

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**IMPACT OF BRANDING ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISION: A
CASE OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY**



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THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY**



**BY
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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES,
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BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MARKETING) DEGREE.**

JUNE, 2019

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, GyeemehKwabena, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE..... DATE.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declared that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertations as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Aaron Kumah

SIGNATURE..... DATE.....

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my lovely parents Mr. and Mrs. Osei, brothers and sister for their support in various means. God bless them all.



TABLE OF CONTENT

Title.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
ABSTRACT.....	x
CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.7 Limitations of the Study.....	6
1.8. Scope of the study.....	6
1. 9 Organization of the Study.....	7
CHAPTER TWO:LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Concept of Branding.....	8
2.2 Concept of Branding and Brand Management.....	9
2.2.1 Elements of Brand.....	11
Table 2.1: Brand Elements.....	13
2.3 Theoretical Framework of Branding.....	13
2.4 Consumer Buying Behaviour.....	16
Fig. 2.1: Consumer Buying Decisions.....	19
2.5 Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchasing Decision.....	20
2.6 Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision.....	22
2.7 The Influence of Perceived Quality of a Branding on Consumer Purchasing Decision....	25
2.8 Conceptual Framework.....	27

Conceptual framework for the Study	28
Fig. 2.2 Framework for analysing branding impact on consumer purchasing decisions.....	28
2.8.1 Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchasing Decision	28
2.8.2 Perceived Quality and Consumer Purchasing Decision.....	29
2.8.3 Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision.....	30
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	31
3.1 Research Design.....	32
3.2 Population of the Study.....	34
3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques	35
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	35
3.5 Data Collection Procedures.....	36
3.6 Data Analysis	37
3.7 Ethical Considerations	37
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY	38
4.1 Demographic Profile of Sample.....	39
4.2 Research Objectives Presentation.....	40
4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider.....	41
4.2.2 Regression Analysis of Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider	44
4.2.3 Descriptive Analysis of the Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Network Provider.....	46
4.2.4 Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Network Provider.....	48
4.2.5 Descriptive Analysis of How the Perceived Quality of a Brand Affected Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider	49
4.2.6 Regression Analysis of the Impact of Perceived Quality on Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider.....	52
4.3 Discussion of Study Results.....	53
4.3.1 Objective One	54
4.3.2 Objective Two.....	55
4.3.3 Objective Three.....	56

CHAPTER FIVE:SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	58
5.1 Summary of Study Findings	58
5.2 Conclusions.....	59
5.3 Recommendation to Management	60
5.4 Suggestions for Further Research	61
References.....	61
Appendix.....	67



LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents.....	39
Table 4.2: <i>Descriptive Analysis of the Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider</i>	42
Table 4.3: <i>Model Summary</i>	44
Table 4.4: <i>ANOVA^a</i>	44
Table 4.5: <i>Coefficients^a</i>	44
Table 4.6: Descriptive Analysis of the Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Network Provider.....	46
Table 4.7: <i>Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Service Network</i>	48
Table 4.8: <i>Descriptive Analysis of How the Perceived Quality of a Brand Affected Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Service Network</i>	49
Table 4.9: <i>Model Summary</i>	52
Table 4.10: <i>ANOVA^a</i>	52
Table 4.11: <i>Coefficients^a</i>	52



ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider. Specifically, the objectives of the study were; to assess the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider, to measure the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider and lastly to ascertain how the perceived quality of a brand affect consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider. This study followed the cross-sectional research design hence, quantitative methodology was adopted. The target population for the study constituted undergraduate students of the University of Education-Winneba, Kumasi campus. Therefore, a projected number of 7,500 students within the Kumasi campus of the university was targeted for this study. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table, the sample size for this study was 365 with a 95% confidence interval and 5% error of margin. This study used a self-administering questionnaire as its data collection instrument. The study distributed 365 questionnaires to the selected samples from the University of Education-Winneba, Kumasi campus. From the questionnaires distributed, a total of 177 completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher. Out of these, 167 were usable for analysis, giving an effective response rate of 47.04 %. Data was subsequently analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. Findings from the study showed that most of the respondents agreed that how reliable and trusted a mobile service network is, is very critical to them when choosing a mobile service network. On this score, it is recommended to the mobile telecommunication networks that the farce that Ghanaian consumers will always look at cost and service charges when choosing a network than factors such as, quality and trusted network cannot be wholly true hence, they should see this as a wakeup call to provide its clients with quality services since how a person perceive their network coverage to be reliable and trusted tends to be key factor that shape their selection decision of a mobile service provider.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This work seeks to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider within the context of Ghana particularly with mobile users within the Kumasi metropolis. Specifically, this section covers the background of the study, the problem statement and the aim and objectives of the research as well as a section on how the entire work will be structured.

1.1 Background of the study

The market space of the mobile technology is one of the most active within the global space. For instance, in recent times, mobile phones have moved from being a luxury to a mass commodity product. Interestingly, the story is not very different from that of Ghana as recent statistics from the National Communication Authority revealed that with a total population of 24 million people, the total mobile phone subscribers as at the end of December 2018, stood at 40,934,875 (National Communications Authority , 2018). This goes to suggest that almost every person uses two mobile phones at a time in Ghana.

However, the increasing penetration of mobile phones within the global space have shaped how subscribers select their mobile network operator from the lot. For instance, recent study by Nadarajan, Bojei and Khalid (2017) revealed that the main factors that influence subscribers selection decisions are pricing, network quality and rewards and promotion packages. Although, these factors have been established to influence subscriber's selection decisions of mobile network operators nonetheless, Phadke, Uzunalioglu, Mendiratta, Kushnir, and Doran

(2013) maintained that operators that solely rely on these factors are going to fail at the long. Their argument is based on the proposition that subscribers who sign up to a service provider mainly on attractive offers or promotions have high propensity to switch as these packages cease or elapse.

Accordingly, attention has been shifted to how mobile network operators can effectively attract or retain their customers after their acquisition. The quest to retain and attract more customers within the Ghanaian communication industry is even severe than other regions judging from the happenings within the sector. Particularly, the Ghanaian mobile telecommunication industry is regarded as one of the most fiercely competitive industry within the country (Boohene&Agyapong, 2011). For instance, with a country population of about 24 million, there are over four active mobile network operators in the country. This intense competition has even forced two operators to merge together thus, Airtel and Tigo become AirtelTigo. As such, operators within the industry are faced with the continuous pressure of showcasing more customer-focused and continuous service improvement as the only means to attract and retain their customers (Boahene & Agyapong, 2011).

Again, even though within sectors like the retail and manufacturing sector, several studies have showed how customers decision to remain with a particular product or store is largely shaped by the entity brand image or identity (see for example, Gómez & Rubio, 2010; González-Benito & Martos-Partal, 2012; Rubio, Oubiña, & Villaseñor, 2014; Vilas, 2011) yet same conclusions have not been made in the mobile service sector.

Besides, as brand image or identity has been viewed to create desirable consumer outcomes such as, brand fondness, positive word-of-mouth, (re)purchase intention, minimized switching intention, acceptance of higher-price premium and brand extensions and higher profit margins (Buil, Martínez, & de Chernatony, 2013; Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010;

Rambocas, Kirpalani, & Simms, 2018), it has become important to ascertain how the brand identities of mobile network operators within the Ghanaian context do influence subscribers decision when it comes to the selection of a mobile service. Accordingly, it against this background that this study seeks to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of a telecommunication network in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Brand identity is created by a consumer perception which is viewed to be controlled by marketing strategists (Erdil & Uzun, 2010) and it includes brand recalls of consumers for the performance and the experience with the brand (Granot, Greene, & Brashear, 2010) and results in cognitive and emotional satisfaction (Kumar & Kim, 2014). Also, consumer attitudes toward product or store brands are not created solely from positive recalls but negative cues and recalls as well (Aghekyan-Simonian, Forsythe, Kwon, & Chattaraman, 2012). Meaning the perception, a consumer form towards a brand after experiencing it has a greater impact on his decision to re-use or repurchase the brand product or service again.

Notwithstanding this linkage between brand and consumer purchasing decision, there appear to be scant studies that have empirically tested this relationship within the mobile telecommunication sector (Arendt & Brettel, 2010). Surprisingly, most of the existing studies within the telecommunication sector have largely looked at the impact of switching cost to mobile operators or the influence of brand on the purchasing of mobile phones (see for example, Nadarajan, Bojei, & Khalid, 2017; Sahin, Zehir, & Kitapci, 2012; Sahin, Kitapci, & Zehir, 2013; Stoica, Veghes, & Orzan, 2015; Yunus & Rashid, 2016).

Similarly, Khan, Kulkarni and Bharathi (2014) held same view as they argued that even though the telecommunications sector has witnessed tremendous growth in recent years yet, it appears most of the works in the context have largely concentrated on factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions of smartphones at the expense of the selection of mobile network providers. This is quite intriguing since after a consumer purchases a cell phone the next decision the consumer will take afterwards is to decide on which network provider to use for his cell phone.

Moreover, within the context of Ghana earlier studies that have been conducted in the telecommunication sector have largely focused on consumer satisfaction of the service providers (e.g., Nimako, Azumah, & Donkor, 2010; National Communications Authority , 2013). However, even with the studies that somehow appear to be related to this context thus, the works of Owusu (2017), Owusu and Nyarku (2015) and that of Owusu and Nyarku (2014) their works objective was solely to explore how radio and television advert influenced Ghanaian consumers decision to purchase telecommunication product. Accordingly, this work seeks to address the gap in the literature by exploring how brand affects consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider. However, the specific objectives this study sought to achieve are:

1. To assess the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider.

2. To measure the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider.
3. To ascertain how perceived quality of a brand affects purchasing decision of a mobile network provider.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider?
2. How do brand image impact on consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider?
3. How does perceived quality of a brand affect consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider?

1.5 Significance of the Study

For marketers, whatever their companies' marketing strategies are, the main purpose of their marketing activities is to influence consumers' perception and attitude toward a brand, establish the brand image in consumers' mind, and stimulate consumers' actual purchasing behaviour of the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity (Zhang, 2015). Accordingly, findings from the study would assist marketers within the telecommunication industry to understand how to position their entity brands in order to reinstate a positive feeling about their services to their customers. Again, players within the telecommunication industry will get to know whether the brand identity of their services resonate with its target market in influencing their purchasing decisions of their product and

services. Equally, findings from this study will contribute to the gap within the literature on how brand image impact on consumer purchasing decision of telecommunication product.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

As similar to any other studies there are possibility of recurrent issues that may impede the entire study processes and may equally be beyond the control of the researcher. First and foremost, it is likely, that some of the target population may not be willing to respond to the study questionnaire due to time schedule and the clash of activities that may occur during the time of the questionnaire distribution. As such, this may limit the number of study samples that may be used for the study analysis hence, affecting the generalizability of the study findings.

