**ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF BRANDING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF**

**BOTTLED MINERAL WATER PRODUCING COMPANIES IN GHANA**

**By**

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# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this write-up is the output of my own work as a requirement towards the award of Master of Business Administration in KNUST and I declare sincerely that, it is not a duplication of any previous work of any person of this institution or another. All extracts from other published materials have been duly acknowledged.

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## ABSTRACT

There has been a high influx of many brands of bottled water in the Ghanaian market over the decade but a few have been competitive. This work was carried out to determine the effect that branding has on the performance of bottled water producing companies in the Ghanaian market. Price, as a factor, was revealed not to be of much influence on customer choice of bottled water, as much as poor taste, colour or odours in water were. The study also revealed that 5 out of the 32 bottled water companies command about 80% of total market shares presently, leaving the other companies struggling to be competitive. This was the motivation for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed for the study. A sample size of 275 respondents comprising of 175 consumers, 50 distributors/retailers, 40 employees and 10 managers, 2 each from 5 selected bottled water companies were selected using convenience sampling. The work was analysed using comparison of means as the tool. The Lack of platforms for consumer feedbacks, inadequate training and capacity building of employees and distributors, quality standard adherence challenges, poor distribution of products constitute some of the main findings of the study. These factors establish that strong branding has a positive relation with performance of the companies in terms of their growth, market share and profitability. It is clearly revealed that branding of bottled water basically bother on quality. The study recommends that a more customer-focused approach is adopted to ensure quality standards to appeal to consumers. Also, an integrated approach to ensuring the promotion of brands by enhancing flow of information along the supply chain to address the performance gap. It is also recommended that, sufficient resources be allocated for brand promotion and quality management in bottled water companies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my supportive family and friends, especially Miss Joan Aku Amuzu.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

# LIST OF TABLE

**LIST OF FIGURE**

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

In an article by Yokowitz (2014), it was stated that if nobody is competing in your space, there is a very good chance the market you are going into is too small (Krasny, 2015). Competition is therefore noted to be a vital mark of a vibrant market.

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) are for the most part reasonable items that have a short timeframe of realistic usability, and are bought by shoppers all the time. Overall revenues on these items are generally low for retailers, who attempt to balance this by offering expansive volumes. Prominent among FMCG companies on the planet include Unilever, Coca-Cola Company, and Johnson & Johnson. The FMCG sector contains a huge variety of items, with the absolute most imperative categories being food, drinks, individual consideration items, and homecare items. Within categories, FMCG items are regularly near identical, and consequently value rivalry between retailers can be extreme (kpmg.com/africa).

To enhance profit margins, companies adopt sales and other strategies to attain loyalty to the product, which warrants them to charge premium prices (kpmg.com/africa).

Monopolistic Markets are characterised by the presence of many purchasers and sellers engaging in comparative product yet differentiated. Firms in this business sector are actually not prone to determining price easily unless it plays smart with the most suitable techniques to outmanoeuvre contenders and to position emphatically in the minds of their clients. Packaged mineral water is a fast growing area of the FMCG

sector worldwide and quick emerging in Ghana and some other parts of the African diaspora.

Mineral water in Ghana in packaged mainly in sachets, dispensers and bottles. The bottled category is largely patronized by the middle and high class individuals and corporate entities.

Branding as a strategy is perceived to be a mind manipulating tool and a soul corrupting magic (Grimalde de Puget, 2005).

For a company's assets to achieve the capability of creating edge for competition, it must exploit opportunities and address dangers in a company's domain. Likewise the assets must be imperfectly imitable and without deliberately identical substitutes (Barney, 1991).

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Many firms in the bottled water producing business in Ghana are struggling in performance in terms of their market shares, growth and profitability.

This outlook does not encourage keen competition but reduces the value creation and pursuit of continual innovation of products by the leading firms. The market leaders take advantage of their dominance in the market and this affects their commitment to innovate and improve on their product quality to keep up the pace with the changing taste and preference of customers. It is in the light of the foregoing this study is being undertaken to equip companies managing such brands to give the leading ones a sound competition.

## 1.3 Study Objectives

To investigate the effect of branding on the performance of selected brands of bottled water in the Ghanaian market.

**Specific Objectives**

1. To ascertain some elements of branding that inform consumers"
   preference for bottled water products.

2. To ascertain some common challenges bottled water companies
   encounter in branding their products.

3. To assess the effect of branding on market shares, growth and profitability of
   bottled water companies in the market.

**1.4 Research Questions**

i. How should branding be managed to create value for competitiveness in the
bottled water market in Ghana? ii. What determinants(s) of branding inform
consumers" decision to attach

with particular brands of bottled water?

iii.     What are some of the limitations inhibiting effective branding of bottled
water?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study is to aid managers of companies which are less competitive
due to their unpopular brands in the bottled water market to keenly compete with the
market leaders through effective and sustainable brand building and development
strategies.

This will help close the huge relative market share gap that exists between the market
leader and the other brands.

The findings of the study are expected to enhance innovativeness in the market to add
more value to bottled water products to delight the consumer and also to reduce price

control by market leaders. This will be to the advantage of the consumers as producers also make good profits.

## 1.6. Overview of Methodology

The main methodology used is case study. Data collection was done through administering of questionnaires. Convenience sampling was used adopted for selecting the Consumer category of respondents and purposive sampling was adopted in selecting Distributors, Retailers, Employees and Managers respondents.

A sample size of 275 respondents drawn from the general public in the Kumasi metropolis including 175 consumers of bottled water, 50 distribution channels of various brands of bottled mineral water. 40 employees, 8 each from the 5 selected water bottling companies were interviewed. 10 managers, 2 each from the 5 selected companies were interviewed as well.

Data was analysed descriptively using comparison of means after extracting frequency tables statistically with SPSS version 16.0. Validity of data was tested by face validity.

Extracts from the interview process was also integrated based on the analysis outline.

## 1.7 Scope of the Study

The area of study is restricted to the Kumasi Metropolis being the biggest city after Accra in Ghana and having a high population, a good percentage of who are moderate to high level income earners like lecturers, public and civil servants, corporate workers, businessmen etc. and therefore can afford to consume bottled water on a regular basis. The characteristics of consumers of bottled water in one city in Ghana are not proven to differ from another. The size and the cosmopolitan nature of Kumasi make it representative of the entire nation.

The study was exclusively concerned with the bottled category of mineral water and not those packaged in sachet or dispensers within a timeframe of one month.

## 1.8 Organization of the Study

This section of the thesis gives a description of the content and sections of this study:

**Chapter One** provides a background to the market category in which bottled water is placed, that is Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), the general nature of the monopolistic market structure. The objectives, significance and scope of the study are all highlighted.

