

Impact of Product Branding on Organizational Profitability Among Selected Consumer Goods Manufacturing Company Lagos State

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<https://doi.org/10.56201/ijebm.vol.12.no9.2026.pg290.302>

Abstract

The paper examined the impact of organizational branding on the profitability of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Lagos state. The objectives are to examine how brand positioning, brand design and product perceived quality contributed to enhancing profitability of selected consumer goods manufacturing firms. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to provide comprehensive understanding of the relationship between product branding strategy and organizational profitability. Data were systematically collected from 235 staffs drawn from lower and upper, middle and lower staff of the Nestle and Unilever Nigeria Plc. Valid responses were received and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Cronbach's Alpha reliability testing, Pearson correlation and Simple linear regression analysis, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.911, confirming the internal consistency of the research instrument. Analysis of data provided robust evidence of the significant influence of product branding strategy on organizational profitability in Nestle and Unilever Nigeria Plc. The results showed that brand awareness has significant positive effect on net profit margin ($R^2 = 0.375$, $\beta = 0.612$, $P < 0.001$), while product positioning significantly enhanced total assets turnover ($R^2 = 0.341$, $\beta = 0.558$, $P < 0.001$). Perceived quality exerted the strongest influence, significantly improved return on equity ($R^2 = 0.419$, $\beta = 0.647$, $P < 0.001$). In contrast, brand design showed a weak, non-significantly have relationship with return on investment ($R^2 = 0.017$, $\beta = -0.132$, $P = 0.059$), suggesting that visual and aesthetic branding elements alone do not guarantee measurable financial return unless reinforced by strong brand awareness and quality perceptions. The study concluded that long established multinational brands with extensive product portfolio in Nigeria market derive tangible profitability benefits from their sustained investment in brand awareness campaigns, deliberate product positioning strategies and consistent delivery of perceived product quality. It is recommended that management should sustain and intensify investment in brand awareness and should be evaluated periodically to ensure continued alignment with profitability objectives.

Keywords: *Product branding, product positioning, quality, brand awareness, organizational profitability*

Introduction

Across the globe, organizations that place emphasis on effective brand positioning and design through offering quality goods and services stand a great chance of gaining competitive advantage in the market place over those that do not. Customers have become more sophisticated and are making more demands from organizations through more demands aimed at satisfying their needs. The ability to rightly position a firm brand in the market place is a step ahead of competitors, and a strategic business tool that attracts, retains and maintains customers in an organization bid to achieve enhanced profitability. Bader & Raed (2019) described product quality as the state of conforming with the previously set requirements within the product/services. Al-Hadad (2018) sees product quality as the physical or non-physical characteristics which constitute the fundamental nature of something. About products, Al-Ageeli (2022) defined product quality as, the business production and offer of a commodity or renders a high quality product which meets the needs and desires of its customers in a way that is consistent with their expectations and achieves satisfaction and happiness; hence summarizing product quality from that point of view as accuracy, perfection, discrimination and integrity (Al-Ageeli 2022). According to the author, offering a product quality that is consistent with customer expectations is done through measures put in advance to produce a distinctive good. In increasing monopolistic competitive business, consumers have more information on products, access to more products, creating more product alternative choices and as a result have higher expectations than ever. The end result of this for marketers and firms is to create more product differentiation to avoid their product being seen as commodities. To cope with this increase in profit, Firms consumer manufacturing companies have intensified the branding of their products to be unique from their competitors (Erkan, Gokerik & Aakgoz, 2021). Forundi (2025) explained that Product Branding involves the process of creating unique name and image for a product in the mind of customers. This makes a product unique from other products, thereby differentiating product from monopolistic market. Product branding comprises of design, logo and messaging. The idea of product branding is to trigger an emotional connection in customers and this connection will last throughout the whole life of the product (Xie and boggs 2006). It makes products have unique image and identity and this makes organisations to position all their product differently - Blair (2019) added that product branding helps in describing profitability distinguished accountants' ascertainment of profit from economic estimation of profit. According to Nguyen et al (2025) A brand is an asset for differentiating promises that link a product to its customers. Mitchel et al (2019) perceives branding as a functional means of differentiating products, increasing product recognition and reputation, thereby securing or gaining market share. Brands of products that have attained a high-level customer confidence: According to Kapferer (2021) Branding places greater emphasis on elaborating a distinctive, symbolic meaning or personality that differentiates a product from its rivals. Over time brand concept has ranged from the brand acting as a simple identification device (American Marketing Association 1960) to the development of complex, value-laden identities (Biljon & Rensburg 2011). The goals consumers have for a brand are numerous. They include communication of particular aspects of self and lifestyle through the use of specific brand (Mitchel et al 2013). Baurat (2020) stated that branding has emerged as a top management priority due to the growing realization that brand is one of the most valuable assets. The above assertion may be regarded as an understatement when critically evaluated against the

