How do Brands compare from the perspectives of the CBBE model: A Comparative study of a Local and International Brand in Nigeria

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Abstract- *The CBBE (Consumer Based Brand Equity) model has been invariably used to evaluate the performance of brands in different types of products such as tourism, etc. Not much has been done to compare how brands fare using the model as a theoretical framework. The aim of this paper is to examine the role that the CBBE model plays in comparing a specific local product with an international product in the Nigerian sugar sector.*

The study draws on primary data collected from two group interviews and a survey of 166 students of both Rufus Giwa Polytechnic and Federal University of Technology in Ondo State Nigeria and is part of a broader study (dissertation) conducted by the main author. University students were chosen for this study as this group are prime users of sweeteners and are at a stage where they are forming brand adoption decisions on their own.

The study finds that distribution is a primary salience tool for both Saint Louis and Dangote. This is done by placing the brands in stores and markets the target customer will frequent. Relevance is maintained by the provision of need fulfilling products that equate price to perceived quality. Thus, due to the affordability of Dangote, it was more purchased by the research population. Nonetheless, there was a higher sense of emotional loyalty to Saint Louis.

The study recommends that product brands use distribution as promotion to their target customer, while ensuring that they anticipate customer needs and eliminate barriers to adoption. Need fulfilment may encourage frequency of purchase and use, but for better resonance, positive feelings need to be encouraged in brand messaging.

General Terms- *Branding, Brand Comparisons, Brand Strategy, Customer Based Brand Equity*

Keywords- *Sugar brands; Nigerian Brands; Customer Based Brand Equity; Strategic Branding; Distribution; Product Placement*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Briciu and Briciu (2016)[20], brands and the process of branding are as old as human civilization and was initially developed through the appearance and use of the "proto-brands" concept and then, in different forms over different period of times depicting the dynamism of their existence. However, branding as a part of marketing was more intensively discussed in the 20th century (Bastos & Levy, 2012)[17]. Along these lines, branding started to be one of the main differentiating factors to gain and sustain competitive advantage. Accordingly branding helped organizations to move from a sales orientation to a marketing orientation (Pike and Bianchi 2016)[45]. Marketing orientation was deemed important as it aims at putting the customer in the focus and attempts are made to create and ensure customer satisfaction over the long term

and hence marketing orientation is future oriented (Kotler 2000)[34]. Back in the years Aaker (1991)[1] referred to a brand as one of the means to differentiate products and services from one another with the idea that the more the brand is strong the more customers were willing to support. Thus, Aaker (1991)[1] looked at a brand as being a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design).

The concept of branding led to brand equity and this concept was further developed by Keller (1993)[28] into the consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) model. The proposed CBBE model comprises five inter - related dimensions to yield a measure of brand equity: brand salience, brand image, brand quality, brand value, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991[1], 1996[2]; Keller, 1993[28], 2003a)[29].

According to Pike and Bianchi (2016)[45] the application and testing of the CBBE model is still in its infancy and requires further work. In fact, the few studies that have been conducted using the CBBE as a theoretical framework were related to areas such as destination and country branding and included amongst others, countries such as Australia, Slovenia, Chile, Las Vegas and Atlantic City (gambling destinations), Korea (international visitors). Asamoah (2014)[13] examines how SMEs small and medium enterprises (SMEs) apply the CBBE model in practice, acknowledging that branding is a relatively new field among SMEs. Bakshi and Mishra (2016)[16] analyse the variables that affect the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) of newspaper brands whilst Yu, Zhao and Wang (2008) analyze 15 brands with data from 3928 consumers of four industries including toothpaste, roll film, cell phone, and gym shoes. Along the same lines, Huang and Cai (2015) [26]developed the CBBE model for multinational hotel brands (USA based) , which examined the effects of brand knowledge on consumer response to these brands in China.

Except for one study conducted by Umar et al (2009) in the Nigerian banking sector, no other studies have so far taken place in Nigeria on the application of the CBBE model. This study will be the first of its kind to explore the competitive advantage of sugar (local and international brand) through the CBBE model.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How does the Customer Based Brand Equity of Saint Louis Sugar and Dangote Sugar compare in Nigeria?
2. What brand strategies are evident in the customer brand based equity of Saint Louis and Dangote Sugar?
3. How can local and international brands establish brand equity in Nigeria?

1.2 Background to the Research Questions and Aims

Nigeria is a key and affluent player in West Africa, thus is a fertile playing ground for both local and international brands aiming to gain the attention and loyalty of profitable customers. These brands will need to deploy strategies that will foster strong brands allowing them withstand competition. Previous literature on Nigerian brands often focused on the apparent quality and exclusiveness of foreign brands. Oyeniyi (2009)[44] opines that local brands are handicapped against foreign ones because foreign brands are believed to be stylish, technologically advanced and better produced. Very often, foreign brands will be selected over a local one because it is believed to be of better quality than a local one (Okpara and Anyawu, 2011)[42].

The branding problems of local brands are believed to be due to the late awakening of Nigerian companies to the importance of branding. Ogunlade (2013)[40] indicates that branding and advertising were part of the arsenal of vintage multinational companies like Cadbury's Bournvita when it was introduced into Nigeria. However, with the spread of globalization and knowledge transfer, branding

is being used by both local and international companies. Service companies like Globacom (Glo) a Nigerian telecommunications company and Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB) a financial services provider are well known strong Nigerian brands. Even more interestingly, global brands that do not need to have physical offices in Nigeria such as the computer and mobile phone giant Apple and financial services provider MasterCard are key players in Nigeria. To identify what makes these brands thrive, it is crucial to understand what strategies brands that wish to survive in Nigeria can use.