**Chapter Two** gives a detailed review of the literature relating to market structures, Competitive strategies adopted by market and price leaders to outwit their competitors. Branding concept, Customers satisfaction and consequently Customer loyalty are discussed. **Chapter Three** looks at the methodology of the work. The chapter discusses the sources of data, size, sampling techniques, and means for gathering and analysing data. It also provides the background of the organisations under study. **Chapter Four** provides the analyses of data and discussions of the outcomes from the analysis. **Chapter Five** addresses the summary of outcome of the study and provides conclusion. It answers specific objectives of the research and makes recommendation based on the findings.

## CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is basically to review prevailing literature and a review of the concept of concept of competition, competitive strategies, branding and organizational performance.

Branding as a strategy is discussed in relation to the monopolistic type of market. The work of earlier researchers pertaining to brand building and management and its consequent result in granting competitive advantage in competitive markets.

### 2.1 The Concept of Competition

Competition is defined as the rivalry between outfits to obtain customer acceptance, loyalty and retention (The business encyclopaedia, 2001).

Competition is seen to be a condition of contention by which a merchant battle to obtain that which other contenders seek to have. In instances that market information flows freely, competition regulates and balances demand and supply (Allen and Gale, 2000).

### 2.1.2 Cutting-edge Strategies

Strategy is the bearing and degree of an organization over a wide space of time: that accomplishes benefits for the organization through its distribution of resource in a competitive enclave, to address the requirements of market and to satisfy the desires of partners (Porter, 2008).

A competitive strategy is an arrangement for the extent to which a company contend, figured subsequent to assessing how its qualities and shortcomings contrast with those

of its rivals keeping in mind the end goal to increase competitive edge over different outfits in the business sector (Porter, 2008).

The underpinning basis of competitive strategy is to perceive the steps and counter steps of a rival firm, and takes appropriate actions to outwit the efficacy of their plans, thereby attaining an upper hand (Porter, 2008).

Michael Porter, investigating the aggressive powers (competitive forces) in an industry, proposed three nonexclusive methodologies which are to be received with a specific end goal to increase competitive edge.

The strategies propounded by Porter addresses the degree to which businesses venture into wide range of product or service lines against that of a narrow scope and also the level to which a company resolves to differentiate its products. The three generic strategies that form the wheels of a competitive firm include product or service differentiation, cost leadership and focus (Porter, 1980).

Porter"s concept of `cost leadership" has been confused with "low price" by so many people. The benefit as well as the challenges associated with each strategic option is an imperative topic. Competitive strategies focus on means by which a company can attain favourable strength within its business environment (Pearson, 1999).

The gain of a firm is difference that exists between its cost and returns. Substantial margins of profit can be accomplished by accomplishing the least expenses possible vis a vis the competition. Cost leadership' and 'differentiation' are strategies that work in every area of business but most companies are able to gain premium pricing through differentiation.

Organizations do accomplish high performance over others basically by distinguishing their products and services from those of their contenders and by achieving reduced cost. Firms can focus on their products by an expansive target, in this way covering a

7

large portion of the market place, or they can concentrate on a limited focus in the market (Lynch, 2003).

Porter propounded that; the three generic strategies cost leadership, differentiation, and focus.

### 2.1.2.1 Cost Leadership

The organizations which endeavour to turn into the most reduced expense player in a business enclave can be alluded to as adopting the strategy of cost leadership. An organization that embarks on reduced cost would achieve the most astounding returns in the occasion when the contending items are basically not differentiated, and offering at market price that is set by demand and supply (Porter, 2008).

Firms engaging in this strategy concentrate on reduction of expenses in every operation along the value chain. It is crucial to learn that although an organization may be a leader in cost, it does not so much suggest that the organization's service or product would have a low price. A company can decide to charge a normal price while still going with the strategy of reduced cost and sow back the profits into the venture. Examples of organizations employing the cost leadership procedure include EasyJet, Ryan Air in the airline industry also ASDA and Tesco, in superstores (Lynch, 2003).

The danger of subscribing to this strategy is that the organization's emphasis on decreasing expenses even to the disadvantage of other major elements might turn out to be enormous to the extent that they lose focus on their direction.

### 2.1.2.2 Differentiation as a Strategy

At the point that an organization distinguishes its products and services, it is regularly in position to attract a price premium for its services and products within the industry where it plays. A number of broad cases of this strategy provide better product performance and quality service levels to clients above what their existing contenders

8

provide. Having contended that for an organization utilizing the strategy of differentiation, there would be additional expenses that the organization would have to bear. These additional expenses may incorporate huge cost of advertising to promote a differentiated brand image for the goods (Porter, 1980).

The differentiation strategy comes with diverse benefits for the performance of a firm. A main challenge with this strategy has to do the difficulty on part of the firm to rightly anticipate how much the customer is willing to pay for the extra expense incurred to make the product or service differentiated. In addition, a well applied differentiation strategy by a firm may attract competitors that might endeavour to duplicate the uniquely differently product. (Lynch, 2003).

### 2.1.2.3 Focus as a Strategy

Organizations utilize focus technique by concentrating on the regions in a business enclave where there is the minimum measure of rivalry (Pearson, 1999). Companies can make use of the focus strategy by concentrating on a particular niche in the business sector and offering specialized product for that specialty. This is the reason the focus strategy also sometimes alluded to as the niche strategy. (Lynch, 2003).

Hence, competitive advantage can be accomplished just in the organization's target fragments by employing the focus strategy. The organization can make use of the cost leadership or differentiation approach as to the focus strategy. In that, an organization utilizing the cost focus approach would go for an expense advantage in its targets fragment only. If a company is using the differentiation focus approach, it would aim for differentiation in its target segment only, and not the overall market.

This technique gives the organization the likelihood to charge a premium price for unrivalled quality (differentiation focus) or by offering a low value price to a little and particular gathering of purchasers (cost focus). Ferrari and Rolls-Royce are classic

9

examples of niche players in the automobile industry. Both these companies have a niche of premium products available at a premium price. Also, they have a little percentage of the overall business, which is a quality normal for niche players. The drawback of the focus strategy, notwithstanding, is that the niche distinctively is small and may not be noteworthy or sufficiently substantial to legitimize an organization's consideration. The attention on expenses can be troublesome in commercial ventures where economies of scale assume an essential part. There is the clear threat that the niche may vanish after some time, as the business environment and client preferences change over the long run (Lynch, 2003).

An organization's inability to settle on a decision between cost leadership and differentiation basically infers that the organization is stuck in the centre. There is competitive advantage for an organization that is stuck in the centre and the outcome is frequently poor monetary performance. (Porter, 1980).

