

MANUFACTURER'S BRANDING AND CONSUMER'S PATRONAGE OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS IN IKEJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAGOS STATE.

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ABSTRACT:

This study investigated the impact of manufacturer branding on customer patronage among pharmaceutical firms' customers in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. It specifically examined the roles of brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty in influencing consumer purchasing behavior. A quantitative research design was adopted. The population comprised customers of registered pharmaceutical firms operating within Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. A sample of 200 respondents was selected using convenience sampling, targeting customers available at selected retail pharmacies and data collected using a self-developed structured questionnaire, which was designed based on existing literature and aligned with the study's objectives. Data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The results revealed that brand awareness had a negative but statistically insignificant effect on customer patronage. Similarly, perceived quality also had a negative and statistically significant effect. However, brand loyalty showed a strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on customer patronage. These findings indicated that customers were more likely to patronize pharmaceutical brands they were loyal to, regardless of their awareness or perceived quality of the brand. The study concluded that fostering brand loyalty was essential for enhancing customer patronage and recommended that firms implement strategies that build trust, satisfaction, and long-term engagement.

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INTRODUCTION

Branding has a significant impact on customer preferences and purchasing behavior, particularly in highly competitive markets (Ayoubi, Fazl & Araam, 2024). For a manufacturer, the brand is a vital means of separating goods and creating a distinct consumer mental image. Branding is not just a name or logo but also a collection of expectations, memories, narratives, and connections that, taken together, affect a customer's decision to favor one product above another (Ward, Yang, Romaniuk & Beal, 2020). Branding becomes a tactical asset that can stimulate customer loyalty and patronage in today's market where prices and quality of goods are often comparable (Lion, 2024).

To affect consumer perceptions and create emotional connections with their target market, manufacturers invest a great deal in branding. According to Aaker (1996), strong brands are linked with trust, quality, and dependability qualities that can greatly influence consumer decision-making (Shafiq et al., 2023). Consumers are more inclined to purchase goods from companies they recognize and view favorably. This acknowledgement not only increases customer confidence but also lessens the apparent risk related to buying, especially for fresh or unfamiliar goods (Tran, 2020).

Furthermore, in an age when brand awareness is becoming more and more widespread, particularly among younger and urban consumers, branding is no longer only about visual identity but about the values and experiences the brand embodies. Abu-Zayyad, Obeidat, Alshurideh, Abuhashesh, Maqableh and Masa'deh (2021) study reveals that consumer loyalty and repeat business are greatly affected by regular brand positioning and communication. Therefore, businesses hoping to achieve competitive edge and keep consumers must first understand the relationship between producer branding and consumer loyalty. Considering factors like brand recognition, perceived quality, and emotional appeal, this study tries to understand how the manufacturer brand used by producers affect consumer patronage. The results should offer insightful information for companies trying to improve their brand positioning and cultivate long-lasting customer relationships.

Statement of the Problem

Many producers have difficulty using brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty to inspire consumer loyalty even if branding is of strategic value. Particularly among new or small-scale producers, a low brand awareness is one big issue (Zhang, 2020). Customers might not know or remember the brand without good brand and visibility, therefore lowering market penetration and sales. Perceived quality also remains a major hurdle. Certain companies don't consistently produce high-quality products or clearly communicate quality through branding, hence damaging consumer confidence and impeding buying decisions (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2020).

Moreover, brand loyalty is vital for repeat business and long-run profit is sometimes low or nonexistent. While many producers concentrate on getting new customers, they ignore techniques that foster close emotional ties with already established ones (Arslan, 2020). Consequently, consumers with little connection to the brand may quickly shift to rivals. In competitive markets where product differentiation is constrained and branding considerations guide consumer choices, these issues are particularly worrisome. Manufacturers risk losing relevance and market share if they do not handle these fundamental branding problems. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate how these branding elements influence consumer patronage and what strategies can enhance manufacturer brand effectiveness in the marketplace.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of manufacturer's branding on customer patronage of pharmaceutical products in Ikeja, Lagos State. This study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i. To determine the impact of brand awareness on customer patronage products of selected pharmaceutical firms in Lagos State.
- ii. To examine the impact of perceived quality on customer patronage products of selected pharmaceutical firms in Lagos State.
- iii. To determine the impact of brand loyalty on customer patronage products of selected pharmaceutical firms in Lagos State.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Manufacturer's Brand