Again, the respondents' level of education may also limit some of the respondent's ability to respond to the questionnaire items accurately. As this study will used questionnaire items as its data collection instrument, one's level of education will limit his or her ability to read and understand the questions asked and possibly respond to it appropriately. Accordingly, this occurrence will somehow make it a little bit difficult for the researcher to obtain relevant data that will be applicable to the study context.

Finally, since the study is mainly to investigate the influence of branding on consumer selection of mobile network provider, some respondents may possibly conceal their telecommunication network service provider in order to make the other service provider look good or bad hence, their responses may not be a true reflection of how brand actually moderate their selection process by based on a premeditated motive.

1.8. Scope of the study

Specifically, the scope for this study will be mobile phone users within the Kumasi metropolis. Hence, individuals within this metropolis who owns a phone will be targeted as the study

population. However, since often times in the literature it has been reported that persons within the age brackets of 25-45 are mostly the kind of mobile phone users that switch from one service provider to the other, the study will largely focus on this age category.

1. 9 Organization of the Study

This study be structured into five chapters. Chapter One, gives background information of the work and sets the topic of the study in context. It presents the aims and objectives of the study and explains the structure of the dissertation. Chapter Two is literature review. This chapter captures a review of related literature conducted in the field of brand and its impact on consumer purchasing decision taking into account its relevance to the research topic in objectives. Chapter Three discusses research methodology. It focuses on the methodology to be used to arrive at the conclusions in the last chapter. Chapter four presents the results / findings and discussion. Chapter Five presents summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. This section will itemize the major research findings and indicate how this research work will contribute to knowledge. This section will also include recommendations and any limitations of the study and will also include suggestions for future research work.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This work seeks to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider within the context of Ghana particularly with mobile users within the Kumasi metropolis. This chapter discusses the concepts and nature of brand, the theoretical framework and the empirical review on effect of branding on consumers purchasing decision and finally the conceptual framework.

2.1 Concept of Branding

David Ogilvy who is credited as the father of modern-day branding makes a succinct description about the concept branding. To Ogilvy, brand is something that remain still when a factory is burnt down (Chovanová, Korshunov, & Babčanová, 2015). Meaning, they are the business elements that bring consistency into business operation, protects a business within a market from other similar businesses and safeguard a business investments in the long run (Loken, Ahluwalia, & Houston, 2010). According to Chovanová et al. (2015), brand image or identity is built over time, largely from the impression a consumer or buyer has towards a company's product or service offerings and tend to either confirmed or destroyed from subsequent future experiences. Accordingly, consumers will feel much certainty and confidence when buying from a recognized or well-established brand within the market space (McDonald et al., 2001).

From this brief background, the concept brand can be described as the distinguishable sign, symbol or value attached to a product or service offerings that helps a consumer to differentiate between similar product offering within the market space (Babčanová, 2010). Hence, it minimizes the chaos's that would have been created within the market if consumers had no means of identifying or verifying products differences.

Accordingly, branding ultimately works as a signal since it helps consumers to quickly recognise a product as one, they are familiar with or the one, they like (Chovanová, et al., 2015). Specifically, “It serves as a memory prompt, allowing consumers to retrieve relevant information from memory. This information may be about past experiences about the brand, brand perceptions or brand associations (Chovanová, et al., 2015, pg.2).” This then suggests that branding becomes the manufacturer’s way of adding value and giving its product or service distinct appeal that sets its product or service apart from the rest of the competition (Roper & Fill, 2012).

Moreover, it has to be added that brand image depicts the operational competencies and competitiveness of a company as such, a good image generates trust in the eyes and minds of the buyer (Chien & Chi, 2019). Fombrun’s (1995) work posited that institutions with strong positive brand identity are able to create an appealing competitive position via their image identity. Hence, this status help institutions to communicate effectively towards their market segment with their informed promise of product consistency and product quality (Spyropoulou, Skarmeas, & Katsikeas, 2010).

Moreover, within the market space, brand identity is viewed as a business trait that is built over time through the consumer experience with a firm’s product or service offering (Cronin & Taylor, 2008). Hence, when a business image is regarded by the market as (i.e. with good status), it has a greater impact on the buying intentions of the consumers (Hsu, Chen, & Hsueh, 2006).

2.2 Concept of Branding and Brand Management

As indicated earlier branding eventually operates as a signal to the consumer. Hence, it helps the buyer to quickly recognise a product as either part of the category they favoured most or distaste (Chovanová, et al., 2015). However, what has to be noted is that, a buyer predisposition

towards a product will largely emanate from his previous experience about the brand, perceptions or brand associations (Chovanová, et al., 2015). According to Winkielman et al.(2000), the information or perception a buyer holds about a brand serves as an important determinant in the consumer future decisions (i.e. repurchase). This goes to suggest that branding has become one of the key business strategy used by organizations to promise the market with elements of quality, dependability, trust, etc.

Consistent views were shared by Holt (2015) as the author asserts that branding is pivotal to creating customer value, not just in imagery but also serve as a key tool for creating and maintaining competitive advantage. Accordingly, branding serves as a process of establishing a strong emotional bond between the customer and business service line(Hislop, 2001).

However, with brand management, it becomes the central factor in the entire brand processes as it through its effect that a brand identity is realized or created(Kotler P., Keller, Koshy, & Jha, 2013).

Moreover, it has been established that, in most often than not, consumers form personal relationships with brands in the same way as they form relationships with each other in a social context(Aggarwal, 2004). The author again added that activities of brand management do enable organizations to build loyal customers via positive connections and images their brand identity resonates. For marketers, whatever their companies' marketing strategies may be, their emphasis will be to incorporate activities that may shape their consumers perception and attitude towards their brand and subsequently stimulate consumers' actual purchasing behavior of the brand, therefore increasing sales, maximizing the market share and developing brand equity(Zhang, 2015). Hence, brand management becomes a critical strategy in the entire brand process.

2.2.1 Elements of Brand

Brand is not merely attributed to a distinctive emblem or identity of an organization. The brand can take several forms thus, emblem, customer service, management of organization workforce, the outlook presentation of a product or service packages. Correspondingly, the moment an individual or buyer transact business with a brand signifies a connection point that will eventually influence the value the buyer will attach to the said organization (Kesavan, 2015). Kotler et al. (2013) established six elements associated with brands thus, whether its products or the entire corporation. Elements such as; attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality and user are the main characteristics that form the basis of brands as stated in their study. Kotler et al. (2013) defined attribute as a feature associated with a brand. Attributes such as corporation efficiency or durability will be associated with how a brand provides its services or produce its product. Another element thus, benefits, seeks to bring forth what a buyer gives much attention to (i.e. will customers feel more secure to buy from a particular company or use its brand services). Kotler et al. (2013) again emphasized that, what the element value, means is to ensure whether the corporate brand in question is in tune with the values of customers or the brand users. For instance, a customer will always ensure or check whether the corporation he or she intends to patronize their products and services exhibit his or her personal values. In this case customers feel that they are self-standing and showcase this via the preference of the institution they decide to purchase from.

Culture as another brand element purpose is to reinforce the particular culture the brands operate from. For instance, Germany as a state has attributes such as; efficiency, dependability, robustness as its cultural traits hence its car manufacturer such as Audi and Benz will be always associated with the Germany culture thus, efficient, dependable and robust. Also, from the perspective of Kotler et al. (2013) personality characterisation goes with the traits such as; professionalism, intelligence and solid. Hence, the question a consumer will ask himself/herself

is whether the business entity in question exhibits these traits in their dealings. On this score, a consumer who is perceived to be highly intelligent or a professional will always like to purchase or deal with a corporation who portrays these traits in its dealings.

The last element under Kotler et al. (2013) brand features is the user. With this brand element, the emphasis is on the eventual user or consumer (i.e. the person who will use the product or service). The authors assert that with this element what a corporation will mostly look for is the characteristics of the people who use the organization products and services thus, users' characteristics such as; age, class/status, millennials, pensioners among others are all used to identify the category of consumers who use a particular corporate brand. However, Kochan (1996) as cited in (Roper & Fill, 2012) sought not to start his brand elements from all the six features but rather sought to delve much into the value element. Kochan (1996) argue that there are three levels of brand values viz; functional, expressive and central values. The functional quality connotes the performance of the corporation and signify the reasoning for buying a product (i.e. as a financial institution their functional value is to provide financial services). Interestingly, Roper and Fill (2012) held that competitors can easily imitate functional value. Expressive quality on the other hand talks mostly about buyers and their self-identity. Kochan, asserts that it is the central values that are most essential. To him, central values signify the key of a buyer's main convictions. A key example of this approach is when corporate brand values embody country or global inclination. For instance, Nestle Company whose values reflect the importance of environmental sustainability in a world of mass consumption reinforce this trait in all its operations and dealings.

Randall (2000) on the other hand came out with four elements namely; functions, differences, personality/image and source. Randall characterisation ties in with the work of Kotler and Kochan. The first three features have previously been acknowledged by studies from Kotler. Sources as an element however is largely comparable to central tenets since it equally talks

about what a business symbolizes. Accordingly, the elements of corporate brand have been presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Brand Elements

Elements	Meaning
Attributes	Product attributes
Benefits	What customers are interested in
Values	The brand should be in tandem with the values of consumers
Culture	The brand may represent a certain culture
Personality	Intelligence, Professional, Solid
User	The main goal, is the kind of person who utilizes the product

Source: Kotler et al. (2013)

2.3 Theoretical Framework of Branding

Generally, business brand and its outcomes are measured either by the kind of perception or impressions consumers have towards that said brand (Chun, 2005). However, these perceptions are largely formed by the brand awareness (Gaines-Ross, 1997), product or service perceived quality (Chun 2005), attitudes toward the brand (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000), and consumers purchase intentions towards the brand (Siomkos & Kurzbard, 1994). As indicated by Jung and Seock (2016), although many theories do exist when it comes to the measurement of brand impact nonetheless, the Hierarchy of Effect Model (HOE) is the most used within the branding literature. The authors attributed its wide usage to its ability to expound the relationships that exist between elements such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand attitude and consumer purchasing intentions.