For this study the two most popular brands in the sugar industry have been selected. These are Saint Louis sugar and Dangote sugar. Founded in 1831 in France, Saint Louis sugar has dominated the Nigerian sugar industry for decades (Adelakun, 2011)[6]. The sugar company is a subsidiary of the Sudzucker group and the sugar cube is often exported to West Africa from France with the help of the Milan Group in Nigeria. Dangote sugar a subsidiary of the Nigerian Dangote Industries Limited, is the largest sugar refinery in West Africa. Founded in 2000, it holds the largest share of the sugar market (Adelakun, 2011)[6]. This company supplies not only domestic consumers but also provides sugar to business buyers.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brand Studies in Nigeria

Branding studies in Nigeria have often focused on the perception of brands based on quality and prestige, with very few studies looking at brand equity or attributes beyond quality that may influence repeat purchases and loyalty.

Oladele and Arogundade (2011)[43] opine that Nigerian students were more likely to accept foreign products over local ones because of the higher perceived quality of foreign products. Ogundele (2014) [39]also noted that foreign rice is preferred to local rice due to its quality. Furthermore, quality of service is also seen to be a key indicator of market performance in the Nigerian airline industry (Asiegbu, Igwe and Akekwe-Alex, 2012)[14]. In a similar vein, in a study on Arik Air Nigeria, Okeudo and Chikwendu, (2013) [41]concluded that quality of service and brand image contributed to customer loyalty. It must be highlighted that the limitation of understanding brand equity through these studies is that they have focused only on the image and performance of the investigated brands.

Other literature on branding in the Nigerian context has addressed various factors, other than quality, that might have an impact on brands. Iyamabo, Ndukwe and Otunbanjo (2013)[27] in their study on the activities of the South African Telecommunications giant MTN note that quality is insufficient to maintain loyalty. They advocate that companies must reflect the psychosocial and emotional values of their customers to maintain loyalty. In another perspective, Udo-Imeh (2015)[53] affirms that lifestyle plays a key role in the brand purchase habits of Nigerian students. Ogbuji, Anyanwu and Onah (2011)[38]

advocate the promotion of trust by emphasizing the corporate entity manufacturing the product. It should be noted that these studies hint at a wider scope for the brand and focus on singular topics. They do not explore the interconnected relationship of these elements as the CBBE allows.

Using the CBBE model, Umar et al. (2012)[54] examine this interconnected relationship and identify that brand awareness and quality do not necessarily translate to loyalty but brand associations should be used to promote favorable feelings for loyalty.

2.2   Customer Based Brand Equity

A viable way of measuring the effectiveness of the brand is by measuring the brand's equity. Farjam and Hongyi (2015)[22] identify three types of brand equity. Financial brand equity which deals in accounting calculations of brand equity, customer based brand equity which is the assessment of brand equity from the perspective of the customer and finally employee brand equity, which seeks to measure brand equity based on the employee's views. For this study the brand equity from the perspective of the customer is considered.

Some of the definitions of customer based brand equity include, the added value that a brand endows a product

(Farquhar, 1989, cited in Spry, Pappu and Cornwell, 2005) and effect the knowledge of a brand has on the customer's response to marketing activities (Keller, 2003b)[30]. In essence, Customer Based Brand Equity is the response of a customer or customers to the brand (Fayrene and Lee, 2011).

Both Aaker (1991)[1] and Keller (1993)[28] developed models of measuring brand equity which are extensively used by researchers. Aaker's model involves five dimensions which include brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 2009)[4]. Keller's customer based brand equity model is built to assess brand equity in a pyramid form, with four different constructs made of six building blocks for brand building, the four major constructs include brand identity at the bottom of the pyramid, followed by brand meaning, brand performances and brand relationships (Gautam and Kumar, 2012)[25]. Each section has sub categories which strengthen its features leading towards resonance i.e. brand relationships. Figure 1. depicts the brand equity model as illustrated by Keller for the Marketing Science institute (MSI) (MSI, 2001).
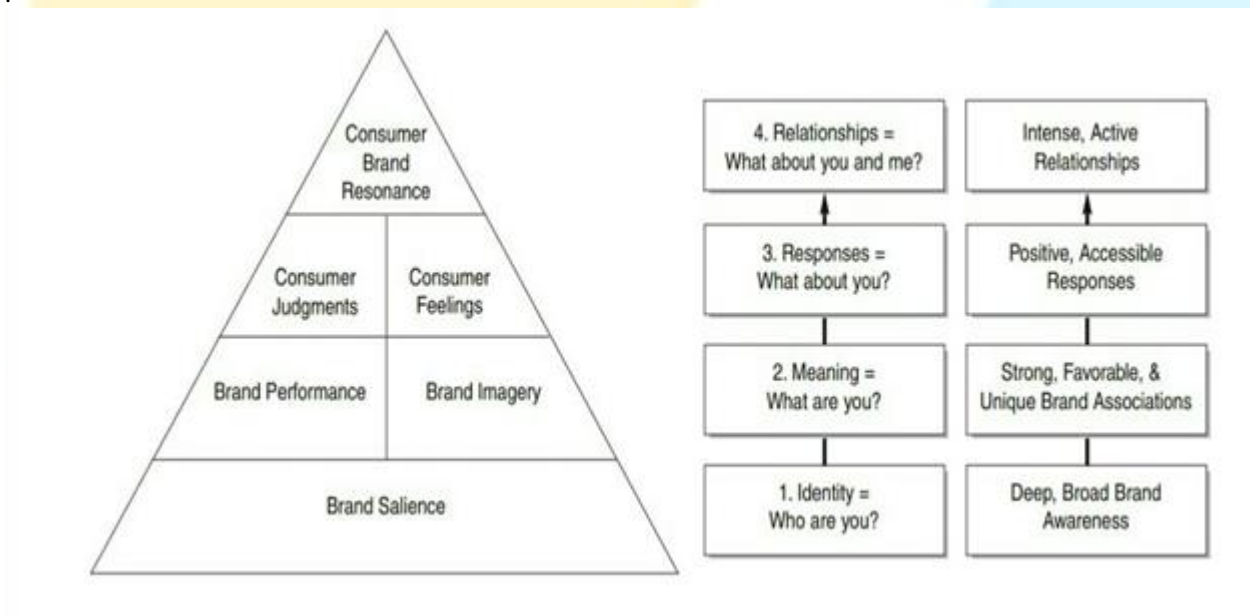
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Fig 1: Source: MSI (2001) Customer based brand equity pyramid