However, there is disagreement between scholars on this aspect of the analysis. Empirical examples of successful companies like Toyota and Benetton, which have adopted more than one generic strategy. Both these companies used the generic strategies of differentiation and low cost simultaneously, which led to the success of the companies (Kay, 1993) and (Miller, 1992)

Firms can browse one of the three generic strategies to contend in the marketplace, paying little respect to the connection of industry (Porter, 1980). Note that organizations that are effective at making use of the cost leadership are frequently situated to benefit from a quality recommendation which rises up out of their low cost emphasis, similar to the exemplary example of overcoming adversity of Tesco in the UK. These organizations regularly centre their efforts on value-oriented clients in the business. Value products are centred on furnishing quality arranged clients with products that are

undoubtedly esteem for-cash, in respect to competitive offerings. Interestingly, an accentuation on cost leadership in this sense can act as a type of differentiation. Successful implementation of a cost leadership strategy would benefit from process engineering skills, products designed for ease of manufacture, access to inexpensive capital, tight cost control and incentives based largely on quantitative targets (www.wikipedia.org).

McDonalds restaurant for instance, accomplish low expenses through standardized products, and brought together purchasing of supplies and so on. Notwithstanding the advantages that the cost leadership strategy involves, there is restricted exact confirmation that supports effective usage of cost leadership strategy. Contrary to the cost leadership strategy, there is empirical evidence to support the differentiation strategy (Pearson, 1999). Sixty-four American organizations were examined and the discoveries of the study uncovered that organizations taking after a differentiation strategy had superior performance compared to those organizations that were not taking after the same (Hall, 1980).

### 2.1.3. Value of Differentiation to Customers

It is important for analysts to note that there is more than one way in which a company can make use of differentiation. Differentiation can be accomplished through a differentiated product, superior quality, and customer service and so on. A key thing to ask is whether the clients of the organization see the point of difference as one that is justified of a price premium.

The point of convergence for the organization seeking after a differentiation strategy ought to be the client, and not in essence the competitors. Note that for a differentiation strategy to be fruitful, the purpose of differentiation perceived by clients as profitable ought to concur with the particular fitness of the organization (Pearson, 1999).

Case in point, Orange succeeded by giving the most fundamental prerequisites to cell telephone correspondence, superior to the competitors, and in that the organization made a separation in the brains of the purchasers. Orange furnished the clients with cell telephone correspondence prerequisites like better network coverage, network dependability, and charging clients for just what they use, rather than components like free phone calls, which even have a higher cost for provider (Barwise et al, 2004). Consequently, a client centred differentiated strategy when actualized with a clear vision gives advantages to the organization from numerous points of view including value premium, brand loyalty and at times even decreased expenses, similar to the instance of Orange. Keeping in mind the end goal to successfully keep up a differentiation strategy, the firm ought to have solid aptitudes in Research and Development, Product Engineering, Change Management, Marketing, Advertising and Human Resources Management. Continuous innovation assumes an important

role in case of differentiation.

### 2.1.4 Niche Strategy

Notably, a number of small and medium sized companies have found that the niche strategy is the most useful strategic area to explore for them (Lynch, 2003). While most companies employ cost leadership strategy, differentiation, or a mix of these two strategies, here are moderately less organizations that adopt a niche strategy. Maybe a standout amongst the most essential components to consider if there should arise an occurrence of a niche strategy is whether the span of the market is suitable from the income potential perspective, and if the organization has the ability to give the particular products that the purchasers in the niche market need and want(Lynch, 2003).

## 2.2 The Integrated Approach of Strategies

The stuck in the middle phenomenon received considerable support in the 1980s (Parnell, 2006; Dess and Davis, 1984; Hawes et al 1984) but was later challenged by numerous scholars (Buzzell and Gale, 1987; Proff, 2000).

It has been noted that a shortcoming of the low-cost-differentiation dichotomy, is that the two strategies are not opposites in entirety, and are neither always mutually exclusive (Parnell, 1997). Notably, most successful firms exhibit one or more forms of differentiation, along with forms that are directly associated with cost leadership and even the focus orientation. This is one of the trickiest areas in the analysis of generic strategies that the reality can be different and more subtle than the stark contrasts that are highlighted by Porter (1980). It is important to conduct the analysis with an open mind, and to explore the relative advantages, disadvantages, and risks that the various strategies may offer to a company vis-à-vis the competition and overall business environment.

Information Technology and the advent of the Internet have caused major changes in the business environment and have accelerated the speed of change. It has been argued that Porter's generic strategies of differentiation and cost leadership will be applicable to e-business firms in a broad sense, while the focus/niche strategy will not be as viable for e-business firms, compared to their traditional counterparts (Kim et al, 2004).

They suggest that an integration of cost leadership and differentiation strategies would be the most promising in the e-business context, but individually differentiation will show superior performance compared to cost leadership. As more and more companies are transforming their bricks-and-mortar existences to brick-and-click, it is vital for analysts to understand the role that generic strategies are playing in the digital era.

## 2.3 Limitations of Porter's Generic Strategies Analysis

During the 1980s, the generic strategies were regarded as fundamental to strategy and the ideas suggested by Porter were used extensively. It became clear over time that in reality there were some shades of grey in the distinction between differentiation and cost, compared to the black and white that is projected in theory.

It is very difficult for most companies to completely ignore cost, no matter how different their product offering is. Similarly, most companies will not admit that their product is essentially the same as that of others (Macmillan et al, 2000).

It is important to bear in mind that Porter's generic strategies should be considered as a part of a broader strategic analysis. The generic strategies only provide a good starting point for exploring the concepts of cost leadership and differentiation. Perhaps a major limitation of the generic strategies is that they may not provide relevant strategic routes in the case of fast growing markets (Lynch, 2003).

## 2.4 Customer Satisfaction

The principle of customer satisfaction is very fundamental and key to every organisation‟s strategy choice. This concept has received enormous attention within the FMCG industry where similar goods are traded in a market of many firms. At the heart of a firms‟ vision is how to competing to win customer interest, putting in the strategic measures to create a good impression so as to register in the minds of clients. Customer satisfaction comes by as provision of quality product and services quality is served (Parasuranam *et al.* 1988).

Customer satisfaction becomes evident when attitude of consumers is positively shown towards the product or service, positive word of mouth advertisement and appraisal will be made to other consumers, frequency and volume of goods purchased will increase, eventually customers will be retained. The average customer goes to the markets with

a level of expectation different from his current state and then assesses the outcome of the consumption.

Customers basically perceives a certain level of satisfaction they wish to achieve and hence will become normally become disappointed when that desire is not met after use of the service or product (Oliver, 1980).

It is propounded that competitive pricing and dependability are the key resonating determinants of customer satisfaction (Levesque and McDougall, 1996).

Contrary to this perception that takes competitive pricing and dependability as generic factors determining customer satisfaction, it is raised by another school that this does not apply to all ages, gender, culture, income groups (Jamal and Nasser, 2003). Other researchers have found varying attributes that affects customer satisfaction. It is the call of the firm to identify the variables that affects the customer positively most or those attributes that create more value and hence concentrate more on them in their corporate brand strategy in pursuit of winning their loyalty.

