PRODUCT QUALITY INNOVATION AND CUSTOMER REPURCHASE INTENTION: A CASE OF CUSTOMERS OF STAR LARGER BEER BY NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC, IN ENUGU, SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined product quality innovation and repurchase intention in Nigeria brewery industry: a study of customers of star larger beer by Nigerian Breweries Plc. In Enugu, South-East, Nigeria. The objective is to investigate the relationship between product quality and repurchase intention. The study adopted survey research design and customers of NB Plc in Enugu, South-East, Nigeria represent the population. A total of 280 customers were used for the analysis. Questionnaire designed with 5-point Likert Scale were administered to the consumers. The work adopted descriptive statistics and was used to present data generated from respondents. Hypothesis was tested with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient through the use of SPSS. The findings revealed that there is significant relationship between product quality and repurchase intention among the consumers of brewery products in Nigeria. The study recommended to NB Plc to increase their customer satisfaction by improving on their products in the area of product quality.*
Keywords: Product innovation; repurchase intention; customers; star; Nigerian breweries

INTRODUCTION

The global market today has become so diversified that consumers have more interests in new things, because their needs and tastes are constantly changing. These changes in their consumption pattern therefore, calls for firms to adapt the use of innovation, as possible and significant way to satisfy their consumers. In market environments, firms compete for consumers, most especially in technology evolving global markets (Nemati, Khan & Iftikhar 2010 cited by Ajimati, 2012). Enzing (2009) noted that beverage companies are increasingly confronted with important strategic and operational questions as the dynamism in their environment constantly created new challenges. These challenges stimulate the management of many beer companies to become more innovative.

Innovation has widely been accepted as a vital strategic factor which enables brands to establish and maintain their competitive advantages (Moon, Miller & Kim, 2010 cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015). Being the first mover while accessing new market with new and innovative products would provide the brand with better opportunities to build positive customer base,

and it also can save it from intense competition (Beverland, Napoli, & Farrelly, 2010 cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015). Obviously, a brand which frequently introduces highly innovative products can protect itself from price competition. Additionally, innovative products can largely improve future purchases and enhance brand performance (Rosenbusch, Brinckmann, & Bausch, 2011, cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015). In highly competitive environments, it is clearly evident that customers' needs and requirements are continuously changing while thinking to purchase a certain product category; the decisions are established according to their perceptions of product innovations in terms of product quality, product design and attributes (Moon et al, 2010 cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015).

The focus on product innovation and its growth is so prevalent in a number of organizations that their brand images are inherently attached with product innovation offering (Henard & Dacin, 2010 cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015). These organizations continuously advertise and largely promote the perception among the audience that they are innovative and frequently introduce creative products to satisfy market needs. For example, the performance of the brand can increase when it initiates a product with innovative feature and make enormous investment in the marketing of that new product (Kaiser, 2011 cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015). Particularly, the ability of an organization to innovate is very essential for its continued presence in adapting to rapidly changing environments (Kotler & Keller, 2006 cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015).

There are a lot of innovations companies can embark on. Companies can embark on process, organizational, technological, marketing, and product innovations. Some may decide to engage on any of these innovations, for example, product innovation. The reason companies are usually embarking on product innovation is to ensure that their consumers are satisfied with their products. Product innovation is the development and introduction of a new product to the market or the modification of existing products in terms of function, quality consistency, or appearance (Liao, Fei, & Chen (2007) cited in Kyei & Bayoh, 2017; cited in Jalal & Haim, 2015)

The issue of quality in a product has been of great importance in the business sphere as it goes to the very essence of survival for business dealing in products. The basic assumption that both manufacturers and consumers have is that value in a product is derived from the products very quality (Achana & Shrivatava, 2013). The quality of a product implies the hidden and the apparent characteristics of the product that the customer looks for in a product. The product can be conceived under four approaches; these are the transcendent approach; the consumer-based approach; the manufacturer-based approach and the value-based approach (Tsoltsou, 2005 cited in Olga, 2015).

The transcendent approach to product quality underscores all the other approaches and conceives some form of innate excellence in the standards and value of the product. This high value standard is what the manufacturer endeavors to put in a product and what the consumer aims to derive from a product after purchasing it. Therefore, the product quality is highly imperative when it comes to (customer satisfaction) repurchase intention (Ali, 2013).