2.2.1   *Brand identity (brand salience)*

This part of the Keller model establishes an identity for the brand by answering the who am I? question (MSI, 2001), enabling the brand to create presence of mind and fit into the right category similar to Aaker's brand awareness. Here, the customer can differentiate the brand from others and clarify what the brand will do over time (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000)[3]. Van der Lans, Pieters and Wedel (2008) explain brand salience as the

degree at which a brand is visually outstanding from its competitors. Romaniuk and Sharp (2004) give a broader explanation by stating that brand salience is achieved by a brand's ability to be top of mind and its ability to come up during buying situations. A salient brand diminishes the presence of other existing brands when there is need for purchase by covering the depth and breadth of the brand (Vieceli and Shaw, 2010)[56].

2.2.2 Brand meaning (brand performance and brand imagery)

This is the next building block for brand equity, its aims to create meaning by answering the "what are you?" question to evoke strong, favorable and unique brand associations (Keller, Aperia and Gregson, 2008)[32]. It consists of two parts which are *Brand performance* and *Brand imagery*.

Brand performance covers the functional aspect of the brand, which can satisfy the customer's wants. It is the ability of the brand to meet and surpass the needs, demands and expectation of the customer and *Brand Imagery* is the extrinsic part of the brand where the socio-psychological needs of the consumer are met (Keller, 2013).

2.2.3 Brand responses (brand judgements and brand feelings)

This is the aspect of the brand equity model where responses are gauged by asking the what about you question, to create positive accessible responses, (MSI, 2001). Brand responses are the thoughts and feelings the consumer has about a brand and are responses to brand meaning and brand identity already created (MSI, 2001). There are two major building blocks here and they are brand judgement and brand feelings. In brand judgement, as the name implies, the brand is judged rationally through quality, credibility, consideration and superiority

(Keller, 2013). Brand feelings consider the emotions raised by the brand which include warmth, fun, excitement, security, social approval and self-respect (MSI, 2001).

2.2.4 Brand relationship (brand resonance)

At this stage the consumer is expected to have a psychological bond (resonance) with the brand and is willing to have a devoted lasting relationship with it. Resonance can be measured by the customer's behavioral loyalty, attitudinal attachment, sense of community and active engagement (Keller, 2003).

This study however focuses on behavioural loyalty because behavioral loyalty occurs when a customer repeatedly purchases and uses the same brand (Mascarenhas et al, 2006)[37]. Behavioral loyalty can help to increase the profitability of a brand, reduce marketing costs through repeated purchases by a customer (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001)[21]. This is in tune with the study's focus of brand acceptance which is defined as the ability of the consumer to buy a brand without having negative feelings towards the brand, but lacking true loyalty and having an open mind to try another brand (Sawant, 2012)[49]. However, complete resonance is not achieved unless it is coupled with brand attachment, brand engagement and brand community. Fig 2. Depicts the sub dimensions of the brand building blocks.
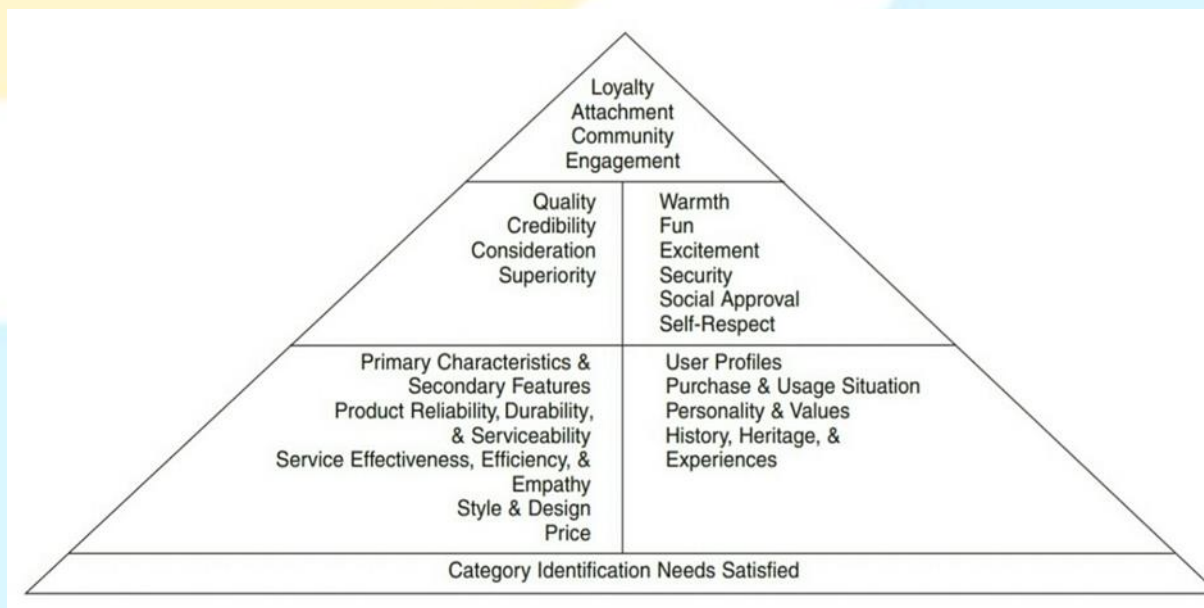

Fig 2: Source: MSI (2001) Sub dimensions of brand building block

2.3 Customer Based Brand Equity and Strategy

As discussed in the literature review, Keller's Customer Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE) is built to assess brand equity in a pyramid form, with four different constructs made up of six brand building blocks. The four constructs include brand identity at the bottom of the

pyramid, followed by brand meaning, brand performances and brand relationships (Gautam and Kumar, 2001)[25]. Each section has sub categories which strengthens each level leading towards resonance i.e. brand relationships (Ranjbariyan, Shahin and Jafari, 2012)[47].