The dependability, responsiveness, empathy and how tangible a product or service is, are salient determinants of the degree of satisfaction a customer experiences (Zaim *et al,* 2010). The customer locations and other demographics influence what they place most value on during their pre-consumption stage. Tangibles and empathy are revealed not to be a determinant for customer satisfaction (Baumann *et al*., 2007). This contravenes to the study conducted by Kumar *et al.* (2010), Ahmed *et al.* (2010) .These contradicting theories therefore make it cumbersome to assign universally identified attributes that directly achieves customer satisfaction. The degree of satisfaction a consumer of a product or service receives could be more dependent on the degree of customer perception and expectation. However because expectation and perception keep changing with time and experience, concluding on some factors as sure determinants for satisfaction could be a challenge (Lai ,2004).

15

In spite of the arguments tabled earlier, it is crucial to realise however that the competitiveness of contemporary environment business environment, attaining merely customer satisfaction is not the end in itself but going further to have them to be loyal and retain is what translate to growth. Impressing the customer is a dire requirement if a competitive advantage is to be attained" (Timmers and van der Wiele, 1990).

This argument has received tremendous backing by other findings of some earlier works promulgating the argument that; only impressing the customer is not enough but the central attention should be on how to gain competitive edge to stay ahead of the race of intense competition. This is due to the fact that it is easy to duplicate services of others. The reliability and consistency of products sometimes is just enough to cause regularly patronage of a firm's goods or services even if the customer has not been outstandingly impressed. A long standing relationship and an inherent loyalty that emanates from that makes it very difficult for them to switch (Kandampully, 2000).

There exist the necessity to exceed the expectation of the customer by making sure that the customer is left with a unique impression through quality service offerings through the advance and continuous innovations, greater reliability and consistency of products or services. It is imperative to note that, quality services or product calls for a personal interaction between the customer and the service or product provider (Kandampully, 2000).

It is therefore becomes very important to empower the human factor of the service offering in order to impress the customer. The same service or product can be served to different consumers in different means and manner by the same service provider. This augments the need to build strong disciplinary qualities to ensure consistency in the mode of service.

## 2.5 Branding

The process borders on creating a unique label and image for a product in the consumers' mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Effective branding can result in higher sales of not only one product, but of other products associated with that brand. Branding purposes to establish a significant and differentiated existence in the market that appeals to and keeps loyal customers (businessdictionary.com). Branding as "the process of creating a relationship or a connection between a company's product and emotional perception of the customer for the purpose of generating segregation among competition and building loyalty among customers (Keller, 2008). It described as a fulfilment of customer expectations and consistent customer satisfaction (Kapferer, 2004) .People engaged in branding seek to develop or align the expectations behind the brand experience, creating the impression that a brand associated with a product or service has certain qualities or characteristics that make it special or unique. A brand can therefore become one of the most valuable elements in an advertising theme, as it demonstrates what the brand owner is able to offer in the marketplace (Shamoon, 2012).

### 2.5.1 Factors of successful branding

*i.*    ***Define Your Customers***: The paramount key to efficacious branding is to define the types of customers a company wants to appeal to. A list of all the categories of customers the business wants to attract or target needs to be identified. Volvo built its brand on drawing people concerned with auto safety (Carol Wiley, 2013).

*ii.*    ***Study Your Customers***: Find out what is imperative to the clienteles you want to attract. If you already have some patrons, you can survey them. If not, look at demographic information and other studies done that provide facts about your target customers. Once you know what's vital to your target customers, decide on the three or four outcomes that are the most vital to your ideal customer (Carol Wiley, 2013). *iii.*

***Be Consistent with Your Brand Position:*** Using the three or four outcomes you defined, create a brand position that defines what your business offers and for whom, the unique value your business creates and how this value is different from its competitors, and the benefits the customer derives from your product or service. Also, decide on the one most central thing that your business constantly assures to deliver to customers. Consistently make all your decisions based on this brand promise and your brand position (Carol Wiley, 2013).

***iv. Create the Elements of Your Brand:*** Create brand personality i.e. traits you want your business known for and, if you have an established business, a brand story that shows how your business' history adds value and credibility to the brand. Also, create the physical elements that make up the brand, including your logo, business tagline, colours, fonts, imagery and other physical elements used in marketing and presenting your brand. These physical brand associations should reflect your brand promise and all your brand traits, and also support your brand position (Carol Wiley, 2013).

***v.Market Your Brand:*** The key to branding is reminding the customer of what you want them to remember about your brand," and he says every contact (including marketing efforts) you have with current or potential customers must reinforce your brand (Carol Wiley, 2013).

### 2.5.2 Brand Awareness and Recognition

Brand awareness is a customers' ability to recall and recognize the brand, the logo and the advertisements. It helps the customers to understand to which product or service category the particular brand belongs and what products and services sell under the brand name. It also ensures that customers know which of their needs are satisfied by the brand through its products. Brand awareness is of critical importance in competitive

situations, since customers will not consider a brand if they are not aware of it (Tan, 2010).

Various levels of brand awareness require different levels and combinations of brand recognition and recall: Most companies aim for "Top-of-Mind". Top-Of-Mind Awareness (TOMA) occurs when a brand pops into a consumer's mind when asked to name brands in a product category. It is a brand or specific product coming first in customers' minds when thinking of a particular industry. For example, when someone is asked to name a type of facial tissue, the common answer is "Kleenex", represents a top-of-mind brand (Lontos, 2012). Companies attempt to build brand awareness through media exposure on channels such as internet, radio, newspapers, television, magazines, and social media. In a survey of nearly 200 senior marketing managers, 50% responded that they found the "top of mind" metric very useful (Farris, 2010).

### 2.5.2.1 Aided awareness
Aided awareness occurs when consumers see or read a list of brands, and express familiarity with a particular brand only after they hear or see it as a type of memory aide.

### 2.5.2.2 Strategic awareness
Strategic awareness occurs when a brand is not only top-of-mind to consumers, but also has distinctive qualities which consumers perceive as making it better than other brands in the particular market. The distinction(s) that set a product apart from the competition is/are also known as the Unique Selling Point or USP.

A widely known brand is said to have "brand recognition". When brand recognition builds up to a point where a brand enjoys a critical mass of positive sentiment in the marketplace, it is said to have achieved brand franchise. Brand recognition is most successful when people can state a brand without being explicitly exposed to the

company's name, but rather through visual signifiers like logos, slogans, and colours (investopedia, 2013).

