

WOLKITE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES

BRANDING AND ITS IMPACT ON CONSUMER BUYING DECISION

(In the case of Selected Natural Spring Bottled Water Manufacturing Companies In Gurage Zone)

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Approval Sheet

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We hereby certify that we have read and evaluated this Thesis titled "**Branding and Its Impact On Consumer Buying Decision: In The Case of Gurage Zone Bottled Water**". Prepared under our guidance by Tewabech Neda Bekena. We recommend that the thesis shall be submitted as fulfilling the requirements for the award of a MA degree in Business Administration (MBA).



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Final approval and acceptance of the Thesis is contingent up on the submission of its final copy to the Council of Postgraduate Program (CPGS) through the candidate's department or school graduate committee (DGC or SGC).

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work prepared under the guidance of Tassew Shedga (PhD). All sources of materials used for this thesis have been properly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABERVATIONS

BA: Brand Awareness

BL: Brand Loyalty

PQ: Perceived Quality

CmrPurbh: Consumers purchasing bhr

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Abstract

General objective of this study is to examine the relationship between branding and consumer buying decision in the case of bottled water consumers in Ethiopia more specifically in Gurage Zone. Explanatory research design was applied using qualitative and quantitative approach.

Similarly, Target populations were taken from customers of bottled water in Gurage Zone using different urban area outlets, so information gained from the view point of other customers who uses other channel using conveniences sampling techniques. Data source were taken from secondary source (questionnaires' document, report. view). After conducting reliability and validity test of data analysis were done thought descriptive statistics in process of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviations in prospecting of ethical considerations.

The results of this study indicated that Consumers purchase intentions of bottled water have a strong positive association with Perceived Quality and brand Awareness which medium contributions of purchase intentions can be enhanced by associated class and brand visibility. The study also found that past purchase loyalty was not directly related to customer satisfaction or current brand preference and that brand preference is an intervening factor between customer satisfactions and re-purchase intentions. It is recommended that the researcher should strive to promote the brand loyalty more to customer along with brand loyalty happening negatively appeared in order to contribute towards positive purchase intentions. In other hand, water Bottling share company in Ethiopia should allow in mind that new familiar brands created as a result of relatively lower creativity of the "health matters of societies" as roamer always says, overextension and lack of investment in developing brand equity and values.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The introductory chapter incorporates seven sub sections. These include background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and limitation of the study definitions' of technical terms,. All these are discussed below:

1.1 Background of the Study

Branding existed for centuries as a way of distinguishing the goods of one producer from those of another, while modern branding finds its origin in the 19th century A.Room, (1992). Then, branding started becoming a special meaning to consumers and now prominently consider as company's most valuable assets in many countries. According to American Marketing Association Keller, (1998), a brand is a "name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate from those of competitors". Branding is the foremost component exists with the product when it is introduced in the market. To make it meaningful and attractive, a brand name is given in different forms. For example, brand name based on People (McDonald, Estee Lauer cosmetics), places (British airways, Chrysler‟s New Yorker), company name (Volvo, General Electric), animals or birds (Dove, Mustang automobiles), things or objects (Apple computers, Shell gasoline) or something that sounds scientific (Intel microprocessors, Lexus automobiles). Besides, there are various components either explicitly or implicitly attached with brand, so called as brand elements like logos, image and symbols. So, marketers have a lot of choices to identify their products in different ways and in different forms such as name and other brand elements Keller (1998). The reason behind these varied choices is that they add value to a product in terms of perceived quality, inferred attributes, and eventually, consumer's awareness and brand loyalty.

The importance of brand awareness for consumers related to the degree to which consumers familiar with the brands product. Products that have a brand which is familiar to consumers have more chance to be selected by consumers than the brand products that are not familiar, and vice

versa, Panchal et al. (2012). Familiar person will more consider brands of products he/she knows, namely when evaluating several alternative brands products which his already known. According to Shimp (2007) brand awareness is the ability of the brand appears in the minds of consumers when they are thinking about a particular product category. (Keller, 1993) defining the brand awareness as consumers ability to remember and recognize product brands in consumer memory. Brand awareness for the company may be intervened through marketing communications to consumers so that consumers can continue to recognize the company's product brands. The company creates exposure to consumers so that consumers can see, hear and think about certain brands, that ultimately the consumer is able to perform the retrieval in the memory if requires information products.

Brand awareness for consumers also serves to reduce the risk of error in purchasing products, because the brand guarantees product quality. In this context, consumers use brands as a marker of the quality of certain products. Consumers do not need to consider too deep or too long to find information about the quality / attributes of a product if consumers already trust the brand. From the above explanation can be concluded that brand awareness effect on brand trust. According to Mourad et al.(2011), Consumer familiarity is an important aspect of brand awareness, which can be stimulated by various corporate communication strategy, the more consumers to hear, observe and think about certain brands, the more easy for consumers to have associations in consumer memory, so in this case will increase consumer brand image. So it can be concluded that brand awareness effect on brand image.

Lin and Chang (2003) their study examined the importance of brand awareness in consumer's decision making process and they found out that brand awareness was a primary factor. Also Jiang (2004) found out in his study that brand recognition influences consumer's choice.

Hence, in this study, brand awareness is conceptualized as consisting of brand recognition brand recall and top of mind.

Kotler& Keller, (2006) state that consumer buying behavior is the study of the way of buying and disposing of goods, services, ideas or experiences by individuals, groups and organizations in order to satisfy their needs and wants. According to Kotler& Keller (2006) Consumer buying

behaviors refer to the buying behavior of final consumers, both individuals and households who buy goods and services for personal consumption.

Scholars in the field commonly agree upon the importance of studying the consumer. In order to succeed in a dynamic and rapidly evolving marketplace, marketers need to know everything they can about consumers. Peter and Olson (2010) outline the importance of consumer behavior for marketing strategies by pointing out that achieving marketing objectives depends on knowing, serving, and influencing consumers.

The area of this research will be on bottled water industry. Water is without any doubt an essential for human life. Rapid growth of population, limited water supply and changing in lifestyle has leveraged the consumption of bottled drinking water.

Bottled water industry is growing rapidly in the recent years as healthy supernumerary Doria, (2006). Furthermore, the bottled water market is success to attract consumers to consume more bottled water Feliciano (2014). Since bottled water market is crowded and it is difficult to penetrate the noise and visually appeal to the consumer from the store shelves Clement (2007). As per the Water Resource Based View (WRBV) approach, there is increasing trend in the number of bottled water manufacturing companies in Ethiopia engaged in the production and sale of potable water in the form of packaged/bottled water for safe drinking by branding water as a commercial product through labeled plastic packages. Because of consumers life style towards safe and quality potable water, there is increasing trend of preference of bottled water to the traditional one (tap water) in the metropolitan cities like Addis Ababa of Ethiopia with large population size and diplomatic city of Africa enhances the commercialization and profitability of water as a product in the national and international market for Ethiopian bottled water manufacturers. MatiwosEnsermu (2012).

To meet people needs in daily life for drinking water; many companies engaged to provide bottled drinking water. As this industry growing and there is more competition, the companies should have to know the things that influence people to buy the products of bottled drinking water. There are various types of bottled drinking water in Ethiopia market. However there has been no previous research into consumer purchasing decision regarding bottled water specifically in Gurage zone bottled water.

This paper seeks to address the factors that influence the purchasing decision of consumers on a specific brand.

As it is with any other consumer product, bottled water demands thorough research with respect to consumer purchasing decision to serve as a guide to which present and future marketing activities should follow.

Thus, the researcher is initiated to assess branding and its impact on consumer buying decision in the case of bottled water consumers in Gurage zone. In other words, this research aims to understand the theoretical impact of a branding on the decision making process of some the consumers of bottled water in Gurage Zone.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Competition is very high in today's marketplace. Every organization is therefore determined to differentiate their brands and service offerings compared to their competitors. In effect, everybody is typing to have unique features in their brand and market them. If organizations want to succeed in this space, they need to assess their brands honestly else similar me-too brands are out there in the market which can destroy their entire marketing efforts. Branding suffering from symmetry syndrome(condition) will find it difficult to survive in the market after some time. t

According to literatures written in the last decays brand awareness is the first and prerequisite dimension of the entire brand knowledge system in consumers‟ minds, reflecting their ability to identify the brand under different conditions.

In water resource based view finding on consumer perception of bottled water preference indicates that, water package, environmental friendliness and convenience are the better attributes that appear to have been rated whereas, cleanliness and price are the least ranked attribute where the bottled water product failed to meet the expectation of the consumers in Ethiopia. Many studies have been carried out to identify determinant factors of brand preference and why consumers prefer one brand over competitor‘s brand in particular product category. Influence might vary with different product categories and country context. Product variables such as quality, quantity style, features, variants &color customer services among others have

relationship with brand quality that could affect consumer‘s particular product choice decision (Ejionueme and Gerald, 2013).

Consumers are willing to pay higher prices for brands that they perceive to have high importance than competing brands in the market with in similar product category (Henry and 2013). If consumers have a positive perception of a brand, they tend to choose the brand, and this will have an effect on repeat purchases by consumers (Andihka, 2016). A well-known and trusted brand personality makes people confident that the organization is dependable (Isik and Yasar, 2015).

There is an energetic increase in the number of bottled water Guesser as the same time number of bottled water producers are expanding. However, the choice of consumer is different due to factors associated with consumer behavior. Understanding what consumers consider in choosing a particular bottled water product is important for bottled water companies; it will provide insight to formulate better marketing strategies. On the other hand, failure to do this may result in losing a substantial market share that in return leads to loss of profit and market share.

Moreover, consumers may have their own choice criteria in selection of a particular brand from a set of given product category. Several companies may not understand what factors determine 15 of brand choice of consumers and wrong investments are made to improper aspect, this in return leads them to loss of their customers (Ahuvia, 2005). Marketers need to comprehend why consumers prefer one brand over the other, how price, product quality, brand image, brand name, brand availability and brand advertisement will affect consumers ‘brand choice decision, and how consumers will respond to those factors.

However, other than the above factors, packaging attribute, taste & odor, price, promotion, brand image and perceived value have their own impact on the consumer awareness. Other researches focused on trying to determine why people bought bottled water and their purchase intention to buy one brand of bottled water over another, branding practice on package waters and influence of bottled water packaging. Within this context, the main goal of the study is to advance the current knowledge of the factors that underlie assessing brand awareness and to examine its effect on consumer purchasing behavior in the preference for specific bottled water.

Currently, there are more than 87 mineral and bottled water producers, majority of them passed through a thorough certification process mandated by the Ethiopian Quality and Standards

Authority (EQSA) and the Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Enterprise (ECAE, 2019). There is almost no significant study has been conducted on branding and its impact on consumer buying behavior in Ethiopia and there is no research on branding and the impact on consumers buying decision in the case of bottled water in Ethiopia as this study found out. Therefore, there is a clear research gap, so this study is conducted to fill the research gap in the area.

