



ISSN Online 2617-359X



Brand Image and Consumer Decision Making in the Mobile Telecommunication Sector, Case Study of Tecno Mobile Ltd, Rwanda

Gilbert Bizimana & Dr. Eugenia Nkechi Irechukwu

ISSN: 2617-359X

Brand Image and Consumer Decision Making in the Mobile Telecommunication Sector, Case Study of Tecno Mobile Ltd, Rwanda

*¹Gilbert Bizimana & ²Dr. Eugenia Nkechi Irechukwu

¹Student, Department, Business Administration, Mount Kenya University, Rwanda

²Lecturer, Department, Business Administration, Mount Kenya University, Rwanda

*Email of the corresponding author: Gilbert.Bizimana@transsion.com

How to cite this article: Bizimana G. & Irechukwu, E., N. (2023). Brand Image and Consumer Decision Making in the Mobile Telecommunication Sector, Case Study of Tecno Mobile Ltd, Rwanda. *Journal of Marketing and Communication*. Vol 6(1) pp. 66-73. <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t30123>

Abstract

A consumer's attitude towards a brand determines the behavior that the consumer will portray towards a particular brand and everything related to it. In the dynamic and fiercely competitive telecommunication industry, brand image plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer decision-making processes. This research explored the concept of brand image on consumer decision-making processes and specifically determined the effect of brand association, ascertained the effect of brand loyalty, established the effect of brand quality, and finally examined the effect of brand awareness on consumer decision-making at Tecno Mobile LTD, Rwanda in the context of the telecommunication industry. The study was anchored on various theories and models, such as the uncertainty reduction theory, brand equity model, and consumer decision-making model, which have been employed to understand the mechanisms through which brand image influences consumers' decision-making choices. The study adopted a descriptive research design and cross-section research design. The population of the study encompassed 88 respondents. Probability sampling techniques of simple random sampling and convenient sampling facilitated the census approach since the unit of observation is small. The data collected was analyzed employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. A significant and positive effect of brand association factors on consumer decision-making ($\beta_1=0.068$, $t=0.313$; $p>0.05$) was observed. Correspondingly, brand loyalty factors depicted a significant and positive effect on consumer decision-making ($\beta_2=0.088$, $t=0.773$; $p>0.05$). There was a positive and significant effect of brand quality factors on consumer decision-making ($\beta_3=0.730$, $t=.605$; $p<0.05$). Brand awareness factors also portrayed a significant and positive effect on consumer decision-making ($\beta_4=-0.051$, $t=-0.046$; $p>0.05$). The study found that all variables exhibited a significant and positive relationship with consumer decision-making. Every unit change in the beta values presented a unit change increase in consumer decision-making. This concluded that all the null hypotheses were rejected.

Keywords: *Brand Image, Consumer Decision Making, Mobile Telecommunication, Tecno Mobile Ltd, Rwanda*

1.0 Background of the Study

Consumer decision-making is a complex and multifaceted process that has been extensively studied in the fields of marketing and psychology. The process typically involves several stages: problem recognition, information search and evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Junior et al., 2019). A brand provides assurance about the unique characteristics of a product or service. The advent of e-commerce and digital marketing has transformed the consumer decision-making process. Online reviews, social media, and personalization algorithms have become integral to this process (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008). Information processing theories, such as the Information Processing Model and the Consumer Information Processing Model, explain how consumers gather and process information when making decisions. Culture, social norms, reference groups, and social networks significantly influence consumer decisions. A strong brand raises awareness of what a company represents and its offerings. Companies' success depends on the amount of information gathered about consumer purchasing attitudes. Maina (2016) explains that companies are interested in developing strong and effective brands to establish long-term customer relationships and ensure survival in a competitive market. In today's dynamic world, consumers continuously purchase a vast array of products and services (Rindell, 2008). Brands are now perceived as symbols of recognition, achievement, and status. Consumers perceive brands differently based on their preferences and past experiences, influencing their decisions directly or indirectly.

1.2 Problem Statement

Intense industry competition has driven firms to differentiate their brands and service offerings in today's dynamic environment. Consumer decision-making significantly impacts the profitability and survival of mobile companies. Therefore, it is crucial for these companies to evaluate their brands, ensuring they possess unique features and are effectively marketed to create a constant visibility that reminds consumers of their products and services. Predominantly, consumers experience uncertainty in interpersonal settings, which subsequently leads to uncertainty that generates cognitive stress. A well-rounded campaign to influence consumer decision-making in the market is based on the concept of marketing visibility, which involves selling the brand in a differentiable way. Studies by Singh (2021) assert that loyal customers are less likely to be swayed by competitive promotions and offers because their loyalty creates a psychological barrier against switching. According to Rehman and Zeb (2023) brand awareness also influences customers' cultural beliefs and behavior, affecting their purchase choices. On the other hand, it also gives businesses a competitive edge. It is in this context that the present study defines the interaction between consumer decision-making and brand image and investigates the influences of branding on consumer decision-making in Tecno, Rwanda with specific attention to brand association, brand loyalty, brand quality, and brand awareness.