Manufacturer's brand refers to a product brand that is owned, created, and marketed by the producer rather than by intermediaries or retailers. It plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, building trust, and influencing purchasing decisions. According to Kotler, Armstrong and Opresnik (2021), a manufacturer's brand serves as a symbol of quality, consistency, and reliability, offering consumers' confidence in the product they are purchasing. Unlike private labels or generic products, manufacturer's brands often have a wider market presence and stronger brand equity due to extensive marketing efforts and distribution channels.

Recent studies emphasize that manufacturer branding helps in differentiating products in competitive markets, especially where product features are easily replicable. For instance, Hassan and Soliman (2020) noted that a strong manufacturer's brand enhances customer loyalty by creating emotional and functional associations that consumers find valuable. In industries such as pharmaceuticals and consumer goods, manufacturer brands are critical in building long-term relationships with customers who often associate brand names with product safety and efficacy.

Furthermore, manufacturer's branding contributes to brand equity by influencing perceived quality, brand awareness, and customer loyalty (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2022). These factors not only attract new customers but also retain existing ones, thus improving profitability and competitive advantage. In today's branding landscape, manufacturers are increasingly leveraging digital platforms, storytelling, and customer engagement to strengthen their brand identities and expand market reach. Therefore, an effective manufacturer's brand strategy is essential for business sustainability and consumer trust.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness describes the degree of consumer awareness of and capacity to remember or recognize a brand and its affiliated products or services. By raising the probability that a brand would be taken into account during purchase (Lăzăroiu, Neguriță, Grecu, Grecu & Mitran, 2020), it influences consumer decision-making fundamentally. High brand awareness not only improves

visibility in a competitive market but also builds familiarity and trust that lowers consumer perceived risk (Gangwani, Mathur & Shahab, 2020).

Customers are more likely to develop favorable impressions and consider a brand if they know of one. Consistent marketing, advertising, and consumer experiences help to create brand recognition. One of the main aspects of brand equity is that it is vital for attaining client loyalty, according to Jahan et al. (2024). Good brand awareness ultimately forms the basis for developing enduring customer relationships and stimulating patronage.

In addition to influencing initial purchase decisions, brand awareness plays a significant role in post-purchase behaviour, such as customer satisfaction, repeat buying, and word-of-mouth referrals. According to Narteh and Braimah (2021), brands with high awareness enjoy greater levels of consumer advocacy because customers are more confident sharing and recommending brands they are familiar with. This trust, built over time through repeated exposure and consistent brand messaging, strengthens the emotional bond between consumers and the brand, further enhancing brand equity.

Moreover, brand awareness serves as a buffer in times of negative publicity or market disruptions. Consumers are more likely to give well-known brands the benefit of the doubt, as familiarity often translates into perceived credibility and reliability (Oladele & Ogundele, 2022). In this way, brand awareness not only drives sales but also protects the brand's long-term image and reputation. This makes it a strategic asset that manufacturers must cultivate through sustained marketing efforts and consistent customer engagement.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is a customer's opinion about a product's general quality or superiority over alternatives, based on their own experiences, ideas, and brand associations rather than objective assessment. It is a crucial part of brand equity and greatly affects consumer behavior, including purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Pina & Dias, 2021). Perceived quality is subjective and molded by elements including brand reputation, marketing communication, and prior usage experience unlike real quality, which is found on observable characteristics. Gil-Pérez, Rebollar and Lidón (2020) say that when consumers lack all the knowledge, they often use packaging, price, and brand image as signs of quality. High perceived quality justifies premium prices (Rachmawati,

Hidayatullah, Nuryanti & Wulan, 2020), so boosting consumer confidence and lowering the perceived risk of purchase. Manufacturers have to thus provide quality consistently and effectively communicate in order to favorably shape consumer perceptions since this may boost competitiveness and encourage long-term patronage.