### 2.5.3 Brand Orientation

Brand orientation refers to "the degree to which the organization values brands and its practices are oriented towards building brand capabilities" (Bridson & Evans, 2004). It is a deliberate approach to working with brands, both internally and externally. The most important driving force behind this increased interest in strong brands is the accelerating pace of globalization. This has resulted in an ever-tougher competitive situation on many markets. A product''s superiority is in itself no longer sufficient to guarantee its success. The fast pace of technological development and the increased speed with which imitations turn up on the market have dramatically shortened product lifecycles. The consequence is that product-related competitive advantages soon risk being transformed into competitive prerequisites. For this reason, increasing numbers of companies are looking for other, more enduring, competitive tools – such as brands (Shamoon et al., 2012).

### 2.5.4 Brand Elements

Brands typically comprise various elements, such as; **Name**: the word or words used to identify a company, product, service, or concept. **Logo**: the visual trademark that identifies a brand. **Tagline** or **catchphrase**: "The Quicker Picker Upper" is associated with Bounty paper towels. **Graphics:** the "dynamic ribbon" is a trademarked part of Coca-Cola's brand.

**Shapes:** the distinctive shapes of the Coca-Cola bottle and of the Volkswagen Beetle are trademarked elements of those brands. **Colours:** Owens-Corning is the only brand of fiberglass insulation that can be pink. **Sounds:** a unique tune or set of notes can denote a brand. NBC's chimes provide a famous example. **Scents:** the rose-

20

jasminemusk scent of Chanel No. 5 is trademarked. **Tastes:** Kentucky Fried Chicken has trademarked its special recipe of eleven herbs and spices for fried chicken.

**Movements:** Lamborghini has trademarked the upward motion of its car doors (Pearce, 2011).

### 2.5.5 Brand Management

In marketing, brand management is the planning and analysis on how that brand is perceived in the market. Developing a worthy connection with the target market is critical for brand management. Tangible elements of brand management include the product itself; look, price, the packaging, etc. The intangible elements are the experience that the consumer has had with the brand, and also the relationship that they have with that brand. A brand manager would mastermind all of these interventions. Brand management targets to create an expressive connection between products, firms and their customers and components. Brand managers may attempt to regulate the brand image (Shamoon et al., 2012).

### 2.5.6 Branding and New Products

A reputable brand makes less tedious to introduce new products that bears the same brand name. The new product could be a range extension; colour, version or different size of an existing product. In the minds of customers, the new product can provide similar qualities as the existing range they are familiar with (Linton, 2013).

### 2.5.7 Brand Communication

Brand communication is important in ensuring brand success in the business world and refers to how a business transmits its brand message, characteristics and attributes to their consumers (Uzunolu, 2014). One method of brand communication, which can be exploited by companies, is electronic word of mouth (eWOM). eWOM is a relatively new approach identified to communicate with consumers, one popular method of

eWOM is social networking sites (SNSs) e.g. twitter. This study found that consumers classed their relationship with a brand as closer, if that brand was active on a social media site i.e. Twitter. It was further found that the more consumers 'retweeted' and communicated with a brand, the more they trusted the brand. Thus suggesting that a company should look to employ a social media campaign to gain consumer trust and loyalty as well as in the pursuit of communicating their brand message (Kim, 2014). Brand communication and stated that when communicating a brand, a company should look to simplify its message as this will lead to more value being portrayed as well as an increased chance of the brand being recalled and recognised by their target consumers (McKee, 2014).

When communicating a brand, it is prudent that, the company in question, if is a global organisation or have future global aims they should look to employ a method of communication which is globally appealing to their consumers and choose a method of communication with will be internationally understood (Riefler, 2012). It is suggested that other senses, apart from vision, need to be targeted when trying to communicate a brand with consumers (Anon, 2007). For example, a jingle or background music can have a positive effect on brand recognition, purchasing behaviour and brand recall. Therefore, when looking to communicate a brand with chosen consumers, a company should investigate a channel of communication, which is most suitable for their short term and long term aims and should choose a method of communication which is most likely to be adhered to by their chosen consumers. The match-up between the product, the consumer lifestyle, and the endorser is important for effectiveness of brand communication (Riefler, 2012).

### 2.6.8. Brand Identity

Brand Identity is the outward expression of a brand including its name, trademark, communications, and visual appearance (Neumeier, 2004).

Because the identity is assembled by the brand owner, it reflects how the owner wants the consumer to perceive the brand – and by extension the branded company, organization, product or service. This is in contrast to the brand image, which is a customer's mental picture of a brand. The brand owner will seek to bridge the gap between the brand image and the brand identity. Brand identity is fundamental to consumer recognition and symbolizes the brand's differentiation from competitors (Neumeier, 2004).

Brand identity is what the owner wants to communicate to its potential consumers. However, over time, a product's brand identity may evolve, gaining new attributes from consumer perspective but not necessarily from the marketing communications an owner percolates to targeted consumers. Therefore, businesses research consumer's brand associations. Colour is a particularly important element of visual brand identity and colour mapping provides an effective way of ensuring colour contributes to differentiation in a visually cluttered marketplace (O'Connor, 2011)

### 2.5.9 Brand Strategies

Branding can be executed using any or a multiple of strategies.

### 2.5.9.1 Company name

Often, especially in the industrial sector, it is just the company's name which is promoted (leading to one of the most powerful statements of branding: saying just before the company's downgrading. This approach has not worked as well for General Motors, which recently overhauled how its corporate brand relates to the product brands (Merriam, 2010).

### 2.5.9.2 Individual Branding

Each brand has a separate name such as Seven-Up, Kool-Aid or Nivea Sun (Beiersdorf)), which may compete against other brands from the same company. For example, Persil, Omo, Surf and Lynx are all owned by Unilever. With this strategy, the products are decoupled from the company name and also from their sisterproducts but instead compete with them (Nisha, 2013).

### 2.5.9.3 Attitude and Iconic branding

Attitude branding is the choice to represent a larger feeling, which is not necessarily connected with the product or consumption of the product at all. Marketing labelled as attitude branding include that of Nike, Starbucks, The Body Shop, Safeway, and Apple Inc. (Klein, 2000).

Iconic brands are defined as having aspects that contribute to consumer's selfexpression and personal identity. Brands whose value to consumers comes primarily from having identity value are said to be "identity brands". Some of these brands have such a strong identity that they become more or less cultural icons which makes them "iconic brands". Examples are: Apple, Nike and Harley Davidson. Many iconic brands include almost ritual-like behaviour in purchasing or consuming the products

(Holt 2004)

### 2.5.9.4 "No-brand" branding

Recently a number of companies have successfully pursued "no-brand" strategies by creating packaging that imitates generic brand simplicity. No brand" branding may be construed as a type of branding as the product is made conspicuous through the absence of a brand name (Matt, 2001). "Tapa Amarilla" or "Yellow Cap" in Venezuela during the 1980s is a good example of no-brand strategy. It was simply recognized by the colour of the cap of this cleaning products company (Muji, 2013).

