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# Branding and Consumer Buying Decision Behavior of Leather Foot Wear Products: Perspectives from the United States of America

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## Abstract

This study examined the effect of branding on consumer buying decision behavior for local leather footwear products in United States. With the primary aim of identifying how branding elements such as brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging influence consumer purchasing choices. Utilizing an explanatory research design and a quantitative approach, the study employed a non-probability purposive sampling method to select a sample size of 384 consumers aged eighteen and above who had purchased locally produced leather footwear within the past five years. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The results indicated that branding elements, particularly brand name and packaging, have a significant positive impact on consumer buying decisions, while other elements like slogan and brand character showed a moderate influence. The findings highlighted the need for local manufacturers to prioritize effective branding strategies to enhance consumer loyalty and competitiveness in the market. Ultimately, this study provides actionable insights for both practitioners and policymakers, supporting the growth and sustainability of United States' leather industry, and contributes to the broader academic understanding of branding's role in shaping consumer behavior in emerging markets.

**Keywords*:*** *Branding, Consumer behavior, Buying decision, Brand element*

## 1.0 Introduction

The study examines the effect of branding on consumer buying decision behavior of local leather foot wear products in the context of United States. This is the introduction chapter, which was outline the main ideas of the study, its background, the significance of the research by defining the research questions and problem statement, formulating its objectives and assessment hypothesis, outlining the scope of the research, the challenges the researcher faced in conducting it, and how it was organized.

The leather footwear industry is a significant segment of the global market, contributing to economic development. The global leather footwear market is projected to reach approximately

$138.29 billion in 2024, with a (CAGR) of 3.1% from 2024 to 2030. This growth is driven by factors such as increasing disposable incomes, evolving fashion trends, and a burgeoning e commerce sector. The demand for durable and stylish leather shoes continues to rise, making it a significant segment within the broader apparel and leather products market, which itself is expected to grow from $1,045.45 billion in 2023 to $1,127.96 billion in 2024.

The leather industry plays a crucial role in economic development, with countries like United States emerging as key players. Within United States specifically, the leather industry is a vital part of the economy, contributing significantly to exports. The United States leather and leather products sector generated approximately $123.4 million in export revenue during the last nine months of the fiscal year 2023. Despite facing challenges such as limited production capacity and market access, the industry has significant potential due to United States' vast livestock resources and strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing production capabilities and market reach. In recent years, the sector has aimed for ambitious targets, including an export goal of $8,000 million by 2020, as outlined in national development plans. However, current export revenues remain relatively low compared to potential, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities for growth within this sector.

Globally, branding has been shown to significantly influence consumer buying decisions across various sectors. Research indicates that brand equity dimensions, such as brand awareness, loyalty, perceived quality, and brand associations, play a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions. A study by Khan et al. (2015) established a causal relationship between brand equity dimensions and purchase intention, highlighting that perceived quality and brand loyalty significantly influence consumer decisions. This underscores the importance of branding as a strategic tool in competitive markets, where consumers often rely on brand reputation to guide their purchasing choices. In Africa, the impact of branding on consumer behavior is increasingly recognized as economies grow and consumer awareness rises. A study by Shafi and Madhavaiah (2013) emphasized that brand equity dimensions significantly affect consumer satisfaction and loyalty in various African contexts. Their findings suggest that consumers are more likely to choose brands that they perceive as trustworthy and high-quality. This trend is particularly relevant in emerging markets where local brands compete with international ones, necessitating effective branding strategies that resonate with local consumers' values and expectations. Within United States, research has demonstrated a growing understanding of the relationship between branding and consumer behavior.

A study conducted by Haymanot (2020) focused on the impact of branding on consumer buying behavior for local leather footwear products in Addis Ababa. The findings revealed that branding elements such as brand name, logo, and packaging significantly influenced consumers' purchasing decisions. This research highlights the need for local producers to develop strong brand identities to compete effectively against imported goods and meet the evolving preferences of United States consumers. As consumers become increasingly discerning, branding has emerged as a critical factor influencing purchasing decisions. Branding encompasses the creation of a unique identity that resonates with consumers, incorporating elements such as logos, messaging, and overall customer experience. According to Muñiz (2015), branding is defined as the process of giving meaning to an organization, company, product, or service by creating and shaping a brand in consumers' minds. It involves developing a unique identity that distinguishes a brand from its competitors and fosters emotional connections with customers.