trend of branding chronology Damori & Wilson (2016). Adebayo O.K and Patel N. (2026) investigate how brand logo design impact consumer consumption behaviors. Rather than measuring direct financial metrics, it explores how logo aesthetics and simplicity alter consumer intake and product perception, providing foundational marketing implications for organizational profitability. Bossel, Geyskens & Gouskens (2019) studies on product branding highlight how visual identity, sensory marketing and digital brand architectures can be used to influence consumer brand relationships, also emphasize that product branding extends beyond visual logos, it incorporates sensory elements like specific colors, packaging, shapes and tactile experience. Their work demonstrates that a well-defined brand identity commands premium pricing, reduces consumer search costs and builds customer loyalty, ultimately generating higher and more resilient profit margin. Strong product branding gives organizational organizations the freedom to change premium price. By increasing the perceived value of a product, companies can distance themselves from commoditization and maintain high profit; Bossel and Gouskens (2019) also findings suggest that product branding transforms buyers into loyal customers. Higher retention rates lead to recurring revenue streams, lower marketing expend expenditures over time and consistent, long term organization organizational profitability. Kelvin Lane Keller (2025) highlights that strategic brand evolution from identification to differentiation is critical for driving organizational profitability and pricing power. This work emphasizes that building brand equity and adapting to consumer practices such as "everyday luxury" directly correlates with enhanced firm valuation and financial performance. Deepak Sangriya (2025). The impact created by brand management practices in the business performance is one of the most interesting discourse among executives and managers of companies (Mitchel et al, 2019). Several studies have reported mixed result on the impact of organizational branding on the performance of organizations. Yet, a critical review of these studies shows that consumer goods firms in Nigeria have not been significantly considered especially, regarding consumer goods manufacturing firms in Lagos. As a result, this paper utilizes and empirical approach to examine the impact of organizational branding on the profitability of consumer goods manufacturing in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated:

HO1: there is no significant relationship between brand awareness and net profit margin of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Lagos state.

HO2: there is no significant relationship between product positioning and total asset turnover of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Lagos state

HO3: there is no significant relationship between product perceived quality and return on equity of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Lagos state

HO: there is no significant relationship between product differentiation and return on investment of consumer goods manufacturing firms in Lagos state

Literature Review

Product Branding

Product branding, operationalized primarily through brand equity, is widely recognized as a strategic intangible asset that enhances organizational profitability in Consumer Goods Manufacturing sectors (FMCGs). These industries feature high volume, volume, frequent purchases, intense competition and often limited functional product differentiation and often limited functional product differentiation and often limited functional product differentiation

(Miyazaki & Kavidass, 2022). Brand and branding returns are often treated as stocks that generate lagged effects emerging after several years and eventually diminishing (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020), showing diminishing and inverted-U profile opposite effects emerging after several years and eventually diminishing.

Brand Equity

Aaker (1991) conceptualizes brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand's name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) the value provided by a product or services. Aaker mentioned five dimensions of Brand Equity model, Brand Awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, brand loyalty and other proprietary assets. This is a Managerial and financial perspective: the brand is a strategic asset that must be measured, protected and leveraged. Keller (2001) define brand equity as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the that brand brand equity resides in the minds of consumers. This is one of the Pyramid Structure most influential frameworks in modern branding theory. Keller argues that the power of a brand (including a product brand) lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about it over time. Brand exists in the minds of consumers, not on the company's balance sheet.