Customers are always looking for value for their money in both the services and products that they purchase (Vadlamudi, 2010 cited in Olga, 2015). Product quality is among the most overriding factors in customer satisfaction (Nderitu & Ngugi, 2014 cited in Olga, 2015). Poor quality products precipitate low satisfaction levels for customers while high quality products have the effect of bringing about high satisfaction levels (Warui & Ngugi, 2013 cited in Olga, 2015). The user-based, after use evaluation occurs when the customer assesses the

product based on products ability to meet or surpass the customer's expectations (Kotler, Keller, Ang, Leong & Tan, 2009 cited in Olga, 2015).

Jakpar and Na (2012) cited in Olga, (2015), said that there are two aspects of the product that can be discerned: the quality of design and the quality of conformance. The quality of design implies devising the product to meet the needs and the desires of the customers. The extent to which they meet certain standard designation is what is conceived as the quality of conformance (Jakpar & Na, 2012). These two features are crucial in determining the extent to which the customers will perceive the product as satisfying their expectations (Warui & Ngugi, 2013). Therefore, the customers' overall perception of the products satisfaction is pinned on the extent to which the customer perceives the salient and specific qualities of the product as satisfying. In other words, overall satisfaction draws from the salient component features of the product (Chakraborty, Srivatava & Marshall, 2007 cited in Olga, 2015).

According to Oliver (2007), there is also value-based dimension to customer satisfaction with respect to quality, which is value-based. The value-based approach to customer satisfaction compares product quality against performance at a given satisfactory price for the customer or conformance. The customer uses the prices as the unit of measuring the quality of the product (Jakpar & Na, 2012). The value-based approach thus conceives product quality as the ability of the product to meet customer needs and desires or expectations in general at a specific price, which is reasonable for the customer to think of repeat purchase (Achana & Srivatava, 2013).

Repeat purchase can be ascribed to consistent patronage that is burnt out of customers' satisfaction with a specific product from the same organisation. It can also be seen as the buying of a product or services by a consumer of the same brand. Repeat purchase customers are customers who are satisfied emotionally, intellectually, physically by an organisation offering which could be in form of a product which exceeds their expectations (Forster, Grant, Idson, & Higgins 2011). Repeat purchase in another context could be referred to as re-patronage intentions," according to Wirtz and Lwin (2009) cited in Agbaeze, Nnabuko, Ifediora & Ekoja, (2017), it is the willingness of an individual to re-patronize a services organisation. In a relationship built on trust, commitment is engendered and then becomes a major predictor of future purchases. Customers regularly visit a particular firm based on their perception of trust that is, they believe that the company has their best interest at heart when providing a service, (Caudill & Murphy 2000 cited in Agbaeze, Nnabuko, Ifediora & Ekoja, 2017).

A repeat patronage is often a measure of loyalty to a brand by consumers, higher repeat patronage value means a well retained, satisfied customer, also higher repeat patronage value drives higher customer value, which means a better top line in the loyalty ladder (Gee, Coates and Nicholson 2008 cited in Agbaeze, Nnabuko, Ifediora & Ekoja, 2017). Higher repeat patronage value can mean higher profitability as it does not include new customer acquisition costs; organization can take some actions to ensure repeat patronage of either their products or services by listening to customer comments, suggestion, feedback, complaints, about the product or services they are offering, by also providing value adding services to the customer experience Ramakrishnan (2006 cited in Agbaeze, Nnabuko, Ifediora and Ekoja, 2017. Repeat

patronage is the prime goal a company can set for its products since it is consumer reference to patronage a given brand in a product category. Customer repeat patronage is a good indicator of a long-term business sustainability and profitability of an organisation; this is because it points to customer satisfaction and retention (Gee, Coates & Nicholson 2008 cited in Agbaeze, Nnabuko, Ifediora and Ekoja, 2017). Hence, the extent to which a customer will patronise the beverage (beer) drinks of producers depends on how the customer perceives the product and how the customer also thinks and feels that the price, promotions, packaging and the product quality (taste) will give him/her the maximum satisfaction.

Nigerian Breweries Plc, one of the key players in the beverage industry in Nigeria has in the past engaged on product innovation to better reposition their company and to retain their market share position and equally maintain their consumer base by giving them products that will give maximum satisfaction. Nigerian Breweries Plc over the years has developed new or innovated some of their existing products. Products like ACE Desire a Zobo flavoured alcoholic drink and Stella lager beer, Star Radler, Stella lager beer, were developed and introduced into the Nigeria beverage market while some existing ones like Life lager beer, 33 lager beer, Gulder Ultimate lager beer and Star larger beer which is currently being studied have undergone some innovations. All these efforts made in developing or innovating new product (s) is to ensure that customer satisfaction is guaranteed.

