

# Product Quality and Consumer Brand Loyalty: A Study of Manufacturing Firms

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## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of the study was to establish the key factors that influence brand loyalty. In today's competitive business environments, consumers are exposed to a large number of brand choice alternatives. Managers and marketers are battling to keep their brand loyal customer loyal and trying to avoid competitors from grabbing of these customers. There are various factors that impede customers to become loyal to either company or brand that they are using. It is the facts that maintaining customer loyalty towards certain brand is not an easy task but marketers are hying their best to increase or at least maintain brand loyalty. As such, this study intended to examine the factors that could possibly affect consumer brand loyalty. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed among 80 respondents. The results revealed that product involvement, perceived quality and brand trust are the major factors that affect consumer brand loyalty. Based on the findings of the study, the research made recommendations as follows; Companies should put more focus on retaining customers which will make the customers loyal for their brand and thus they will also help in promotion through word of mouth as found in this survey majority of the respondents who are satisfied with the brand recommend that brand to others, etc.*

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## **1.1 Background to the Study**

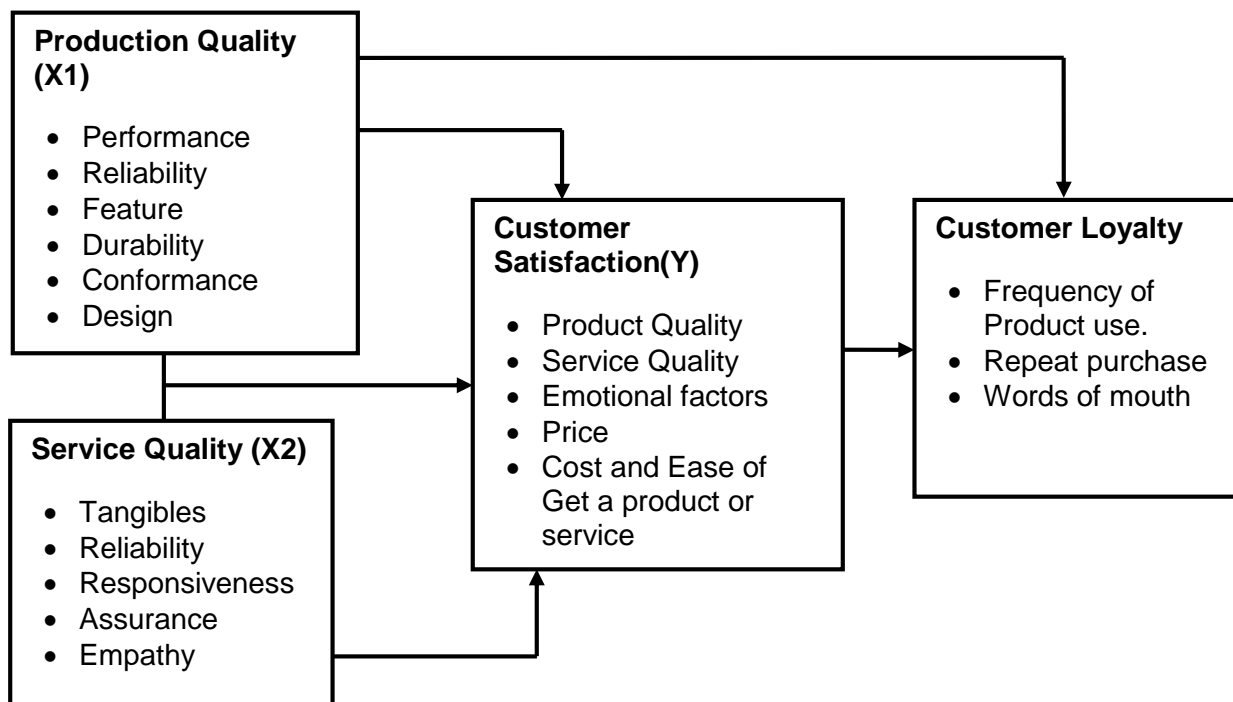
A successful brand is an exclusive product (industrial or consumer), place, person or service, amplified in such a way that the user or buyer perceives significant and exclusive added values, which go with their needs closely. If a brand provides superior service over many years of regular use, it gains added value of acquaintance and proven trustworthiness. The added values can come from the experience of using the brand, e.g., reliability, risk and familiarity.