Product Branding

Brand positioning theory generally concerns how firms create distinct, preferred place for a brand in consumer's mind relative to competitors, often drawing on differentiation, perception, signaling and customer based human equity (Keller, 2023). Ke, et al (2023). The model brand positioning via a firm's product portfolio on a hoteling line. Consumers form brand perceptions from the average location of products under the brand, this aggregate "brand positioning" credibly guides costly consumer search. Niche positioning conveys more information than mainstream positioning. Zhao (2025) game theoretic model of the strategic interplay between a platform's store-brand (SB) positioning (popular vs Niche markets) and a national brand manufacturer's (WBM) core category innovation decisions, addresses upstream – downstream, competition and applications for supply chain coordination, useful for consumer goods manufacturer's facing price-label competition. The strategic activity of brand positioning points s to marketers' choosing as its target markets a subset of demand creating conditions to deal with a responsive offering and the consumers who experience such conditions. Brand positioning aims to impact the brands prospects prefer in the marketplace. The brand strategy focuses on creating a brand to claim and deliver value to prospects to where they want to be to provide a firm with an above-industry average return on investment.

Brand awareness

Bergkrist & Taylor (2022) address the relative neglect of brand awareness in recent advertising research. They propose and updated definition: "Brand awareness is the likelihood that a person retrieve a brand identifier and a product category or category need from memory across brand relevant situations". They review measurement issues trajectories of effectiveness measures and offer guidelines for including awareness in future studies. Kehinde (2024) explained Brand awareness is framed as making a brand more likely to enter the consumers consideration set, enabling positive altitudes and ultimately raising purchase intention, higher awareness strengthens the brand's position in memory and makes it more likely to be chosen especially for familiar or well-known brands. (Sanchez and Pintado (2024). The authors show that both can co-exist:

advertising generated awareness builds equity (strong theory element), while other sources primarily support recognition/loyalty without the same equity building power.

Bethels et al (2021) widely recognizes as a pioneer in brand strategy. Bethels et al define brand awareness as the anchor of brand knowledge. Brand awareness, in combination with brand identity, brand image, brand association, brand loyalty is described as important components of consumer brand equity that significantly influence the consumer decision making process. A higher degree of brand awareness positively influences customer purchase intentions and willingness to recommend the product. Brand awareness theory centers on the concept that consumer's familiarity and recognition of a brand influence their perceptions and purchasing decisions. The core idea is that high brand awareness, achieved through consistent marketing efforts, creates a preference for familiar products over competitors and is a crucial component of building brand equity. The theory suggests that the more consumers know and recognize a brand's name, logo, or other elements, the more likely they are to consider and choose it when making purchase.

Brand Design

Victor et al (2023) focused on branding and packaging from consumer neuroscience (neuro marketing) perspective. It is highly relevant to consumer goods manufacturing firms (especially FMCA packaging goods) because it emphasizes that in highly competitive markets a differentiated brand that adds value through packaging is essential. Brand design is treated as a key communication and differentiation tool that influences subconscious consumer decision making.

Makino and Kobayashi (2025) examined how product design can be integrated into the development process to maintain brand consistency over time while allowing innovation and adaptation to market changes key for long-selling (long life) brands. The authors emphasize that essentialization (distilling core product/ brand essence) and universalization (making the design broadly adaptable and enduring) are particularly critical, when these are properly incorporated, product design can support both brand consistency and ongoing innovation /sustainability. Foroudi (2019) highlights that product brand design evaluates its effectiveness by assessing how it aligns with the brand's goals and communicates its values to the target audience. A good review analyzes the consistency of the design elements, the emotional and cognitive response it elicits, and how well it differentiates the product from competitors. Effective reviews use specific examples and objective criteria, considering both the overarching brand strategy and the product's specific functionality and user needs.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Organizational Profit

The dynamic theory of profit developed by Clark suggests that profit is generated in a society which is dynamic in nature. The dynamic nature of a society means that the population, size, of capital, level of output, taste and preferences of people of that society are changing. All these changes cause the gap between price and unit cost. Profit arises when price exceeds unit cost. In a static society there are no changes in above variables and as a consequence the difference between price and unit cost does not arise. Thus profit is not generate in static society. There are risks or uncertainties associated with dynamic society and as a result of this it is difficult to forecast the future positions of price and output level. Thus entrepreneur claims profit as a reward of undertaking these risks or uncertainties in the dynamic society.

According to Clark the following things exist in a static economy. In such society the demand for goods can be estimated easily. There is no risk and uncertainty. Supply will be always equal to the cost production, because there is perfect competition. In static society the reward is just equal to the marginal productivity of the factors of production and so there cannot be profits. But we are not living in a static society. Ours is a dynamic world, where some changes are constantly taking place.