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### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers." Effective branding not only differentiates products but also fosters emotional connections and trust among consumers, which are essential for driving sales and loyalty (Shopify, 2024). Consumer buying decision behavior regarding leather footwear products involves the processes and factors that influence how consumers make purchasing choices. This behavior is shaped by various elements, including brand perception, product quality, price, and individual preferences. Research indicates that emotional value associated with brands significantly effects consumer decisions, as consumers often seek products that resonate with their personal identity and social status (Getaneh, 2018). Additionally, factors such as income level, age, and gender play crucial roles in determining consumer preferences for specific footwear brands (Havkinz, et al., 2006). The consumer market in United States reflects a blend of traditional values and modern influences, making it essential to understand how branding effects consumer behavior in this context.

## 2.0 literature Review

This study aimed at exploring the specific effect of branding on consumer buying decision behavior regarding leather footwear products in United States, providing insights that can inform marketing strategies for local manufacturers. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for local businesses seeking to enhance their market presence but also for policymakers aiming to support the growth of the leather industry in United States. By examining the interplay between branding and consumer behavior, this research will contribute valuable knowledge to both academic and practical applications in marketing within the leather footwear sector. In general, the leather footwear market is poised for substantial growth globally, driven by consumer demand and evolving market dynamics. However, to realize this potential, the United States leather industry must overcome challenges related to production capacity and export revenues. By addressing these issues and leveraging its strengths, United States can significantly contribute to both regional economic development and the global leather market. Understanding the key drivers of consumer behavior was enable businesses in United States to tailor their branding strategies effectively to meet consumer needs. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the effect of branding on consumer buying decision behavior of local leather foot wear products.

## 3.0 Literature Review

According to Chopra et al. (2012), research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted. They specifically indicated that a research design is the arrangement of condition for collecting and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. A research design is the arrangement for a precise statement of goals and justification. This study were established Explanatory /causal/ relationship between variables. It was causal research type, Explanatory /causal/ research to explain the relationship between the branding and purchasing decision. Quantitative data type was employed in this study, since mainly statistical analysis is based on quantitative data using appropriate measurement of their variables and it can be measured numerically. Quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post positivist claims for developing knowledge and employing strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003).

The study's target population was those who use local leather foot wear products in United States, and bought a leather foot wear product within the last one year period. Both men and

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women customers who had bought local leather footwear products within the specified time period were the unit of analysis. More over all of the respondents included in the study attended the age of eighteen. This is mainly because in our society children and youngsters below the specified age group may have no chance to choose a product by themselves. They may fall under the influence of their parents. Total population: 496,450 among them: males: 233,770, and females: 262,680. Based on their age: below 18=30%, above 18=70% Source: (United States Mayer office planned and development department, 2024). The study was used a sample of individuals living in United States above 18 years of age. Within the target population, there are 496, 450 people who live in debark city. Among them, 30% of the population is under the age of 18, and the other 70% of the respondents are above the age of 18. So, for this study, the researcher was used 70% (347, 515) of the population. The researcher were using a non-probability sampling method, and in non-probability sampling, purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents because Purposive sampling offers several key advantages, including the ability to gather targeted insights by selecting participants with specific characteristics relevant to the study, which facilitates a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and rich qualitative data collection. This method is also cost and time-efficient, as it focuses on individuals most likely to provide valuable information, optimizing resource use and reducing data collection time. Additionally, purposive sampling allows for flexibility in research design, enabling researchers to adapt their selection criteria as the study progresses, which enhances the overall depth of investigation.

The study was used primary quantitative data. The primary data was collected from target audiences through survey. In order to draw findings or make defensible decisions, researcher gather primary data with the intention of evaluating and interpreting it. Using primary data has the benefit of offering current, first-hand knowledge that is directly related to the goals of the study. It gives researchers command over the process of gathering data, guaranteeing the accuracy and dependability of the information. A questionnaire was prepared for the respondents it is the main primary data was used in the research.

The instrument that was used to collect data is questionnaire. According to Alvin & Ann (2020) survey methods, which usually include large sample sizes, allow the systematic, inexpensive, and efficient collection of huge volumes of data in comparison to observation or other qualitative methods. In addition, the questionnaire was simple and convenient for participants, and it was quick and affordable distributed to a large number of cases throughout a wide geographic area, and the language of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents were used in Amharic version; the place for distributing the questionnaire was at their home and office, and the method for collecting the questionnaire was the same as distributing the questionnaire by going to their home and office. In order to investigate the effects of branding on consumer purchasing decision for leather foot wear products, the researcher was used quantitative analytic methods for statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis, t-tests & ANOVA. The quantitative analysis's results were interpreted by using confidence intervals, effect sizes, and statistical significance.