1.3 Research Questions

The researcher attempted to answer the following basic research questions:

- What is the level of awareness and satisfaction of packaged drinking water among the consumers?
- What are the determinants factors influencing consumers purchase decision for bottled water products in Gurage Zone?
- What are the relationship between branding and consumers buying decisions of bottled water?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The General objective of this study is to examine the relationship between branding and consumer buying decision in the case of bottled water consumers in Ethiopia more specifically in Gurage Zone.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the level of awareness and satisfaction of packaged drinking water among the consumers;
- To identify the determinant factors that influencing consumers‘ brand-choice decision for bottled water products in the city of Gurage Zone;
- To examine relationship between branding and consumers buying decisions of bottled water. the

1.5. Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypothesis are formulated after a critical examination of various literatures had been performed, all mentioned hypothesis were tested in order to achieve the targeted main and specific objective of this study. In the hypothesis Brand awareness measurements (Recognition, Recall, Top of the mind and Dominant) are the independent variables while consumer buying behavior is the dependent variable.

H1: Recognition has a significantly and positive effect on purchasing decision of bottled water consumer in Gurage Zone.

H2: Recall has a significantly and positive effect on purchasing decision of bottled water consumer in Gurage Zone.

H3: Top of the Mind has a significantly and positive effect on purchasing decision of bottled water consumer in Gurage Zone.

H4: Dominant has a significantly and positive effect on purchasing decision of bottled water consumer in Gurage Zone.

1.6. Significance of the study

The study on the determinates of consumer based brand equity in bottled water product is important for different reasons. The water industry is fast growing in Ethiopia, with the special interest in bottled water consumer branding.

Hence, this study Expected to contribute to the body of knowledge with current information on the determinates of consumer based brand equity, for both marketing students and Marketers in bottled water Ethiopian drink industry.

The study was also be essential in ensuring consumers to make smart choices when purchasing soft drinks based on elements in relation to the brand attributes. This will give value for money to the bottled water consumers.

Moreover, the study would be essential to the local beverage industry by highlighting key data in the bottled water drink market in ensuring the products available in the market meet the expected standards. That would be promoting a healthy competitive environment among bottled water drink players.

Lastly, that would be a source of information for policy maker in the sector and It can motivate other researchers to give time and study in this area and other companies other than bottled water. When companies have more understanding about their consumers, the consumer also benefited from this research when the company delivered the needed product by the consumers. Finally, the researcher may be benefited from the research, as the research study may enhance his skill on how the research would be conducted.

1.7. The Scope of the study

This research study explored the determinates of the relationship between branding and consumer buying decision in the case of bottled water consumers in Gurage Zone. Likewise, the study focuses on only in Gurage Zone markets; it may decrease the degree of applicability in other areas of the country.

Geographically; the study delimited only in Gurage Zone, due to shortage of time, and financial constraints limited.

Methodologically; the study would uses both quantitative and qualitative research method and also the main source of the data were questionnaire and other source of data.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

The geographical scope of this research would be limited in Gurage Zone. This geographical limitation is because of time, access and cost restriction. Hence, the finding cannot be generalized to a national level.

Conceptually, among the brand equity dimensions; brand image, brand awareness, brand knowledge and perceived quality which influence consumer purchasing decision this study will only focuses on the level of brand awareness.

The study is conducted only on bottled water products specifically on bottled water, because it believed that this market could be representative for other similar consumer markets and it is much easier to get data on consumer usage and other variables.

Data within the study was more specifically collected from consumers of bottled water in hotels, café and restaurants and also data would be collected from the head office of the company.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the research will seek to build an academic foundation from which a further research can be conducted upon. Its purpose is to throw more light on the various theories and concepts circling brand as well as consumer behavior and its theoretical impact on the purchase decision making process of consumers. Finally, the research narrowed down by investigating brand awareness.

Theoretical Review

2.1 Brand Definition

Consumers view brand as an important part of the product and brand might add value to the product. Brand equity is the value of a brand for both consumers and companies. To find factors that influence consumers‟ brand choice, the concept of brand were investigated. First, brand is defined. Further, different brand theories from the most prominent brand researchers such as Aaker, and Keller etc. are discussed. Finally, brand awareness which is a part of brand equity is investigated.

The American Market Association (AMA) defines brand as a “name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” Keller (2003). Following this line of reasoning concerning the difference between a brand and a product” a product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless” Aaker (1991).

In a wider perspective, a brand is the symbol of all information connected with a product or service. A brand typically includes a name, logo, and other visual elements such as images or symbols. It also covers the set of expectations associated with a product or service which typically arise in peoples‟ minds Brand – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, (10-16-05).

One of the brand‟s purposes is to be an identity to the products and services so that it can be separated from other products and services in the same category. In that way, just by seeing the name or the logo, the customer gets a certain indication of the product. The brand knowledge may work as a protection both for the customer and the manufacturer Aaker (1991). Hankingson and Cowking (1996) also highlight the fact that the brand should help to distinguish the product. They define brand as: “A product or service which can be distinguished from its competitors”.

According to Schmitt (1999), brand cannot only be seen as an identifier. He states that a memorable name and a good image is not enough; the company has to deliver experiences. Schmitt suggests two approaches to branding; the first is to see the brand as an identifier where the names, logos and slogans give the consumers awareness and a specific image. The other approach is to see the brand as an experience provider where the names, logos, slogans, events and other consumer contacts give the consumers sensory, affective, creative relations and lifestyles with the brand. Keller and Armstrong (2004) also believe that brand is more than an identifier. It stands for consumer sensitivity as well as emotions to the product.

Further, Keller (2003), states that in recent years, brands have increased in importance. A distinguishing tool of the companies „products or services is the branding. The theme or combination of themes, that can be associated to brands, such as the trademark, logo, name, identity, image, personality, value and evolving entity, create the brand. In general, marketing is defined as a consumer-based process that permeates organizational functions and processes, and it balances the companies „objectives and customer satisfaction. Branding is a marketing tool perceived to be important for both the company and consumer. Brands are important valuable intangible assets for companies, a distinctive tool that builds a long-term relationship with the consumers, and protects its rights. For consumers, brands reflect their experience and knowledge; simplifying the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands. In addition, brands reflect consumer experiences and knowledge thus, simplify the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands.

2.2 Brand Equity

More and more company leaders and market executives and groups like finance analysts, start to realize the value of branding. It was during the 1990‟s the concept of brand equity came in focus

for brand researches in both brand management and consumer behavior. Brand equity is intangible. It does not consist of factories and physical infrastructure but of memories, feelings, associations, loyalty and attention towards brands Aaker (1991).

Kotler and Armstrong (2004) define the meaning of brand equity as the positive outcome that the customers show to the product or service. A similar definition by is that brand equity can be seen as the outcome of putting together a brand's values, responsibilities and resources with the symbol and/or name. A brand's responsibilities and resources, which are very important for brand equity, may change in different situations. To see the changing factors more easily, they can be divided into five classes.

1. Brand loyalty: People are bound to a brand which decreases the weakness to other brands‟ movement.

2. Brand awareness: A known brand has more chance to be selected and bought before an unknown brand, just because of reliability and familiarity to the recognized brand.

3. Perceived quality: How a brand's quality is seen by customers. Good quality can also mean higher price and a better gross margin. How to measure quality in different industries vary.

4. Brand association: A symbol or character that symbolizes a specific brand, for example Nike‟s "the swoosh".

5. Other proprietary brand assets: Something that discerns a specific brand from others: patents, trademarks, relationship channels etc.

Brand equity provides value both to the company and the customers. Brand equity assets provide value to the customers in the way that the assets can help them to interpret, process, and store great quantities of information about products and brands. They also help the customers in the buying decision in terms of perceived quality and familiarity with the brand. Both perceived quality and brand associations may increase the customers‟ satisfaction.

Product is of a special brand may affect the experience and increase the satisfaction for the customers.

Branding is a significant marketing tool and is used to differentiate an organization‘s product(S) in the marketplace‖ (Graham,1994) this is in support of Doyle and Stem et.al.(2006) who define brand as attributes that make the recognition and identification of a product easy for customers, Kelleretal (2003) further explains that brands are among the most valuable assets of a company which determines the competitive advantage and the organization‘s profit.

According to Kapferer (2008) brand is source of influence which are interconnected mental associations, the further states we say there is a cumulative brand experience when brand has a power to influence a given market. There is three ad hock points where we can see the dynamic of branding these are 1) product and Service 2) name and symbol, 3) concept. Branding has become one of the most important aspects of business strategy. Yet it is also one of the most misunderstood. Branding is sometimes considered to be merely an advertising function. And many managers and business writers hold the view that branding is about the management of product image, a supplementary task that can be isolated from the main business of product management. This note provides an alternative perspective, arguing that:

- Branding is a strategic point of view, not a select set of activities.
- Branding is central to creating customer value, not just images.
- Branding is a key tool for creating and maintaining competitive advantage.
- Brands are cultures that circulate in society as conventional stories.

Brand equity can provide value to the firm by generating marginal cash flow in many ways. It can improve programs to attract new customers or recapture old ones. The perceived quality, brand associations and name awareness can increase brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is both one of the dimensions of brand equity and is affected by brand equity. Brand equity usually gives higher margins by permitting premium pricing and not so much reliance upon commercials. Further, it can also provide higher growth inform of brand extensions. A strong brand can also give more influence on the distribution channels. Finally, brand equity assets provide a competitive advantage to the competitors Aaker (1991).

As mentioned above, Keller has done research about customer-based brand equity, where he describes brand equity from the customers‟ point of view, how the customers react to the marketing of a product with a brand compared to that of a product without a brand. “Customer

based brand equity occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favorable, and unique brand associations in memory" Keller (2003). Positive customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumers react more positively to a product with a certain brand compared to the same product without a brand. If the consumers do not see any differences in the product with a brand compared to the product without a brand, the brand is less valuable.

According to Keller, brand equity consist of strong brand awareness and a positive brand image in the consumers‟ memory in terms of strong, favorable, and unique brand associations. Furthermore, Keller (2004) developed a model that helps to understand brand equity from the customers' perspective, how consumers react to marketing of a brand product compared to a product without a good brand. The model is based on the premise that the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen and heard about the brand as a result of their experiences over time. He defines CBBE "as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand". The Consumers‟ knowledge of the brand consists of brand image (types, strength, grade of uniqueness and favorable associations) and awareness (recognition and brand recall).

The brand image exists in the consumers‟ mind and depends on what type of association appears and how this association is valued by the consumers in terms of strength, uniqueness and favorable associations.