1.3 The Objective of the Study

- i. Determine the effect of brand association on consumer decision making at Tecno mobile LTD, Rwanda
- ii. Ascertain the effect of brand loyalty on consumer decision making at Tecno mobile LTD, Rwanda
- iii. To establish the effect of brand quality on consumer decision making at Tecno mobile LTD, Rwanda

- iv. To examine the effect of brand awareness on consumer decision making at Tecno mobile LTD, Rwanda

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework in research refers to a collection of interconnected concepts, theories, and models that provide a structured foundation for understanding and investigating a particular phenomenon or problem. It serves as a guide for the researcher to develop hypotheses, collect data, and analyze findings within a specific framework of thought. In this study, the theoretical framework defines the interaction between consumer decision-making and brand image.

2.1.1 Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) is a communication theory developed by Charles R. Berger and Richard J. Calabrese in 1975 (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). This theory focuses on how individuals seek to reduce uncertainty in interpersonal interactions by gathering information about one another. It posits that reducing uncertainty is a primary motivation for human communication and that individuals engage in various strategies to achieve this goal. Predominantly, for the determination of this research, people experience uncertainty in interpersonal settings, uncertainty generates cognitive stress, when strangers meet, their primary concern is to reduce their uncertainty, high levels of uncertainty will result in information seeking, and interpersonal communication is the primary means of uncertainty reduction.

2.1.2 Keller's Brand Equity Model

Keller's Brand Equity Model, also known as the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model, is a framework developed by Kevin Lane Keller in the 1990s to understand and manage brand equity. This model provides a structured approach to building strong and valuable brands by focusing on the perceptions and attitudes of consumers. It emphasizes that a brand's value is ultimately determined by how customers think and feel about it.

2.1.3 Consumer Decision-Making Model

Consumer decision-making is a complex process that individuals go through when they are faced with the need to make a purchase or choose between different options. There are various models that attempt to explain this process, and one of the most well-known is the Consumer Decision-Making Model. It's important to note that this model is not always a linear process. Consumers may skip or repeat stages depending on the complexity of the purchase, their previous experiences, and individual differences. Additionally, external factors like culture, social influences, and psychological factors can also play a significant role in shaping consumer decision-making. Marketers and businesses often use consumer decision-making models to understand the buying process better and tailor their marketing strategies to influence consumers at each stage. By aligning their efforts with the stages of this model, they can create more effective marketing campaigns and enhance customer satisfaction.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

It examines the association amongst branding images and their impact on consumer decision making.