Customer based brand equity begins with brand salience which is the awareness of the brand. This in turn boosts the ability of the brand to be considered in buying

situations. Having associations tied to the brand allows it to be distinguished in the minds of users, further setting it apart from other brands, giving room for reactions in the form of judgements and feelings to be established, resulting into deep levels of loyalty. This will suggest that both the brands chosen for this study will need to first identify themselves with a product category, create differentiation through meaning, court favourable responses which will in turn lead to acceptance and loyalty (Keller, 2003).

Keller (2013)[31] notes that the very first step in creating brand equity is identifying the brand to a product class and category. To create an impact, it is vital for a brand to differentiate itself from others in the same category, by creating a high level of brand awareness and a positive brand meaning in the memory of the consumer through strong, favourable and unique brand associations (Keller,2003), thereby producing knowledge that can affect consumer response to the brand and translating into higher levels of acceptance and equity. Brand salience boosts the ability of the brand to be considered in buying situations. This suggests that the ability of the consumer to distinctively identify both Dangote and Saint Louis sugar puts the brands in a favorable situation as opposed to simply classifying them as "foreign or local".

Lee, James and Kim (2014)[35] highlight how consumer perception may influence the CBBE model which include the overlapping of brand performance and imagery. They identify that design and style as a functional benefit for a brand may be considered as an imagery for another brand where buyers may contemplate using the design and style of the brand as imagery to represent their self-worth. This represents how customer perception can cause complex interactions in the CBBE, leading certain items to have dual influence . Thus elements of brand performance may also translate to brand imagery, where a component can represent both intrinsic and extrinsic meanings, leading to brand feelings and judgement. However, there may be a rearrangement of the CBBE Model.

In the modern business sphere where the internet is a key tool in developing the brand, a brand may first build a community to provide salience to the brand . The CBBE Model suggests that community building is the result of the actions of loyal customers. With the advent of the internet, brands can invite casual or non-users into online communities and create positive images and association by providing customers useful and entertaining information through emails, websites and social media. This exercise may in turn increase the chances of brand recall, image associations and trial of brand products. For example, Proctor and Gamble uses the Being Girl community to target teenage audiences by encouraging open discussions amongst users and providing useful information to them. This strategy will effectively use the community to promote brand salience.

An alternative framework to examine brand strategies is the Theory of Buyer Behavior, which posits that hypothetical constructs and variables are influenced by significative, symbolic and social environment inputs, exogenous variables to provide outputs such as purchase behavior may be used, as this framework will examine the influence of culture and country of origin ((Howard and Sheth 1969; Loudon and Della Bitta 1993 cited in Bray, 2008)[19]. In this study where the two brands to be studied are the most prominent market leaders in a low involvement category, the outputs of limited problem solving, extended problem solving and routine problem solving may be suited for a brand with competitive brands in their product category. Also, the CBBE model neatly organizes and simplifies the brand influences towards brand resonance.

2.4   Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is based on the CBBE Model. This study applies the CBBE model to determine the underlying strategies used by both Saint Louis and Dangote sugar to maintain brand equity in the Nigerian Market. The effective use of distribution and the resulting organic development of brand equity are discussed.

3   METHODOLOGY

The subject of the study are students of tertiary institutions in Ondo State Nigeria. There are nine tertiary institutions in Ondo State Nigeria. Two government-owned institutions namely the Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA) and Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo Ondo State (RUGIPO) were identified for data collection using the non-probability sampling technique. University students were chosen for this study as the university age group is an important market segment for the sugar industry. University students are expected to frequently consume sugar and are forming independent decisions about brand use. To gain access to the students of Federal University of Technology, a faculty member introduced one of the researchers to students and their class representatives. Access to the students and their class representatives of Rufus Giwa Polytechnic was facilitated by a Dean of Faculty.

3.1 Interview Participants

For the interview phase of the study, a convenience sample of ten students (divided equally between male and female) was selected from both schools with the help of the lecturer, Dean, and class representatives. Participants were students who were frequent buyers of both Saint Louis and Dangote sugar, between the ages of 20-30.

3.2 Survey Participants

Participants in this study included 166 students from FUTA (100) and RUGIPO (66). Participants were selected by convenience sampling and included 100 males and 66 females. In this sample 88.6% were between the ages of 20-29, 10.8% were between the ages of 30-39 and 6% were aged between 40-49.

3.3 Research Design

Mixed methods were used in conducting this study by using the exploratory sequential design, where qualitative data was first collected followed up by the quantitative survey to counter check the qualitative data (Cameron, 2009).Using a mixed method design allowed the researchers to move away from the constraints of theory by introducing the perspective of the individual. This permitted a more robust research than a mono-method research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Using a mixed method is different from simply using multiple methods of research as it consists of rigorous analysis and integration of both methods of design (Hanson et al., 2005).

3.3.1. Interview design

Interview questions were developed from the literature, however, a few additional questions emerged while interviewing the students. To examine the effects of CBBE, interview questions were adapted from MSI (2001). These questions examined the awareness of the brands, brand associations, responses and brand relationships.

3.3.2. Questionnaire design

Following the interview, the next step involved developing a questionnaire to test the results of the qualitative stage. The questionnaire was also based on the building blocks of the CBBE derived from MSI (2001) and fine-tuned by the answers provided during the interview to test these answers on a larger scale. The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions in total. Four questions focused on brand salience, two questions compared brand performance in relation to needs satisfaction. Two questions compared image perceptions, an additional two compared quality versus value for money. Two questions compared trust and credibility levels, two questions compared the feelings of self-respect and the final two questions compared loyalty levels.