The practice of branding first urbanized in the middle ages. During this period, craft guilds used brands to identify inferior goods and to limit production. In nineteenth century America, the purposes of branding began to change. The historical advancement of brands has shown that initially brands have served the roles of discriminating between competing products, representing uniformity of quality and giving legal protection from replication. Apart from providing the contribution with the badge of its maker, thereby indicating legal possession of all the special technical and other relevant features that the contribution may possess, the brand must have a powerful symbolic worth. The brand can in itself involve status, increase project and image or augment lifestyle so that the ownership of the making process by reducing perceived risk from the supplier's perspective, it not only assist in discriminating the offering, but also lead to brand loyalty, discourage market entry and well deployed, facilitate its owners to rule profit margins and higher prices. (Bradley 1995; Egan-Guilding, 1994) According to Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) brand loyalty is: "The (a) behavioral response, (b) biased, (c) expressed over time, (d) by some decision making unit, (e) with respect to one or more alternative brand out of a set of such brands and (f) is a function of psychological decision making processes".

Building and maintaining brand loyalty is a central theme of marketing practice and theory in establishing a sustainable competitive advantage. There are at least four cognitive based determinants of satisfaction. First, expectancy disconfirmation theory says that customers form prospect as benchmarks from which performance is rated. Disconfirmation has been established to be a significant determinant of satisfaction. Second, perceived performance also affects satisfaction assessment (Tse & Wilton, 1988). Support for both expectancy disconfirmation and performance evaluations in a customer satisfaction situation has been established (Oliver, 1995; Oliver & Burke, 1999). Third satisfaction influences by equity (Oliver & Desarbo, 1998). In a study of payment equity, it is found that satisfaction is directly affected by normative comparisons of payments (Bolton & Lemon, 1999).

Finally, the most important cognitive factor of satisfaction is potentially fairness (Oliver & Swan, 1989). Fairness has been operationalized as perceived losses and gains in a service relationship (Bolton, 1998).

The construct of loyalty has been researched in a number of contexts, including brand loyalty (Cunningham, 1956; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Kahn, Kalwani, & Morrison, 1986; Massy, Montgomery, & Morrison, 1970), source loyalty (Wind, 1970), service loyalty (Butcher, Sparks, & O'Callaghan, 2001; Caruana, 2002; Gremler & Brown, 1996), to loyalty (Beatty et al, 1996; Czepiel, 1990; Macintosh et al., 1992; Reynolds & Arnold, 2000) and e-Loyalty (Srinivasan et al., 2002). Bearing in mind what product quality is, and what brand loyalty is, it is therefore the focal point of this research to find out how product quality can affect consumer brand loyalty in the manufacturing firms.



Source: Researcher's Desk, 2018.

## 1.2 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objective of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

- To what extent do product quality affects consumer brand loyalty?
- To what extent do product durability affects consumer brand loyalty?
- To what extent do product reliability affects consumer brand loyalty?

### 1.3 Research Hypotheses

- H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between product reliability and consumer brand loyalty.
- H<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between product durability and brand loyalty.
- H<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between product reliability and consumer brand loyalty.

### 1.4 Empirical/Literature Review

This is to review the work done by other researchers which have relevance to the study.

Jacoby and Kyner, (1973) Brand loyalty has been described as behavioural response and as a function of psychological processes, which means that brand loyalty is a function of both behavior and attitudes. Most studies in brand loyalty have been concentrated on the behavioral aspect of brand loyalty (e.g. repeat purchases) without considering the cognitive aspects of brand loyalty (Choong, 1998).

Repurchase action is not sufficient evidence of brand loyalty since the purchasing practice should be intentional, in order to be considered as brand loyalist, consumer should have the intention to buy the same product or services at all the time. In addition; brand loyalist would also include some degree of commitment toward the quality of a brand that is a function of both positive attitudes and repetitive purchases.

Tepeci, (1999) Understanding loyalty is essential for marketing practitioners as loyal customers are less likely to switch and make more purchases than similar non loyal customers (Reichheld, 1996; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990), thus if the company can retain just 5% more of its loyal customers, profits will increase by 25% - 125%. Reichheld's (1996) is further supported by Strauss and Frost (1999), who suggest that relationship marketing is cost effective; it is less expensive to retain one customer than to acquire one; it is easier to sell more products to one loyal customer than to sell the same amount to two new customers.

This means that, it is easier to persuade loyal customer than to persuade new customers. The loyal customers normally have more confidence towards the firms compared to new customers.