Accordingly, within this study context, the HOE model will be used as the theoretical framework for the study. Specifically, the HOE model postulates that an individual goes through three mental stages in a decision-making process: the cognitive, the affective, and the conativestage(Jung & Seock, 2016). However, each stage within the decision process has its own tasks and functions that a consumer has to deal with or explore. First and foremost, it is at the cognitive stage that a consumer gets to form his or her awareness towards a product offering(Kotler & Bliemel, 2001). Largely, it is this awareness a consumer forms about a product or a brand that shape his decision whether to use that product or ignore it. Generally, a product awareness tends to be very critical in the consumer decision making since well-known brands are always favoured than less known brands(Jacoby, Szybillo, & Busato-Schach, 1977). For instance, it has been established that during low involvement situations basic brand awareness alone about a product may be adequate to influence the choiceof a brand, even in the absence of well-formed attitudes (Hoyer& Brown 1990).

Also, Macdonald and Sharp (2000) observed that buyers will usually depend onbrand awareness within their decision-making mainly because consumers would like totake less amount of time together with minimum cognitive efforts in their purchasing decisions. Meaning, raising a business brand awareness among consumers increases its patronage within the market space(Chakravarti & Janiszewski, 2003).Consistent views were espoused in the studies of Wu and Lo (2009) and that of According to Akkucuk and Esmaili (2016) as their work observed that an organization with a high level of brand awareness will receive higher preferences over a brand with less level of awareness. This is because people generally tend to buy brands, they are familiar with or have seen before.

Perceived quality, is described as the total sum of the physical and psychological benefits a consumer receives from the brand (Avery et al., 2010). This perceived value emanates from four distinct benefit dimensions: informational benefits, risk reducing benefits, symbolic and

identity related benefits, and social benefits. According to Dennhardt (2014), the perceived quality of a brand impacts directly on the decision-making process of a consumer. It also directly influences the brand loyalty of a consumer. This influence is even more pivotal when customers are in a condition, which makes them unable to make an analysis of the product or service quality. Same views were shared by Monirul and Han (2012) as their work revealed that the higher the perceived quality towards a product the higher the chances that consumers will use this product or buy this product.

Again, attitude and purchase behaviour in the HOE are significant and extensively studied variables in consumer behaviour research (Spears & Singh, 2004). Several works have asserted that attitude and purchase behaviour are distinctly associated within the cognitive-affective relationships of the HOE model (Poon & Prendergast, 2006). Attitude in this context is described as a buyer's assessment and predisposition towards a product or service, and it constitutes the affective dimension of the HOE model (Loudon & Della Bitta, 1993). Purchasing intention, which is included as a conative dimension in the HOE model, is equally described as a personal behavioural inclination to purchase a certain category of product (Bagozzi & Burnkrant, 1979). Hence, purchasing intention which tends to be the conative dimension in the HOE model is viewed as the main action path in a consumer decision making (Wu & Lo, 2009; Wahid & Ahmed, 2011). This suggests that brand which generally, seeks to portray a distinct form of performance promise about a product or services through the antecedents of brand awareness, perceived quality, person's attitude shapes a buyer purchasing intentions towards that product. Accordingly, this study will rely on the tenets of HOE (i.e. brand awareness, perceived quality, brand attitudes and consumers purchase intentions) to assess how its presence influence consumers purchasing of mobile network provider in Ghana.

2.4 Consumer Buying Behaviour

According to Jacoby and Morrin (2015), consumer behaviour can be described as the acquisition, consumption, and disposal of time and offerings (goods, services, and ideas) by decision-making units (i.e. individuals, dyads, and larger groups). In a much similar vein, Cengage Learning (2007) viewed consumer behaviour as how consumers make purchase decisions and how they use and dispose of the purchased goods or services. This goes to suggest that business and marketing managers ought to understand its consumer's behaviour in order to be in the better position to tailor its products and services to meet their needs.

Generally, consumer behaviour tends to be pervasive and universal since every individual in his or her entire life time will make decisions all the time (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). Interestingly, some of these everyday decisions tend to be unconsciously done. For instance, bathing in the morning, dressing up for work or school, greeting your friends or colleagues, etc. However, some decisions too tend to be semi-automatic that is, they can be part of everyday habits, but not necessarily automatic, for instance, deciding on which attire to wear for work, deciding on which food to eat or buy in the morning (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). Aside these, there are also decisions that are highly reflective decisions like purchasing a car, choosing a life partner, or undertaking a graduate study. According to Willman-Iivarinen (2017), although, the decisions may appear different nonetheless, it has to be added that the decision-making processes are almost always the same.

That is, in a typical decision-making process, a consumer being it individual or corporate entity pass through the same processes when seeking to purchase a product or service thus, need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behaviour (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

The first stage at the decision-making process is the need recognition. It is at this stage of the decision process that a consumer recognizes the need for a product or services (Stankevich, 2017). Most often times, businesses seek to create a state of deprivation between the consumer's current condition and that of their preferred state or status. Hence, it is as a result of this deprivation or imbalances that coerced the consumer to recognize how the purchasing of a particular kind of product or service will address his or her present deprivation (Stankevich, 2017). Generally, a need can emanate either from an internal or external stimulus.

Munthiu (2009) argued that the internal stimulus can be caused by the most basic needs that are generally situated at the realm of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (i.e. hunger, thirst, sex, etc.) or at most often times from a person's religious belief or affiliation. Conversely, external stimuli are influencers from outside sources such as recommendation of a new product by a friend, the design of a package, or an advertisement on television or radio (Stankevich, 2017). Stankevich (2017) again asserted that in other instances, businesses may create the need by themselves by making the consumer feel self-doubting without using their product or services. This goes to suggest that it is not at all times that consumers create the need by themselves since others too are intentionally created by the organization via advertisement and promotions.

Moreover, it is after the identification of the need that the information search comes to play thus, the second stage in the decision-making process. Accordingly, after the identification of a need, a consumer begins to search for information about the availability of products and services within the market space (Stankevich, 2017). Strictly, the intent of this exercise is to help the consumer identify the best available option that can address or satisfy his or her need. As suggested by Cengage Learning (2007), a consumer information search can either take the form of an internal or external source. With an internal information search, the person's focus is to recall information stored in his or her personal memory. This stored information comes largely

from earlier experiences with a product, for example, recalling whether a phone purchased in some time past gave the user a trilling experience or the vice versa (Cengage Learning, 2007). However, with an external information search, the consumer will usually seek for information from his closest friends or family members (Stankevich, 2017). Aside, these sources, external information search could at times come from public sources, such as reviews, blogs or even from marketing-controlled sources, such as banners, television ads, brochures, etc. The information search leads the consumer into the third stage which is the evaluation of alternatives (Ahmad, 2015). As anticipated, the consumer will assess the available alternatives within the market by using the information gathered during the information search. Specifically, a consumer at this stage will pose these questions to himself or herself: "Do I really need the product?" Are there alternatives out there? Is the original product that bad? (Stankevich, 2017). Largely, the consumer will select the product or services that correspond best to his personal attributes' or in other instances used a shortened form method (e.g., price, quality, brand, etc.) (Ahmad, 2015). However, the attitude a consumer will form or have towards a product brand after its evaluation will inform his purchasing decision (Kotler, 2010). Moreover, Consumers do not use a simple and single evaluation process in all buying situations. Moreover, the degree of complexity of the evaluation process is influenced by various factors, among which the most essential ones are; the importance of the service/product to be considered; the cost of making a bad decision; the complexity of the evaluated alternatives and the urgency with which the decision must be taken (Muntiu, 2009). Hence, consumer level of involvement in the decision process will inform the kind of assessment method to employ when assessing the available alternatives.

The purchase decision is the last but one stage where the consumer eventually makes the choice as to what telecommunication service to select from. However, as indicated by Kotler, (2010) this stage may be disrupted by unforeseen circumstances such as a job loss or income loss.

Additionally, knowledge which may not have been encountered in the information search can now become present and changed the mind of the consumer(Ahmad, 2015). An example of this would be negative feedback from a previous service provider that would force the consumer to re-evaluate his decision.

The final and perhaps the most important stage for businesses will take place after the purchase when the buyer will have two outcomes. The post purchase behaviour of the consumer will be either satisfied or dissatisfied(Ahmad, 2015). Satisfaction can result from the telecommunication large outreach within all parts of the country particularly the remote places. However, if it happens that the mobile user is dissatisfied by his network purchasing, it may result in negative assumptions of the company that can diminish brand loyalty which is why it is absolutely critical that companies should be very careful to create positive post-purchase communication (B2B Marketing, 2015).Moreover, the consumer buying decision has been presented in Figure 2. 1.

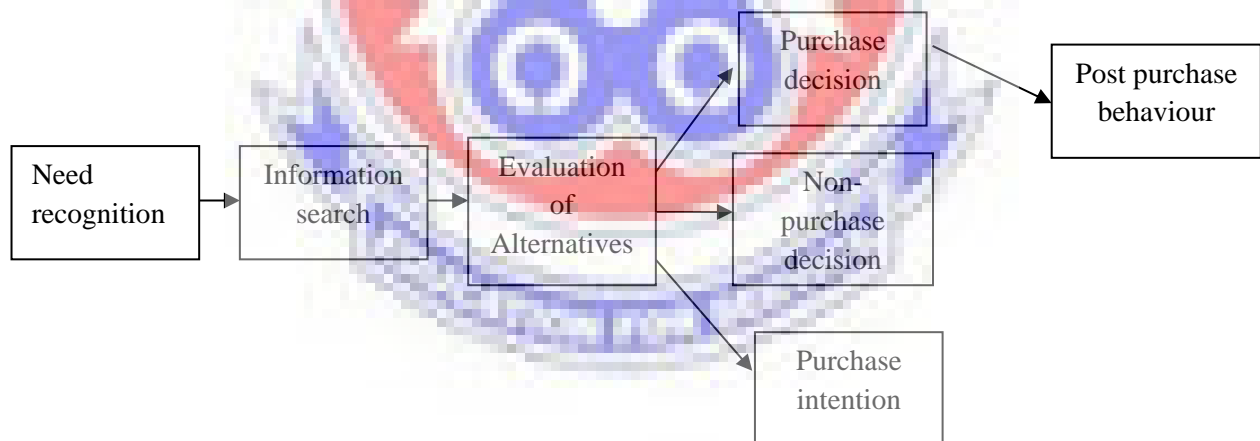


Fig. 2.1: Consumer Buying Decisions

Source:(Kotler & Keller,2012)

2.5 Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchasing Decision

As succinctly put by Willman-Iivarinen (2017) there is much more to consumption than just merely to satisfy physical needs. Thus, everything one uses can be employed as social currency, an identity claim, a tool for self-branding, a signal for values or a tool for regulating mood (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). Accordingly, consumers form strong attachment with different products. Meaning there will be products consumers will like as well as the ones they will hate (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). However, these emotional connections are explained by brands since every product has a brand identity. Brand is the image buyers have towards a product, service, a business entity or even an individual. Hence, people tend to have a social appeal towards a brand because they have symbolic features and personalities that resonate with their personal trait (Belk, 1998).