The second phase of the study included the distribution of the paper questionnaires. In all, 200 questionnaires were printed and a target of 100 students via convenience sampling at each university was aimed. 100% of the distributed questionnaires were returned at the Federal University of Technology Akure, but only 66% were returned at the Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, this was due to the temporary disruption of academic activities shortly after the questionnaires were distributed. The researchers were assisted by the class representatives to collect the filled-in questionnaires.

4   RESULTS

4.1   Qualitative Results

4.1.1   Brand Salience: Brand Depth and Brand Breath

Brand Depth: In group discussions, students quickly recalled *"Saint Louis"* and *"Dangote"* as the two largest competitors in the sugar industry. There is mention of *"Golden Penny"* but the brand is soon dismissed as a minor competitor because *"it is not as common as Dangote Sugar."* Many thought of Saint Louis because it was the first entrant into the market, though Dangote is recognized as a competitor that may soon take over because *"it (Saint Louis) is going out of vogue"*.

It was identified that there were no means of promoting these brands but people knew where to buy them from. Individuals commented that they *"saw it"* often at home, with friends, in school and in the market and *"bought "it"*. Showing that the major form of brand knowledge were customers and location of purchase. This confirms that distribution plays a primary role in salience and visibility of the products.

Brand Breath: Saint Louis was described to be used *"for taking tea because it is in cubes"*. Dangote's granulated state however allowed it to be used as a general sweetener in, *"confectionaries"*, *"tea"*, *"pap"* and *"garri"*. However, an ardent Saint Louis consumer argued that Saint Louis could be used for meals like pap and garri when *"you just crush it"* though it was identified to be strictly not for baking.

4.1.2   Brand performance: needs fulfilment

The participants agreed that both brands fulfilled their needs. Frequent users of Dangote cited its granular form and its affordability as a source of fulfilment. They stated that it was *"cheap"* and it was in *"granules, so you can mix it with anything"*. Regular users of Saint Louis cited its measurability as their primary source of satisfaction. This is because the cube form *"is easy to quantify"*. A bonus for Dangote in this group of respondents was its affordability, which managed to gain the attention of some students who were initial consumers of Saint Louis as depicted below

"We use the one with blue packaging (Saint Louis) at home but Dangote is cheaper for more."

4.1.3   Imagery: user profiles and purchase/usage situations

Many believed that Saint Louis was for rich households and should be used in official and posh situations e.g. *"breakfast meetings where tea is taken"*. Alternatively, Dangote is believed to be economical and for everyone. Another source of imagery is the celebrity leader (Dangote himself) associated with the Dangote company. A frequent user of Dangote marveled at the entrepreneur's genius ability to provide sugar that *"meets the needs of those in the grass roots"* thereby increasing purchase. The common points of purchase for Saint Louis were identified as *"big shops and super markets"* and Dangote was noted to be found *"anywhere"*.

4.1.4   Consumer judgement: quality and value for money

When interviewees were asked if the price was worth the quality. Dangote was believed to provide value for money because it provides quantity at a cheap price and is easy to use. A Dangote buyer hypothesized that the cheapest form of Dangote (scoop and tie) sugar had about *"10 cubes of sugar (Saint Louis)"*. Though Dangote sugar does not come directly from the manufacturer in these cheap packs, they are resold by scooping and tying into

small nylons by local traders. Saint Louis Sugar is not handled in a similar manner because it will not prove profitable for the sellers. In contrast, Saint Louis buyers will still purchase the product because *"the quality commensurate the price"*. Interestingly, no interviewee immediately linked the value and quality of Saint Louis to its foreign origin.

4.1.5 Consumer judgement: trust/credibility

Trust for Saint Louis emanated from its quality and longevity. Saint Louis is admired to *"have been able to withstand the test of time, due to their product quality"* One participant believed Dangote could not be compared to Saint Louis as the secret to Saint Louis's longevity is because they had not *"compromised their standard"*. Trust from Dangote emanates from the established brand name and acceptable product quality. Dangote is expected to *"hire qualified and experienced people... to promote the company's good name"*.

4.1.6 Consumer feelings: self-respect

Participants identified the feelings of self-respect with the two brands. Warmth was additionally attached to Saint Louis but was dropped from the study as it was absent in Dangote. Participants derived self-respect from Saint Louis because it was *"a product of quality"* and prestige, while Dangote elicited self-respect because the buyers believed they were supporting a Nigerian brand.

There were groups of people who were *'indifferent"* as they were uncertain they should associate feelings to sugar. There was an additional group who believed sugar was a commodity that could elicit no feelings as "*it is not Louis Vuitton"*.

4.1.7 Resonance: loyalty

Behavioral loyalty was detected among the participants. Many interviewees were open to trying new brands to *"promote competition"* and *"pick the best"* that satisfies their needs. It was also noted that it was not necessarily a choice between Dangote and Saint Louis, meaning that a buyer could purchase both brands depending on the individual's choice:

"It depends on the individual and what I want to use it for. I may go to the market and buy Saint Louis but I may still buy Dangote."

The strongest loyalty encountered came from consumers of Saint Louis sugar, who often used the term *"nostalgic"*. This may be because the users have been familiar with the brand since childhood, thus making it their preferred choice. While some wish to be loyal to Saint Louis *"the economic situation"* may encourage them to purchase Dangote.

4.2   Survey Results

Out of the 200 respondents surveyed, 166 survey forms were returned. Of the 166 respondents 9 questionnaires were incomplete, hence reducing the total number of answered questions. Each question was analyzed individually and presented in tables of frequencies and weighted means. The characteristics of the respondents are discussed in Table 1., based on their age group,

gender, university associated with and frequency of purchase. These results are gauged in frequencies and percentages. Table 2. ranks each item of the investigated CBBE sections in order of significance.