Reichheld and Sasser, (1990) In addition, brand loyalty also contributes in reducing the costs of doing business, thus improving brand as well, as company's profitability (Tiele and Mackay, 2001). In this instance, the profit gain is the result of loyal customers whom would possibly provide 'free-advertisement' through positive word of mouth. Happy customers make recommendation about stores, product, or services to their friends. A research study reported that each satisfied customer tells nine or ten people about the happy experiences and 13% of dissatisfied customers tell more than twenty people about how bad the company/product were (Sonnenberg, 1993). This is the reason why many companies are trying to understand the contributing factors of brand loyalty.

Cravens, (1994) Theoretically, brand loyalty could be enhanced by maintaining the long term relationship with the customers in that it could help in creating the competitive advantages for any particular company. Normally, in order to increase the market share, most companies are utilizing common strategies such as discounting their market prices (having price war with competing brand), expanding their distribution channels or even launching promotional campaigns. However, it would be

Most cost effective and profitable to increase the market share that could be sustained over time though effectively strategizing the brand loyalty rather than using the common short-

term strategies. Once the relationship or loyalty is build, it would be easier for the companies to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

According to Fisher (1985), due to the positive outcome that could be expected from brand loyalist, every company working hard to obtain brand loyalty to be the market leader or at least to keep them survive and stay competitive. As mentioned previously, stated that “marketers battling (0 keep’ competitors from grabbing off customers complain that there just doesn’t seem to be as much brand loyalty around as there used to be.” In other Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework for consumer brand loyalty building in a competitive market, known as L7STA Framework, has been proposed.

An additional view of brand familiarity is an information processing view (Marks and Olson, 1981). Regarding this view of brand familiarity that underlines to the cognitive representations of experiences stored in memory as an alternative of prior experience with a brand. These cognitive representations of experiences with a brand are structured in the memory as a construction or plan in the Form of representations of brand names, attributes, uses, choice criteria etc. Emerged on this information processing view, brand familiarity is a nonstop variable (Kent and Allen, 1994). As a result, people with different cognitive structures or schemas may differ in their levels of brand familiarity that show the charisma of customer attitudes. A substitute view of brand familiarity is the amount of time exhausted in processing of brand that was implicated (Baker, et al, 1986). The greater the amount of time fatigued processing brand information, the greater the level of familiarity with that information regardless of how much the type of processing is semantic (e.g., words, name, logo) or sensory (e.g., pictures, attributes) (Bettman, 1979).

Customer satisfaction, a significant concept of satisfying customer’s needs and desires in marketing process (Spreng, 1996) is an important determinant of long- term consumer behavior (Oliver, 1980). According to Oliver defines customer satisfaction as “the summary of psychological assert resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is tied with the customer’s past feeling about the consumption experience” (Oliver, 1981).

Even though the definition of customer satisfaction is common in marketing and service literature, it is usually conceptualized as an individual’s emotional evaluation resulting from a judgment on a product’s perceived performance or result, whether the product meets or exceeds his or her expectations that come from consumption experiences (Oliver, 1981; Brady and Robertson, 2001 & Lovelock, et al, 2001). In their empirical analysis regarding customer satisfaction, Jones and Suh and Yi and La encompass two concepts of satisfaction: transaction-specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction (Jones and Suh, 2000). Transaction-specific satisfaction underlies to a customer’s reaction or evaluation of an individual service encounter (. Cronin and Taylor, 1992 & Boshoff and Gray, 2004) and is formed by immediate evaluative judgment of the most current post consumption experiences (Oliver, 1993); while, cumulative satisfaction is the customer’s in general evaluation the consumption experiences up to now. In applied marketing research, the general level of customer satisfaction with the different facets of a company, product or brand is more repeatedly used than an episode specific satisfaction.

Customer’s overall satisfaction is articulated as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experiences with a good or service over period of el-a” (Anderson, et al 1995). Thus, customer satisfaction will be encompassed by an overall satisfaction unto a certain brand based on earlier experiences in a customer’s mind and play a key role to build brand loyalty.

## Trust of the Brand

Weitz and Anderson underlie to brand trust as “one party’s faith that its needs will be satisfied in the future by actions undertaken by the other party” (Weitz and Anderson, 1989). Trust has become one of the major variables in discussions of relationship marketing. Relationship market in is articulated as the process of creating, maintaining, and enhancing strong vaule-laden relationship with customers and other stakeholders (Helsen and Kotabe, 1998). Similarly, Morgan and Hunt explain relationship marketing as “all marketing activities directed unto establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges with customers”. Usually, commitment trust theory, a significant theory in relationship marketing research, which is concerned in business-to business relationships and business-to customer relationships, encompasses on the long-term relational exchanges between sellers and buyers.