The essence of any business is to satisfy the consumers and when the consumers are satisfied there will be repeat purchase and when there is repeat purchase the company will in turn make profits and retain their market share position and consumers may become loyal to the company and their products. Modern consumers are so sophisticated in demanding; they know exactly what they want. They do not want only a product but also something that will give them maximum satisfaction or solve their problem. This satisfaction could be achieved by given them good (appearance, aroma, flavor and taste/mouthfeel and alcohol content) good qualities, which could lead to repurchase if well priced. In recent time, Nigerian Breweries Plc in her quest to maintain her market share position in the brewery industry introduced some new products but those products failed to stand the test of time probably because it is believed that consumers did not get the desired satisfaction they wanted from the products.

Product quality as one of the aspects of product innovation could probably be attributed to one of the reasons consumers were satisfied or not satisfied with some products that were produced by the Nigerian Breweries Plc that failed or not doing well in the market. As we know, product quality is very important for consumers. They are ready to pay high prices, but in return, they expect best-quality products. But if they are not satisfied with the quality of product of company, they will purchase from the competitors which could lead to the failure of such products, Sultana (2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The underpinning theory for this paper is the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory. This theory is the most promising theoretical framework for the appraisal of customer satisfaction which helps the authors to drive their point. This Theory was proposed by Oliver in 1980. The theory implies that customer purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about the anticipated performance. The expectation level then becomes a standard against which the product is judged. That is, once the product has been used, outcomes are compared against expectations. If the outcome matches the expectation, confirmation occurs.

Disconfirmation occurs where there is a difference between expectations and outcomes. A customer is either satisfied or dissatisfied as a result of positive or negative difference between expectations and perceptions.

Thus, when product performance is better than what the customer had initially expected, there are a positive disconfirmation between expectations and performance which results in satisfaction, while when product performance is as expected, there is a confirmation between expectations and perceptions which results in satisfaction. In contrast, when product performance is not as good as what the consumer expected, there is a negative disconfirmation between expectations and perceptions which causes dissatisfaction. Expectancy-confirmation theory assumes that expectations, coupled with perceived performance, lead to post-purchase satisfaction (repurchase intention). This effect is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation between expectations and performance. If a product quality outperforms expectations (positive disconfirmation) post-purchase satisfaction will result. If a product quality falls short of expectations (negative disconfirmation) the consumer is likely to be dissatisfied.

Product quality can also be defined as an extent to which a product succeeds to meet the needs or expectations of the customer (Lemmink & Kasper, 1994; cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013). According to product-based approach, the quality is the root of economics and the variation in quality of product are the reflection for differentiation in quality (Garvin, 1984 cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013).

Product quality is one of the important tools to maintain the competitive advantage in market which is designed to undergo the product development process to achieve the consumer satisfaction and upgrade the quality in performance (Benson et al., 1991 cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013; Flynn et al., 1994 cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013). To be more specific and precise, further study from different researcher shows that along with the competitive advantage the product quality is also a basis for strategic advantage, which implies that an enhanced performance can be determined when a product quality is improved (Daniel & Reitsperger, 1991; Terziovski et al. 1999 cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013). Ultimately, this suggests that a real product quality is/should be visible in an improved quality performance (Dunk, 2002 cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013). According to Garvin (1987) cited in Hussain & Ranabhat quality is primarily stated as strategic question which governs or helps to control the development of product design together with its features or options. Every firm is objected towards achieving a world class performance, and for that they adopt a method and set the strategic objectives in order to improve the product, process and service quality (Adam, 1992 cited in Hussain and Ranabhat 2013). In addition, Hill (1994) cited in Hussain & Ranabhat states that product quality is significant factor for firm's development and for gaining sustainable competitive advantage. It involves measuring the good level of the product based on the development effort, satisfaction of customer needs, robustness and reliability of the product to be sufficient enough to gain market share and still be affordable for customers to pay for it (Iwu 2010 cited in Ajimati, 2012).

Moreover, Garvin forwards his view that the past experience with a firm and its product plays a vital role in maintaining the customer impressions about its products. He states that "high quality means pleasing consumers, not just protecting them from annoyances. He suggests that with respect to quality management and the related design of products or services, management needs to think strategically about quality, and focus on those dimensions that support their strategic objectives and are interrelated to each other and influencing customers for its product and services. When an individual makes a purchase decision, the primary objective begins with the motive of having a satisfaction from the product they purchase.