Awareness consists of two parts, recognition and recall. Recognition is the extent to which consumers in a store recognize the brand that they have just been exposed to, for example in a commercial. Recall is the consumers‟ ability to recall the brand from memory when given a relevant indication. Brand awareness can be created by increasing the familiarity of the brand through repeated exposure (for brand recognition) and strong associations with the relevant product category and consumptions indications (for brand recall). Keller (2003) also states that feelings, experiences and the brand personality affect the brand equity.

2.3 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness means the ability of a consumer can recognize and recall a brand in different situations (Aaker, 1996).From this definition it can be seen that brand awareness consists of

brand recall and brand recognition. While brand recall refers a situation when consumers see a product category, they can recall a brand name exactly, and brand recognition used to describe consumers ability to identify a brand when there is a brand cue Keller (1993). This means, consumers can tell a brand correctly if they ever saw or heard it.

Brand awareness is measured according to the different ways in which consumers remember a brand, which may include brand recognition, brand recall, top of the mind brand and dominant brand Aaker (1996). As he explained the matter, Brand recognition is related to consumers ability to confirm prior exposure to that brand when given the brand a cue which is expressed when consumer correctly discriminate that particular brand from other in similar category as having been previously seen or heard. Brand recall relates to consumers aptitude to retrieve the brand from memory given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category or a purchase or usage situation as a cue. Consumers required to correctly generating the brand from memory when given a relevant cue.

The basic difference between brand recognition and recall is that, brand recognition happens for example when customer exposed for different brands in the same category in the supermarket they will able to differentiate the brand they are aware of among others. However in the case of brand recall customers expected to remember the brand from their memory that they are aware of while given only some clue about it.

The other level of brand awareness as stated by Aaker,et al. (1996), is Top-of-mind brand which is the brand name that first comes to mind when a consumer is presented with the name of a product classification like for example if soft drinks mentioned as a product classification then someone may say coca or Pepsi or other brand at first place. The last one Dominant Brand is the ultimate awareness level, where in a recall task; most consumers can only provide the name of a single brand for instance from soft drink classification someone only can recall Coca. From top to down their level of awareness is becoming increase that is why Aaker,et al. (1996) put recognition as important for new or niche brands and recall and top-of-mind as more sensitive and meaningful for well-known brands. Brand awareness can provide a host of competitive advantages for the marketer as it renders the brand with a sense of familiarity, it can be a sign of presence, commitment and substance, and it is also an asset that can be inordinately durable and thus sustainable. It may be extremely difficult to dislodge a brand that had achieved a dominant

awareness level Aaker, (1996): Fundamentally, high levels of brand awareness should increase the probability of brand choice, produce greater consumer and retailer loyalty, and decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions Keller, (1993).

2.3.1 Brand Awareness and Consumer Decision-Making

According to Keller (1993) Brand awareness plays an important role in consumer decision making for three major reasons: First, it is important that consumers think of the brand when they think about the product category. Brand awareness is essential in buying decision-making as it is important that consumers recall the brand in the context of a given specific product category, awareness increasing the probability that the brand will be a member of the consideration set. Raising brand awareness increases the likelihood that the brand will be a member of the consideration set Keller (1993) the handful of brands that receive serious consideration for purchase. Second, brand awareness can affect decisions about brands in the consideration set, even if there are essentially no other brand associations. For example, consumers have been shown to adopt a decision rule to buy only familiar, well-established brands Keller (1998)

2.3.2 Measuring Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is measured according to the different ways in which consumers remember a brand, which may include brand recognition, brand recall, top of the mind brand and dominant brand Aaker (1991).

Brand recognition: It related to consumers _ability to confirm prior contact to that brand when given the brand a cue. It requires that consumers can correctly discriminate the brand as having been previously seen or heard. . Brand recognition is the minimal level of brand awareness. It is based upon an aided recall test. Brand recognition is particularly important when a buyer chooses a brand at the point of purchase.

Brand recall: Brand recall relates to consumers _aptitude to retrieve the brand from memory given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category or a purchase or usage situation as a cue. It requires consumers to correctly generate the brand from memory when given a relevant cue. Brand recall is based on unaided recall, which is a substantially more difficult task than recognition.

Top-of-mind brand: This is the brand name that first comes to mind when a consumer is presented with the name of a product classification.

Dominant Brand: The ultimate awareness level is brand name dominance, where in a recall task most consumers can only provide the name of a single brand.

Therefore the challenge facing the marketers is to build awareness and presence both economically and efficiently Aaker (1991)

Brand awareness can be characterized according to depth and breadth. The depth of brand awareness concerns the likelihood that a brand element will come to mind and the ease with which it does so.

A brand that can be easily recalled has a deeper level of brand awareness than one that only can be recognized. The breath of brand awareness concerns the range of purchase and usage situations where the brand element comes to mind. The breadth of brand awareness depends to a large extent on the organization of brand and product knowledge in memory. Keller, et al. (1998)

2.3.3 The Value of Brand Awareness

According to (Aaker, 1991) brand awareness creates value in at least four ways

1. Anchor to which other associations can be attached

Brand recognition is the basic first step in the communication task. It usually is wasteful to attempt to communicate brand attributes until a name is established with which to associate the attributes. A name is like a special file folder in the mind which can be filled with name related facts and feelings. Without such a file readily accessible in memory, the facts and feelings become misfiled, and cannot be readily accessed when needed.

2. Familiarity/liking

Recognition provides the brand with a sense of familiarity and people like the familiar. Especially for low-involvement products like soap, chewing gum, paper towels, sugar,disposable pens, or facial tissues, familiarity can sometimes drive the buying decision. In the absence of motivation to engage in attribute evaluation, familiarity may be enough.

3. Substance/ commitment

Name awareness can be a signal of presence, commitment, and substance, attributes which can be very important even to industrial buyers of big-ticket items, and consumer buyers of durables. The logic is that if a name is recognized, there must be a reason such as:

These suppositions are not necessarily based upon knowledge of specific facts about the brand. Even if a person has not been exposed to advertising and knows little about the firm, brand awareness could still lead to the assumptions that the firm is substantial and backs the brand with advertising. If a brand is completely unknown before it was put into view as a choice alternative, there is a suspicion that it is not substantial with a committed firm behind it. Sometimes, even in the case of large and involved purchase decisions, brand familiarity and perceptions of substance associated with brand awareness can make all the difference.

2.4 Consumer Behavior

The marketing concept has long been argued and established as the appropriate philosophy of doing business. This concept states that an organization should satisfy consumer needs to make profit Peter & Olson. (2000). this establishes understanding of the consumer at the center of the marketing concept and the necessity of research into consumer's behavior. The American Marketing Association (2014) defines consumer behavior as the dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behavior, and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives. In other words, consumer behavior involves the thoughts and feelings people experience and the actions they perform in consumption processes. It also includes all the things in the environment that influence these thoughts, feelings, and actions. These include comments from other consumers, advertisements, price information, packaging, product appearance, blogs, and many others

Peter &Olson.,et al. (2000) Forwarded insightful framework that links all the elements of this important definition. Marketing strategies are outcomes of the constant relationships and interdependences between the consumers „affect and cognition, their actions and their environment in the Wheel of Consumer Analysis Model by the authors. As such, consumer behavior reflects the actions of the consumer that prevail as a result of the consumers „knowledge and feelings as well as the consumer's environment.

2.5 The Consumer Decision-Making Process

Every person is unique; therefore, each person has one-of-a-kind characteristics, knowledge, background, motivations and lifestyle, as well as different reasons for purchasing items Anh, (2017). The consumer decision-making process comprises five stages, namely problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase behavior. Each of these will be discussed further.

Stage 1: Problem Recognition

The consumer recognizes a need or wants to purchase an item Lautiainen (2015). This can be triggered either by an internal or an external stimulus. Internal stimuli refer to psychological factors that influence a consumer, whereas external stimuli refer to different social environments such as family and friends who influence purchase decisions Rahmat& Mohan (2017). This step is important as it initiates the entire process of making decisions. Maslow‟s hierarchy of needs plays an important role in this stage of the decision-making process as this model incorporates the psychological levels of needs that an individual has. Some needs are more important than others; therefore, they help to influence the decisions that an individual make Lautiainen (2015). According to McLeod (2017), the most basic need is physiological needs, and everything else that constitutes a particular person's behavior follows after. Maslow‟s hierarchy of needs comprise physiological needs, safety needs, needs of belonging and love, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

Stage 2: Information Search

These stages occur after the consumer has recognized the need or want for an item. The consumer searches for information that will help to make a purchase decision Stankevich (2017). Consumers can obtain information that raises awareness of the different types of brands and while they are searching for this information, they might come across a brand that they were not aware of, or brands that they have not considered before Lautiainen, (2015). Consumers may gather information from a variety of sources such as internal sources, reference groups, marketing sources, public sources and experiential sources study by Deloitte, asked the participants what has the greatest influence on their fashion purchases. Of the respondents, 27 % said that they are influenced by friends they admire, 46.1 % said that the brand itself influences

their purchase decisions, and 26.9 % said that they are influenced by a favorite celebrity endorser Deloitte (2017).

Stage 3: Evaluation of Alternatives

After having collected relevant information on the different products, the consumer assesses the choices depending on various factors such as price, quality, brand, and so forth. The consumer compares different products against fulfilling the need. Stankevich (2017) states that when information or knowledge about a product is low, the price factor is the next variable that is considered before purchasing the product. Consumers rank different brands or products from highest to the lowest according to their needs. Then they choose the most important attribute to make the final decision. Consumers gravitate towards big, well-known brand names because the brand name resonates in consumers‟ minds and helps consumers to make purchase decisions Stankevich (2017).

Stage 4: Purchase Decision

This stage is when the consumer is ready for the actual purchase decision. The final product decision has been made when the consumer chooses the products that fulfills the need or want Lautiainen (2015).

Stage 5: Post-purchase Behavior

The consumer would either be satisfied or dissatisfied with the product or service in the sense that the product either met or exceeded the need that was brought forward. If a consumer is satisfied, then the chances of retention are higher, and there is a higher chance of consumer loyalty and spread by word-of-mouth. This stage allows the consumer to make judgments of the transaction for future reference Qazzafi (2019).

In this stage the consumers take further action after the purchase decision by evaluating their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is determined by the overall feelings, or attitude, a person has about a product after it has been purchased. Consumers engage in a constant process of evaluating the things they buy as they integrate these products into their daily consumption activities.