According to Escalas and Bettman (2005), consumers use properties and brands in identity building. Hence, people are very critical in what they select since the product or service they use will define who they are as a person. This is because certain products are linked to or resonate certain social roles (Kleine, Kleine, Schultz, & Kernan, 1993).

Gosling (2008) argued that identity claims can either aim to send message to ourselves or portray a certain kind of image about ourselves to the outside world. Hence, it seeks to remind us about what kinds of person we are or want to be (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). As such, brands and consumption are understandably used as an identity claim because of its ability to transfer brand qualities into user qualities. Accordingly, a person or consumer awareness about the kind of image a brand signals or portrays to the public will influence the buyer decision to select from that brand (Kleine, et al., 1993). Consistent view was shared by Walker (2008) as the author work asserts that people awareness about the idea a brand connotes will influence buyer's purchasing decision.

Likewise, comparable results were reproduced in the studies of Salazar-Ordóñez, Rodríguez-Entrena, Cabrera and Henseler (2018) as their work seek out to assess how brand influence consumer attitude toward a particular foodstuff and a product alternative, as well as the actual consumption of the foodstuff. Evidently, results from the study posited that attitudes to both products explained the relative consumption of the foodstuff under study. Again, it was established that consumer brand awareness measure by brand equity influenced consumer attitude towards that food product.

Similarly, in the study of Liu and Liang (2014), it was observed that over 70 percent of the respondents were willing to spend more money to buy their favourite brand of smartphone. Meaning the respondents level of awareness about the smart phone brand influenced their purchasing decisions. Specifically, their work sought to identify customers' perception towards different smartphone brands. Again, in the same study, the analysis of the eye tracking data showed some significant differences in the sequential position of viewing the phones' logos. The viewing of most participants focused on the smartphone brand rather than on the product specifications and price. The study therefore concluded that consumers decision to purchase a smartphone was informed by their earlier awareness of that brand but not necessarily on the phone price or specifications.

A very intriguing results about how brand awareness influence consumers decision was found in the studies of Tseng (2010). Evidently findings from the study postulated that consumers generally tend to depend on the image of the country of origin, and beliefs and attitudes towards the brand when they are not familiar with or have no knowledge of a product. However, when consumers tend to be much aware about a particular brand, these considerations that is, country of origin, and beliefs and attitudes towards the brand tend to become less important in the consumer purchasing decision.

Finally, it has been recognized that brand awareness impact on consumer decision becomes very significant especially during the purchasing of low involvement products or services (Sarigöllü & Huang, 2012). This goes to suggest that brand awareness is a key influencer during the first two stages of the decision-making processes thus, need recognition and information search (Malik, Ghafoor, & Iqbal, 2013). Accordingly, for any business to enjoy high patronage within its space, it will be required that it clearly communicate the values and performance promise of its brands to its target market (Sarigöllü & Huang, 2012). Consistent views were shared by Çaland Adams (2014) as their work opined that customers are more likely to patronage brands that they have pre-knowledge on than brands they are less familiar with.

2.6 Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision

As indicated earlier that everything one consumes are used as social currency, an identity claim, a tool for self-branding, a signal for values or a tool for regulating mood (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). On this score, this section seeks to explore how brand status and identity influence consumers decision during the decision-making process.

The work of Andreea (2014) established that brand name or identity tend to have a significant impact on consumer buying decisions. The author attributed this relationship to the fact that at most often times consumers tend to choose a brand that they consider congruent with their self-image or identity. Hence, Andreea (2014) argued that at individual level a consumer buying decision tend to depict his or her identity status through the products he uses or decide to purchase.

Similar results were corroborated in the studies of Shamsuddoha and et al. (2010) as their study revealed a significant relationship between brand name and consumers purchasing decisions. Expressly, their work found out that branded cars have a greater place in consumer mind, when customers go to purchase a car hence, they prefer to purchase a well-known branded car

over an unknown one. According to Shamsuddoha et al. (2010), consumers high preference for branded cars can be informed from the fear of the unknown that are associated with unknown brands or vehicles.

Again, in the studies of Kakkos, Trivellas and Sdrolas (2015), similar results were produced as their work posited that a consumer decision to purchase private labels were largely influenced the product brand identity. Specifically, the study was conducted among consumers in three supermarket chains offering private label products in Greece. The study eventually targeted 171 sample size whom afterwards were given questionnaires to indicate how labelled brand influenced their purchasing intentions or decision towards that brand.

More so, a study done by Jalilvand et al. (2011) incorporated all the frameworks in Aaker's (1991) brand equity construct thus; brand awareness, association, perceived quality and loyalty as a key variable affecting consumer buying decisions of automobiles. The research underscored that variables such as brand awareness, association, loyalty, and perceived quality have a significant impact on consumers buying decisions of automobiles.

Furthermore, Lee (2014) in his study sought to identify the factors that influence early adopters' purchase of smart phone among college students. The study made startling findings which demand recommendations. For instance, Lee (2014) reported that the factors that have the significant impact on early adopters of smart phone were; friends' recommendation, financial burden and other family members recommendation. However, the author concluded that the brand image of retailer selling the smart phones had the most significant impact on the buying decision of the early smart phone adopters. Also, it was observed that brand image of the retailer equally had a significant correlation on the perceived quality and perceived risk of buying a phone a particular store.

Additionally, with the work of Gupta et al. (2014) it sought out to explore how the brand image of retailers affected elements such as, the perceived quality and perceived risk of store brands and ultimately the customers' buying decision. The study established that brand image of a retailer has a significant impact on the buying decision of respondents. Likewise, the research reported that the brand image of the retailer has significant correlation on the perceived quality and perceived risk of respondents' decisions to buy from a store. This suggests that when consumers have tried the store brand, their opinion about it will eventually have a great impact on the store image; nonetheless, it will be more likely that the image of the store will be the main catalysts that will influence consumers' willingness to try the brand.

Again, when it comes to the studies of Fianto, Hadiwidjojo, Aisjah and Solimun (2014), it specifically measured the influence of brand image on purchase behaviour of 13 Islamic private universities in East Java Indonesia. The study used variables such as; Islamic values, brand image and brand trust as the independent variable and purchase behaviour as the dependent variable. Evidently, the study results showed that brand image has the most significant impact on the respondents purchasing behaviour. Conversely, Islamic values reported no significant impact on the respondents purchasing behaviour. Their findings further indicated that students in Islamic private universities in East Java exhibited more preference to brand image than Islamic values.

Last but not the least, the works of Letchumanan and Sam (2016) explored the influence that brand name had on the purchasing intentions of automobile in Malaysia. Apparently, results from the study showed that brand has a strong influence on consumers' buying decision. Findings from the study further revealed that the study respondents had a strong preference toward branded cars, which connoted better quality and superior performance.

Finally, the work of Zeb, Rashid and Javeed (2011) assessed the influence of brands on female consumer's buying behaviour in Pakistan. The study respondents came from female consumers between the ages of 20-35 years and likewise the study used questionnaire items for its data collection. Findings from the study indicated that variables such as; status branding, brand attitude, paying premium for branded clothing, self-concept and reference groups were found to have positive impact on female consumer buying behaviour.

2.7 The Influence of Perceived Quality of a Branding on Consumer Purchasing Decision

This section of chapter seeks to explore the impact that the perceived quality of a brand has on consumer purchasing decisions. According to Erdil and Uzun (2010), brand image is formed from consumer perception about his or her past experiences with regards to a product or service performance promise (Granot, Greene, & Brashear, 2010) and results in cognitive and emotional satisfaction (Kumar & Kim, 2014). Accordingly, the perceived quality of a brand depicts the ability of a brand to meet consumers' needs and expectations. Conceptually, perceived quality denotes a consumer's judgments about brands' overall superiority or excellence (Erdil T. , 2015). The superiority of products or services provided by companies or brands will largely be dependent on buyers' perception of the quality that may emanate from repetitive experiences from both new and existing consumers (Das, 2014).

As such, consumers do take into account series of factors when judging a product or service perceived quality. Moreover, a consumer will consider both his personal experiences to that of other social factors to make his or her decision about a brand perceived quality (Mendez, Oubina, & Rubio, 2008). Meaning, the perception a consumer create about a brand or product quality will shape his present and future buying decision about a brand. Hence, in the studies of Aghekyan-Simonian, Forsythe, Kwon and Chattaraman (2012), it was evident that consumer attitudes toward product or store brands are formed not only by positive recalls but also negative

cues and recalls as well. As such, the perceived quality attached to a brand has a greater impact on the consumer decisions (i.e. repurchase, revisit, positive word of mouth, etc.).

Consistent views were shared by Erdil (2015) as their study revealed that the perceived quality of a brand influenced consumer decisions with regards to the decision to try the brand, use or recommend it to a third party. Specifically, the study aim was to assess the effect elements of brands such as, price, image, status and perceived quality on consumers purchasing decision of apparel product. The study also examined the mediating effect of store image on customer relationship. The study used both questionnaire and structured interviews to elicit responses from 146 retailer shoppers within Turkey.

Similar thought was shared by Beneke and Carter (2015) as they argued that consumers' perceptions about product value is formed by the product level of quality, price and level of risk. As such, these perceived risk factors directly and indirectly shape consumers' willingness to buy the brand. Even though, it has been established in other context that price discounts and promotions may increase sales in a retail store in the short run nevertheless, Erdil (2015) pointed out clearly that such discounts may have negative repercussion on a brand's quality perception since cheap price often connotes less quality. Accordingly, the perceived quality of a brand has been established as the most significant predictor of consumer purchasing decision but not on price (Ding, Ross, & Rao, 2010). Likewise, in a study undertaken by Torres, Summers and Belleau (2001), it was evident that the perceived quality of a product brand had a greater impact on male consumers purchasing of apparel.

Generally, it has been established that consumers depend on risk reducing cues such as brands or perception quality of brands to lessen their uncertainty and risks associated with their shopping choices (Aghekyan-Simonian et al., 2012). Accordingly, consumers perceived quality of a brand which is described as the individual subjective beliefs about potentially

negative or positive experiences about his or her earlier experiences shape his future purchasing purchasing or buying decisions (Diallo, 2012). Consistently, it has been confirmed that brands with higher perceived quality tend to receive higher preference and usage among consumers than brands with low perception of product quality (Wu, Yeh, & Hsiao, 2011).