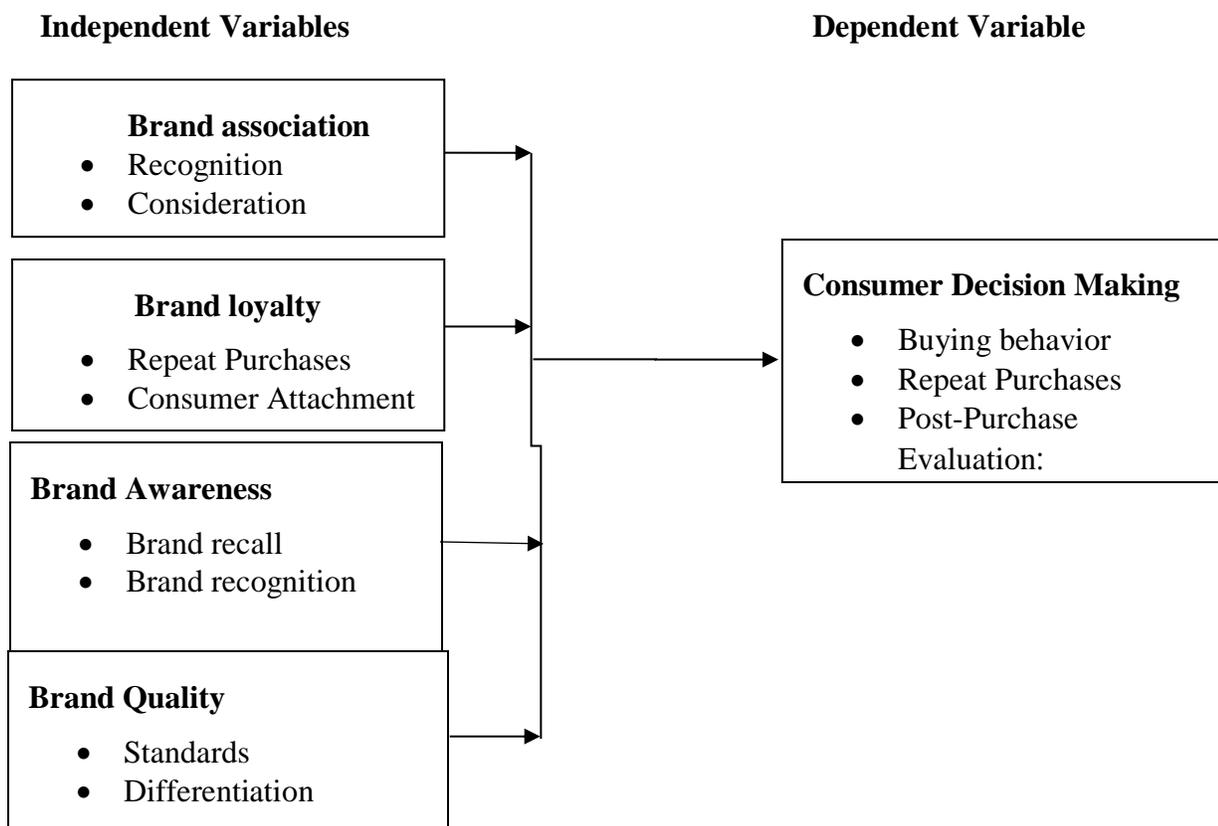


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0 Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive research design with a cross-sectional approach to observe phenomena and identify patterns between variables in a short time frame. The target population was 88 customers from Techno’s Outlets, selected conveniently. Simple random sampling and convenience sampling with census were employed due to the small population size. Primary data was collected through a mixed-method approach, using structured questionnaires and interviews. The study used Cronbach Alpha for reliability tests, SPSS for calculating alpha coefficients, and construct and content validity tests to ensure the accuracy of data collection tools. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis and t-tests, were used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses related to contract management practices and procurement performance.

4.0 Findings and discussion

The researcher conducted both correlation and regression analysis to establish the extent to which the dependent variable (consumer decision making) was affected by independent variable (brand image). Likert scales was used to measure their opinions with ranges of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

4.1 Relationship between Brand Association Factors and Consumer Decision Making

Table 1: Relationship between Brand Association Factors and Consumer Decision Making

Mode	R	R- Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.864 ^a	.747	.736	8.710

The study found that 73.6% variation on consumer decision making was explained by brand association factors. The correlation established a good fit of significance of 5% at level ($p=0.000 < 0.05$). From the significance it was therefore prudent to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 2: Coefficients- Brand Association

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	4.296	2.233			1.924	.067
Brand Association	.728	.088	.864		8.232	.000

The estimated model from Table 4.13 above is $Y=4.296+0.728X_1$. This point out that a variation of one unit in the brand association factors leads to a rise in 0.728 units in consumer decision making at 5% level of significance ($B_1=0.728$)

4.2 Relationship between Brand Loyalty and Consumer Decision Making

Adjusted $R^2=0.71$ this implies that performance of mobile firms was explained by Brand loyalty. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and this is a reflection of Resource- Based Theory which holds that a resource must fulfill four criteria in order to provide competitive advantage and sustainable performance. That is valuable, rare, non-imitability and non-substitutability and if the resource does not fulfill any of the criterion, then should be eliminated or reduced.

Table 3: Coefficients- Brand Loyalty

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	4.021	2.080		1.933	.075
Brand loyalty	.020	.073	.075	.271	.010

The results in show that: $Y=4.021+0.020X_2$. This implies that a unit change in the Brand loyalty factors results to an increase of 0.020 units in consumer decision making. As from the results, there is no significance in the brand loyalty factors and consumer decision making at 5% level of significance as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p=0.010>0.05$).

4.3 Relationship between Brand Quality Factors on the Consumer Decision Making

The study found that there was a strong positive relationship between quality factors and the consumer decision making (Adjusted $R^2= 0.851$). This indicates that 85.1% variation on the consumer decision making was explained by quality factors. This relationship was significant at 5% level of significance ($p=0.000<0.05$) as the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and conclude that quality factors are significant determinants in the consumer decision making Table 4 shows results of further study on the effect of quality factors on consumer decision making.

Table 4: Coefficients-Brand Quality Factors

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	3.650	1.728		2.112	.047
Quality	.763	.069	.926	11.010	.000

The study reveals $Y=3.650+0.763X_3$ which implies that an increase in one unit of quality factors leads to an increase of 0.763 units in consumer decision making at 5% significance level. The results show that p-value is less that the critical value of 0.05 ($p=0.000< 0.05$) and therefore quality factors has statistically significant effect on consumer decision making.