Regarding the first purchase of a new product/brand, the buyer enters five different levels of adapting. The adapting process is a psychological procedure a person goes from hearing about the product to buying it:

1. Awareness: The consumer becomes aware of the new product, but lacks information about it.

2. Interest: The consumers seek information about the new product.

3. Evaluation: The consumers consider whether trying the new product makes sense.

4. Trial: The consumers try the new product on a small scale to improve their estimation of its value.

5. Adoption: The consumers decide to make full and regular use of the new product.

This is just a model and all the stages are not necessarily used when purchasing a new product; for example, the stage "trial" is not entered when buying a car Kotler& Armstrong (2004)

Consumer buying behavior differs much depending on what kind of product the consumer will purchase. There is a big difference in involvement when buying a car compared to toothpaste. Kotler, Armstrong, & Saunders (1999) have made a buying behavior model with four different buyer behaviors.

Moreover, consumers differ much individually in willingness to try new products and brands. This has led to a classification of consumers into different groups.

Innovators are defined as the first consumers adapting to the new product. The innovators or pioneers are adventurous. They like to try new things and are more willing to take risks. Further, they tend to take risks. They are often young and well educated. Further, they tend to take more advantage of special promotions such as discounts and samples.

The early adopters are the next ones. The early majority adapt to the new product before the average consumer.

The late majority adapt to the new product only after most people already have tried it.

Finally, the laggards are the last ones that adapt to the new product. They are bound to tradition and adapt to the new product only when it has become tradition itself.

Empirical Review

The concept of brand is vital and draws synergy between organizational resources (human, fixed resources, tangibles and intangibles) and the strategic objectives of the organization to achieve success among competitors. In this regard, after achieving success through branding, maintaining and managing the brands reputation becomes integral to be the market leader.

Bickerton, (2003) considered the emerging focus in both academic and practitioner literature on the concept of the corporate brand and argues that the underlying generative mechanisms and processes that enable successful corporate brand management are not clearly understood. Alizadeh, et al.(2014) determined Comparison of Product and Corporate Branding Strategy: a conceptual framework and concluded that competition within the free market environment has grown to become a throat cutting one and hence calls for distinctive branding in order to be easily noticed by consumers.

An Empirical Study of Starbucks Coffee in Taiwan Tu et al. (2012) indicated that organizational branding directly affects customer satisfaction. In addition, the study found that the level of customer satisfaction adequately influences customer loyalty which was supported by the findings of Eakuru and Mat (2008); analyzed and discuss the strategic positioning of associations that can be established between a corporate brand and entities in its surrounding network such as brands, product categories, persons, places and institutions.

Xuan Lam hoang, (2020) Primary aim of this study was to investigate the impact of brand loyalty and brand association on consumer purchase intent. It also aimed to examine the association between brand awareness and perceived quality related to consumer purchase intent. Findings revealed that both brand loyalty and brand association are significantly associated with consumer purchase intent, whereas brand awareness and perceived quality are not significantly related to consumer purchase intent. Non-random based sampling technique was used to collect data from 260 respondents through close-ended questionnaires from different market places of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia.

ZarlishShahid (2017) presents a review about the impact of brand equity and brand awareness on the purchasing intentions of the consumers. The purpose of the research was to elaborate the relation between the awareness of a brand and the intention of consumer of buying that brand.

This has been done by going through different literature and articles by different authors. The study help to come across the work done by various well known authors at one place and hence will help to know how knowing a brand well will affect the consumer in making decision about buying a product.

Andualem Asnake (2018) Branding is an important concept in consumer buying behavior and it is a crucial factor influencing the purchasing of product. The main purpose of the study is to explore the impact of branding on consumer buying behavior in case of Gurage Zone consumer. Both primary and secondary data was used in the study. Moreover, structured questionnaires Will be used to gather relevant information and the data will be analyzed by using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) and presented through descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis. The study come up with branding has a significant effect on consumer buying behavior. The study revealed that the four dimensions of branding that is, brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association and perceived quality have positive and significant relation with customer buying behavior. The study recommend that branding is very vita to attract and retain customers; therefore, continues improvement must be maintained at all times on brand awareness, brand loyalty and brand association as well as product quality that meet consumer buying behavior.

Jemal Kider (2019) the research was carried out to determine the factors that affect the perception of consumers on the performance of bottled Water Companies in Addis Ababa. as his research outcome registered clearly that the electronic media advertisement, influences the choice of many consumers as to what brand to purchase. This evidently applied to those who are not strictly adapted with a particular brand. A few consumers of bottle water are strong clients of the brand; so it is a more influential on the demand side of the market. The company has to work on the promotion intensively to be more addressable and attractively. It was also revealed in the study that consumer response or feedback after using consuming the water product is very vital to brand performance. The perception of the consumer on the brand of any product cannot be taken for granted if a company is to achieve competitiveness.

2.6. Summery

The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical and empirical frame of reference for this study. This can be summarized as follows. The purpose of this study is to provide understanding of the cause and effect of brand awareness on consumer purchasing decision which is one of consumer buying behavior. The theoretical base in this area is fairly rare. This study concerns brand awareness and consumer purchasing decision in specifically brand of bottled water. Focus in the study is limited to the measurement of brand awareness and their effect on purchasing decision of bottled water. In the following chapter the research methodology choice was discussed and justified.

2.7. Conceptual Framework

Aaker‘s (1991) conceptual definition has usually been used to operationally define brand equity. This model was one of the first published studies that conceptualized brand equity from the customer‘s perspective, combining both the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of brand equity. It probably provides the most comprehensive framework for examining brand equity. Aaker‘s(1991) theory of brand equity is essential for successful brand management and informed this study by providing a thorough understanding of brand equity from the customer‘s point of view.

Brand equity is a multidimensional concept and a complex phenomenon. Keller (2002) divided it into two components: awareness and association. Aaker (1996; 2000) grouped it into five categories: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, and other proprietary brand assets such as patents, trademarks, and channel relationships.

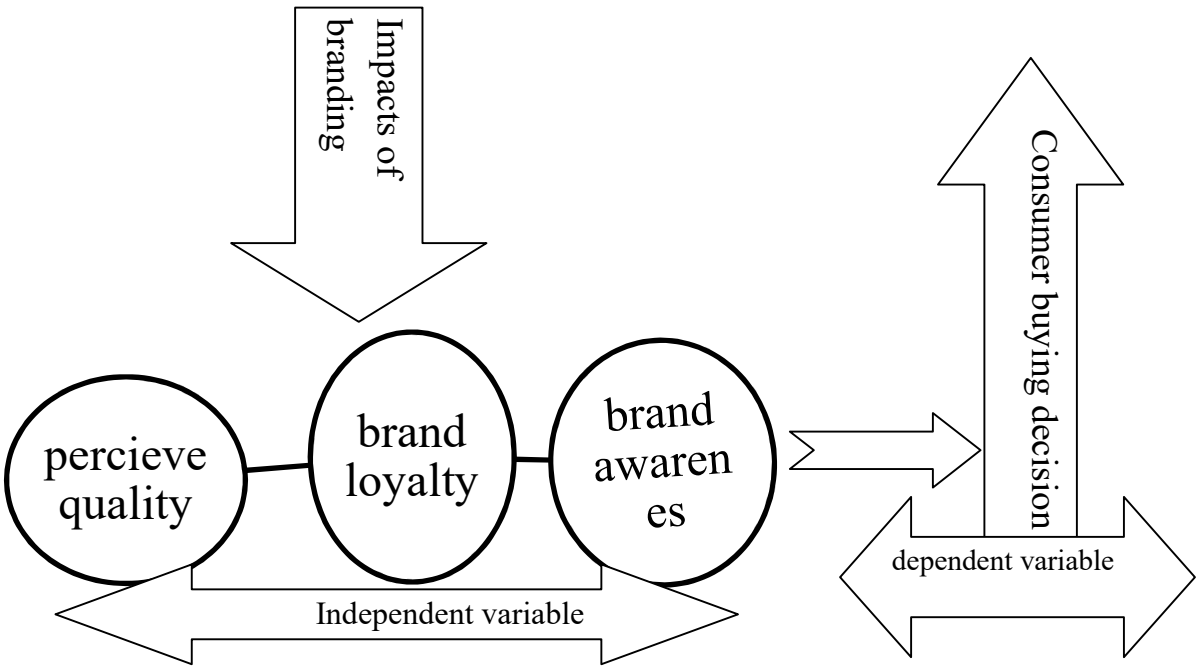


Figure 1 Conceptual framework developed by Author, 2020

As we can see from the above figure brand awareness can be measured according to different ways in which consumer remember a brand which may include, brand recognition, brand recall, top to the mind and dominant brand Aaker (1996). If there is high level of brand awareness the chance of consumer can buy the product will be high compare to the low level of brand awareness, especially in low involvement commodities.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study was used explanatory research design with self-administered questionnaire as secondary data collection techniques using both qualitative and quantitative data type. Therefore, Explanatory research design is believed to be appropriate for this study as it consists of mainly how and why questions of the study, behavioral real events which are not possible to control and contemporary and complex social phenomenon whose boundary is not clear (khaotari, 2004).

Among the various types of quantitative design, the research is conducting an explanatory study, where emphasis is given on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationship between variable .Explanatory researches will be used in order to identify the extent and nature of cause-and-effect relationships.

Explanatory research was used because it enables the researcher to critically examine the relationship between independent variable of brand awareness such as Recognition, Recall and Top of the Mind and the dependent variable consumer purchasing decision. By employing inferential statistics (regression analysis), the effect of the independent variable (brand awareness) on the dependent variable (consumer purchasing decision) will be asses.

3.2 Research Approach

This research Approach was organized using both quantitative and qualitative methods, which was in triangulation research method which is help to clarify concepts, characteristics, descriptions, counts and measures to demonstrate implications of the issue under objectives. The quantitative method involves the use of structured and semi-structured questionnaire while qualitative would include the use of structural questionnaires' with the sampled subjects selected for this research. According to Mouton & Marais (2001), identified about Quantitative methods are most often used when the motives for research are evaluated?

3.3 Target Population, Sample Size, Sample Techniques

3.3.1 Target Population

Population can simply be defined as the total number of people or entities from which Information or data is gathered. The target population of the study would be 355 consumers of bottling water. Include of urban and different rural area in Gurage zone. List of consumers are obtained from bottling water users.

comprises of all individual consumers in Gurage Zone which are selective on specific brand, who use bottled water products, which are either men or women aged 18 and above and have at least a foundation education. All Gurage Zone specifically in different urban area are the target location to obtain the respondents.

3.3.2 Sample Size Determination

Sample size, refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. Customer group are infinite so sample size determination is very essential. The size of the sample should neither be excessively large, nor too small.

According to Sekaran (2003), sample size of 300-500 is adequate for most researches. In order to determine the sample size, an estimation of the expected proportion of success must be considered Kothari (2004). In this case, a more conservative proportion of success (p) which is 50% was selected together with a level of confidence of 95% (z), a sampling error no greater than 5% (e).