Perceived quality does not only influence a consumer's initial decision but also shapes their long-term expectations and trust in the brand. When customers believe that a product consistently delivers value, they begin to associate that brand with reliability and excellence, even without evaluating each new purchase in detail. As noted by Mensah and Fadeyi (2023), perceived quality helps simplify decision-making in recurring purchases, especially in sectors like pharmaceuticals, where safety and effectiveness are critical yet not always directly observable. This trust, built over time, creates a mental shortcut that reinforces loyalty and discourages brand switching.

In addition, perceived quality contributes significantly to brand differentiation in markets where product features are difficult to distinguish. Brands that manage to position themselves as premium through strategic packaging, endorsements, and testimonials often enjoy a psychological edge over competitors, regardless of identical product content. Obi and Chukwuma (2021) argue that in such cases, perceived quality can even outweigh real performance in influencing brand preference. For pharmaceutical manufacturers, this underscores the importance of managing brand cues such as professional branding, detailed labeling, and credibility indicators to enhance consumer perceptions and maintain a strong market presence.

Brand Loyalty

Driven by satisfaction, trust, and emotional connection, brand loyalty is a consumer's constant desire and frequent purchase of a certain brand over time. It embodies a strong dedication opposing changing behavior, even when rivals provide same or better choices (Amani, 2022). Usually exhibiting favorable sentiments toward the brand, loyal consumers recommend it to others and are less sensitive to price fluctuations. A fundamental element of brand equity, brand loyalty, helps to maintain a company's market position, Aaker (1996) argues. It improves consumer relationships, increases profitability, and lowers marketing expenses. Mostafa and Kasamani (2021) further stress that brand loyalty results from constant delivery of value, quality, and good brand interactions. For producers aiming for long-run success and customer support in today's cutthroat

market, developing and keeping brand loyalty is imperative. Achieving this loyalty depends on good branding techniques that build trust and happiness (Agu, Iyelolu, Idemudia & Ijomah, 2024).

Brand loyalty also serves as a strategic asset during times of market instability or product-related crises. Loyal customers are more likely to remain committed to their preferred brand, offering companies a stable revenue stream even when competitors introduce similar or lower-priced alternatives. According to Onuoha and Abiodun (2022), consumers with strong brand attachment often defend their chosen brands publicly, contributing to positive brand reputation and reducing the negative effects of unfavourable publicity. This level of advocacy not only enhances brand credibility but also attracts new customers through trust-based referrals.

Brand loyalty plays a pivotal role in fostering emotional engagement and long-term consumer-brand relationships. As stated by Eze and Musa (2023), emotional loyalty driven by meaningful experiences and shared values which often surpasses rational loyalty based on product features alone. This emotional connection motivates consumers to stay loyal, even in the presence of more convenient or economical alternatives. For manufacturers, cultivating emotional bonds through personalized experiences, consistent communication, and brand storytelling can transform occasional buyers into devoted brand ambassadors, thereby strengthening overall brand equity and market influence.

Customer Patronage

Often driven by pleasure, trust, and seen value, customer patronage is the regular and persistent support consumers offer to a certain brand or producer. It represents more than a transaction; it denotes a long-term connection between the customer and the brand. Cao, Sial, Álvarez-Otero, Brugni and Comite (2024) defines consumer patronage as a manifestation of consumer loyalty that evolves over time through positive experiences and emotional attachment (Närvänen, Kuusela, Paavola & Sirola, 2020). Key drivers of patronage include brand trust, perceived product quality, and effective customer engagement (Bhattacharyya, Rana & Imran-Khan, 2024). Strong branding becomes imperative in influencing customer choices and promoting repeat buys in very competitive markets where product options are comparable. Loyal consumers not only keep buying but also suggest the company to others, therefore starting a ripple effect that strengthens market presence (Cao et al., 2024). Manufacturers therefore have to grasp the elements influencing

patronage so as to maintain consumer interest and create a devoted clientele.