Interestingly, it is not in all cases that a significant relationship has been reported between perceived quality of brand and consumer purchasing intentions. A clear case is the study of De and Singh (2017) as it sought to investigate the interrelationship that existed between attributes such as, price consciousness, quality variability, brand image, store image and smart-shopper self-perceptions) and consumer purchasing decision of private label brands. The study likewise explored how personal attributes such as, age, gender, occupation, income and qualification influenced the respondents purchasing decision of private label brands. Apparently, findings from the study showed that brand identity of private label brands had the most significant impact on the consumers purchasing decisions whereas perceived quality had the least impact on the consumers purchasing decisions.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a graphic or inscribed text that depicts either graphically or in narrative form, the main constructs or variables to be studied in a study. However, as this study employed the Hierarchy of Effect Model (HOE) to explore how elements such as brand awareness, perceived quality and brand image influenced consumer purchasing decision of mobile network, these brand elements will form the main variables of the study.

A conceptualization of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is illustrated in Figure 2.

Conceptual framework for the Study

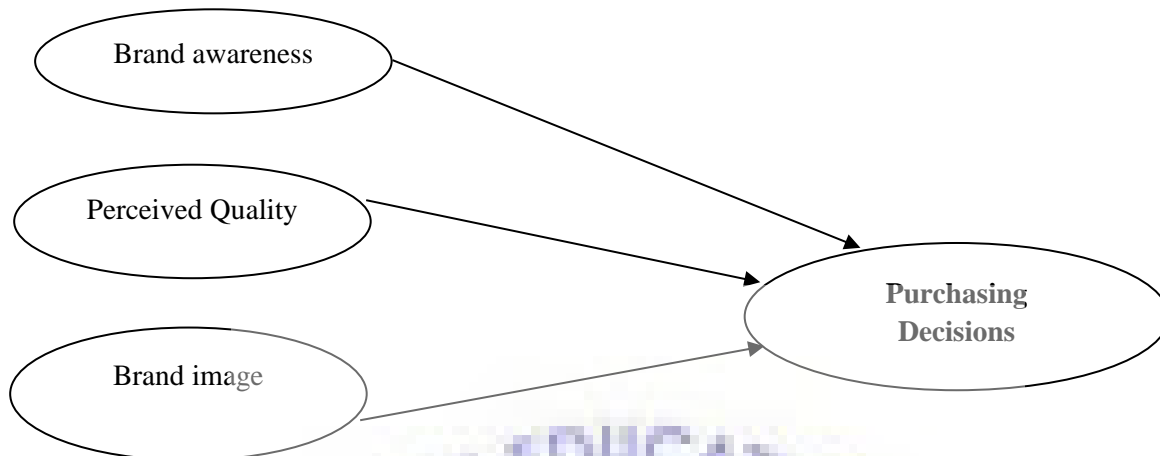


Fig. 2.2 Framework for analysing branding impact on consumer purchasing decisions

Source: (Adapted from, Gaines-Ross, 1997; Ahluwalia, et al., 2000; Chun 2005)

2.8.1 Brand Awareness and Consumer Purchasing Decision

As succinctly put by Willman-Iivarinen (2017) there is much more to consumption than just merely to satisfy physical needs. Thus, everything one uses can be employed as social currency, an identity claim, a tool for self-branding, a signal for values or a tool for regulating mood (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). Accordingly, consumers form strong attachment with different products. Meaning there will be products consumers will like as well as the ones they will hate (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). However, these emotional connections are explained by brands since every product has a brand identity. Brand is the image buyers have towards a product, service, a business entity or even an individual. Hence, people tend to have a social appeal towards a brand because they have symbolic features and personalities that resonate with their personal trait (Belk, 1998).

Accordingly, one awareness about the kind of image a brand signals or portrays to the public will influence the buyer decision to select from that brand (Kleine, et al., 1993). Hence, in the

work of Walker (2008), it was revealed that people awareness about the idea a brand connotes tend to influence the buyer purchasing decision. Likewise, comparable results were reproduced in the studies of Salazar-Ordóñez et al.(2018) as their work established that consumer brand awareness measured by brand equity influenced consumer attitude towards that food product. Similarly, in the study of Liu and Liang (2014), it was established that 71% of the respondents were willing to spend more money to buy their favourite brand of smartphone. Meaning the respondents level of awareness about the smart phone brand influenced their purchasing decisions. Accordingly, in this study context, it is hypothesized that:

H₁: There will be a significant relationship between brand awareness and consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider

2.8.2 Perceived Quality and Consumer Purchasing Decision

The perceived quality of a brand depicts the ability of a brand to meet consumers' needs and expectations. Conceptually, perceived quality denotes a consumer's judgments about brands' overall superiority and/or excellence (Erdil, 2015). The superiority of products or services provided by companies or brands will largely be dependent on buyers' perception of the quality that may emanate from repetitive experiences from both new and existing consumers (Das, 2014). As such, consumers do take into account series of factors when judging a product or service perceived quality. Moreover, a consumer will consider both his personal experiences to that of other social factors to make this decision about a brand perceived quality (Mendez, Oubina, & Rubio, 2008). Meaning, the perception a consumer create about a brand or product quality will shape his present and future buying decision about a brand.

In the studies of Aghekyan-Simonian et al. (2012), it was evident that consumer attitudes toward product or store brands are formed not only by positive recalls but also negative cues and recalls as well. Accordingly, the perceived quality attached to a brand has a greater impact on the

consumer decisions (i.e. repurchase, revisit, positive word of mouth, etc.). Consistent views were shared by Erdil (2015) as their study revealed that the perceived of a brand influenced consumer decisions with regards to the decision to try the brand, use or recommend it to a third party. Similar thought was shared by Beneke and Carter (2015) as they argued that consumers' perceptions about product value is formed by the product level of quality, price and level of risk. As such these perceived risk factors directly and indirectly shape consumers' willingness to buy the brand. On this premise, it is hypothesized that:

H₂: There is a significant relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchasing decision of a network provider

2.8.3 Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision

In the work of Andreea (2014), it was established that brand name or identity tend to have a significant impact on consumer buying decisions. The author attributed this relationship to the fact that at most often times consumers tend to choose a brand that they consider congruent with their self-image or identity. Hence, Andreea (2014) argued that at individual level a consumer buying decision tend to depict his or her identity status through the products he uses or decides to purchase. Comparable results were corroborated in the studies of Shamsuddoha and et al. (2010) as their study revealed a significant relationship between brand name and consumers purchasing decisions. According to Shamsuddoha et al. (2010), consumers high preference for branded cars can be informed from the fear of the unknown that are associated with unknown brands or vehicles. Again, in the studies of Kakkos, Trivellas and Sdrolias (2015), similar results were produced as their work posited that a consumer decision to purchase private labels were largely influenced the product brand identity. As such, it is hypothesized that,

H₃: There is a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile network operator.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This work primarily seeks to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider within the context of Ghana particularly with mobile users within the Kumasi metropolis. This chapter discussed the research design employed in this study. It discussed the basic research designs, which include the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach. Subsequently the chapter presented the method adopted for this study context as well its justification. The research design is examined followed by a discussion of population, sampling methods and data collection procedures. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical issues and how the data gathered would be analysed.

3.1 Research Design

The choice of research design in management and social sciences draw its source from a researcher's assumptions about the nature of the social world, the nature of the knowledge to be obtained and methods of gaining knowledge (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Accordingly, the assumption on how the nature exist as well as how to acquire knowledge guides a study to appreciate which paradigm will enable its study to achieve valid and reliable results. According to Creswell (2014), research design are the forms of investigation within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that present the exact direction for processes with which a scientific enquiry may be carried out. Equally Denzin and Lincoln (2011) viewed it as strategies for scientific investigation. Creswell (2014) identified three main research designs namely; qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods as the main approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in any research study.

Importantly, quantitative studies are positioned within the positivist worldview whereas the qualitative research are positioned within the constructivist and interpretivist perspective (Creswell, 2014). The positivism posits that situations that can be assessed through our senses (i.e. sight, hearing, touching, taste, etc.) really produce knowledge. From this predisposition,

the real world can only be studied from the utilization of these senses through experimentation, theory testing, and theory creation, pretesting and post-testing measures of attitudes (Creswell, 2014). Hence, it argued that research ought to be objective rather than subjective statement for that matter objectivity is the only proper domain of science.

Conversely, the interpretivist or constructivist paradigms seek to establish the meaning of a problem or situation from the views of the participants (Creswell, 2014). This means identifying a culture-sharing group and studying how it develops shared patterns of behaviour over time (i.e., ethnography). Interestingly, one of the key elements of collecting data from this perspective is to assess participants' behaviours during their engagement in activities. Therefore, from this perspective appreciating this interaction of individuals and the environment can produce knowledge of phenomena under investigation. Hence, direct knowledge of the social world according to the interpretivist/subjectivist view is impossible.

However, as this study seeks to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing of mobile network provider, positivists' paradigm provides the best medium for the study to achieve its study objective. Accordingly, this study employed a quantitative research design to measure how branding influence consumer purchasing of mobile network provider. Bryman(2012) held that quantitative research can be viewed as a research approach that betones quantification in the collection and analysis of data and that entails a deductive approach to the connection between theory and research, in which the prominence is placed on the testing of theories. Accordingly, as this study seeks to follow positivist worldview, quantitative methods are best suited. Also, in reviewing previous studies that has been carried out within the field of branding and consumer purchasing decision (see for example, Aggarwal, 2004; Aghekyan-Simonian, et al., 2012; Ahmad, 2015; Beneke & Carter, 2015) quantitative

methods were employed within the respective studies hence confirming its suitability within this study context.

Moreover, as argued earlier by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) research design are strategies employed for scientific investigation. As the study wanted objective and valid answers, quantitative research is best suited as it can minimise the risk of any possible bias, something which can seriously threaten the validity of any study. Despite the associated benefits of quantitative design, it equally has some weaknesses as well. For instance, Ponterotto(2005) argues that quantitative research neglects the interviewee perspective within the context of their lives. Nevertheless, the quantitative methodology is viewed by the researcher as the best approach as this approach will enable the researcher address its research objectives more adequately than a qualitative perspective.