According to this theory, three vital formations including trust, relationship commitment and cooperation are i identified and determined. Morgan and Hunt include that both commitment and trust are essential for successful relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). In their study of commitment-trust theory, trust had a positive impact and was a major determinant of relationship commitment and cooperation. Additionally, trust and relationship commitment were essential antecedents of cooperative behaviors of relationship marketing success. As a result, for building brand loyalty marketers should emphasize trust on a brand.

### 1.5 Research Methodology

The research design adopted for gathering the data for this study, the population, sample size and sampling technique, method of data collection and analysis. The Pearson Product Moment correlation was used.

### 1.6 Research Design

The study used the survey method to find out the impact of product quality on consumer brand loyalty in manufacturing firms. A survey design provides a quantitative description of some fraction of the population that is sampled through the data collection process (Frankel and Wallen, 1995). The study also employed the questionnaire as the data collection instrument for the study.

### 1.7 Population of the Study

A research population is the aggregate of elements, events, conceivable traits, people, subjects or observations having the same characteristics relating to the situation of interest in the study. The population for this study therefore includes all manufacturing firms in Nigeria; with specific study of dangote consumer. It is however not possible to study the entire identified population of this study, the sample size is unknown.

### 1.8 Sample Size/Sampling Technique

The sample of the study represents the unit from the target population under investigation. Since the population is unknown the researcher adopted the non- probability sampling technique to determine the sample size of the respondents were questionnaire was administered to the study on the impact of product quality on consumer brand loyalty.

The formula for the Pearson product moment correlation cu-efficient is therefore given as;

$$r = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

(x) and (y)

Where X Strongly Agree and Agree  
Y = strongly disagree and Disagree.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of 100 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents out of which 80 were fully filled and returned, while the rest 20 copies were not completed and retrieved as such were not recorded. Below is the analysis presented.

### Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

Respondent	No of Questionnaire Administered	Percentage Administered	No of Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage Retrieved
Customers	100	100	80	80

Source: Survey data, 2018.

From the table above 100 copies of questionnaires was administered and 80 copies were properly filed and retrieved back from the respondents.

### Gender of Respondents

Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage Distribution
Male	50	62.5
Female	30	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Survey data, 2018.

The table above shows that 50 (62.5%) of the respondents were males while 30 (37.5%) were females.

### Marital Status of Respondents

Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage Distribution
Married	45	56.25
Single	35	43.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Survey data, 2018.

From the above table 45 (56.25%) of the respondents are married while the remaining 35 (43.75%) are single and not married.

### Age of Respondents

Age	No of Respondents	Percentage Distribution
20-30	15	18.75
31-40	25	31.25
41-50	40	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Survey data, 2018.

The above table shows that 15(18.75%) of the respondents are within the age of 20-30,25(31.25%) within ages 3 1-40 and 40(50%) were within the ages of 41-50.

### Academic Qualification of Respondents

Academic Qualification	No of Respondents	Percentage Distribution
FLSC	8	10
WASSCE	12	5
ND/HND	15	18.75
BSc	20	25
MSc	25	31.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Survey data, 2018.

The table shows that 8 (10%) of the respondents have first school leaving 12 (15%) have Senior school (0' level) certificate, 15 (18.75%) are ND/HND holders, 20 (25%) are BSc holders while the remaining 25 (31 .25%) of the respondents are Masters Degree holders.

### Analysis of Responses

	SD	D	SA	A	Total
Product durability influences consumer brand loyalty	10	10	20	40	80
A brand's quality is one of the factors which influences consumer brand loyalty	20	10	5	45	80
Brand equity is one of the determinants of consumer brand loyalty	15	10	25	30	80
Consumer brand loyalty is also influenced by brand performance	10	10	30	30	80
Brand preference is made according to; Durability Performance Price Design and Reliability	20	10	25	25	80
You will buy your preferred brand even if the price is higher compare to other brand of same line.	10	10	30	20	80

## Data Presentation and Analysis

### 1. Product durability influences consumer brand loyalty

SD	D	SA	A	Total
10(12.5%)	10(12.5%)	20(25%)	40(50%)	80

Source: Survey data, 2018.