Profit Maximization Theory

The theory argued that firm's profit margins are largely determined by their need to generate internal finance (retained profits) to fund investments on external especially under constraints on external borrowing. Adrian Wood (2023) update revises the theory in light of major changes since the 1970s. Shift in business motives away from pure growth maximization toward greater emphasis on shareholders returns, financialization and easier access to external finance for many firms and greater importance of monopoly power while the general principles (profit margin) linked to internal finance need effects of monopoly power vs shareholder's objectives. In principles applied to any sector including consumer manufacturing.

This classic economic principle states that firms aim to operate at a point where their profits are as high as possible. They achieve this by finding the optimal balance between setting prices and controlling production costs to maximize the difference between total revenue and total expenses. The profit maximization theory posits that firms strive to produce at the output level where their total profit, the difference between total revenue and total cost, is highest. This optimal point occurs when the additional revenue gained from selling one more unit (marginal revenue, or MR) equals the additional cost incurred to produce it (marginal cost, or MC), i.e. $MR=MC$. This theory is a fundamental concept in neoclassical economics, assuming firms are rational agents driven by the single goal of maximizing profits.

Resource Based Theory:

Bhandarie et al (2020) examined the relationship between resources-based theory and firm performance. The study demonstrates that resources such as technology, knowledge, human skills, innovation capabilities and organization capabilities can contribute to improve firm financial outcome. However, simply processing resources does not automatically guarantee profit. Organization must combine, manage and deploy their resources effectively to create competitive advantages and achieve superior financial performance. This theory posits that firm's internal resources and capabilities are the primary drivers of its competitive advantage, rather than external market factors. To achieve a sustained competitive advantage, these resources must be valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and non- substitutable. By focusing on these unique, internal assets, firms can outperform competitors and achieve superior, long-term success. The theory proposes that sustained profitability stems from a firm's unique and valuable resources and capabilities that are difficult for competitors to imitate. Competitive advantage, derived from these resources, becomes a key driver of profit differentials.

Empirical Review

Fakhreddin and Foroudi (2025) showed that branding capabilities (alongside networking) enhance product innovativeness, which builds differentiation advantages and ultimately improves business performance in manufacturing firms. In contrast, research on commoditised, near-perfectly competitive markets (e.g. dry bulk shipping) found no significant correlation between corporate

brand strength and financial performance, suggesting branding yields limited competitive barriers or returns under pure price competition. Product-level branding choices also matter. Hsu, Fournier and Srinivasan (2022, published online 2021) studied new product branding strategies (direct extension, sub-brand or new brand) across a large sample of brand introductions. Misalignment with product category and firm level conditions reduced firm value (measured via product and firm specific metrics), correct alignment enhanced stock market value, bridging behavioural brand extension research with real-world financial outcomes. Large scale quantitative analyses consistently link higher brand value to superior profitability metrics. Belesis, Kampoures, Andreas and Malliari (2026) analysed 135 international firms (2005–2024) using Brand Finance valuation and Bloomberg financial data. They found robust positive associations between brand value and turnover, operational income, net income and market capitalisation. Econometric results indicated that a \$1 increase in brand value correlates with approximately \$1.76 higher turnover and \$0.16 higher net income. Brand value also improved non-operating income (likely via better financial terms) without inflating price-to-earnings ratios unsustainably. The authors conclude that brand-building investments drive long-term profitability and competitiveness.