Where

no = Sample size

e = Acceptable error

p = Proportion of success

q = Proportion of failure

z = Standard variant at a given confidence level

$$n_o = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

3.3.3 Sample Techniques

The target population included all bottled water users specifically located from respondents of Gurage Zone. The sample focuses on respondents from specific Café, Restaurant and Hotels with a technique used convenience sampling techniques, as it is relatively quick, convenient, and less expensive for collecting data.

3.4 Data Source

This section describes source of data. Data can be collected by both primary and secondary methods. Both primary and secondary source of data would be used in these studies.

Secondary Data

The initial step in research is the analysis of studies completed by other researchers for their own purpose or secondary data. The main advantage of using secondary data is the availability. Also, secondary data is fast and less expensive to obtain.

Primary Data

Primary data is data that is observed or collected directly from first-hand experience. The primary data collection method is divided into two types, namely survey and observation. The survey method of collecting primary data would be used in these researches. A survey is a quick,

inexpensive, efficient and accurate means of assessing information from a representative sample of a population Zikmund et al. (2003).

3.5. Data Collection Form

The researcher used primary data from the market through questionnaire including Brand Awareness, Brand loyalty, Perceived Quality, Associated class and brand visibility.

Among the type of surveys, data were collected by distributing self-administered questionnaires which are research questionnaires delivered personally by the researcher to the respondents and the questionnaires are completed by a respondent without an interviewer. This method was selected because it is cost-effective method of collecting data. Another reason for the use of self-administered questionnaires is that this method allows the researcher to provide respondents with a detailed explanation on the purpose of the research. This is vital for the research since explanations about the research would be reduced the respondents to answer the questions in an honest manner Zikmund et al. (2003).

3.6. Validity and Reliability

For quantitative data gathering

Cronbach Alpha is one of the commonly used indicators of the scales internal consistency. Reliability Statistics were used to confirm the reliability of the instrument. Preferably, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of a scale should be above 0.7. Based on this, a pilot test with 15 respondents was made in the study area in Bottled water drinks at Gurage Zone drinking and eating out let only before the actual distribution of the instrument starts. As a result, the coefficients of reliability of items measuring variables are found to be Cronbach‘s alpha $\alpha = 0.962$. Therefore, the instrument can be accepted as reliable. So the questionnaire was distributed after correcting the feedback given in the pilot study. Cronbach‘s value for all variables after data entry is $\alpha = 0.962$and then is computed as per the category as follows.

The category Cronbach‘s values that are less than the overall and items was greater than 0.7 which have been accepted. : Survey Cronbach‘s Alpha Reliability Result of the Variables

Table 3. 2: Reliability test instrument

Questionnaire Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Item	N of respondent

		s	s
Brand Awareness, , ,	0.872	5	343
Brand loyalty	0.949	5	343
Perceived Quality	0.812	5	343
Purchasing bhr	0.923	5	343

Source: Owen survey (2024)

As indicated from the reliability scale measurement of the above table the scale of reliability test is acceptable and shows good internal consistency.

For qualitative data

For the document analysis and secondary data trustworthiness was assured by avoiding double barreled, long and complex questions. Efforts were made to avoid leading questions and false premises. Triangulation by method and data source was held to keep the trustworthiness of the data to authenticate the genuineness of data; the researcher was established good rapport relationship between study participants and documents.

3.6.2.Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what is supposed to measure. Data need not only to be reliable but also true and accurate. If a measurement is valid, it is also reliable (Joppe 2000). The content of validity of the data collection instrument would be improved through discussing the study instrument with the experts in the field of study and the researcher supervisor. The valuable comments, corrections, suggestions, given by the study experts assisted the validation of the instrument. Before issuing the questionnaire to respondent's comments and suggestions given by advisor has been adjusted accordingly.

3.7.DataAnalysis

As a set of procedures or methods that were applied to data that has been collected in order to obtain one or more sets of results. Analyses the research results of consumer's attitudes towards branding of bottled water consumers in Ethiopia more specifically in Gurage Zone.

The data analysis consisted of three parts as follows:

1) The analysis of customer‘s demographic data.
2) The analysis of consumer‘s branding toward bottle water consumer at Gurage Zone. Regressions using to show some key characteristics of the respondents and most importantly analyses the patterns and behavior to present a predictive model of consumer based bottled water.
3) Branding and their buying decision from consumer‘s data.
4) It is unquestionable that after the collection of data analysis, interpretation and presentation in order to give recommendation to the problem.

For the purpose of this study both qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed accordingly. Qualitative data start during and after data collection, which helped in rearranging and analyzing these data systematically and rigorously. Data was presented in the form of statement. Mainly for quantitative data, descriptive statistics used to summarize data by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS) version 23 software. Statistics including mean, frequency and standard deviation also was used to analyze the data among the different groups. The mean and standard deviation was used to describe the data obtained indicted mean difference of variables (determinant of branding I.e. Brand Awareness, Brand loyalty, Perceived Quality variable are independent variable) and the dependent variable (Consumer purchase behavior).
. In inferential statistical analysis, correlation and multiple linear regression tools would be utilize to investigate the most important questions and objectives of this study and to arrive at the core findings of the study with regards to the hypotheses forwarded. The correlation analysis reports on the magnitude and direction of relationships between variables in the study. These variables are the independent variables and the dependent variable. The use of these statistical tools and methods are described below:
Multiple Linear Regression Equation is an extension of simple linear regression to show up the out case and effect, factor and impact analysis. It is used to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables.
The variable used to predict is called the dependent variable (sometimes, the outcome, target or criterion variable). The variables are using to predict the value of the dependent variable is called the independent variables (or sometimes, the predictor, explanatory or repressor variables) Sometimes also called multivariate linear regression for MLR.

3.7.1. Multiple linear regressions analysis

Multiple regressions would be applied to learn more about the relationship between brand equity whose components, which are independent variables and purchasing decisions are made which is a dependent variable. The regression equation or model specification for assessing the effect of brand equity on purchasing decisions in case of Gurage zone bottling water consumer. The multiple linear regression equation is in the form of:

$Y= \beta 0 + \beta 1X1+ \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \beta 4X4 + + \beta 5X5 + \varepsilon$

Where Y=purchasing decisions βi are coefficients to be estimate

(x1)= **Brand awareness**

(x2) = **Brand loyalty**

(x3) = **perceived quality**:

ε=error term normally distributed with zero mean and variance.

Y is the dependent variable, Xi are the independent variables and„ε‟ is the error term.

I. Independent Variable

BAwns: Brand Awareness

BLoylt: Brand Loyalty

PQlty: Perceived Quality

I. Dependent Variable

CmrPurbh: Consumers purchasing bhr

3.8. Ethical Considerations

As suggested by Trochim, (2000); and Sekaran, (2006), the researcher would warranted the strict devotion of the following ethical conducts: Respondents take part in the research voluntarily and data would be collected based on the purpose of the research that would clearly explained to respondents, Information provided by respondents would be treated with strict confidentiality and the researcher ensured that participants would remain unknown throughout the study and there would no misrepresentations or distortion of the actual data collected from respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and presentation of the quantitative data collected through questionnaire. The questionnaires composed close-ended questions, which are summarized and presented quantitatively in tables using SPSS 23 software. The researcher used some secondary data from published and unpublished documents of the case organization. Out of 355 questionnaires distributed, 343 were collected which makes the response rate is 96.6% of the questionnaires the returned questionnaires were usable because they were filled properly. The researcher, as much as possible, made the questionnaire easy to read and answer without difficulties.

Table4.1: RatesofResponse

Sample Size 355

Completed and Returned Questionnaires	343
Response Rate	96.6%

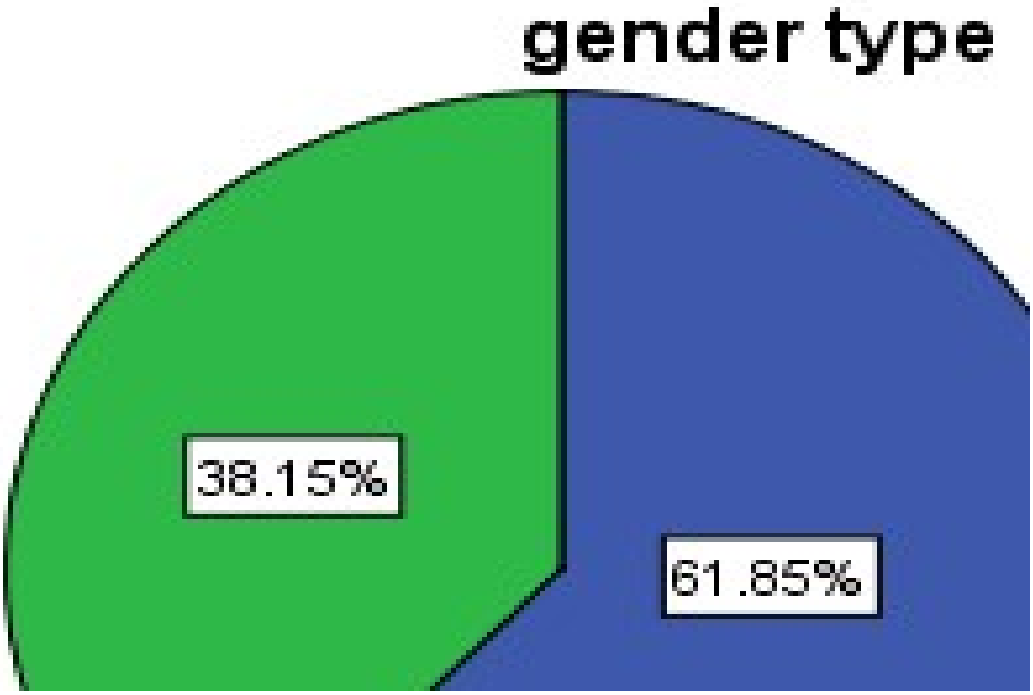
Source: Computed from the Field Survey,2024

4.2. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study analyzed the demographic characteristics of respondents involved in the study. In this section the respondents profile is presented. It includes gender, age; level of educational, length of service uses soft drink and outcome to perform in the current position. Analyzing these

variables was meant to provide any evidence of association between these variables various response

The below Table 2, regarding to respondent‘s gender, majority 211of them are male while132 of them were female. Out this we can see that 211 respondents are male consisting 61.5% of the workforce while 132 respondents are female consisting 38.5%.



gender type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	211	61.5	61.5	61.5

	female	132	38.5	38.5	100.0
	Total	343	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own Survey, 2024

From the above table it can be observed that the difference in gender composition in the sector is marginally high which the respondents rating promotes gender balance in its branding awareness practices.

From above chart 1 result most of consumer of soft drink are 32.24 younger which,34.97 are at age of 55, other 18.58 of the respondents were at age of 18-25, the rest of 9.29% were 41-55 years old. A few studies have been conducted in the field of bottled water consuming bottled water consuming have been used in the day to-day life of millions of consumers in Addis Ababa. A study on marketing of water drinks help the bottled water makers to understand the consumers how it is benefited and what are the problems which are faced by the consumers while in using it and how they opined about it.