**4.0 Findings and Discussion**

Regression analysis is conducted to be familiar with how much the independent variable explains the dependent variable. Multiple linear regressions were conducted to know how independent variables influence the dependent variable as correlation alone does not imply that one variable causes the other. Brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging were used as the independent variables while Consumer buying decision behavior was used as the dependent variable. An independent variable is an input or assumption that is changed to assess the effect on a dependent variable.

The regression analysis is used to see how far the dependent variable can be explained by the various independent variables. To test the hypotheses set of the model, there is a need to find out if the independent variables are significant predictors of the dependent variable. To test these relationships in line with the stated research hypotheses, regression analysis is used in this thesis. Accordingly, with a regression analysis, it can be determined whether the independent variables explain a significant variation in the dependent variable, including whether a relationship exists. Multiple regression is a very powerful tool because it tells us what factors are related to the dependent variable, how each factor influences the dependent variable (the sign), and how much each factor influences it (the size of bi) (Burns & Veeck, 2020). And it measured by adjusted R square.

The following table provides a summary of the model about R, R square, adjusted R square, and the standard error of the estimate, which can be used to determine how much the dependent variable is explained by predicting variables under the study.

**Table 1: Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .920a | .847 | ,845 | .44561 | 1.935 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Packaging, Character, Logo, Slogan, Brand Name

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Decision Behavior

Source: SPSS output

The model summary in the above table provides some important insights into the regression model being analyzed. First, the R value of 0.920 indicates a strong positive correlation between the predictor variables (brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging) and the outcome variable, so this predictor variables are good indicators of the outcome variable. Second, the R square value of 0.847 indicates that 84.7% of the variance in the outcome variable can be explained by the predictor variables. This is a relatively high amount of variance explained, which suggests that the model is a good fit. Third, the adjusted R square value of 0.845 is similar to the R square value but considers the number of predictor variables in the model. This value suggests that the model is still a good fit even when accounting for the number of predictor variables. Finally, the standard. Error of the estimated value of 0.446 indicates the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. Lower values of this parameter indicate a better fit for the model. The remaining 15.5% are explained by other variables outside of this model.

**Model Fitness**

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows whether the regression model is significantly better at explaining the dependent variable than using the mean as the best predictor. The table below shows the statistical significance of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable.

**Table 2: Analysis of Variance**

| Model | Sum of square | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 383.917 | 5 | 76.783 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 69.299 | 349 | .199 | |
| | total | 453.216 | 354 | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Decision Behavior

b. Predictors: (Constant), Packaging, Character, Logo, Slogan, Brand Name

Source: SPSS output

Similarly, the ANOVA in Table shows the overall significance and acceptability of the predictors from a statistical perspective. As the significance value of F statistics shows a value of 386.692 and a p-value (.000), which is less than p<0.05, the model is significant. This indicates that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance.

**Regression Coefficients**

The regression coefficient is the constant 'b' in the regression equation that tells about the change in the value of the dependent variable corresponding to the unit change in the independent variables. The following table displays the estimated coefficients of the multiple regression of Consumer buying decision behavior against the independent variables for the sample of 355 customers. The next table provides details of the model parameters (the beta values) and the significance of these values.

**Table 3: Regression**

| **Model** | | **Unstandardized coefficient** | | **Standard coefficient** | **t** | **sign** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **B** | **Std error** | **Beta** | | |
| 1 | Constant | .571 | .111 | | 5.130 | .000 |
| | Brand name | .570 | .060 | .431 | 9.476 | .000 |
| | Logo | .289 | .042 | .272 | 6.896 | .000 |
| | Character | .128 | .052 | .101 | 2.462 | .014 |
| | Slogan | .250 | .042 | .241 | 6.033 | .000 |
| | Packaging | .178 | .030 | .173 | 6.003 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Decision Behavior

Source: SPSS output

According to Table the regression standardized coefficients for the independent variables, i.e., Brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging are (0.431, 0.272, 0.101, 0.241, and 0.173) respectively. Their significance levels are (0.000, 0.000, 0.014, 0.00, and 0.000), respectively, which are less than 0.05. This indicates a significant a significant relationship between them and the dependent variable (Consumer buying decision behavior). All variables have a positive effect on consumer buying decision behavior. Since the coefficients of the predictor variables are statistically significant at less than five percent, all alternative hypotheses were accepted.