4.2.1   Age of respondents

Table 1 shows that most respondents were aged between 20-29 representing 88.6% of the survey. This is followed by those between the ages of 30-39 (10.8%). The least represented group was between 40-49 (0.6%). The high representation of those between 20-29 may be due to the prominence of this age group in the tertiary environment.

4.2.2   Gender of respondents

Data in table 1 indicate that majority of the survey population was male (60.2%) and 39.8% was female.

4.2.3   Tertiary institution

Table 1 shows that 60.2% of the respondents were from the Federal University of Technology Akure and 39.8% were from RUFUS GIWA Polytechnic Owo. While this number corresponds with the gender distribution of the respondents, both males and females were surveyed in each school. Equal numbers of sample population could not be collected due to a disruption of school activities at RUFUS GIWA.

4.2.4   Frequency of use

As depicted in Table 1 a higher percentage of respondents indicated that they were more likely to use Dangote (54%) than Saint Louis (45.8%).

Table 1 distribution of respondents by age, gender, tertiary institution and frequency of use.

Age of respondent	Frequency	Percent
20-29	147	88.6
30-39	18	10.8
40-49	1	0.6
Gender of Respondents		
Male	100	60.2
Female	66	39.8
Tertiary Institution		
Federal University of Technology Akure	100	60.2
Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo	66	39.8
Frequency of use		
Dangote	90	54.2
Saint Louis Sugar	76	45.8

4.2.5   Brand Salience: brand breath and brand depth

Table 2. confirms the qualitative study and rearranges it in order of importance. The most dominant salience contributing factor to both brands is their availability at the nearest outlet (weighted mean = 4.64), followed by the customer's familiarity with the brand, where Saint Louis is more salient at 4.39 than Dangote at 4.38. Indicating that both brands are well known in the market with minimal difference. The least ranking item is the belief that Dangote has more uses than Saint Louis (3.54).

4.2.6   Brand performance: needs fulfilment
Table 2. demonstrates that Dangote Sugar fulfills more needs (3.70) than Saint Louis (3.52).

4.2.7   Imagery: user profiles and purchase/usage situations
The most influential imagery for Saint Louis is its history with participants from childhood (3.82), followed by its expensive nature (3.51). Conversely, the most dominant image for Dangote Sugar is its convenience (3.99), followed by its economical nature (3.92). Dangote as a business leader is considered insignificant at 2.80. However, based on the results of the interviews, it is a viable association to some.

4.2.8   Consumer judgement: quality and value for money
Table 2. indicates that respondents believe that they were getting value for their money with both brands with Dangote (3.76) slightly leading against Saint Louis (3.73).

4.2.9   Consumer judgement: trust/credibility
Table 2. shows that both brands were highly trusted by their customers. However, Saint Louis Sugar (3.69) is more trusted than Dangote (3.54).

4.2.10   Consumer feelings: self-respect
Table 2 shows that Saint Louis elicits the feeling of self-respect more than Dangote Sugar with a weighted mean of 3.64 and Dangote at 3.35.

4.2.11   Resonance: loyalty
Table 2. illustrates that both brands have loyal customers with Saint Louis (3.31) having a marginally higher loyalty than Dangote (3.23).

Table 2 Weighted Means ranking for Brand Salience, Brand Performance, Brand Imagery, Brand Judgement, Brand Feelings, Brand Resonance, Country of Origin and Hofstede Dimensions in relation to Saint Louis Sugar and Dangote Sugar. SD= Strongly disagree, D= Disagree, I= Indifference, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree.

Brand Salience	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Weighted Sum	Weighted Mean	Significance ranking
I am familiar with Saint Louis Sugar (n=166)	3	10	11	38	104	728	4.39	2nd
I am familiar with Dangote Sugar (n=166)	6	4	9	49	98	727	4.38	3rd
Dangote Sugar has more uses than Saint Louis Sugar (n=166)	17	22	40	28	59	588	3.54	4th
I have not been exposed to promotions of either brands but they are available at my nearest outlet (n=166)	0	1	3	50	112	771	4.64	1st
Performance								
Saint Louis Fulfills my needs (n=166)	14	25	30	54	43	585	3.52	2nd[t]
Dangote Fulfills my needs (n=166)	11	15	31	65	44	614	3.70	1st
Dangote Image								
Dangote is economical *(n=166)*	7	13	26	60	60	651	3.92	2nd
I associate Dangote Sugar to Dangote the business man (n=166)	32	53	28	23	30	464	2.80*	3rd
Saint Louis Image								
Saint Louis Sugar is expensive (n=165)	7	30	42	44	42	579	3.51	2nd
I grew up with Saint Louis Sugar (n=166)	14	18	19	43	71	634	3.82	1st
Quality (Money Value)								
The money I pay for Saint Louis is worth it (n=166)	7	19	27	71	42	620	3.73	2nd

The money I pay for Dangote is worth it (n=165)	4	17	37	64	43	620	*3.76*	*1st*
Credibility (Trust)								
I trust the makers of Saint Louis (n=166)	6	12	53	51	44	613	*3.69*	*1st*
I trust the makers of Dangote(n=166)	7	22	47	55	35	587	*3.54*	*2nd*
Feelings (Self-respect)								
I get the feeling of self-respect from Saint Louis Sugar(n=165)	9	20	43	43	50	600	*3.64*	*1st*
I get the feeling of self-respect from Dangote Sugar (n=165)	10	22	58	50	25	553	*3.35*	*2nd*
Resonance (Loyalty)								
I am loyal to Saint Louis Sugar (n=166)	15	31	42	39	38	549	*3.31*	*1st*
I am loyal to Dangote Sugar(n=166)	11	36	47	46	25	533	*3.23*	*2nd*

5   DISCUSSION

5.1   Customer Based Brand Equity for both Saint Louis And Dangote

Customer Based Brand Equity helps brands to understand customer satisfaction and is influential in formulating marketing strategies (Lee, James and Kim, 2014)[35]. Hence to put the effectiveness of the glocal strategy of Saint Louis and the local strategy of Dangote into perspective, the results of the study are put into a brand equity pyramid for comparison purposes. The perception of differentiation between the brands is evident primarily through brand imagery where user groups are clearly distinguished.