The above table shows that product durability influences consumer brand assertion was accepted by 20 (25%) strongly agreed, 40 (50%) agreed, strongly disagreed while the remaining 10 (12.5%) disagreed.

### 2. Product quality is one of the factors which influences consumer brand loyalty

SD	D	SA	A	Total
20(25%)	10(12.5%)	5(6.25%)	45(56.25%)	80

Source: Survey data, 2018.

From the table above, the assertion was made that product quality influences consumer brand loyalty, and 20 (25%) strongly disagreed 10 (12.5%) disagreed, 5(6.25%) strongly agreed while 45 (56.25%) agreed.

### 3. Brand equity influences consumer brand loyalty

SD	D	SA	A	Total
15(18.74%)	10(12.5%)	25(31.25%)	30(37.5%)	80

Source: Survey data, 2018.

Table 3 above shows that brand equity influences consumer brand loyalty, 30 (37.5%) agreed to the point, 25 (31.25%) strongly agreed, while 10 (12.5%) disagreed and 15 (18.74%) strongly disagreed.

### 4. Consumer brand loyalty is influenced by brand performance

SD	D	SA	A	Total
10(12.5%)	10(12.5%)	30(37.5%)	30(37.5%)	80

Source: Survey data, 2018.

Table 4 shows that brand performance influences consumer brand loyalty, this point is supported by 30 (37.5%) who agreed, 30 (37.5%) strongly agreed while 10 (12.5%) disagreed and the rest 10 (12.5%) disagreed.

### 5. Customers will prefer a particular brand over others even if the price is higher

SD	D	SA	A	Total
10(12.5%)	10(12.5%)	30(37.5%)	30(37.5%)	80

Source: Survey data, 2018.

Table 5 shows that customers will prefer a particular brand over others even if the price is higher, 10 (12.5%) strongly disagreed, 10 (12.5%) disagreed, while 30(37.5%) strongly agreed and 30(37.5%) agreed.

## 1.9 Testing of Hypothesis

The variables are grouped into the following;



X = Strongly agree and agree  
Y = Strongly disagree and disagree

Hypothesis testing is necessary in order to ascertain the authenticity of the assumption made by the researcher.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between product quality and consumer brand loyalty

**H<sub>i</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between product quality and consumer brand loyalty.

**Contingency Table**

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 from the questionnaire will be used for the hypothesis testing.

Question	SD	D	SA	A	Total
1.	10(25%)	10(25%)	20(25%)	40(50%)	80
2.	20(25%)	10(25%)	5(1.25%)	45(56.25%)	80
3.	15(18.75%)	10(25%)	25(31.25%)	30(37.5%)	80
4.	10(25%)	10(25%)	30(37.55%)	30(37.5%)	80
5.	20(25%)	10(25%)	20(25%)	30(37.5%)	80

Source: Research Survey, 2018.

S/N	X	Y	X/Y	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>
1.	40	10	400	1600	100
2.	20	10	200	400	100
3.	45	10	450	2025	100
4.	5	20	100	25	400
5.	30	10	300	900	100
6.	25	15	375	625	222
7.	30	10	300	900	100
8.	30	10	300	900	100
9.	30	10	300	900	100
10.	20	20	400	400	400
	∑x275	∑yx125	∑yx3125	∑yx <sup>2</sup> 8675	∑yx <sup>2</sup> 1725

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{10(3125) - (275)(125)}{\sqrt{[10(8675) - (275)^2][10(1725) - (125)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{3125}{4252}$$

$$r = 0.7349$$

The one tailed test was used

H<sub>0</sub> = p=0

H<sub>i</sub>-p≤0

### 1.10 Conclusion

As an overall conclusion, this study basically intended to find out the factors that affect consumer brand loyalty in the manufacturing firms. It also gives an insight on how product involvement, perceived quality, brand equity, durability and brand trust affects brand loyalty in general.

In terms of product involvement, it is found that product involvement does have a relationship with brand loyalty and it did affect brand loyalty in certain ways. Indeed involvement with a product is a necessary precondition for consumer brand loyalty. Where else, perceived quality is not the main factor that contributes to brand loyalty but it can be assure that perceived quality does have association with brand loyalty that could enhance the loyalty of an individual towards a brand. In terms of durability, it is found out that the more durable a brand the more the customer is loyal to the particular brand. Honesty is important dimension of brand trust that could enhance brand loyalty.

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