3.2 Population of the Study

Bryman (2012) viewed a study population as the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected from. Generally, it has been argued that the key thing to consider when defining a study population is the exact specification of who should and who should not be included in the sample (Malhorta & Birks, 2007). More so, as this study seeks to investigate the influence of branding on consumer purchasing of mobile network provider, the researcher found it more prudent to employ a student population whom are known to be a segment of a population that tend to switch easily from one mobile service provider to the other. From this qualification, the institution selected for this research work was the undergraduate students of the University of Education-Winneba campus. Based on the researcher's initial enquiry at registrar office, it became evident that the Kumasi campus has total undergraduate students' population of 7,500 (University of Education, Winneba, 2018). Therefore, the population size for this study was 7,500.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

According to Bryman (2012), a sample is a segment of the population that is selected for investigation. In another words it is a subset of a population. The method of purchasing may be based on a probability or a non-probability sampling approach. However, the decision to select a sampling approach is informed by what the study seeks to achieve. For instance, if a study seeks to ensure that each unit in the population has a fair or equal chance of being selected, then random sampling should be employed (Creswell, 2014). In contrast, if a study purpose is to collect data or information from a selected few then non-probability sampling approach should be used. However, what each researcher ought to know beforehand is that each sampling approach has its own consequences.

Moreover, as this study seeks to ensure that each sample has an equal and fairer chance of being selected for the study, the study employed probability sampling specifically simple random sampling. Subsequently, the study used the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table to determine the sample size for the 7500-population size. Based on the table, the sample size for this study was 365 with a 95% confidence interval (error of margin).

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

According to Kumar (2011), data collection methods are the instruments employed for a study data collection. Data collection instrument can take the form of self-administering questionnaire or a structured interview schedule and other forms of techniques guides a study uses to collate information from the subject under enquiry. Again, the author added that in a decision to select or employ a particular research instrument a researcher ought to take notice of some possible conditions. For example, Bryman and Bell (2007) posited that in certain instances, the demographic profile of a study subjects may affect the answer the respondents

will give. Therefore, a respondent personal profile such as educational qualification, religion, and perception about the study may influence his response rate. Obviously, since the present study participants are highly literate and could all read and understand the study items, the demographic characteristics in this case is not expected to have any direct impact on the way and manner the participants will respond to the study items. Accordingly, self-administering questionnaire is more appropriate for the study since it will eschew all these defects from its study findings.

Equally, questionnaires over time have proven to be one of the less expensive instruments to implement (Creswell, 2014) to use to collect study primary data. Bryman (2012) on his part argued that self-administering questionnaires provide greater anonymity and likewise minimize Hawthorne effect than other forms of data collection instruments.

Nonetheless, questionnaires have some weaknesses too for example, Bryman(2012) established that with questionnaire a researcher may find it to establish whether the selected sample actually answered the questionnaire by himself or not. Yet Bryman (2012) maintained that, this problem largely applies to open questions as well, which are not necessarily a great deal in self-completion questionnaire.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaires were sent out to the study samples of the undergraduate students of the University of Education-Winneba Kumasi campus to enable the researcher have adequate insight into the problem under study. Additionally, permission was sought from the course representative before the questionnaires were administered to the students. Also, a cover letter was attached to each questionnaire. The letter outlined the purpose of the study and provided assurance of confidentiality. It also included the researcher's name and contact details. Churchill and Iacobucci (2002) added that cover letters are very important in convincing

respondents to cooperate in a study. The administration of the questionnaire was done by the researcher and one field assistant who equally assisted the researcher in the data collection exercise. Prior permission was sought from the respondents before the questionnaires were eventually given to them to respond to.

3.6 Data Analysis

The empirical analysis for the present study aims to investigate the influence branding on consumer purchasing of mobile network provider. The data collected were keyed into The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 and the result of the study was analysed on the basis of descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations and regression analyses. However, in identifying the correlation between the variables, regression analysis was carried out to know the strength of association or amount of influence the branding elements (i.e. brand image, perceived quality and brand awareness) had on the respondents' purchasing of mobile network operator.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration places enormous responsibility on the researcher to assess carefully the possibility of any harm that could affect the study participants and also to provide appropriate measures to control these effects (Bryman & Bell, 2007). When carrying out research it is important that participants are aware of why it is being carried out, and what will be done with the information they provide. If this is not made clear, the information given may not be entirely truthful or may be slant towards a certain direction. Equally it is important to assure participants that their identities will not be shared and that there is full confidentiality. It is also important that in quantitative research, investigators must be completely objective and try not to influence a study with their own values and perceptions (Bryman, 2012). In order to address these issues

firstly, permission was sought from the respondents before the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the participants to complete.

Moreover, every questionnaire that was sent out had a cover letter included in it which clearly espoused the purpose of the survey. The questionnaire didn't require the names of the respondents; this was to protect their identity and remain anonymous. As a result, the employees were aware from the beginning what the researcher was doing, why and where the information was going and why it was being gathered.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the analysis of the final data collected from the survey and summaries of the statistics related to the participants' demographic profile and the other key measuring items of the study. Within this study context, the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

version 20.0 was used for the entire data analysis. The chapter is structured into three sections. The first section presents the demographic profile of the study respondents. The second section presents the results under the various study objectives. The third section looked at the discussions of the study results.

Moreover, in this study distributed a total of 365 questionnaires to the selected samples from the University of Education-Winneba, Kumasi campus. From the questionnaires distributed, a total of 177 completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher. Out of these, 167 were usable for analysis, giving an effective response rate of 47.04%. As indicated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) having a response rate of 50% is adequate for a study's analysis where 60% can be termed as good and above 70% as highly sufficient for data analysis. Accordingly, having a response rate which nearly close to the 50 percent suggests that the response rate is fairly adequate for the study's data analysis.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Sample

The demographic profile of the study respondents is presented in Table 4.1. Specifically, it has information about the respondents age distribution, gender and their educational qualification.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	87	52.1%
	Female	80	47.9%
Age	21-30 years	110	65.9%

	31-40 years	57	34.1%
Education qualification	SSCE/WASSCE	114	68.3%
	Diploma/HND	53	31.7%

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The demographic profile of the study participants in Table 4.1 shows that out of the total respondents surveyed, 87(52.1%) were males whereas the remaining thus, 80(47.9%) were females. Again, with regards to the respondents age distribution, results from Table 4.1 show that more than half of the respondents thus, 110(65.9%) ages fell within the age bracket of 21-30 years. Likewise, it was established that 57(34.1%) of the respondents ages were within the age brackets of 31-40. Lastly, with reference to the respondents' level of academic qualification, it became evident that 114(68.3%) had either SSCE or WASSCE as their highest level of education, whereas the remaining thus, 53(31.7%) of the respondents had diploma or HND as their highest level of education.

4.2 Research Objectives

This section present the actual objectives of the study as stated as:

- To assess the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider.
- To measure the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider.
- To ascertain how perceived quality of a brand affects purchasing decision of a mobile network provider.

4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer

Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider

As argued by Willman-Iivarinen (2017) there is much more to consumption than just merely to satisfy a physical need (i.e. hunger or thirst). Thus, everything one uses can be employed as social currency, an identity claim, a tool for self-branding, a signal for values or a tool for regulating mood (Willman-Iivarinen, 2017). Accordingly, one awareness about the kind of image a brand signals or portrays to the public tends to influence an individual decision to purchase a particular kind of product or services (Kleine, et al., 1993). Hence, with this assumption, this study objective sought to establish how the respondents' level of brand awareness will influence their purchasing decision of mobile service network.

Moreover, this study objective used a 5-point Likert scale (i.e. 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree) to elicit the respondents' responses as to whether their foreknowledge or awareness of a brand will influence their purchasing decision of that mobile service network. However, in order to describe the respondents' ratings, a hypothetical mean of 3.5 was chosen as an indicative that respondents agreed that the said statements about brand awareness influenced their purchasing decision. Once more, a mean value within the ranges of 2.5-3.0 suggests that the respondents were undecided in their level of agreement on a given item whereas a mean value below 2.4 indicates that the respondents level of agreement fell within the disagreed score or rating. Accordingly, respondents' ratings as to whether the given elements of brand awareness did influence their purchasing decision of mobile service network have been presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: *Descriptive Analysis of the Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer Purchasing**Decision of a Mobile Network Provider*

Items	Responses	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 1	I prefer using recognized mobile service network when deciding to purchase a sim card.	1	5	4.13	.979
Item 2	Brand name is important to me when I want to select a mobile service network.	1	5	4.17	.909
Item 3	I feel comfortable when buying sim card from an unrecognized mobile service network.	1	5	1.58	.978
Item 4	If am not familiar with the brand identity of mobile service network I do not use their services	1	5	3.62	1.133
Item 5	When it comes to the purchasing of mobile network service, I always go in for the well-known mobile networks.	1	5	3.74	1.024

Source: Field Survey, 2019.

The first item under this construct sought to establish from the respondents as to whether they preferred using recognized mobile service network when deciding to purchase a sim card. Evidently, results from Table 4.2 show that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score. It had a Mean value of 4.13 and a SD of 0.979. This suggests that the study respondents in their view preferred to go in for only recognized mobile service network anytime they wanted to purchase a sim card for their mobile phones.

Also, with the second item, results from Table 4.2 show that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score when asked whether the brand name is important to them when they want to select a mobile service network. It recorded a Mean value of 4.17 and SD of 0.909.

However, when it came to whether the respondents felt comfortable when buying sim card from an unrecognized mobile service network, it was established that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the disagreed score. Meaning, most of the respondents felt uncomfortable when buying or choosing a mobile service network that is not very recognizable within their circles. It had a Mean value of 1.58 and SD of 0.978.

Again, the fourth measuring item under this construct sought to find out from the respondents as to whether if they are not familiar with the brand identity of mobile service network, they do not use that services. Apparently, results from Table 4.2 show that most of the respondents responded in the affirmative as most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score. It had a Mean value of 3.62 and a SD of 1.133.

Finally, the last item under this construct sought to establish from the respondents as to whether when it comes to the purchasing of mobile network service, they always go in for the well-known mobile networks. Expressly, results from Table 4.2 show that most of the respondents responded in the affirmative on this item. It had a Mean value of 3.74 and SD of 1.024. This suggests that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score. Evidently, findings from the study show that the respondents' awareness about a mobile network service brand did shape their decision to use that service on their mobile devices.

4.2.2 Regression Analysis of Effect of Brand Awareness on Consumer

Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider

After the descriptive analysis, a simple linear regression analysis thus, enter method was employed to establish the extent of impact the variable brand awareness had on the respondent's purchasing decision of a mobile service network. Accordingly, the regression analysis in Table 4.3-4.5 provides the result of the constant value, Beta coefficients of the predictive variables, standard error values, t-value and the significant values (p-values) of the independent variable.