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Factor = **β**1 Variable1 + **β**2 Variable2 +...... + **β**n Variable n + ε Y is the outcome variable, **β**1 is the coefficient of the first predictor (X1), **β**2 is the coefficient of the second predictor ($X_2$), bn is the coefficient of the nth predictor (Xn), and ε is the difference between the predicted and the observed value of Y. Whereas in the model, it is taken as:

$$\mathbf{Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon}$$

The standardized coefficients B column on regression coefficient table gives us the coefficients of the independent variables in the regression equation, including all the predictor variables as indicated below.

CBDB=.571(C) + .431(BN) +.272(L) +.101(Ch) +.241(S) +.173(P) + ε

Whereas: C= Constant

BN = Brand Name

L = Logo

Ch= Character

S = Slogan

P = Packaging

The SPSS output in the above table provides details of the model parameters (the beta values) and the significance of these values. The standardized beta coefficient column shows the contribution that an individual variable makes to the model. The beta coefficient helps to see the direction and strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Accordingly, since the sign of the β coefficient for the independent variables is positive, there is a positive relationship between the independent variables. The beta values tell us about the relationship between Consumer buying decision behavior and each predictor. If the value is positive, we can tell that there is a positive relationship between the predictor and the outcome, whereas a negative coefficient represents a negative relationship. For this, all of the predictors have positive b-values, indicating positive relationships with Consumer buying decision behavior.

The results shows that the standardized beta coefficient column shows the contribution that an individual variable makes to the model. Thus, among the five explaining variables, the largest effect on Consumer buying decision behavior is explained by Brand name (.431), followed by Logo (.272), Slogan (.241), Packaging (.173), and the last one character (.101). As we can see, if the value of variables in the column labeled Sig. is less than 0.05, then the predictor is making a significant contribution to the model. The smaller the value of Sig and the larger the value of the greater the contribution of that predictor.

Standardized coefficient B, or beta weight, is the average amount that the dependent variable increases or decreases when the independent variables decrease or increase by one unit, respectively (all other independent variables are held constant). Therefore, standardized beta coefficients are interpreted as follows:

It means a one-unit increase in Brand name was have a 0.431 unit increase in Consumer buying decision behavior. (all other independent variables are held constant), a one-unit increase in Logo was have a 0.272 unit increase in Consumer buying decision behavior (all other independent variables are held constant), a one-unit increase in Character was have a 0.101 unit increase in Consumer buying decision behavior (all other independent variables are held constant), and a one-unit increase in Slogan was have a 0.241 unit increase in Consumer buying decision behavior, (all other independent variables are held constant); a one-unit increase in

Packaging was have a 0.173 unit increase in Consumer buying decision behavior (all other independent variables are held constant).

Generally, the beta coefficient of the study further shows that all explaining variables have statistically significant influence on Consumer buying decision behavior. All of those variables (brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging) have a positive and significant effect on Consumer buying n United States.

**Hypothesis Testing and Discussion**

Hypothesis testing is the method of testing whether claims or hypotheses regarding a population are likely to be true. The goal of hypothesis testing is to determine the likelihood that a population parameter, such as the mean, is likely to be true. In this study, the researcher developed five hypotheses to check whether these five predictors (brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging) had significant and positive relationships with consumer buying decision behavior.

The researcher compared these hypotheses against the p-values analyzed using the regression method as follows: To test the hypotheses of this research, multiple linear regression technique was used. The individual contribution of each predictor to the model is shown by the estimated B value in relation to the t value. Hence, if the value corresponding to the B value is significant at $P<0.05$, it indicates that the predictor is significantly contributing to the model. The smaller the value of '*p*' and the larger the value of't', the greater the contribution of the predictor (Field, 2008). To accept or reject a hypothesis, the standardized coefficient β value shown in Table important, along with the significant value. Hence, the formulated hypothesis is either supported or not supported by taking the coefficient of correlation table, which signals strength and dimension, along with the coefficient of regression analysis β value.