Customer patronage is also significantly influenced by post-purchase satisfaction, service delivery, and after-sales support, which reinforce consumers' positive impressions of a brand. According to Adedeji and Nwankwo (2023), when customers consistently receive quality service even after a purchase, they are more inclined to return, thereby reinforcing their loyalty and habitual buying behavior. This repeated engagement helps manufacturers gather valuable consumer feedback, improve offerings, and fine-tune marketing strategies. A seamless and satisfying post-purchase experience can thus transform one-time buyers into long-term brand advocates.

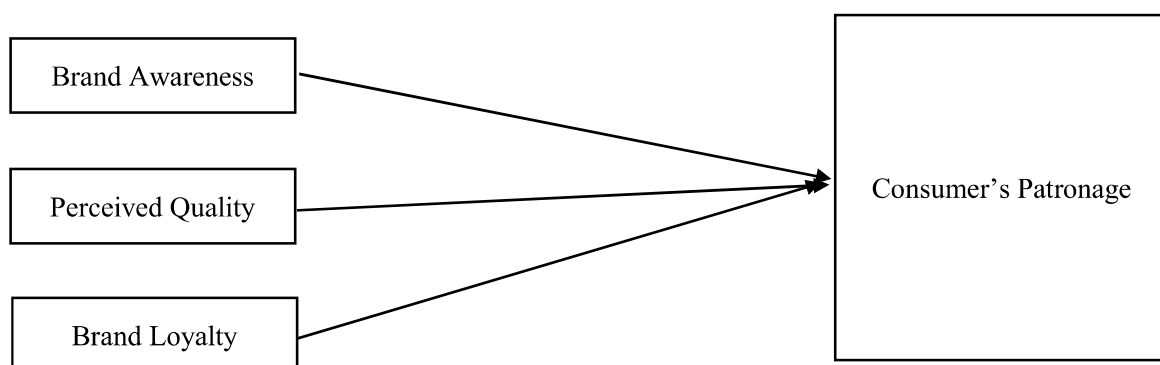
Furthermore, socio-cultural and psychological factors also play critical roles in shaping patronage behavior. As highlighted by Mohammed and Okechukwu (2022), peer influence, cultural alignment, and perceived social value of using a brand can enhance customer preference and commitment. Consumers often feel a sense of identity or status through the brands they associate with, particularly in industries like fashion, technology, and pharmaceuticals. Manufacturers that align their brand messaging with the values and lifestyle of their target audience can deepen emotional connections, leading to consistent patronage and sustained market relevance.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Manufacturer Branding



Source: Researcher Compilation (2025)

Theoretical Review

Brand Equity Theory

Brand equity theory, as propounded by David A. Aaker in 1991 which is the worth a brand brings to a product or service beyond its practical advantages. Tasci (2021) notes that brand equity includes important elements including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. Rising trust, enabling product differentiation, and improving consumer loyalty and pleasure all help these factors affect consumer behavior. The theory postulates that a strong brand increases customer awareness of value, which results in greater purchasing intent, premium pricing, and long-term customer relationships (Narayanan & Singh, 2023). It further claims that brand equity is an invisible asset that greatly influences a firm's general value and competitive edge.

Proponents of the theory, like Eslami (2020), contend that effective marketing campaigns and long-term profitability rely on brand equity. Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model complements Aaker's by highlighting how consumers perceive and relate to the brand. Critics contend, however, that brand equity is hard to measure objectively because of its abstract quality and dependence on consumer perception (Ishaq & Di Maria, 2020). Some also contend that the model disproportionately stresses customer perspectives, thereby ignoring operational capabilities and internal brand management. Though there have been detractors, brand equity theory is still fundamental in marketing literature and branding.