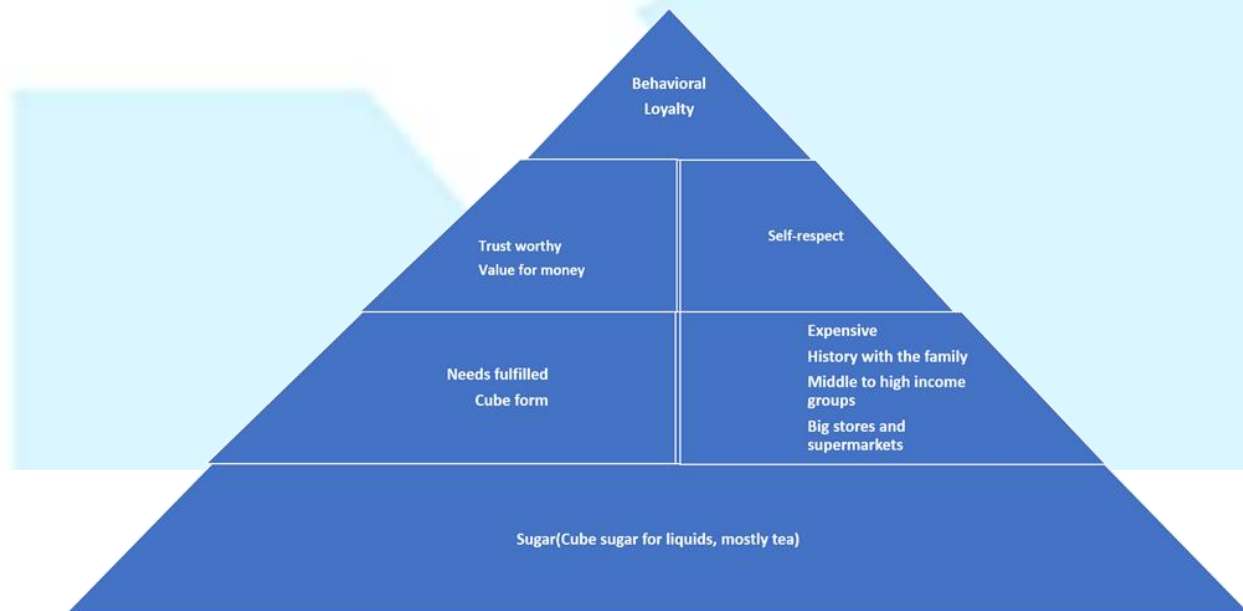The brand equity models of both Saint Louis and Dangote Sugar are depicted in figure 3 and figure 4 below

Figure 3. Saint Louis Sugar Brand Equity based on the perception of study population

Figure 4. Dangote Sugar's Brand Equity based on the perception of study population

5.1.1 Brand salience

In this study, differences between brands are evident from brand salience. Saint Louis's long history is credited for giving the brand a larger depth in the sugar sector. However, a weakness is the limited usefulness of the product which is mostly linked to tea drinking due to its cube form. In contrast, due to its granulated form, Dangote

sugar has more breadth as it can be put to various uses, which contributes to its frequency of use.

Visibility of brand is enhanced by the most dominant influencing factor of distribution by strategically placing the brands in outlets where the target consumer is likely to visit. By using effective distribution and visibility of the brand to customers, the profiles of local and international brands become similar (Tanusondjaja et al , 2015)[52] and the customer can make a choice.

5.1.2 Brand Performance: Needs Fulfilled

Results show that the ability of the product to fulfill functional needs play a key role in determining brand equity . Results align with the assertion of Punj and Brookes (2002)[46] that brands that fulfil more needs are more likely to be purchased. Based on the higher usage of Dangote Sugar, usage was more related with functional needs such as price needs and mode of use. A reluctant Dangote user cites that the *"economic situation"* did not allow him to buy the preferred Saint Louis brand. Likewise, the multiple uses of Dangote's granulated form is highly likely to lead to more solutions to the consumer's sugar needs. It is therefore paramount that brands consider

the needs the customer wants to fulfil and design products that satisfy these needs.

5.1.3 Imagery: User profiles and purchase/usage situations.

The brand images illustrate that both brands have distinct target markets which is the main source of differentiation. Saint Louis is targeted towards high income markets while Dangote is targeted to the mass market, especially to the low-income markets.

Both Saint Louis and Dangote have emphasized on effective distribution to encourage visibility of their respective brands to their target markets. This has helped to increase salience and image definition. Identifying the target market in a long-term brand strategy can help the brand tailor elements of its four marketing P's to suit the overall messaging of the brand to their target customer (Wood, 2000)[57]. This is evident in the place strategy of both brands. The availability of Saint Louis in *"Supermarkets"* and *"big stores"* places the product in the line of sight of its target market. Alternatively, the presence of Dangote *"anywhere"* and its significantly lower price, places Dangote in the line of sights of not only high-income consumers but also low income consumers.

5.1.4 Consumer judgement: quality and value for money

Both sugar brands are believed to be of high quality. The interview results showed that the customers' perception of quality was largely subjective. This perceived quality influences the choice of the customers (Severi and Ling,

2015) and their brand acceptance. In this study the buyer considered the perceived quality, needs fulfillment and the imagery of the product to establish the value for money. A brand should therefore understand the value it is presenting its customers, perceived quality influences the choice of the customers and their brand acceptance.

