p < 0.05$	
Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Intention				

The regression analysis presented in Table 1 provides the findings on the relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intention. The results indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. The model's key statistics are as follows:

- Model Significance: The model was found to be statistically significant, as indicated by the F-statistic, $F(1, 435) = 134.886$, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This demonstrates that the model, as a whole, is a good fit for the data and that corporate brand image is a significant predictor of consumer buying intention.
- Coefficient of Determination (R^2): The R-squared value of 0.091 indicates that 9.1% of the variation in consumer buying intention can be explained by corporate brand image. This suggests that while brand image is a significant factor, other unexamined variables account for the remaining 90.9% of the variance.
- Correlation: A correlation coefficient (R) of 0.302 shows a positive but weak relationship between corporate brand image and consumer buying intention.

The unstandardized regression coefficient (β) for Corporate Brand Image was 0.338. This is a positive value, indicating that a one-unit increase in corporate brand image leads to a 0.338-unit increase in consumer buying intention. This relationship was found to be highly significant, with a t-value of 11.614 and a p-value of 0.000.

The regression equation for the model is represented as:

CBI = 34.599 + 0.338 * CBI

Where:

- CBI = Consumer Buying Intention
- CBI = Corporate Brand Image

The constant term, 34.599, indicates the estimated level of consumer buying intention when corporate brand image is held at zero. Based on the significant positive relationship (β = 0.338, p = 0.000), the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated that corporate brand image does not have a significant impact on consumer buying intention, is rejected. The findings confirm that corporate brand image is a significant determinant of consumer purchasing intentions at the selected petrol stations in Lekki, Lagos.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirmed the primary hypothesis, revealing that corporate brand image has a significant and positive influence on consumer purchasing intentions at petrol service stations in the Lekki area of Lagos State. This result aligns with the fundamental principles of branding theory and is consistent with a wide range of previous studies conducted across various industries and contexts. The empirical evidence underscores that brand image is not merely a superficial element but a tangible asset that shapes consumer behaviour and drives purchasing decisions.

This finding corroborates several studies from the existing literature. For instance, the result aligns with the work of Chandra and Indrawati (2023), who found that brand image acts as a crucial mediator between marketing efforts and purchase intention, highlighting the power of brand perception. Similarly, the findings support the research by Armawan et al. (2023), who concluded that brand image significantly influences consumer attitudes and buying intentions in the coffee shop industry, and by Martadina and Anwar (2023), who emphasised its pivotal role in competitive markets. Our study's results also align with those of Özcan and Elçi (2020), who demonstrated that a positive brand image, particularly one established through corporate social responsibility, enhances purchase intentions.

The significance of brand image extends beyond product-based industries and into the service sector, as evidenced by this study. This finding is consistent with Baalbaki's (2024) research on tourism, which demonstrated that a robust destination brand image can sustain consumer interest even during challenging times. Furthermore, our findings on the mediating role of brand image align with the conclusions of Liu and Hu (2022) in the hospitality sector and Suhan et al. (2022), who both identified the critical function of brand image in fostering consumer loyalty and trust.

The results also align with the conclusions of Chandra and Indrawati (2023), who noted the positive impact of brand image in the digital realm, suggesting that its influence extends beyond traditional market boundaries.

While the study found a significant relationship, the R-squared value indicated that corporate brand image accounted for only 9.1% of the variance in consumer buying intention. This suggests that other factors, not examined in this research, play a considerable role in consumer decisions within the Lekki petroleum market. These variables could include competitive pricing, fuel availability, service quality, and the strategic use of promotional tactics. Future research could explore the combined effects of these factors to provide a more holistic understanding of consumer behaviour in this sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This research confirms that corporate brand image is a significant determinant of consumer purchasing intentions for petroleum products in Lekki, Lagos. A positive brand image enhances a service station's ability to attract and retain customers, thereby strengthening its competitive position in the market. The findings suggest that consumers in this region are not solely driven by product availability or price but are also influenced by their overall perception of a brand, which is shaped by its reputation, values, and customer experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is highly recommended that petrol service station operators in Lekki, Lagos, prioritise the development and management of their corporate brand image.

- Implement Strategic Branding and Advertising: Companies should invest in targeted and consistent marketing campaigns that clearly communicate their brand values, such as reliability, commitment to quality, and community engagement.
- Enhance Service Standards: Given that customer experience directly shapes brand image, service stations should focus on improving service quality, ensuring prompt service, and maintaining clean, well-organised facilities.
- Leverage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Brands should actively engage in CSR initiatives and publicise these efforts. This can significantly enhance a positive brand image, which, as this study confirmed, can directly boost consumer loyalty and sales.

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