4.4 Relationship between Brand Awareness Factors and Consumer Decision Making

Adjusted $R^2=0.658$ figure from the results show a strong positive relationship between the awareness factors and consumer decision making. This is to say that 65% variation in consumer

decision making was explained by brand awareness factors at 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected

Table 5: Coefficients-Brand Awareness

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.287	2.690		1.222	.234
	Awareness	.792	.115	.820	6.874	.000

There was a unit increase in brand awareness factors as shown in the model $Y=3.287+0.792X_4$ thus to an increase in consumer decision making by 0.792 units at 5% level of significance ($p=0.000 < 0.05$). Hence, brand quality factors are a strong determinant of consumer decision making.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the review of literature and the study's findings, the research questions are answered in accordance with the convergence and divergence, and further conclusions and observations drawn from the findings are linked to the theory. In conclusion, mobile telecommunications companies should priorities brand image because it has a significant impact on consumer decision making. Firms can strengthen their brand image and position themselves positively in a competitive market by focusing on emotional associations, consistency, pricing, reputation management, innovation, customer support, and strategic collaborations. A high level of brand awareness influences consumer choices positively, resulting in increased brand loyalty and the formation of positive brand associations. In addition, the study shows the importance of marketing strategies in increasing brand awareness, emphasizing the importance of mobile telecommunications companies investing in effective marketing campaigns. As consumers in the mobile telecommunications industry face numerous options, brand awareness serves as a guiding force in assisting them in navigating their choices. A strong brand identity and effective marketing efforts are essential for establishing and maintaining high brand awareness, which has a significant impact on consumer decision making. Understanding these dynamics is critical for mobile telecommunications companies to develop effective marketing strategies and build strong brand equity, which will lead to increased market share and consumer loyalty. Future research in this area should continue to examine the intricacies of brand awareness and consumer decision making, particularly in the context of changing technology and consumer preferences. In the mobile telecommunications industry, brand awareness is a critical factor that influences consumer perceptions and choices. Advertising and digital marketing are critical tools for increasing brand awareness and, as a result, influencing consumer purchasing decisions. In the relationship between brand awareness and consumer choices, trust is critical. Consumers are more likely to choose trusted brands. Lastly, it has been found that there is some correlation between a brand and consumer behavior in terms of purchasing decisions. Consumers are well-informed about the various brands on the market, and as such, their judgement is critical when making a purchase decision, particularly for the first time.

6.0 Recommendations

Brand Awareness should be prioritized by mobile telecommunications companies. Continue to invest in advertising and digital marketing to raise brand awareness and reach a broader audience. To strengthen brand awareness, they should also maintain brand consistency and ensure that the brand message and identity are consistent across all marketing channels and touch points. They must build consumer trust by focusing on providing quality services and products, which will positively impact brand awareness while monitoring and analyzing consumer feedback. Monitor and analyses consumer feedback on an ongoing basis in order to adapt branding strategies and respond to changing consumer preferences. They should innovate and differentiate themselves even more. Innovate in terms of services and products to differentiate the brand and create unique selling propositions that can strengthen brand awareness while leveraging on social media to engage with consumers and create a strong online presence.

REFERENCES

- Berger, C. R., & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT).
- Cheung, C. M., Lee, M. K., & Rabjohn, N. (2008). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth: The adoption of online opinions in online customer communities. *Internet research*, 18(3), 229-247. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662240810883290>
- Junior, A. C., de Godoy Moreira, A., de Souza, C. G., de Oliveira, P. S. G., & de Oliveira, S. L. I. (2019). Buying Decision: The Choice of Restaurants to Have Dinner. *E-review of Tourism Research*, 16(5).
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
- Keller, K. L., & Aperia, T. (2017). Brand image and consumer decision making in telecommunications companies. *Journal of Brand Management*, 24(3), 250-266. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-017-0033-9>
- Maina, V. N. (2016). *Relationship Marketing and Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Large Pre-Hospital Service Companies in Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Rehman, F. U., & Zeb, A. (2023). Translating the impacts of social advertising on Muslim consumers buying behavior: the moderating role of brand image. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 14(9), 2207-2234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-07-2021-0231>
- Rindell, A. (2008). *Image Heritage-The Temporal Dimension in Consumers' Corporate Image Constructions*. Svenska handelshögskolan.
- Singh, K. (2021). *The impact of customer loyalty programmes on consumer decision-making and brand loyalty: A University of KwaZulu-Natal student perspective* (Doctoral dissertation).