Table 4.3: Background of the Respondent

Product Dimension	Measurement scale	N=343	100%
Educational Level	Below high school	121	35.29
	Diploma	131	38.19
	First degree	89	25.94
	Masters or PhD	2	0.58
Respondents Experience	Less than a year	1	0.3
	1 - 5 years	259	75.51
	6 – 10 years	83	24.19

Source: Own Survey, 2024

From above table 3 result regarding to Educations of the Respondent‘s 35.29% were learn in high school, other 38.19% were have Diploma, other 25.94% of the respondents were having first degree and other0.58% Masters or PhD.

From above pie chart 2 result regarding to consumer years of started consuming bottled water product which is majority 75.51% of the mare started 1-5years, other 24.19% were 6-10 years, other 0.3% of the respondents were less than, the rest of 12% were using consuming bottled

water drink 5-10 years before.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

Hoeffler and Keller, (2002) suggest that Branding and Its effect On Consumer Buying Decision by building consumer awareness, enhancing brand image, creating a sense of brand community, and eliciting brand engagement. One statistical approach for determining equivalence between groups is to use simple analyses of means and standard deviations for the variables of interest for each group in the study (Marczyk, Dematteo and Festinger, 2005). The mean indicates to what extent the sample group averagely agrees or does not agree with the different statement. The lower the mean, the more the respondents disagree with the statement. The higher the mean, the more the respondents agree with the statement. On the other hand, standard deviation shows the variability of an observed response from a single sample. The data collected are tabulated in which it shows the frequency/percentage of respondents and the mean and standard deviation from the total 343 respondents. The measurement instrument used to calculate brand awareness brand loyalty and perceived quality, are scaled from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4=Agree and 5= strongly Agree.

4.3.1. Branding related to Consumer Buying Decision

Business firms are usually encouraged to operate their business according to the law by the ethical responsibility (Kotler 1991).The major concern of this section is to investigate the ethical domain of branding. To investigate the brand awareness domain of branding 6 questions were presented and the mean has been calculated. The responses are presented as follows.

Table 4.1: Consumer buying decision related to Branding

S.	brand awareness		SD	D	N	A	SA	MS	SDV
1	I have better Knowledge of the manufacturer bottled water -and have ability to distinguish between the brands	N=343	-	-	-	124	219	4.53	0.5
		100	-	-	-	36.15	63.85		

2	bottled water brand is fixed on my mind because I have better awareness of it	N=343	-	-	-	169	174	4.53	0.5
		100	-	-	-	49.27	50.73		
3	Customers recognize their brands based on the number of advertising directed at bottled water packing material	N=343	-	-	3	180	160	4.5	0.506
		100			0.87	52.48	46.65		
4	Brand performance satisfies me and also I am brand loyal	N=343	-	-	-	200	143	4.5	0.501
		100				58.31	41.69		
5	The brand offers better service to me let me be remain permanent customer of it	N=343	-	-	9	176	158	4.5	0.517
		100			2.62	51.33	46		
6	I believe that products quality have impacts on choice of bottled water	N=343	-	-		200	143	4.52	0.464
		100				58.31	41.69		

Source: Computed from the Field Survey, 2024

The first question under brand awareness domain of brand is “bottling water consumer in Gurage Zone.

From a participants of the survey, the vast majority are agreed on the issue and they accounted 124(36.15%) agree and 219 (63.85%) strongly agree. The second question is “bottled water brand is fixed on my mind because I have better awareness of it” Response of respondents showed that, 169(49.27%) agree and 174 (50.73%) are strongly agree. The third presented question is “Customers recognize their brands based on the number of advertising directed at bottled water packing material.” For this responses 3(0.87%) of respondents answer “not decided”, 180 (52.48%) “agree” and 160 (46.65%) the respondent to answer strongly agree. This implies that, majority of respondents believed that bottling water consumers. From there respondents fourth question ‘’Brand performance satisfies me and also I am brand loyal’’200 (58.31%) are agreed and 143(41.69%) strongly agree that; for the fifth question ‘’the brand offers better service to me let me be remain permanent customer of it’’176(51.33%) of the Respondents are “Agree” and 158

(46.00%) “Strongly agree” but 9 (2.62%) of the respondent not decided to answer the question in either of the way, agree or disagree. In this study comprises six items that intended to measure the degree brands of those items, “All the six items have scored 4.52 grand mean which fall in the range of Above 3.2, it is considered as agreed. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that, consumer of the “bottled water customers are satisfied. In support of this study results researches conducted by **(**Edget wolde,2022)when he assessments the effect of corporate social responsibility practice on brand equity of total Ethiopia share company regarding companies activities of ethical CSR the grand mean and the standard deviation value of his study were 4.51 and .507 which are the highest mean value like to this study result and the secondary source of data which obtain from the Gurage Zone bottled water company. This implies that branding and its effect of consumer purchasing diction.

Table 4.2.1. Consumer buying decision related to Branding

S.	Perceived Quality		SD	D	N	A	SA	MS	SDV
1	I Satisfying bottled water brand performance and quality	N=343	-	-	-	203	140	4.52	0.5
		100	-	-	-	59.18	40.82		
2	I different bottled water product is suitable to me due to availability of better service comprises of tangible and Reliable attributes.	N=343	-	-	-	158	185	4.51	0.5
		100	-	-	-	46.06	53.94		
3	I prefer to buy bottled water which have a strong indication in the formation of quality experience	N=343	-	-	5	211	127	4.47	0.50
		100			1.46	61.51	37.03		
4	I am more depend on health safety matter before making purchase decision	N=343	-	-	-	243	100	4.49	0.511
		100				70.81	29.15		

Source: Computed from the Field Survey, 2024

The first part under quality domain of bottled water presented as “Satisfying bottled water brand performance and quality.” From all attendants of the research respondents 203 (59.18%) agree and 140 (40.82%) strongly agree on the statement. The second question under quality domain of bottled water is “different bottled water product is suitable to me due to availability of better service comprises of tangible and Reliable attributes.” 158 (46.06%) of respondents are fallen under the category of “Agree” and 180 (52.5%) fallen under “Strongly agree”. This implies that the quality of branding on bottling water consumer satisfaction. With regard to the third question “prefer to buy bottled water which have a strong indication in the formation of quality experience” The feelings of respondents indicate that 211 (61.51%) and 127 (37.03%) of customers strongly agree and agree respectively but 5 (1.46%) the respondent not decided to answer the question in either of the way, agree or disagree. Thus, it indicates that bottled water is maintaining a strong competitive position in the market. In the fourth question “depend on health safety matter before making purchase decision” 243 (70.85%) of the respondent customers agree and 100 (29.15%) are “strongly agree”. The respondents were also asked the table 4.4 the overall mean rating and the standard deviation of the respondents for Perceived Quality were 4.503and .451 respectively. It indicates that customers’ attitude towards brand is good. In support of the above results, researches conducted by **(** Mesaite Shibeshi,2021) when he studied the Branding and its Effect of Consumer Buying Decision the grand mean and the standard deviation value of his study were 4.41 and .507 which is the highest mean value like to this study result and the secondary source of data which obtain from the bottled water company. This implies that Perceived Quality of brand bottled Water Company is a very essential element to build buying decision.

4.3.6. Consumers choice of purchasing

Choice of purchasing is the added value able on products and services. It may be reflected in the way consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as in the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands (Aaker's, 1996). Band equity is the dependent variable of the study. Customer’s response on brand equity is presented in table 4.3.2 below.

Table 4.3.2: Consumers buying decision related to brand

S.	Consumers buying decison		SD	D	N	A	SA	MS	SDV
1	When I am thinking of bottled water, bottled water drink will come at first in my mind and enjoy of it..	N=343	-	-	2	201	189	4.51	0.51
		100	-	-	0.58	58.60	40.81		
2	bottled water attributes better (taste, texture, appearance, and packaging) have very important for developing mine brand equity.	N=343	-	-	-	196	147	4.56	0.5
		100	-	-	-	55.40	44.60		
3	I choice bottled water products because it delivers the way I expected..	N=343	-	-	-	164	179	4.55	0.5
		100				47.81	52.20		
4	Whenever I purchase and choice bottled water products are my first choice.	N=343	-	-	-	159	194	4.57	0.5
		100	-	-	-	44.36	56.64		

Source: Computed from the Field Survey, 2024

According the table 4.3.2 the results of customer's opinion on branding. About 201(58.6%) and 140(40.81%) of the respondent agree and strongly agree respectively that they can identify brands with strong consumers activities only 2 (0.58%) of the respondent were neutral. The respondents were asked the second question "bottled water attributes better (taste, texture, appearance, and packaging) have very important for developing brand equity." The feeling of the respondents were 196(55.40%) and 147(44.6%) agree and strongly agree respectively and the mean value was 4.56 being explained high. This indicates that bottled water consumer activities raise the profile of a brand in consumer's mind. Regarding to the third question "choice bottled water products because it delivers the way I expected." the feeling of respondents were 164 (47.80%) and 179(52.2%) agree and strongly agree respectively. This implies that consumers of bottled Water Company can quickly recall the symbol or logo of brands of that company. From

the respondents of question four, 159 (44.36%) and 194(56.64%) of the respondent agree and strongly agree respectively. The implication of the finding is that; majority of the respondents strongly recognize bottled Water Company symbol or logo of brands due to its consumer decision making. As it can be observed from the above table, respondents have generally developed strong positive perception regarding brand equity dimension with grand mean value 4.55 which is above the cut-off point 3.67. In support of this study results researches conducted by **(**Tariku Amare,2020) when he assessment the effect of corporate social responsibility practice on building brand equity's of Hilton Addis Ababa regarding companies activities of brand equity CSR the grand mean value of his study was 4.51 which is the highest mean value like to this study result.

4.4. Inferential Analysis

The inferential analysis section includes correlation and regression analysis to assess the relationship between brand quality and consumer buying decision.