**2.5.9.5 Social media branding**

It is posited that social media brands may be the most evolved version of the brand form, because they focus not on themselves but on their users. In so doing, social media brands are arguably more charismatic, in that consumers are compelled to spend time with them, because the time spent is in the meeting of fundamental human drivers related to belonging and individualism. "We wear our physical brands like badges, to help define us – but we use our digital brands to help express who we are. They allow us to be, to hold a mirror up to ourselves, and it is clear. We like what we see (Pont, 2013).

**2.5.10. Challenges of Branding**

*Treating brands as assets:* The on-going pressure to deliver short-term financial results coupled with the fragmentation of media will tempt organizations to focus on tactics and measurables and neglect the objective of building assets (Aaker, 2014). *Possessing a compelling vision:* A brand vision needs to differentiate itself, resonate with customers and inspire employees. It needs to be feasible to implement, work over time in a dynamic marketplace and drive brand-building programs. Visions that work are usually multidimensional and adaptable to different contexts. They employ concepts such as brand personality, organizational values, a higher purpose, and in general they simply move beyond functional benefits (Okonkwo, 2009).

*Creating new subcategories:* The only way to grow, with rare exceptions, is to develop "must have" innovations that define new subcategories and build barriers to inhibit competitors from gaining relevance. That requires substantial or transformational innovation and a new ability to manage the perceptions of a subcategory so that it wins (Palgrave, 2007).

*Generating breakthrough brand building:* Exceptional ideas and executions that break out of the clutter are necessary in order to bring the brand vision to life. These ideas and

25

the execution of them are more critical than the size of your budget. "Good" is just not good enough. That means making sure you get more ideas from more sources, and that you make sure you have the mechanisms in place to recognize brilliance and bring those ideas to market quickly (Aaker, 2014).

*Achieving integrated marketing communication (IMC):* IMC is more elusive and difficult than ever in light of the various methods you have to choose from such as advertising, sponsorships, digital, mobile, social media and more. These methods tend to compete with each other rather than reinforce because the media scene and options have become so complex, so dynamic, and because product and country silos reflect competition and isolation rather than cooperation and communication (Okonkwo, 2009).

*Building a digital strategy:* This arena is complex, dynamic and in need of a different mindset. The reality is, the audience is in control here. New capabilities, creative initiatives and new ways to work with other marketing modalities are required. Adjust the digital marketing focus from the offering and the brand to the customer"s sweet spot, which is to say the activities and opinions in which they are interested or even passionate about. Develop programs around that sweet spot in which the brand is an active partner, such as Pampers did with Pampers Village or what Avon did with their Walk for Breast Cancer (Wiley, 2008).

*Building your brand internally:* It is hard to achieve successful integrated marketing communications or breakthrough marketing without employees both knowing the vision and caring about it. The brand vision that lacks a higher purpose will find the inspiration challenge almost impossible (Okonkwo, 2009).

*Maintaining brand relevance:* Brands face three relevance threats: Fewer customers buying what the brand is offering, emerging reasons not-to-buy, and loss of energy.

Detecting and responding to each requires an in-depth knowledge of the market, plus a willingness to invest and change (Aaker, 2014).

***Creating a brand-portfolio strategy that yields synergy and clarity:*** Brands need well-defined roles and visions that support those roles. Strategic brands should be identified and resourced, and branded differentiators and energizers should be created and managed (2010).

***Leveraging brand assets to enable growth:*** A brand portfolio should foster growth by enabling new offerings, extending the brand vertically or extending the brand into another product class. The goal is to apply the brand to new contexts where the brand both adds value and enhances itself. Those engaged in building and leveraging a brand should examine each of these challenges in turn and determine which are most critical to their success. Then evaluate the extent to which your brand is in deficit in meeting that challenge. The answers to those questions should result in a roadmap to strengthening both your brand and your impact (Birnik, 2010).

## 2.6 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance entails the actual output of an organisation as measured against its intended output or goals. Organizational performance encompasses three thematic areas of firm outcomes: financial performance such as profits, return on assets and return on investment, also product market performance such as sales and market share. Lastly, shareholder return such as economic value added, etc. (Richard et al., 2009).

In recent times, many organizations have endeavoured to manage organizational performance engaging the balanced scorecard methodology where performance is tracked and measured in multiple dimensions such as financial performance e.g.

shareholder return, customer service, employee commitment, social responsibility e.g. corporate citizenship, community outreach (Upadhaya, 2014).

## 2.6. 1 Organizational Performance versus Organizational Effectiveness

Although organizational performance dominates the strategic management literature, not to mention economics, finance, and accounting, it is not unchallenged. Performance is one type of effectiveness indicator, with some advantages and disadvantages. Hence, we first need is to distinguish between organizational performance and the more general construct of organizational effectiveness

(Venkatraman & Ramanujam 1986).

Organizational effectiveness is a broader construct that captures organizational performance, but with grounding in organizational theory that entertains alternate performance goals (Cameron & Whetten 1983). Management research in general, and strategic management research more specifically, has taken a much more limited empirical view, emphasizing the central role of accounting, financial and stockmarket outcomes. To simplify this discussion and keep some consistency with the usage in the literature we will distinguish between the domains of organizational effectiveness and organizational performance.

Organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: (1) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, etc.); (2) market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and (3) shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added, etc.).

Organizational effectiveness is broader and captures organizational performance plus the plethora of internal performance outcomes normally associated with more efficient or effective operations and other external measures that relate to considerations that are broader than those simply associated with economic valuation

(either by shareholders, managers or customers), such as reputation.

Although innovation and efficiency measures are generally placed into the wider conceptual domain of „organizational effectiveness" (Cameron & Whetten, 1983; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986), other management researchers have taken these same variables as their dependent performance measure (see, e.g., Capon et al., 1990; Hall et al., 2005). For instance,

The implementation of balanced scorecards has also increased the attention given to wider aspects of organizational effectiveness. Although primarily used for internal management and control, balanced scorecards explicitly include measures of financial performance, customer outcomes, innovation and internal processes (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). However, in doing so they are more closely tailored to each individual firm. Allowing for this tailoring in order to compare firms would be almost impossible, given that the implementation of a balanced scorecard for a single firm is already complex and difficult (Neely & Bourne, 2000; Schneiderman, 1999). It is for this reason that organizational performance dominates organizational effectiveness for management researchers.

Meaningful comparisons across firms and industries. However, what is evident is that even with a narrower domain organizational performance is not a one-dimensional theoretical construct nor is it likely to be characterizable with a single operational measure. Although the multi-dimensionality of performance is recognized in accounting (e.g., Callen, 1991) and finance (e.g., Henri 2004) and discussed theoretically in the management literature (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986), empirically the lack of consistency in the measurement of organizational performance

in management research has revealed a surprising lack of researchers "walking the walk".

# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

The aim of every study is to select an appropriate research techniques or tools that sufficiently gather, validate and measure the fundamental parameters towards the achievement of core objective of the study. This chapter discusses the procedural arrangement followed in carrying out the study and also explores the techniques adopted for the collection and analysis of relevant data.