5.1.5   Consumer judgement: brand trust

It is important to build trust, since customers are more likely to buy and recommend brands if trust is established (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013)[18]. Both brands in this study are trusted by their customers to provide quality products. It is also important to consider that company trust may not be sufficient. From the interviews, it was noted that interviewees were interested in products and possible competition rather than in the company, although a company with many successful products may give credibility to a brand. This finding is in contrast with Ogbuji, Anyanwu and Onah (2011)[38] who posit that company names need to be advertised along brand names to give it credibility. A recognized company name may influence the consumer to test the product initially but it is the needs satisfaction based on performance and image that will promote the trial to acceptance. It is important for companies to not only promote company and brand name but also create need fulfilling products.

5.1.6   Consumer feelings: self - respect

The associations of feelings towards the brands were limited in the interviews, although self-respect was identified as a feeling that could be linked to both Dangote and Saint Louis sugar. Saint Louis provokes self-respect because of its quality and its ties with prestige. Dangote elicits self-respect due to the idea that the consumer is supporting a Nigerian brand. These feelings have grown in the minds of the consumer on their own as they have not been promoted by the brands. A stronger feeling may be attached to the brands if they both reinforce their messages, not only to create distinctions, but to further attach feelings to their brands. This is proven by the example of the reconsideration of an interviewee who had previously believed she could not relate feelings to sugar since it was not *"Louis Vuitton"*. When prompted to think about the nostalgic feeling, both Saint Louis sugar and Peak Milk (an unrelated milk brand) provided her, she was quick to note that she felt warm and happy because of the family memories these brands elicited. This feeling was clearly established with Peak Milk's *"generation to generation"* adverts leading her to state:

"....for sure it's (Saint Louis) like Peak Milk generation to generation. Peak and I are for life.".

5.1.7   Resonance: loyalty

Since the scope of this study is brand acceptance, brand resonance is judged through the strength of the loyalty of the brands. Moreover, loyalty and use did not immediately align. While both brands have loyal customers, usage was more related with functional needs such as price needs and mode of use while loyalty seemed

to be more emotional than functional. Thus loyalty was behavioural.

6   CONCLUSION

This study suggests that both multinational and local brands have equal opportunities in the Nigerian market as seen in the sugar industry. This is achieved when there is complete brand salience, sufficiently developed brand meaning leading to adequate brand responses and continued loyalty or acceptance.

The study suggests that to fully comprehend the Customer Based Brand Equity of a local or foreign brand, the litmus test is to question if the brand has already established salience in that market. This should be followed by the brand's evaluation in relation to the product quality and value provided to the target market. Need satisfaction is essential to the target market and can lead to behavioural loyalty. However, there is also a need for the brand to communicate feelings to target groups to promote acceptance beyond behavioral loyalty. These feelings should be in line with the judgments of need satisfaction to solidify equity.

6.1   Practical Implications

Based on this research the following practical implications are provided

For product brand managers, the first agenda to put into consideration is salience via effective distribution. This has worked effectively for both Saint Louis and Dangote. To improve the awareness of products, availability on shelves where the target market frequent is important. Therefore product brands need effective distribution networks to place the brands in the line of sight of the customer for visibility and customer consideration. Farquhar (1994)[23] cites an effective distribution system as a key element to building strong brands since availability is essential to product trial, which begins brand experience. In view of this, brand managers may also consider the breadth and depth while using distribution as a salience factor. They may not only display their products on shelves but may also make their products available for sale in situations that they are most likely needed. For example, sachet and bottled water are staples at Nigerian public transport parks for the recreation of the traveler. The availability of a brand at a possible usage situation will either promote the brand's trial or dissuade the trial of a competitor's brand.

Also, since image attributes do not immediately translate into sales for both local and foreign products. The brand image must also suit the usefulness and performance of the product or service. To improve brand acceptance both local and International brands need to consider the needs of their target markets. This will include that managers understand where the perceived quality is equal to the point where value for money is agreeable to the customer. Finally, brand managers should consider promoting brand feelings that will help a brand grow beyond behavioural loyalty. For example, participants who felt self-respect by

buying a Nigerian product may have stronger attachment to the brand if it is promoted to reflect this feeling. Likewise, if Saint Louis is promoted to amplify the feeling of nostalgia felt amongst its customers to include feelings such as warmth and family togetherness it may help it maintain its category leadership. However, it is crucial to note that brand feelings may create moving emotions in the consumer and create effective recall, associations and triggers, but it may not affect the perception of quality (Kirmani and Ziethmal, 1993)[33]. For example, if Dangote promotes pride in its Nigerian heritage, this feeling may not reduce the customer's reaction if the brand serves a poor quality product.

6.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While due care was taken to answer the research questions and objectives, the study is not without limitations. The limited time used in conducting the group interviews did not allow varying opinions to be considered in depth. This permitted a tendency to note down the most dominant opinions in the groups, although this is mediated by having direct questions pointed at individual members in a second group interview.

Also, the generalizability of the study is limited because of the convenience sampling and the sample size which was not a representative of the total population of all the tertiary institutions in Ondo State. The research was biased towards males and students in the 20-29 age group, an older age group or a different focus group such as working-class individuals within this age group with more financial independence may prove to frequently consume Saint Louis. Although this research may be indicative that Saint Louis is losing the younger male demographic in public universities. Using a nonprobability sample that was reminiscent of the school population was impossible due to the sheer size of this population.

Finally, the questionnaire did not measure certain aspects of the study, for example the extent of the favorability, uniqueness and strength of the brand associations were not measured. The inclusion of additional questions to gain a more robust study would have been beneficial but this was outside the scope of this study. It is therefore recommended that further research consider these issues.

To improve on the limitations a larger sample of students especially from private institutions need to be represented. A more diverse population, outside that of students, should be considered to provide stronger inclusive evidence. There may also be need to redesign the questionnaire to give a more robust view of the study. Finally, a research to find the causation of acceptance amongst different income groups may provide further insights to this study.

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