4.4.1. Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation test was conducted to know the degree of relationship between the independent variable i.e. brand awareness and the dependent variable i.e. consumer buying decision. Pearson correlation coefficients reveal magnitude and direction of relationships (either positive or negative) and the intensity of the relationship (–1.0 to +1.0). Correlations are perhaps basic and most useful measure of association between two or more variables (Marczyk,Dematteo and Festinger, 2005). The correlation between dependent and independent variables along with the causal effect was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

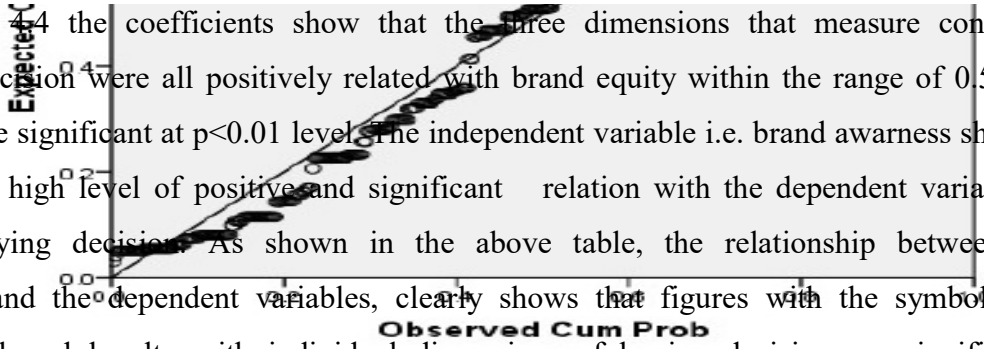
Table 4.4: Relationship between branding and consumer buying decision.

Correlations		Brand awareness	Brand loyalty	Perceived quality	Consumer buying decision
Brand awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.541**	.619**	.566**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000

	N	343	343	343	343
Brand loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.541**	1	.792**	.835**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	343	343	343	343
Perceived quality	Pearson Correlation	.619**	.792**	1	.794**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	343	343	343	343
Consumer buying decision	Pearson Correlation	.566**	.835**	.794**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	343	343	343	343

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

Source : Source : Owen survey (2024)



As per table 4.4 the coefficients show that the three dimensions that measure consumer purchasing decision were all positively related with brand equity within the range of 0.566 to 0.835, all were significant at $p<0.01$ level. The independent variable i.e. brand awarness shows a moderate and high level of positive and significant relation with the dependent variable of consumer buying decision. As shown in the above table, the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables, clearly shows that figures with the symbol "**" indicate that brand loyalty with individual dimensions of buying decision are significantly correlated at a significance level of $p<0.01$.

4.4.2. Linearity Test

Since general linear model assume linearity, it is necessary testing for non-linearity. In this regard as Garson (2012) pointed out, simple inspection of scatter plots is a common method for determining if nonlinearity exists in a relationship. Consequently, the researcher run simple scatter plot to see if there is a linear relationship exists between the variables.

Figure 4.1: Normally distributed errors

Source : Owen survey (2024)

As it is shown in the figure 4.2, the P-P plot of residuals reveals no large deviation in the spread of the residuals that almost all residuals lay on the linear straight line. Therefore, this indicates that the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is linear.

4.4.3. Multi co llinearity test

This refers to the relationship among the independent variables. Multi co llinearity exist when the independent variables are highly correlated (Pallant, 2007). We have perfect Multicollinearity if the correlation between two independent variables is equal to 1 or -1. In practice, we rarely face perfect multicollinearity in a data set. More commonly, the issue of multicollinearity arises when there is an approximate linear relationship among two or more independent variables. Tolerance is the percentage of the variance in a given predictor that

cannot be explained by the other predictors. When the tolerances are close to 0, there is high multicollinearity and the standarderror of the regression coefficients will be inflated. The Multicollinearity problem arises because there is insufficient information to get an accurate estimation of model parameters (Meyers, Gamst&Guarino, 2006). To avoid this, it is important that the results from collinearity diagnostics should have tolerance value above 0.10 and variance inflation factor (VIF) value less than 10, which indicates less correlation of the variables (Pallant,2010). Small degree of multicollinearity is Tolerance value and VIF value are above 0.10 and below 10 respectively. In our model the maximum VIF value was 3.969 and minimum Tolerance value 0.252 . So multicollinearity does not exist for the independent variables.

Table 4.5: Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.292	.173		7.600	.000		
Brand awareness	.532	.059	.516	1.339	.000	.292	3.429
Brand loyalty	.821	.048	.802	11.384	.000	.316	3.169
Perceived quality	.659	.049	.646	6.614	.000	.306	3.264

a. Dependent Variable: based on buying decision

Source: Owen survey (2024)

4.5. Regression Analysis

Multiple regressions are a flexible method of data analysis that may be appropriate whenever a quantitative variable (the dependent or standard variable) is to be examined in relationship to any other factors (expressed as independent or predictor variables). In order to see contribution of branding on buying decision, linear regression analysis was employed.

Table 4.6:Model Summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.934[a]	.873	.871	.3944	2.094

Source: Owen survey (2024)

The model summary table 4.6 states that the three independent variables that constitute the brand equity of coefficient of determination R square is 0.873, which implies that there is quite significant explanatory power and also 87% variation on dependent variable is caused by independent variables and the remaining 13% is because of other unknown variables. The model summary table 4.6 also shows the Durbin Watson statistic to taste the assumption that our residuals are independent or uncorrelated. Durbin Watson range is from0 to 4 .the value close to 2 is very appropriate, value<1 and >3 are cause for concern and may render our analysis invalid. In our model Durbin Watson value 2.094 which is best value based on Durbin Watson criteria

Table 4. 7: Analysis of Variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.665	5	.733	471.081	.000[b]
	Residual	.535	344	.002		
	Total	4.2	349			

a. Dependent Variable: buying decision

b. Independent: (Constant), brand awareness, brand loyalty and perceived quality.

Source: Owen survey (2024)

The analysis is used to identify appropriateness of the model in estimating effect of branding on consumer buying decision. The researcher used multivariate linear regression method to run regression analysis. F statistic is significant at 0.01 indicating that the model used is appropriate to estimate the effect of independent variables in the model on the dependent variable. In addition, the significance of the model indicates that branding on significant effect by consumer buying decision..

Table 4.8: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.292	.173		7.600	.000
Brand awareness	. 532	.059	. 516	1.339	.000
Brand loyalty	. 821	.048	. 802	11.384	.000
Perceived quality	. 659	.049	. 646	6.614	.000

a. Dependent Variable: based on consumer buying decision

Source*:* Owen survey (2024)

The coefficient table for branding dimensions indicates the beta values of the independent variables.

From this the regression equation is derived as:

Y = a + bX1 + bX2 + bX3

CBD = 0.292 + 0.516BA + 0.802BL + 0.646PQ

Where, CBD = Consumer Buying Decision

BA = Brand Awareness

BL = Brand loyalty

PQ = Perceived Quality

From this the regression equation is derived as: three of the branding dimension has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decision. The findings confirm the four hypotheses formulated for this study show that there is a significant relationship between brand awareness,

brand loyalty and perceived quality with consumer buying decision bottled water Company and as a result we reject the null hypothesis for four of them.

Hypotheses1 HO Brand Awareness doesn't affect buying decision in bottled water Company;
HA: Brand Awareness does affect buying decision; As indicated on table 4.4, the correlation (r) of brand awareness is 0.566 ** and the p-value is .000which is less than 0.01. From this one can understand that there is medium positive relationship between brand awareness and buying decision. Therefore, the null hypostasis is rejected.

Hypotheses 2 HO Brand loyalty doesn't affect buying decision.
HA: Brand loyalty does affect buying decision in bottled water company;
As indicated on table 4.4 the correlation (r) for Brand loyalty is .835 and the p-value is .000 which is less than the significant level .01. This positive correlation coefficient .835 indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between Brand loyalty and brand equity. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypotheses # 3HO: Perceived Quality doesn't affect buying decision bottled water Company;
HA: Perceived Quality does affect buying decision bottled water Company; As stated on above table the correlation (r) of : Perceived Quality is .794 ** and p-value is .000, which is less than .01. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between Perceived Quality and buying decision bottled water Company. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

4.6. Discussion of the major findings

According to the study findings, four factors: advertising, brand loyalty, product quality and packaging, were identified as critical factors that influence consumers in their preference of bottled water brands. However, the influences of product quality, is the most important than the other factors in the preference decision. This finding is consistent with the findings of other researchers in different areas. Literatures and studies found out that the perceived quality is the major factor that enables consumers to prefer one brand over another. Quality is important for affecting brand preference. Because it is the portion of personal risks that, a consumer takes on the decision-making process and in evaluating the purchase of a product (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2010).

Brand Awareness

With respect to the first objective, the result of the analysis indicates the relationship between Brand Awareness and buying decision by taking its weighted average mean and accordingly the outcome shows that there is a positive effect of ethical responsibility on brand equity at (β= . 516,p=.000). This result is supported by the empirical evidence of (Jee-Won Kang, Young Namkung, 2017) at (β= .521, with the p- value of .000) and It also supported by the empirical evidence of (Tesfaye Mehare,2021) at (β= .615, with the p- value of .000) . Thus a unit increase in ethical responsibility leads to .516 increases in buying decision other things being constant.

Brand loyalty

From the regression analysis we can see that there is a positive statistical relationship between Brand loyalty responsibility (the independent variable) and buying decision (the dependent variable) at (β= . 802, with the p- value of .000) This result is supported by the empirical evidence of (Jee-Won Kang, Young Namkung,2017) at (β= .803, with the p- value of .000) and It also supported by the empirical evidence of (Tesfaye Mehare,2021) at (β= .821, with the p- value of .000) and (David Servera-Francés &Lidia Piqueras-Tomás,2018) at (β= .841, with the p- value of .000) Thus a unit increase Brand loyalty leads to . 802 increase in buying decision other things being constant. In the beginning, businesses were created as economic objects intended to provide goods and services to social customers. Before it was anything else, business organization was the basic economic unit in our society (Carroll 1991). Therefore, the more bottled water invests on its Brand loyalty the more it increases buying decision. This suggests that complying the Brand loyalty that include creating maximum long term success with customers, providing quality products, delivering what it promises, success organization and responsiveness to the complaints of its customers, resulted on brand equity.