This is also related to the character of "performance" proposed by Garvin from customer perspectives. Supporting to the given dimensions by Garvin, other several researchers have made the empirical investigations on it. For example Stone-Romero et al., (1997) cited in Hussain and Ranabhat, (2013) studies provide support to the multi-dimensional nature of product quality; Paulson-Gjerde and Slotnick (1997) cited in Hussain and Ranabhat, (2013) also forwarded a multidimensional approach to study manufacturing quality; (Ahire and Dreyfus, 2000 cited in Hussain and Ranabhat, 2013) find that the management of product design is equally important as the management of process quality(Sousa and Voss 2002 cited in Hussain and Ranabhat, (2013) point out that future research should focus upon the fundamental nature of an organization's products and use measures that capture the relevant dimensions for those products. Thus, we can assume that the Garvin's proposed dimensions are a knowledgeable kit for studying a product quality.

Furthermore, in addition to the characteristics of product defined by Garvin (1987) cited in Hussain and Ranabhat, (2013) and Hussain and Ranabhat, (2013) link two new dimensions "form" and "function" to product usability. Therefore, product form can be defined as the customer's image and impression of the product. Here, product functions are relevant to the product's performance. However, these both dimensions are essential in creation of value and maintaining customer satisfaction (Roozenburg & Eckels, 1995 cited in Hussain & Ranabhat, 2013).

Jalal and Haim (2015) examined the effect of product innovation on relationship quality in automotive industry in Kedah, Malaysia. The automotive sector in Malaysia was selected to conduct this study whereby the data were collected from passenger car users in Northern region of the country. The data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (AMOS). The findings revealed that the research model fits the data significantly and achieved the recommended values for all fit indices. In particular, the findings supported the significant positive effect of brand satisfaction on brand trust. Consequently, brand trust has significant positive effect on brand commitment. Moreover, the findings indicated that product innovation has significant positive effect on relationship quality and its dimensions; brand trust, brand commitment, and brand satisfaction. The findings also demonstrated that the main contribution of this study lies in the examination of product innovation as an antecedent to relationship quality and its dimensions rather than looking on the frequently used antecedents. These results and their implications along with avenues for further research are also elaborated in this study.

Thus, the authors proposed this hypothesis;

H_{O1}. there is no significant relationship between product quality and repurchase intention.

METHODOLOGY

The data was gathered through questionnaire involving Nigerian Breweries Plc customers who have drank Star larger beer. The respondents were randomly selected from Enugu metropolis, South-East, Nigeria. As such the study relied on the Nigerian Breweries Plc customers who were available on request. The choice of Enugu from South-East was because Nigerian Breweries Plc situated their brewery plant in the state and the company has been embarking on product innovation ever since then. Also, this city is dominated by civil servants who take out time for relaxation. The questionnaire administered to the customers contained measures of product quality, product packaging, brand name, customer loyalty and repurchase retention as well as questions used to elicit demographic information.

In all, 600 customers were approached. The refusal rate was above 34.6%. 392 respondents agreed to participate but only 280 were valid for final analysis. The rest were not used for related incomplete data, responses bias and inappropriate responses. Age distribution of respondents: 86 (30.7%) are between 18-27 **years of age; 118 (42.1%) fall within 28-45 years of age; while 76** (27.1) are within 46 years and age bracket. The implication of this is that the respondents are of reasonable age to give valid information. On the sex, 125 (44.6%) of the respondents are females while the remaining 155 (55.5%) respondents are males. On marital status, 159(56.8%) of the respondents married while 121(53.2%) of the respondents are single. On education, 66(23.6%) are SSCE holders, 145(51.8%) are holders HND/BSc degrees while the remaining 69(24.6%) are holders MSc/Ph.D. The income level of the respondents indicates that 8 (2.9%) of the respondent are low income (N 20,000-N50,000) earners, 137 (48.9%) of the middle income(N51,000-N100,000) earners while 136 (48.2%) of the respondents are high income (N 100,000-and above) earners. Finally, most respondents were found to have a monthly average income varying between N51,000 to 100,000 which shows a relatively middle-income earner.