This study aligns brand equity theory by examining how brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty are the core components of the theory that collectively influence customer patronage in pharmaceutical firms, thereby validating the theory's practical relevance in real consumer behavior and market outcomes.

Consumer Behavior Theory

Developed by several academics, most notably Howard and Sheth in 1969, consumer behavior theory clarifies how consumers decide to buy items depending on psychological, social, and financial considerations. The theory investigates the phases consumers go through before, throughout, and after purchasing a product or service including recognition, information search, option assessment, buying decision, and post-purchase behavior (Guthrie, Fosso-Wamba &

Arnaud, 2021). Howard and Sheth's paradigm emphasize the impact of stimuli, perceptual and learning constructs, and outputs like brand selection. The theory postulates that consumers are logical decision-makers attempting to maximize utility based on current knowledge, preferences, and past experiences. It also asserts that consumer behavior is shaped by both internal elements like motivation, perception, and attitude and external influences namely, culture, reference groups, and advertising signals.

Understanding consumer behavior enables marketers to create more successful campaigns to satisfy customer needs, boost happiness, and build brand loyalty (Zulfikar, 2022), proponents like Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) argue. They see consumer behavior as crucial to forecasting market patterns and customizing advertising messages. Nonetheless, critics contend that by concentrating much on reason and ignoring emotional, impulsive, or unconscious influences, the theory oversimplifies the complexity of human behavior. Still, consumer behavior theory offers a fundamental paradigm for understanding how customers interact with brands and make purchase choices.

This study relates to consumer behavior theory by analyzing how branding elements such as awareness, perceived quality, and loyalty influence consumers' decision-making and patronage patterns in the pharmaceutical sector, reflecting the theory's emphasis on psychological and experiential factors shaping purchasing behavior.

Empirical Review

Pereira, Ardigó and Limberger (2021) investigated the association between brand reputation and customers' loyalty towards retail pharmaceutical companies in Brazil. Using a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from 469 customers in Balneário Camboriú, and analyzing it through descriptive statistics and multivariate regression, they found that brand reputation significantly influenced customer loyalty. The study emphasized that maintaining a strong and consistent brand image increases consumer confidence, leading to greater patronage and repeat purchases.

Uzir, Hamid, Jerin, Latiff and Thurasamy (2021) conducted a study on the Egyptian home appliance market and discovered that brand reputation plays a vital role in enhancing customer

loyalty, mediated by satisfaction and trust. Drawing data from 357 respondents and employing structural equation modeling, the study confirmed that when consumers perceive a brand as reputable and trustworthy, they are more likely to be satisfied and develop long-term loyalty. This emphasizes the importance of fostering positive brand experiences and reliability in product delivery.

Khan, Salamzadeh, Iqbal and Yang (2022) examined corporate reputation's impact on customer loyalty in the Chinese market. The study found that emotional factors such as brand likability and personal affinity had a stronger influence on loyalty than cognitive elements like brand knowledge or perceived competence. This suggests that companies should not only communicate value but also create emotional resonance with consumers to strengthen loyalty and long-term relationships.

Irfandani, Jatmiko and Robbie (2021) explored brand trust and loyalty among Indonesian mobile phone users. They concluded that brand trust and satisfaction significantly affect consumer loyalty, with trust acting as a key mediator. The research highlighted the importance of consistent service quality and transparency in building customer confidence. Trust, once established, leads to customer retention and higher brand advocacy, especially in competitive and high-involvement product markets like mobile technology.

Saleem and Anjum (2023) studied the hospitality sector in Pakistan to assess how brand equity elements such as awareness and association impact brand loyalty. The research showed that these elements enhance brand reputation, which in turn fosters brand trust and loyalty. The study's findings suggest that businesses should focus on increasing brand visibility and cultivating positive brand associations as a means to build reputation and ensure consistent customer patronage.