Table 4.3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.484 ^a	.235	.230	1.93026

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand.awar

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Table 4.4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	188.516	1	188.516	50.596	.000 ^b
	Residual	614.773	165	3.726		
	Total	803.289	166			

a. Dependent Variable: Purch.decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand.awar

Table 4.5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.380	.932		6.842	.000
	Brand.awar	.459	.065	.484	7.113	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purch.decision

The simple linear regression results in Table 4.3 show that respondent's awareness about a mobile telecommunication brand had a significant effect on their purchasing decision of that mobile service network since $p < 0.01$. Again, the correlation coefficient for the independent variable stood at ($R=0.484$) suggesting that there is moderate positive relationship between brand awareness and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Also, the Adjusted R square value of 0.230 implies that only 23% of the variability in the respondents' purchasing decision of a mobile service network could be explained by their level of awareness about that telecommunication network brand. Again, results from Table 4.4 show that brand awareness had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision since the p value recorded on this variable was < 0.05 . Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis which suggested that there will be a significant relationship between brand awareness and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile service network is accepted whereas the null hypothesis which made contrary claims is rejected.

Furthermore, on the Beta value of the predictor thus, consumer awareness, it recorded a positive Beta value of 0.459 which suggests that as consumers' awareness about a telecommunication brand increases their decision to use that service network for their phones will increase in the same direction by the percentage points of 0.459.

Findings from this study suggest that a consumer decision to purchase or use a particular mobile service for their handset is informed by their level of awareness about that mobile service network brand. For instance, in the descriptive analysis, most of the respondents held that they felt uncomfortable when buying or choosing a mobile network that is not very recognizable within their circles. Equally, most of the respondents preferred to go in for only recognized mobile service network anytime they wanted to purchase a sim card for their mobile phones.

All these views go to affirm the strong relationship reported between brand awareness and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network.

4.2.3 Descriptive Analysis of the Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Network Provider

Generally, it has been established that at most often times consumers tend to choose a brand that they consider congruent with their self-image or identity. Hence, at the individual level a consumer buying decision tends to depict his or her identity status through the products he uses or decides to purchase (Andreea, 2014). Accordingly, this study objective sought to establish the nature of relationship that existed between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Accordingly, the respondents rating as to whether a brand image that is what a brand stands for influenced their purchasing decision when it comes to mobile service networks have been presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Analysis of the Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Network Provider

Items	Responses	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 1	What a mobile network service brand stands for influence my decision to use it.	1	5	3.73	.978
Item 2	What a mobile network service brand stands for does not in any way influence my purchasing of a mobile network provider.	1	5	2.01	1.114
Item 3	If a mobile service network brand enhances my status or improve my success, I favour that brand a lot.	1	5	3.96	.760
Item 4	If a mobile service network brand can provide a better picture of myself, I use it.	1	5	3.73	.947
Item 5	I favour mobile service networks that are being used by respectable people within my circles.	1	5	3.73	.895

Source: Author's field work, 2019

The first item under this construct sought to establish from the respondents as to whether what a mobile network service brand stands for influence their decision to use it. Apparently results from Table 4.6 show that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score. It had a Mean value of 3.73 and SD of 0.978.

However, as to whether what a mobile network service brand stands for does not in any way influence their purchasing of that mobile service network, it became evident that most of respondents dissented. Meaning, the element of what a telecommunication brand stands for did influence their decision to use that services or not. It had a Mean value of 2.01 and SD of 1.114. This suggests that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the disagreed score.

Again, on the third measuring item that is, if a mobile service network brand enhances my status or improve my success, I favour that brand a lot, results from Table 4.6 show that most of the respondents agreed to this issue. It had a Mean score of 3.96 and SD of 0.760. Meaning most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score.

Likewise, as to whether if a mobile service network brand can provide a better picture of myself, I use it, it was evident that most of the respondents rating on this item was within the agreed score. It recorded a Mean value of 3.73 and SD of 0.947.

Finally, as to whether the respondents favour mobile service networks that were being used by respectable people within their circles it was established that most of the respondents responded in the affirmative as their level of agreement on this item fell within the agreed score. Meaning most of the agreed that they favour mobile service networks that were being used by respectable people within their circles. It had a Mean score of 3.73 and SD of 0.895.

Findings from the study suggest that it was only on 'item 2' (What a mobile network service brand stands for does not in any way influence my purchasing of that mobile service network)

that the respondents' level of agreement fell within the disagreed score. Even with that their level of agreement go to confirm that what a mobile telecommunication brand stands for or signal to the public did shape the respondent's decision to use that service network or not.

4.2.4 Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Network Provider

Correlation analysis was performed to establish the kind of relationship that existed between image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Accordingly, the correlation analysis has been presented in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: *Relationship between Brand Image and Consumer Purchasing Decision of Mobile Service Network*

Variables	Brand.image	Purch.decision
Brand.image	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.374**
	N	167
Select.decision	Pearson Correlation	.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1
	N	167

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

Source: Author's field work, 2019

Findings from Table 4.7 indicate that there exists a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Results from Table 4.7 indicated a moderate positive association between brand image and consumer purchasing decision at $r=0.374$, $p<0.01$. This shows positive relationship between brand image and

consumer purchasing decision. This suggests that an increase in brand image consequently shape consumers general perception towards that said brand. Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis which suggested that there will be a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile network operator is accepted whereas the null hypothesis which suggested otherwise is refuted.

4.2.5 Descriptive Analysis of How the Perceived Quality of a Brand Affected Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider

The perceived quality of a brand depicts the ability of a brand to meet consumers' needs and expectations. Conceptually, perceived quality denotes a consumer's judgments about brands' overall superiority or excellence (Erdil, 2015). The superiority of products or services provided by companies or brands will largely be dependent on buyers' perception of the quality that may emanate from repetitive experiences from both new and existing consumers (Das, 2014). As such the perceived quality of a brand which is usually formed from prior user experience tends to shape consumer purchasing decisions at all times. Accordingly, this study objective sought to establish how the perceived quality the respondents have about the various telecommunication will shape their future or present purchasing decision mobile service network. Accordingly, the respondent's responses as to how the perceive quality of a mobile service network brand influenced their purchasing decision of that service network have been presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: *Descriptive Analysis of How the Perceived Quality of a Brand Affected Consumer Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Service Network*

Items	Responses	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Item 1	Reliable and trusted mobile service networks are important to me when choosing a mobile network	1	5	4.51	.710
Item 2	I will recommend other people to use the same mobile service network I use.	1	5	4.01	.724
Item 3	I will keep using my mobile service provider even if its price is higher than that of competitors.	1	5	3.21	1.124
Item 4	I regard unknown mobile service networks as less reliable networks.	1	5	3.43	.954
Item 5	Even when another mobile network provider charge is cheaper, I would prefer the leading mobile network provider.	1	5	3.44	1.170

Source: Author's field work, 2019

The first item under the perceived quality construct sought to establish from the respondents as to whether reliable and trusted mobile service networks were important to them when choosing a mobile service network. Expressly, results from Table 4.8 show that most of the respondents were very emphatic in their rating as their level of agreement fell within the strongly agreed score. Specifically, this item had a Mean score of 4.51 and SD of 0.710.

Again, on the next item, results from Table 4.8 show that most of the respondents responded in the affirmative when asked whether they will recommend other people to use the same mobile service network they use. It had a Mean score of 4.01 and SD of 0.724. This means that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the agreed score.

However, as to whether the respondents will keep using their mobile service provider even if its price was higher than that of its competitors, it became evident that most of the respondents rating on this item fell within the neutral. This suggest that the respondents could not be explicit in their responses as to whether they will still keep using their mobile service network even if

its service charges were higher than that of other network providers. It had a Mean score of 3.21 and SD of 1.124.

Again, on the next item thus, as to whether they will regard unknown mobile service networks as less reliable networks, it was established that most of the respondents rating on this item was within the neutral score. Meaning, the respondents were undecided as to whether they will regard unknown mobile service networks as less reliable network or not. It had a Mean value of 3.43 and a SD of 0.954.

Similarly, on the last item, it was established that most of the respondents remained neutral in their rating as most of them couldn't tell as to whether when even if another mobile network provider charge was cheaper, they would still stick to the leading mobile network provider. It had a Mean score of 3.44 and SD of 1.170.

Generally, findings from the study suggest that it was only on item 1 and item 2 where the respondents could be explicit in their responses. Moreover, with reference to the other items where the respondents could not be definitive in their responses, it was evident that even on these items the emphasis was on whether users will change their service providers for a much cheaper service network. This goes to suggest price was not a major determining factor but rather the reliability and trustworthiness of the mobile service shape consumers perceive quality about the mobile service network.

4.2.6 Regression Analysis of the Impact of Perceived Quality on Consumer

Purchasing Decision of a Mobile Network Provider

After the descriptive analysis a simple linear regression analysis thus, enter method was employ to establish how the perceive quality of a mobile service network influenced the respondent's purchasing decision of that mobile service network. Accordingly, the regression analysis in Table 4.9-4.11 provides the result of constant, Beta coefficients of the predictive variables, standard error values, t-value and the significant values (p-values) of the independent variable.

Table 4.9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.459 ^a	.211	.206	1.95993

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceiv.qual

Table 4.10: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	169.467	1	169.467	44.117	.000 ^b
	Residual	633.821	165	3.841		
	Total	803.289	166			

a. Dependent Variable: Purch.decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceiv.qual

Table 4.11: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.308	1.008		6.257	.000
	Perceiv.qual	.418	.063	.459	6.642	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purch.decision

The simple linear regression results in Table 4.9 show that respondent's perceived quality about a mobile telecommunication brand had a significant effect on their purchasing decision of a mobile service network since $p < 0.01$. Again, the correlation coefficient for the independent variable stood at ($R=0.459$) suggesting that there is moderate positive relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provided. Also, the Adjusted R square value of 0.206 implies that only 20.6% of the variability in the respondents' purchasing decision of a mobile network could be explained by their perceived quality about that telecommunication network brand. Again, results from Table 4.10 show that perceived quality had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision since the p value recorded on this variable was < 0.05 . Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis which suggested that there will be a significant relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchasing of a network provider is accepted whereas the null hypothesis which made contrary claims is rejected.

Furthermore, on the Beta value of the predictor thus, perceived quality it had a positive Beta value of 0.418 which suggests that as consumers' perceived quality about a telecommunication brand increases their decision to use that service network for their phones will increase in the same direction by the percentage points of 0.418. Findings from this study suggest that a consumer decision to purchase or use a particular mobile service for their handset is informed by their perceived quality about that mobile network brand.