Finally, the percentage of responses from Enugu, South-East, Nigeria were proportional to their population respectively. Durbin Weston was used to test for autocorrelation in this study. The Durbin Weston value according to our result is 1. 494. The acceptable threshold is that the value must be close to two. In this study, the value is not close to two but the researcher did not border about it because, other basic parametric assumptions have been achieved in the study.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

Factor	Reflective item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Standardized Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha if Item loading
Product Quality	I am satisfied with the product because of the taste.	13.5250	8.580	.832	**.782**
	I am satisfied with the product because of the flavor	13.5643	12.254		**.618**
	I am satisfied with the product because of the aroma the product	13.8250	9.643		**.503**

	I am satisfied with the product because of the level of alcohol content	14.0929	8.844		**.681**
	I am satisfied with the appearance (color) of the product	13.6500	8.422		**.718**
Repeat Purchase	Spreading the good news about their products by others	12.1464	5.222	. 762	**.674**
	Buying more product agree	12.6250	6.802		**.779**
	Not considering other competing brands	12.1179	6.355		**.519**
	Joining the brand's social and media community activities	12.7679	5.362		**.765**
	I usually supporting the brand (purchasing promotion item)	12.4571	6.701		**.586**

Source: SPSS statistics 23,2019

The purpose of reliability assessment in survey research that involves use of questionnaire instrument is to ensure that the research instrument prove consistency beyond reasonable doubt in repeated applications. In this study, the reliability assessment was done to achieve this purpose. Accordingly, the minimum benchmark that must be achieved to establish reliability of research instrument is 50% value of Cronbach's alpha ($\propto \geq 50\%$). The results of our reliability test indicate an excellent reliability result. From our results for instance, the overall Cronbach alpha standardized values for the six variables range between 83% (the highest value) and the lowest value of 65% at both extremes.

The individual reflective indicators or the questionnaire item also showed high level of reliability with adequate scale mean with the provision for deletion of item. The reliability of the individual questionnaire item was tested for the purpose of internal consistency. The result shows a reliability output that indicate high level consistency between the overall standardized Cronbach's Alpha results for the two major constructs or variables and the individual reflective construct or the questionnaire items. The values range from 79% to 50%.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

		Sum_PRODQUALITY	Sum_REPEATPUR
Sum_PRODQUALITY	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	86.671	
	Covariance	.311	
	N	280	
Sum_REPEATPUR	Pearson Correlation	.780[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Sum of Squares and Cross-products	66.249	83.271
Covariance	.237	.298
N	280	280

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS 23, 2019

Test of Hypothesis

Table 2 summarized the result of the hypothesised relationship. Results clearly indicate that the P-value in respect to hypothesis one is 0.028 with corresponding t-value of 0.507. In line with the decision rule guiding the study, the above P-value falls within the acceptable significant levels at 1% level of significant. Based on the result presented above and guided by the decision rule stated, the authors reject the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis. The implication of this decision is that there is a significant positive relationship between product quality and repurchase intention among the consumers of brewery products in Nigeria. The beta value of 0.182 indicates that 18 percent increase in the quality of brewery product brings about 2 percent increase in repurchase intention among consumers, all things being equal.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study originally offers insight into the relationship between product quality innovation and (customer satisfaction) repurchase intention in Nigerian Breweries Plc. The global market today has become so diversified that consumers have more interests in new things, because their needs and tastes are constantly changing. These changes in their consumption pattern therefore, calls for firms to adapt the use of innovation, as possible and significant way to satisfy their customers. Thus, the need for proper understanding of the construct of the relationship between product innovation and customer satisfaction by companies in brewery industry becomes imperative. The authors made following contributions:

1. The finding and recommendation of this paper serves as precaution to managers of organizations and marketers in formulating marketing strategies that would deliver quality product to their customers resulting in maximum satisfaction.
2. This study is one of the few studies in this part of the world that looked into the relationship between product quality innovation and repurchase intention in Nigerian Breweries Plc in Enugu, South-East, Nigeria.
3. It will also serve as viable research reference material to research students studying the relationship between product quality innovation and repurchase intention in brewery industry in developing economies and Nigeria in particular.

The study was based on sample of 280 captive sample from the customers. Questionnaire was the major instrument used for primary data collection. In this study the descriptive statistics such as frequency counts with simple percentage were used to analyze some data. Hypothesis was tested by the researcher since the objective of the study is to examine the

relationship between product quality innovation and repurchase intention in Nigeria, using customers of Nigerian Breweries as the case study. In line with the research objective, correlation analysis was employed for testing the hypothesis of this paper. The finding of this study indicates that: There is a positive significant relationship between product quality innovation and repurchase intention among the consumers of brewery products in Nigeria. The beta value of 0.182 indicates that 18 percent increase in the quality of brewery product brings about 2 percent increase in repurchase intention among consumers, all things being equal.

Declaration of competing interest:
The authors certify that there no conflict of interest associated with this manuscript.

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