Perceived Quality

To the third objective of the study, the result of the survey indicates that there is a positive effects of Perceived Quality on buying decision at (β= . 646, with the p- value of .000). Furthermore, this result is maintained by the empirical evidence of (A.R.Zahari, ElindaEsa, JegatheesanRajadurai, N.A.Azizan, PuteriFadzlineMuhamad

Tamyez,2020) at (β= .636, with the p- value of .000) and (Tariku Amare,2020) at (β= .629, with the p- value of .000).This implies brand behaviors which intended to enhance Perceived Quality are positively related to brand image in a study involving several famous brands and a diversified group of citizens. This study confirms a unit increase in social responsibility leads to. 646 increase in brand equity other things being constant.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Conclusion, summary of findings and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

The study traces that analyzing the relationship between branding and consumer buying decision in the case of bottled water consumers in Ethiopia more specifically in Gurage Zone. Therefore, study conducted using Multiple liner regression Analysis coefficient shows to the influence of Brand Awareness on Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water Was found that in the likely (coefficient of 0.532) at 5% significance level which is consumer believing that it is very important to stock branded products whose values are aligned to the supermarkets chain and location, perhaps the most significant role bottled water companies can play in promoting 94% positive awareness of their brands is through dissemination of Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water. Therefore, results also indicated that consumers searched for product information from friends and family, manufacturers 'websites and brochures. However, brand awareness was highly influential during the decision-making process by helping consumers to refine their choice criteria and choose systems that satisfied their end goals in this study. Multiple liner regression Analysis coefficient shows to the influence of Brand loyalty on Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water Was found that in the likely (coefficient of- 0. 821) at 5% significance level which study on consumer relationships and store loyalty findings reveal that for those with an interpersonal relationship, trust and commitment to the salesperson are negatively 94.8% linked with purchase intention as well as indirectly through Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water. For customers without a salesperson relationship, trust in the store leads to unable to be

loyalty indirectly through store attitude, but does have a direct impact on purchase intention. Multiple liner regression Analysis coefficient shows to the influence of Procurement practices & Distribution Networks on Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water Was found that in the likely (coefficient of=1.232) at 5% significance level. Procurement practices & Distribution Networks on contextual factors have 1.2% significant influence on Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water relationships. Communication is thought to vary depending on the involved, an approach that has been recently popularized by the Consumer Satisfaction Index studies in Gurage Zone of Ethiopia. Generally, study explored the effect of consumer based branding on Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water in Ethiopia. The results of this study indicated that Consumers purchase intentions of bottled water have a strong positive association with Perceived Quality and brand Awareness which medium contributions of purchase intentions can be enhanced by Associated class and brand visibility and Procurement practices & Distribution Networks as a result of their strong positive association with Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water in Ethiopia. The study also found that past purchase loyalty was not directly related to customer satisfaction or current brand preference and that brand preference is an intervening factor between customer satisfactions and re-purchase intentions.

5.2 Summary of major findings

Consumers perceive consumer choice-based brand equity to include five dimensions: brand awareness, perceived quality, proprietary brand assets and Procurement practices & Distribution Networks a moderating aspect of the industry context in order to insisting the Consumers choice of purchasing bottled water in Gurage Zone Ethiopia The following are general findings of this study

1. There is a strong relationship between branding and consumer bottled water buying decision

2. All elements of branding do not have equal impact on the consumer bottled water buying decision.

3. Consumers purchase intentions of bottled water have a strong positive association with Perceived Quality.

4 brands Awareness have medium contributions of purchase intentions can be enhanced by associated class and brand visibility and Procurement practices decision.

5. Past purchase loyalty was not directly related to customer satisfaction

5.3. Recommendations

- First and for most marketers in the industry should focus on differentiation of the product in order for consumers prefer a given brand from a range of alternative brands: they should perceive that there is a difference between different brands. Therefore, bottled water companies should work on adding a distinct feature that can make consumers believe the existence of difference between a certain marketer brand and the others. However, differentiation is not the only task that marketers should do, but also making consumers see the difference is the best part of it. If consumers perceive there is a significant difference in the brand, they are most likely to make preference decision toward the brand.
- Product quality is a critical element for consumer decision making, Tsiotsou (2005) studied that high quality product has higher chance to be purchased than when consumers perceive a product being low quality. In the context of bottled water marketing, a consumer may view quality of the product in terms of purity, organic nature, being nutritious such as high in mineral etc. Therefore, since perceived quality is in the mind of the consumers, companies should inform them by clearly stating their ingredients such as the percentage of each ingredient contained in the bottled water. Keeping this in mind the management should continuously carry out researches into quality improvement that will make consumers enjoy good value for money paid to purchase the brand.
- The company should strive to promote the brand loyalty more to customer along with brand loyalty happening negatively appeared in order to contribute towards positive purchase intentions of consumer in Gurage Zone.

- The result of this research shows that Marketer should to know that there are factors which influence consumer choice to wards brand equity by assessing designing disparate strategies to beguile consumers with emphasizing on brand equity in fast moving consumer goods.
- This research result shows that Marketers should give priority for brand equity concepts strategy to attract potential customers since it does show significant direct and indirect relationships between the dimensions of brand equity and brand loyalty varying and give effect during the study with 343 representative respondents in Gurage Zone.
- Majority of Bottled water Share Company in Ethiopia should bear in mind that old familiar brands decease as a result of poor management of the ―health matters of minerals‖ as roamer always says, overextension and lack of investment in developing brand equity and values.
- Therefore, continuous effort to enhance brand loyalty helps Marketers to increase consumers buying decisions. The result of this thesis also indicates that customer based-brand equity has great important on consumers 'choice of brand and the lower level brand equity will weaken consumers 'perception.

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Appendices

Appendix 1A: Questioners

Wolkite University School Of Graduate Studies Department of Business Administration

(Regular program)

A Master of Business Administration Candidate

To _____I would like to thank you in-advance for your kind cooperation and take part in my research entitled **"**The Branding and Its effect of Consumer Buying Decision'': In The Case of Gurage Zone Bottled Water Consumers. Your participation is absolutely voluntary and the data gathered through this research will be used only for academic purpose & will be kept confidential.

There is an open ended and close ended question in this research. Try to attempt all the questions. Thank you again for your kind cooperation. If you have any question or would like to have the research result at the end, you are more than welcome for inquiring and use the address below.

Sincerely yours.

Tewabech Nida

Mobile 09-20-48-22-81

Part I: Background Information

1. Gender: 1) Male 2) Female 2.
2. Age: 1)18 -25 2) 26– 40 3) 41– 55 4) >55
3. Educational Background 1) High school 2) Certificate 3) Diploma 2) 4) Degree 5) Masters and above
4. . Do you drink different bottled water products? a) Yes b) No
5. How long you have been drinking bottled water brand products? 1) Last 2 years 2) 2-5 Years 3)5-10 4) more than 10 years
6. What product of bottled water do you consume? .....

Part II: Determinants of Branding of bottled water

Direction. (1-storngly disagree 2-disagree 3 -Neutral 4 -agree 5- strongly agree)

Brand Awareness	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I have better Knowledge of the manufacturer bottled water -and have ability to distinguish between the brands					
bottled water brand is fixed on my mind because I have better awareness of it					
Customers recognize their brands based on the number of advertising directed					

at bottled water packing material					
Brand performance satisfies me and also I am brand loyal					
The brand offers better service to me let me be remain permanent customer of it					
I believe that products quality have impacts on choice of bottled water					
Perceived Quality					
I Satisfying bottled water brand performance and quality					
I different bottled water product is suitable to me due to availability of better service comprises of tangible and Reliable attributes.					
I prefer to buy bottled water which have a strong indication in the formation of quality experience					
I am more depend on health safety matter before making purchase decision					
Associated class and brand visibility					
I believe that class plays a role in the choice of brand of bottled water					
I purchase a particular brand of bottled water due to brand associations					
The array of brand line extensions and choices of the same manufacturer enables me to be loyal to one brand					
I believe that a highly visible trademark may influence my product choice					

Consumers choice of purchasing					
When I am thinking of bottled water, bottled water drink will come at first in my mind and enjoy of it.					
bottled water attributes better (taste, texture, appearance, and packaging) have very important for developing mine brand equity					
I choice bottled water products because it delivers the way I expected.					
Whenever I purchase and choice bottled water products are my first choice					
Direct mail, telephone and personal conversation which I receive from					

marketers of bottled water - enables me to know about facts, importance and some studies done on it.					

It you have some please ----------

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME

Appendix 1B: Questionnaire (Amharic Version)

የታሸገ ውሀ ተጠቃሚዎችን የምርት መለያ (ብራንድ) ምርጫን ለመለካት ስለሚረዳኝ ወሳኝ ሁኔታዎች መጠይቅ

እኔ ስሜ ተዋበች ንዳ ሲሆን፣ በወልቂጤ ዩኒቨርስቲ በንግድ ስራ አመራር ትምህርት ክፍል የድኅረ ምረቃ ተማሪ ነኝ። በጉራጌ ዞን ውስጥ በፋብሪካ የሚመረት (የታሸገ) ውኃ የሚጠቀሙ ሰዎች በምርት መለያ (ብራንድ) ላይ ያላቸውን ግንዛቤን ለመገምገምና የምርት መለያ ምርጫቸውን በሚወስኑ መስፈርቶች ዙሪያ ጥናት በማካሔዴ ላይ እገኛለሁ። የጥናቱ ውጤት የታሸገ ውሀ አቅራቢዎች (አምራቾች) አሁን ያሊቸውን ምርት ለማሻሻሌ እንዱሁም የደንበኞችን ፍሊጎት ለማርካት የተሻለ መንገዴ የሚሆን የግብይት ስሌት (strategy) **እንዱገነቡ ይረዲቸዋሌ። በዚሁ መሰረት የሚሰጡት መረጃ ለጥናቱ አሊማ ብቻ ጥቅም ሊይ እንደሚውሌና ምስጢርነቱ የተጠበቀ እንደሚሆን (ለላሊ ወገን አሌፎ እንደማይሰጥ) ላረጋግጥልዎት እወዲለሁው።**

ምንኛውም አይነት ጥያቄ ቢኖርዎት፣ ከታች ባለlው አዴራሻ ሉያገኙኝ ይችሊለ።

ስለሀነም መሌካም ትብብርዎ በቅዴሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ተዋበች ንዳ

ክፍል አንድ ፡- አጠቃሊይ መረጃ

እባክዎ ትክክለኛው ን መሌስዎን በመምረጥ እርስዎን የሚገሌፀውን ያክብቡበት

1. ዕዴሜ፡- 18-25 □ 26-35 □ 36-44 □ 45 **እና ከዚያ በሊይ** □

2. ጾታ፡- ሴት □ **ወንዴ** □

3. የትምህርት ዮረጃ፡-

አንዮኛ ዮረጃ ያጠናቀቀ □ ሁሇተኛ ዮረጃ ያጠናቀቀ □ ዱፕልማ □

የመጀመሪያ ዱግሪ □ የዯሕረ ምረቃ ዱግሪ እና ከዚያ በሊይ □

4. የታሸገ ውሃ ምን ያህሌ አዘውትረው ይጠቀማለ?

በየቀኑ □ በሣምንት አንዳ □

በሣምንት ከአንዴ ጊዜ በሊይ □ ላሌ (እባክዎ ይግሇጹ) _____

5. የታሸገ ዉሃን ሲያስቡ፣ መጀመሪያ ወዯ አእምሮዎ የሚመጣው የምርት መሇያ ስም (ብራንዴ) ምንዴን ነው?

6. ምን ዓይነት የታሸገ ውሃ(የትኛውን ብራንዱ) አዘውትረው ይጠጣለ/ይጠቀማለ? (በጣም የሚመርጡትን አንዱ የታሸገ ውሃ ስም ብቻ ይፃፉ) _____