4.3 Discussion of Study Results

This section discusses the results that were obtained from the study data. Also, practical implications about the results are discussed in line with the objectives the study sought to measure. Equally, the study findings are linked to the literature to establish where the similarity existed or dissimilarity existed.

4.3.1 Assess the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider

With this study objective, it sought to assess the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. With reference to this study objective, results from the study show that brand awareness had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision since the p value recorded on this variable was <0.05 . This goes to suggest that a consumer decision to purchase or use a particular mobile service for their handset is informed by their level of awareness about that mobile network brand. For instance, in the descriptive analysis, most of the respondents held that they felt very uncomfortable when buying or choosing a mobile network that is not very recognizable within their circles or telecommunication space. Equally, most of the respondents preferred to go in for only recognized mobile service network anytime they wanted to purchase a sim card for their mobile phones.

Findings from this study affirm the results of Salazar-Ordóñez et al.(2018) as their work established that consumer brand awareness influenced their decision to use or purchase that entity product. Likewise, findings from this study is comparable with the studies of Salazar-Ordóñez et al. (2018) as their work established a significant relationship between brand awareness and consumer purchasing decision. Similarly, findings from this study is in tandem with the works of Sarigöllü and Huang (2012), Malik et al. (2013) and that of Çaland Adams (2014) as their respective studies posited a significant relationship between brand awareness and consumers purchasing decision. As rightly suggested by Malik et al. (2013) brand awareness is a key influencer during the first two stages of the decision-making processes thus, need recognition and information search. As such, consumer awareness about a particular brand attributes and performance has over time being a key factor that shapes consumers

purchasing decisions. Accordingly, results from the study affirmed the proposition made by Malik et al. (2013) in their work.

4.3.2 Measure the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider

This study objective sought to measure the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider. Specifically, on the descriptive statistics, results from the study revealed that what a mobile network service brand stands for influenced the respondent's decision to use that service for their mobile devices. Equally, it was evident that if a mobile service network brand enhances the respondent's status or improves their success, they favour that brand a lot. Again, results from the descriptive statistics revealed that if a mobile service network brand can provide a better picture of oneself, the respondents prefer to use that brand.

However, with regards to the correlation analysis, findings from the study revealed that there exists a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value suggests that there exists a moderate positive association between brand image and consumer purchasing decision at $r=0.374, p<0.01$.

Accordingly, findings from this study are consistent with that of Shamsuddoha and et al. (2010) as their study revealed a significant relationship between brand image and consumers purchasing decisions. Similarly, findings from this study corroborate that of Gupta et al. (2014) as their work established a significant relationship between brand image and consumer decision to use a service or sign up to a particular service. In the same vein, findings from this study align with that of Fianto et al. (2014) as their work reported a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision. Lastly, findings from this study are consistent

with that of Letchumanan and Sam (2016) and Zeb et al. (2011) as their works postulated a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision.

4.3.3 Ascertain how perceived quality of a brand affect purchasing decision of a mobile network provider

This study objective sought to ascertain how the perceived quality of a brand affected consumer purchasing decision of a mobile service network. Apparently, on this study objective, it was observed that perceived quality had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision since the p value recorded on this variable was <0.05 . Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis which suggested that there will be a significant relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchasing of a network provider is accepted whereas the null hypothesis which made contrary claims is rejected.

On this score, findings from this study is in tandem with the works of Erdil (2015) as their study revealed that the perceived quality of a brand influenced consumer decisions with regards to the decision to try the brand, use or recommend it to a third party. Equally, findings from this study is in line with the works of Ding et al. (2010) as their work established a significant relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchasing decision.

Generally, the impact of perceived quality on consumer purchasing decision is borne out of the fact that consumers tend to depend on risk reducing cues such as brands or perception quality of brands to lessen their uncertainty and risks associated with their shopping choices (Aghekyan-Simonian et al., 2012). As such, a consumer prior experience about a service delivery tends to shape his future decisions with regards to repurchase or replacement of a given product or services. Accordingly, the perceived quality consumers form about a product or service delivery becomes a key factor in shaping their purchasing decisions. Accordingly,

the study results confirming a significant relationship between perceived quality and consumer purchasing decision affirm the results of Diallo (2012) and that of De and Singh (2017).



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents the summary of the study as guided by the research objectives, research questions and conclusions reached based on the findings and recommendations as well as suggestions for additional research studies.

5.1 Summary of Study Findings

The main problem of the study was to assess the influence of branding on consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Accordingly, the study employed the Hierarchy of Effect Model (HOE) as its theoretical framework for the study. Specifically, the literature review of the study was developed around these themes thus, definition of concepts, theoretical framework, the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider, the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider, the impact of perceived quality on consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network and the conceptual framework of the study. The target population for the study constituted the undergraduate students of University of Education-Winneba, that is the Kumasi Campus. Subsequently, the study used the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table to determine the sample size for the 7500-population size. Based on the table, the sample size for this study was 365 with a 95% confidence interval (error of margin).

On the first research question, the study found out that most of the respondents held that they felt uncomfortable when buying or choosing a mobile service network that is not very recognizable within their circles. Equally, most of the respondents preferred to go in for only recognized mobile service network anytime they wanted to purchase a sim card for their mobile phones. Likewise, under this same research question, the study observed that brand name is important to the studied respondents whenever they wanted to select a mobile service network.

Also, with the second research question, it was revealed that what a mobile network service brand stands for influenced the respondent's decision to use that service on their mobile devices. Equally, it was evident that if a mobile service network brand enhances the respondent's status or improve their success, they favour that brand a lot. Again, results from the descriptive statistics revealed that if a mobile service network brand can provide a better picture of oneself, the respondents prefer to use that brand. Finally, on the third research question, it was revealed that reliable and trusted mobile service networks were important to the respondents whenever they decided to select a mobile service network for their handset.

5.2 Conclusions

The first objective the study sought to measure was to assess the effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network provider. Evidently, on this study objective results from the study established that brand awareness had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision. This goes to suggest that the respondent's willingness to purchase a particular mobile service network was informed by their level of awareness about that mobile telecommunication network brand.

The second objective of the study sought to measure the relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of a mobile service network. Apparently, on this study objective, results from the study revealed that there exists a significant relationship between brand image and consumer purchasing decision of mobile service network. Moreover, the correlation coefficient value suggests that there exist a moderate positive association between brand image and consumer purchasing decision.

Finally, on the third research objective, the study seeks out to ascertain how the perceived quality of a brand affected consumer purchasing decision of a mobile network provider.

Evidently, on this study objective, it was revealed that perceived quality had a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision of a mobile service network.

5.3 Recommendation to Management

- It became evident that most of the respondents' held that their ability to identify a telecommunication brand will indeed influence their decision to select or use that mobile service network for their mobile devices. On this note, it is recommended to the management of various mobile telecommunication network within the country to make it point to streamline their advertising strategies since the respondents' awareness of a particular brand within the telecommunication industry will inform their purchasing decision when time come for them to select network for their mobile devices.
- Moreover, it became evident in the study that most of the respondents agreed that how reliable and trusted a mobile service network is, is very critical to them when choosing a mobile service network. On this score, it is recommended to the mobile telecommunication networks that the farce that Ghanaian consumers will always look at cost and service charges of their services when choosing a network than factors such as, quality and trusted network cannot be wholly true hence, they should see this as a wakeup call to provide its clients with quality services since how a person perceive their network coverage as reliable and trusted tends to be key factor that shape their purchasing decision.
- Finally, it became evident that the brand image of a mobile service network has a significant impact on consumer purchasing decision of a mobile service network. On this note, it is recommended to the managers of these telecommunication networks to strike to organically grow their institutions brand identity since it will at the long run pay off for their organizations bottom-line.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Specifically, this study confined itself to only tertiary students thus, students of the University of Education specifically the Kumasi campus. Accordingly, a comparative study should be carried out to compare whether the impact that branding was found have on the purchasing decisions of mobile service network among the student's respondents could equally be replicated in other regions or metropolis.



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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA-KUMASI CAMPUS

Master of Business Administration Marketing

Questionnaire Items

Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire is designed to collect information about how branding affects consumer decisions when it comes to the selection of a mobile service provider. The results of the study would provide a better understanding of how telecommunication networks in Ghana can build upon their brand image to realize optimal results. The study is for academic purpose solely, your responses, though voluntary, are greatly appreciated and would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you.

Instructions: Please tick [v] the response that best describe your view.

SECTION A: RESPONDENTS PROFILE

1. Age

- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- above 50

2. Gender

- Male
- Female

3. Educational Background of Respondent

- Diploma
- Degree
- Post-degree
- Doctorate
- Please others(s), specify.....



SECTION B: BRAND ELEMENTS

Please indicate how you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about how these factors affect your selection decision of mobile service provider. Use this scale: (1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Can’t tell, 4 – Agree, 5- Strongly agree)

BRAND AWARENESS ON CONSUMER SELECTION DECISION		1	2	3	4	5
4.	I prefer using recognized mobile service network when deciding to purchase a sim card.					
5.	Brand name is important to me when I want to select a mobile service network.					
6.	I feel comfortable when buying sim card from an unrecognized mobile service network.					
7.	If am not familiar with the brand identity of mobile service network I do not use their services					
8.	When it comes to the selection of mobile network service, I always go in for the well-known mobile networks.					
EFFECTS OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMER SELECTION DECISION		1	2	3	4	5
9.	What a mobile network service brand stands for influence my decision to use it.					
10.	What a mobile network service brand stands for does not in any way influence my selection of a mobile network provider.					
11.	If amobile service network brand enhances mystatus or improve my success,I favour that brand a lot.					
12.	If a mobile service network brand can provide a better picture of myself, I use it.					
13.	I favour mobile service networks that are being used by respectable people within my circles.					
EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED QUALITY ON CONSUMER SELECTION DECISION		1	2	3	4	5
14.	Reliable and trusted mobile service networks are important to me when choosing a mobile network					

15.	I will recommend other people to use the same mobile servicenetworkI use.					
16.	I will keep using my mobile service provider even if its price is higher thanthat of competitors.					
17.	I regard unknown mobile service networks as less reliable networks.					
18.	Even when another mobile network provider charge is cheaper, I would prefer the leading mobile network provider.					
	SELECTION DECISIONS	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I will continue to select my favourite mobile service providerwithin any time and any day.					
20.	I will encourage my friends and relative to use my preferred mobile service network					
21.	I intend to select or use the most favoured mobile network brand within their Ghanaian telecommunication space					
22.	I will always use my preferred brand when it comes to the selection of mobile service network.					

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!!!