Han (2023) investigated the effect of continuous corporate philanthropy on brand reputation and consumer loyalty in Thailand. Their findings revealed that sustained philanthropic efforts improve public perception and brand reputation, which then translates to greater consumer trust and loyalty. This study underscores the strategic value of corporate social responsibility initiatives in differentiating a brand and enhancing emotional engagement with consumers.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative survey research design to examine the effect of manufacturer's branding on consumer patronage products of pharmaceutical firms in Ikeja Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The target population comprised consumers who frequently purchase branded pharmaceutical products from registered pharmacies within the area. The population is considered infinite, as the exact number of regular pharmaceutical consumers across retail outlets cannot be precisely determined due to the open and dynamic nature of customer inflow.

A sample size of 200 respondents was determined based on similar studies in branding and consumer behaviour that used sample sizes ranging from 150 to 300 for reliable statistical analysis (Shaista, Farishta, & Maha, 2016; Satyender & Nandini, 2024). The sample was selected using convenience sampling, which was deemed appropriate due to the ease of access to participants and time constraints.

Data were gathered using a self-developed structured questionnaire, created based on relevant literature and research objectives. The instrument consisted of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale, covering constructs such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and customer patronage. The questionnaire was validated by marketing and branding experts to ensure content clarity and relevance. Completed responses were collated, coded, and analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and patterns, while inferential statistics, specifically multiple regression analysis, were applied to test the hypothesized relationships among the variables.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.240	0.380		3.263	0.001
	Brand Awareness	-0.171	0.103	-0.155	-1.656	0.099
	Perceived Quality	-0.428	0.098	-0.524	-4.375	0.000
	Brand Loyalty	1.332	0.105	1.482	12.744	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Customer Patronage						

Source: Author's Compilation (2025)

The regression coefficients table presents the influence of brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty on customer patronage. The constant (intercept) is 1.240, indicating that when all independent variables are held constant, customer patronage would still score 1.240 on the scale.

Brand awareness has a negative unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.171$), suggesting that an increase in brand awareness slightly decreases customer patronage. However, the effect is not statistically significant ($p = 0.099$), meaning the relationship may be due to chance at the 5% significance level.

Perceived quality also has a negative coefficient ($B = -0.428$) and is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$), indicating that higher perceived quality is unexpectedly associated with a decrease in customer patronage in this context. This may reflect unique consumer behaviors in the pharmaceutical sector or possible multicollinearity.

Brand loyalty, on the other hand, has a strong positive and statistically significant effect ($B = 1.332$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that as brand loyalty increases, customer patronage increases significantly. The standardized beta value (1.482) confirms that brand loyalty has the most substantial effect among all predictors.

Conclusion

This study concluded that among the examined branding elements such as brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand loyalty, brand loyalty has the most significant and positive influence on customer patronage products of pharmaceutical firms in Ikeja, Lagos State. While brand awareness and perceived quality showed negative or insignificant effects, brand loyalty emerged as a critical factor driving repeated customer purchases. These findings underscore the importance for pharmaceutical companies to focus on strategies that build long-term loyalty, such as consistent product performance and customer engagement. Strengthening brand loyalty can ultimately enhance sustained patronage and competitive advantage in the local pharmaceutical market.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Pharmaceutical firms in Ikeja, Lagos State, should focus on strengthening brand loyalty through consistent product quality, excellent customer service, and personalized engagement strategies. Loyalty programs and after-sales follow-ups can foster deeper customer relationships and increase repeated patronage.

Although brand awareness showed an insignificant influence, firms should not neglect it; consistent advertising, public relations efforts, and presence in digital platforms can enhance visibility and recognition over time.

Furthermore, the unexpected negative impact of perceived quality suggests a potential mismatch between customer expectations and actual experiences. Companies should conduct regular customer feedback surveys to understand and address quality perception gaps. Regulatory compliance, transparent communication of product benefits, and continuous improvement in packaging and delivery can also help restore trust in perceived quality.

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