Elsayed (2023) examined investments in the brand value chain and related activities (advertising, R&D, and related activities) using Amazon financial data (2010–2021) alongside survey responses from 237 European financial analysts. Investments positively affected brand resonance (customer-mindset equity), firm profitability and market value with significant direct and indirect (mediated) pathways. Brand resonance and profitability mediated the effect on market value. The study emphasizes long-term stabilization of sales and reduced volatility rather than short-term gains, illustrating how broad equity converts into sustained financial performance. Supporting evidence appears across contexts. Studies on Foods Consumer Goods manufacturing companies show branding efforts improve both brand performance and financial performance (sales, profit, market share). In consumer goods and emerging markets, dimensions such as brand equity, perceived quality and associations positively influence profit margin, return on investment (ROA) and sales growth. Brand equity can also enhance innovation commercialization outcomes when firms collaborate with suppliers or customers, particularly for radical innovations (Belesis et al., 2026). Belesis, Mapouris, Andreas & Malliari, (2026). Cobranding is a brand alliance practice to increase reach, awareness, and sales potential by targeting the prospective customers of partnering brands. Several kinds of cobranding relationships can be found in the marketplace today. These include joint advertising campaigns, bundling, and cobranded products. Cobranding practices allow for brand extensions, with brand marketers capitalizing on the existing brand names of their partners to access new markets and product categories. Cobranding is also considered a valuable marketing approach. It has been proven to enhance awareness, quality, market value, and brand equity (Malhotra & Bhattacharyya, 2022). A study conducted by Adetunji, Raufu & Olaniyi (2017) finds Peak Milk as the most consumed milk in Lagos, Nigeria, while later study by Yekini (2019) reveals Cowbell Milk brand as the most consumed milk in Lagos, Nigeria. Peak and Cowbell Milk brand are the most conspicuous milk brands in Nigeria with the highest Dairy market share in Nigeria. From the above, it could be inferred that the two companies are in the same strategic group as stated by Kuye (2009), hence, the existence of possible competition. What influences consumers loyalty to a particular brand, despite similarities in both product branding. In this study, the researcher uses content analysis in evaluating the applicability of theories of branding. The specific type of content analysis approach chosen by a researcher varies with the theoretical and substantive interests of the problem being studied. This study enquired in to these components relying on secondary data. Qualitative research of this kind provides detailed

information that leads to a logical conclusion.

Methodology

The adopted a descriptive research design, and inferential statistics procedures. The population of the study consists 259 of Nestle and Unilever Nigeria Plc, Lagos State. The sampling procedure in this study was predicted on assumption of randomness. A total of two hundred and fifty-nine (259) questionnaire were distributed to respondents while only two hundred and seventeen (217) copies were returned. A quantitative research method was employed to diagnose the impact of product branding on organizational profitability of Unilever and Nestle Plc Nigeria. The company owns more than 400 brands, which are put into four main categories- refreshment, foods, personal cares and home care.

Result and Discussions

Table 4.1: Analysis of Questionnaire Response Rate

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Copies administered	235	100.0
Copies returned	217	92.3
Copies not returned	18	7.7
Valid copies used for analysis	205	87.2
Copies discarded (incomplete/invalid)	12	5.1

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The achieved response rate of 87.2 percent is considered adequate and well above the minimum threshold of 50 percent recommended for survey-based organizational research (Baruch and Holtom, 2008; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The 205 valid responses therefore formed the empirical basis for the demographic analysis, descriptive analysis and hypotheses testing that follow.

4.5.1 Hypothesis One

H0: High levels of brand awareness do not significantly enhance organizations' net profit margin.

Table 4.5.1: Summary of Correlation and Regression Analysis of Brand Awareness on Net

Profit Margin								
Relationship	r	R ²	F	Sig. (F)	B	t	Sig. (t)	Decision
Brand Awareness → Net Profit Margin	0.612	0.375	121.730	0.000	0.596	11.030	0.000	H0 Rejected

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.612$, $p = 0.000$) indicates a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between brand awareness and net profit margin. The regression result shows that brand awareness accounts for 37.5 percent of the variance in net profit margin ($R^2 = 0.375$), and the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.596$, $t = 11.030$, $p = 0.000$) indicates that a unit increase in brand awareness leads to a 0.596

unit increase in net profit margin, holding other factors constant.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Brand awareness has a statistically significant and positive effect on the net profit margin of the sampled companies.

4.5.2 Hypothesis Two

H0: Effective product positioning has no positive impact on organizations' total assets turnover.

Table 4.5.2: Summary of Correlation and Regression Analysis of Product Positioning on Total Assets Turnover

Relationship	r	R ²	F	Sig. (F)	B	t	Sig. (t)	Decision
Product Positioning → Total Assets Turnover	0.558	0.311	91.760	0.000	0.556	9.580	0.000	H0 Rejected

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

The correlation result shows a moderately strong positive relationship ($r = 0.558$, $p = 0.000$) between product positioning and total assets turnover. The regression model indicates that product positioning explains 31.1 percent of the variation in total assets turnover ($R^2 = 0.311$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.556$, $t = 9.580$, $p = 0.000$) confirms that improvements in product positioning are associated with corresponding increases in total assets turnover.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Effective product positioning has a statistically significant and positive impact on organizations' total assets turnover.