**Table 4: Hypothesis Testing**

| Model | | t | Sig. | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (Constant) | 5.130 | .000 | Accepted |
| | Brand Name | 9.476 | .000 | Accepted |
| | Logo | 6.896 | .000 | Accepted |
| | Character | 2.462 | .014 | Accepted |
| | Slogan | 6.033 | .000 | Accepted |
| | Packaging | 6.003 | .000 | Accepted |
| | 6.003 | | | |
| | .000 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Decision Behavior

Source: SPSS output

**$H_1$:** Brand name has a significant and positive effect on consumer buying decision behavior for leather footwear products.

The brand name predictor's regression analysis shows a t-value of 9.476 and a p-value of 0.000, both of which are significantly below the significance level of 0.05. This suggests a statistically significant result. The positive standardized coefficient (β) further demonstrates that consumers' purchasing decisions for leather footwear items rise in accordance with improvements in brand awareness or perception. Because a strong brand name promotes quality, reliability, and prestige, this shows that customers place a high value on brand recognition and reputation when making judgments about what to buy. As a result, marketing tactic s that increase brand equity and awareness can successfully affect customer purchases in this market.

**$H_2$:** Brand logo has a significant and positive effect on consumer buying decision behavior for leather footwear products.

With a t-value of 6.896 and a p-value of 0.000, the brand logo predictor showed a statistically significant positive correlation with consumer purchasing behavior. Customers can recognize and distinguish the brand from rivals with the use of the logo, which acts as a visual signal. A distinctive and eye-catching logo can improve brand recall and build emotional bonds, both of which have positive effects on purchasing decisions. In order to draw in and keep consumers in the leather footwear sector, this research highlights how crucial it is to invest in logo design and consistent brand images as part of the entire branding strategy.

**$H_3$:** Brand character has a significant and positive effect on consumer buying decision behavior for leather footwear products.

Although brand character may have a lesser effect size than brand name and logo, it is still a significant predictor with a t-value of 2.462 and a p-value of 0.014. The personality traits or human-like characteristics that are associated with a brand, such excitement, sophistication, or dependability, are referred to as brand character. Customers' purchase selections may be influenced by these qualities if they align with their goals or self-image. The positive correlation implies that consumers choose businesses whose personalities complement their beliefs and way of life, which makes personality building and brand narrative essential elements of marketing campaigns.

**$H_4$:** Slogans has a significant and positive effect on consumer buying decision behavior for leather footwear products.

With a t-value of 6.033 and a p-value of 0.000, the slogan predictor has a strong positive influence on customer purchasing decisions. In a memorable phrase, a carefully developed slogan captures the promise, values, or unique selling proposition of the brand. It can arouse feelings or trust in customers and aid in reinforcing brand identification. The significant influence suggests that slogans are crucial in influencing consumer attitudes and promoting buying habits. Therefore, brands should concentrate on coming up with memorable, consistent, and meaningful slogans that appeal to their target market.

**$H_5$:** Packaging has a significant and positive effects on consumer buying decision behavior for leather footwear products.

Additionally, packaging shows a strong positive influence, as evidenced by its t-value of 6.003 and p-value of 0.000. In addition to providing product protection, packaging is a marketing technique that draws attention, conveys quality, and sets the product apart from others on the shelf. Packaging that is attractive, useful, and environmentally friendly can improve the customer experience overall and boost sales. The significant result demonstrates the importance of packaging design and innovation in influencing consumer purchase decisions, particularly in a competitive sector like leather footwear.

Based on previous studies, Brand name has been shown to increase brand equity by improving recognition and trust, which in turn positively influences purchase intentions (Keller, 2013; Aaker, 1996; Kotler & Keller, 2016); Brand logos are powerful visual identifiers that facilitate brand differentiation and evoke emotional responses, strengthening consumer attitudes toward the brand (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Bottomley & Doyle, 2006; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008); and brand character or personality plays a crucial role in aligning the brand with consumers' self-concept, fostering emotional connections and loyalty (Aaker, 1997; Fournier, 1998; Malär et al., 2011).Additionally, Slogans promote brand recall and likability, which in turn influences consumer behavior and purchasing decisions (Percy & Rossiter, 1992; Lee & Schumann, 2004; Keller, 2003). Lastly, by drawing attention, communicating quality, and generating emotional reactions, packaging affects consumer perceptions, boosting preference and purchase intent (Underwood & Klein, 2002; Silayoi & Speece, 2007; Orth & Malkewitz, 2008).

Collectively, these studies corroborate the considerable and beneficial effects of brand name, logo, character, slogan, and packaging on consumer purchase choice behavior shown in the current research on leather footwear items.

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