4.5.3 Hypothesis Three

H0: The standard of product perceived quality does not have a significant impact on return on equity.

Table 4.5.3: Summary of Correlation and Regression Analysis of Perceived Quality on

Return on Equity

Relationship	r	R ²	F	Sig. (F)	B	t	Sig. (t)	Decision
Perceived Quality → Return on Equity	0.647	0.419	146.170	0.000	0.617	12.090	0.000	H0 Rejected

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Perceived quality is strongly and positively correlated with return on equity ($r = 0.647$, $p = 0.000$). The regression result shows that perceived quality accounts for 41.9 percent of the variance in return on equity ($R^2 = 0.419$), with a significant unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.617$, $t = 12.090$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that improvements in perceived product quality translate into measurable improvements in return on equity.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The standard of product perceived quality has a statistically significant and positive impact on return on equity.

Hypothesis Four

H0: Product differentiation through brand design has no effect on organizations' overall return on investment.

Table 4.5.4: Summary of Correlation and Regression Analysis of Brand Design on Return on Investment

Relationship	r	R ²	F	Sig. (F)	B	t	Sig. (t)	Decision
Brand Design →								H0 Not Rejected
Return on Investment	0.132	0.017	3.600	0.059	0.135	1.897	0.059	

Source: SPSS Output, 2026

Brand design shows a weak, positive correlation with return on investment ($r = 0.132$), which is not statistically significant at the 5 percent level ($p = 0.059$). The regression result shows that brand design accounts for only 1.7 percent of the variance in return on investment ($R^2 = 0.017$), and the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.135$, $t = 1.897$, $p = 0.059$) falls just short of conventional statistical significance. This finding aligns with the earlier descriptive result on brand design, where two of the five items recorded mean scores below the criterion mean, and lends support to prior studies such as Yeboah, Duncan and Owusu (2018), who similarly found trademark and design-related branding elements to be statistically insignificant in explaining organizational performance outcomes in the Ghanaian context. It suggests that although employees and stakeholders perceive brand design as conceptually important, its direct, measurable translation into return on investment is weaker than that of brand awareness, product positioning and perceived quality, possibly reflecting a 'brand gap' between intended design perception and its realized financial value. Since the p-value (0.059) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Product differentiation through brand design does not have a statistically significant effect on organizations' overall return on investment.

Conclusions

Arising from the findings of this study, it is concluded that product branding is a significant strategic driver of organizational profitability in Nigeria's consumer manufacturing sector, but that its constituent elements do not contribute equally to financial performance. Brand awareness, product positioning and perceived quality emerged as consistently strong and statistically significant predictors of net profit margin, total assets turnover and return on equity respectively, lending strong empirical support to the resource-based arguments in the literature that intangible brand asset, when effectively built and communicated, translate into measurable financial value for the firm. Conversely, brand design, while positively regarded by respondents

at the perceptual level, did not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with return on investment. This suggests that visual and aesthetic branding elements, such as logo, packaging and typography, are necessary but not, on their own, sufficient drivers of profitability; their financial value appears to be more fully realized when reinforced by strong brand awareness and consistently perceived quality, consistent with the concept of the 'brand gap' discussed in the review of related literature. Overall, the study concludes that Unilever Nigeria Plc and Nestle Nigeria Plc, both long-established multinational brands with extensive product portfolios in the Nigerian market, derive tangible profitability benefits from their sustained investment in brand awareness campaigns, deliberate product positioning strategies and consistent delivery of perceived product quality, and that these three elements should be regarded as the primary branding levers for driving organizational profitability among consumer manufacturing companies operating in similarly competitive, price-sensitive emerging markets.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made: Management of consumer manufacturing companies should sustain and intensify investment in brand awareness campaigns across traditional and digital media, given its strong, demonstrated effect on net profit margin. Awareness initiatives should be tracked and evaluated periodically to ensure continued alignment with profitability objectives.

Companies should continuously review and refine their product positioning strategies, using the 5Ps framework (product, price, promotion, place and people) to clearly communicate unique value propositions relative to competitors, as this has been shown to significantly enhance total assets turnover.

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