## 3.2. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive method research design which embodied both qualitative and quantitative phases. The quantitative phase took care of the survey by administering of questionnaires as data collection technique to collect some numeric values .An inductive approach was used to develop a rich theoretical perspective with the numeric values on consumer expectation in brands.

The qualitative phase which is an interpretive philosophy adopted a case study approach to determine some findings from subjective issues bothering on the study.

## 3.3. Sources of Data

The study drew data from both primary and secondary sources.

## 3.3.1 Primary Data

The study obtained direct data from the selected respondents through the administering of questionnaires. The objectives of the study was used the principal guide in designing the questionnaires. Additional data was obtained through interviews of brand/marketing

managers of the case companies. The questions designed for the interview are open-ended.

## 3.4 Unit of Analysis

A registered water bottling company, accredited by Ghana Standards Board to operate in the production of bottled water. The company whose brand has been on the market for at least one year and listed as a major company in terms of infrastructure, number of depots and distribution coverage.

## 3.5. Population and Sample Frame

The population targeted for the study consumers, merchants and producers of water bottle products in Ghana. Per the data collected from the management, the population is estimated to be 1.4million people. The Sample frame comprised of the consumers, merchants and producers within Kumasi metropolis.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), when conducting research one cannot study everybody, everywhere, doing everything etc. Practically, it is sometimes not possible to collect data to cover the whole population. Compounding this is the problem of financial constraints. In order to prevent these challenges it is relevant to use a sample to represent the entire population. The sample must however share or have the same characteristics of the population from which it was selected (Graziano and Raulin, 1997).

### 3.6. Sample Size

With the deVaus approach, the sample size was calculated (deVaus, 2002). The sample

size for the study was 275. The sample size was calculated using the below formulae:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+ N (\alpha)^2}$$

Where   N= sample frame, n= minimum sample size, α= error margin=0.06%,

Confidence level = 94%

Total population = 1, 400, 000

The statistical sampling method adopted to select samples is illustrated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(\propto^2)}$$

$$= \frac{1,400,000}{1 + 1,400,000\,(0.06)^2}$$

= **275.7**

Sample size (n) is estimated to be 275

*Table 3.1 Table Showing Categories of Respondents*

| Strata type | Total |
|---|---|
| Consumers | 175 |
| Retailers | 35 |
| Distributors | 15 |
| Managers | 10 |
| Employees | 40 |
| **Total** | **280** |

## 3.7. Sampling Techniques

A non-probability sampling technique of convenience was used. The five water bottling companies were selected because they collectively control over 80% of market share in Ghana. Convenience sampling was used in selecting the consumers. However, the distributors, retailers, employees and managers were purposively sampled for the study. Distributor/retailer respondents were selected based on experience in the bottled water marketing business. The managers and employees were carefully selected based on their inclination to the subject matter.

## 3.8. Data Collecting Tool

The study used three different questionnaires to collect data from consumers, distributors and employees. The different sets of questionnaires were designed with each category of respondent in mind. A response rate of 94 % was attained for the study. Additionally, Brand managers of some companies in the bottled water market were interviewed to obtain relevant information from the perspective of management. The questions that guided the interview were semi-structured.

The questionnaires designed for the employees sought to collect views on brand features, achievements, management-staff relationship, and staff involvement in brand promotion.

The questionnaire designed for consumers centred on the perception of consumers on brands of bottled water.

The questionnaire designed for the distributors and retailers aimed at identifying some of the public degree of reports and feedbacks they had received from end users of bottled water.

### 3.8.1 Pre-testing of Questionnaires

Draft questionnaires were designed and tested for efficacy. The questions that proved

to be unclear to test-respondents were rephrased to enhance understandability. The final

questionnaire was developed based on the determinations of the pre-test.

### 3.8.2 Response rate

The average response rate for all three categories of questionnaires administered was

94%. The responsiveness was high for validity of data.

### 3.9 Data Analysis

The responses from the administering of the questionnaires were prepared and explored

using the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) to extract representative

frequency tables and charts for analysis.

Data was analysed using two analytical tools for different sections due to the structure

of questionnaire. Tables and charts are used to represent and describe the demographic

data. Comparison of mean analysis was used to analyse the data collected from

respondents. The responses gathered from the open-ended interview granted by the

managers of the companies under study was summarised and analysed to ascertain the

effect of branding on the performance of the selected companies.

### 3.10 Brief Profile of Selected Bottled Water Brands

This section gives some brief background information of the selected companies.

### 3.10.1 Voltic Ghana Limited

Voltic Natural Mineral water a subsidiary of SABMiller plc., is one of such products

proven to be Ghana‟s flagship in the bottled water market currently commanding about

45% market share in a market of over 32 bottled water brands. Voltic emerged on the

Ghanaian market, in 1995, captured 65% of market share within the first three years

and dropped steadily to its current position of 45%. Voltic has become a generic name in a perfect competitive market (www.volticghana.com).

### 3.10.2 Everpure Ghana Limited

Everpure Ghana Limited was established in 2008 by seven friends who went into partnership. The brand has recorded a sky- rocketing growth in the short period to become the second largest in terms of market share after Voltic Ghana Ltd. The company is revealed to be the fastest growing bottled water company currently in Ghana with a relative market share of 25%. Not only has Everpure undergone a tremendous expansion drive but also installed several depots dotted throughout the country to meet its fast growing demand. (www.everpureghana.com).

### 3.10.3 SBC Beverages Ghana Limited

SBC (Seven up Bottling Company) is a franchise registered under Pepsi International. SBC is solely into beverages. The company launched the packaged water brand, Aqua Splash in the year 2014. This brand however is not a franchise brand but a locally branded product line.

Aqua splash is capitalizing on its already existing world class competitive production and quality systems, marketing and distribution channels to build and promote the brand as one of the leading brands in the industry. It currently holds 9% of total market share (www.myjoymarket.com).

### 3.10.4 Coca-Cola Company, Ghana Ltd.

Coca-Cola Company was solely into beverage manufacturing. Bonaqua was introduced to its line of products late 2012. The company has used powers as the leading global brand to market and push the course of Bonaqua brand of bottled water on the market. Bonaqua holds 9% of market share. A result of a research conducted by The Coca Cola

Bottling Company, Ghana Ltd. (TCCBCGL) on Dasani and Bonaqua which are both subsidiaries of TCCBCGL revealed that consumers settled on the Bonaqua at the expense of Dasani because of their unique quality (www.allafrica.com).

### 3.10.5 Special Ice Mineral Company Ghana

Special Ice Company Limited joined the bottled water industry in 2011. As a natural mineral water company, its primary goal to is to supply real natural mineral water to all Ghanaians at affordable prices everywhere. It holds 6% of market share (www.rootsafrikiko.com).

# CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results of the study and provide descriptive analysis of the findings.

The findings of the study are measured against the objectives and questions of the study are shown here. The demographic of results are represented in frequency tables and chart interpreted. Cross-tabulation and Comparison of mean is applied in the analyses of the key determinants of the objectives. The Response rate is 94%.

### 4.2 Consumers of Bottled Water

Consumers "perception on some selected brands of bottled water and also the most popular brand of bottle water as the study reveals. The demographic information of the consumer respondents is also presented here.

*Table 4.1 Frequency Distributions of the Personal Information of Respondents.*

| Level of economical productivity: | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Artisan | 4 | 2.3 |
| Private Sector Employee | 29 | 16.6 |
| Public Servant | 48 | 27.4 |
| Self Employed | 15 | 8.6 |
| Self-Skilled | 9 | 5.1 |
| Student | 25 | 14.3 |
| **NAP** | 45 | 25.7 |
| **TOTAL** | **175** | **100.0** |

| Gender: | Frequency | |
|---|---|---|
| Percentage (%) | | |
| Male | 96 | 54.9 |
| Female | 75 | 42.9 |
| **NAP** | **4** | **2.3** |
| **TOTAL** | **175** | **100** |

| Level of education: | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| | | (%) |
| J.H.S | 1 | .6 |
| O level | 2 | 1.1 |
| S.H.S | 36 | 20.6 |
| tertiary | 34 | 19.4 |
| **NAP** | **102** | **58.3** |
| **TOTAL** | **175** | **100** |

| *Age Group:* | **Frequency** | **Percentage (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| *under 20* | 24 | 13.7 |
| *20-29* | 67 | 38.3 |
| *30-39* | 36 | 20.6 |
| *40-29* | 22 | 12.6 |
| *50-59* | 14 | 8.0 |
| *60 and above* | 7 | 4.0 |
| *NAP* | 5 | 2.9 |
| *TOTAL* | 175 | 100 |

Source: Field data, July 2015.

**4.2.1 Demographic Information on Consumer Respondents**

From table 4.1, the respondents comprised of 96 males and 75 females representing

54.9% and 42.9% of respondents respectively. However, 4 respondents representing 2.3% of total respondents provided no information on their gender. This female dominant selection was employed based on the popular view that it is more in the nature of the Ghanaian women to be more critical on the quality of what they consume than the men.

58.3% of the total respondents failed to provide information on their occupation perhaps due to qualitative nature of the questionnaire to a large extent. It was realized that respondents preferred to tick options of answers provided than to write. This may owe partially to why this large number ignored that question.

The age ranges of 20-29 and 30-39 were dominant in the age groupings that constituted the respondents with 38% and 20.7% respectively.

*Table 4.2 location of Respondents*

| location of business | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Kumasi | 173 | 98.8 |
| NAP | 2 | 1.2 |
| **Total** | **175** | **100%** |

Source: Field Data, July 2015

**4.3**

**Findings of Consumer Perception on Bottled Water with reference to Objective 1.**

With reference to **Objective 1** of the study which seeks to ascertain some elements of branding that inform consumers" preference for bottled water products. The following findings were attained:

### 4.3.1 Spate of Quality-related Concerns

On the question of quality problem encounter, less than half the respondents represented by the mean of 1.678 with a standard deviation of 0.468 affirmed that they have experience a case or two of quality problems with some brands of bottle water. The greater number of the respondents expressed that they had no quality concerns about any bottle water brand. A section of population represented by a mean of 1.278 with a standard deviation of 0.445 were of the view that, Voltic, the leading brand as well as the price leader in the bottle water market is not doing anything extraordinary about its quality from what its competitors are doing. This registers their perception that there may be other factors other than the element quality that can still make a brand competitive.

### 4.3.2 Electronic Media and Brand Choices

On the subject of the possible influence of the television and radio adverts on the choice of brands by consumers, it was established by majority of the consumer respondents represented by a mean of 1.323 with a standard deviation of 0.468 that it does. Generally, it is argued that except strict brand loyal, everybody is prone to taste something a credible agent like the electronic media recommends. This influences the choices of many consumers"

**4.3**

**.3 Availability of Favourite Brand**

170 out of the total respondents of 175 responded to the question of availability of their preferred brand of bottled water. A mean of 3.918 with a standard deviation of 1.329 represented the respondents who claimed that their preferred bottle water is almost always available on the market. A mode of 5 representing "very good" indicates that a largest group of the respondents rated the availability of their preferred the best. Linking this finding to the respondents" acclamation of Voltic as most preferred, insinuates that Voltic does well in terms of distributions of its brand, one hallmark for performance.

**4.3.4 Pricing of Bottled Water Brands**

168 out of the 180 consumer respondents gave their views on the effect of price on the performance of a brand on the market. About half of the respondents represented by the mean 3.625 with the standard deviation of 1.059 were of the view that, the slight margin of price difference among the brands will not influence a significant shift of consumers from their preferred brands. This could partly be due to the ideology that almost everyone who can afford a number of bottle water daily without considering the existence of a the cheaper option of sachet water is financially capable. This is believed to be indicative of an existing theory which states that a loyalty results in a customer"s willingness to pay a higher price; often 20 to 25% more than competing brands available (DMA release, 2010). So achieving loyalty of customers should be the driving force behind a company"s branding.

However, the other divide of the respondents expressed that the price differential among brands of bottle water no matter how minimal will result in a significant drift of customers it attracts.

**4.3**

   **.5 Taste of Preferred Brand**

163 out of 175 customer respondents who responded to the rating of taste of their preferred brand, a mean of 3.951 with a standard deviation of 1.206 represents the number of respondents who rated the taste of their preferred bottle water excellent. Taste is a pivotal variable that goes into a substance that is orally consumed. Quality water should be devoid of any unfavourable taste. The better the taste, the better the water. Many consumers will consider taste of water above some other factors.

**4.3.6 Perception on Colour of water**

164 out of 175 customer respondents who rated the colour of their preferred brand, a mean of 4.012 with a standard deviation of 1.156 represent the number of respondents who rated the taste of their preferred bottled water high. Ideally natural water should be colourless and without impurities. This is of prime concern to the consumer due to the health implication.

The mode 5 from the table implies that the highest rating by the consumers for the colour or clarity of the water falls in the high categories of the determinants that inform the brand choice of bottle water. It is crucial to note that the number 5 on the questionnaire meant "very good".

**4.3.7 Clarity of Labels and Packaging**

166 customer respondents" out of the 175 responded to the question on labels and packaging. With a high mean of 4.060 and a standard deviation of 1. 088 representing the highest opinion of respondents which expresses that the labelling and packaging of water in a bottle is as important as the quality of the content of the bottle to some consumers. The quality of water bottled by different companies may not differ much

in terms of quality but the packaging can do some magic. Consumers attach different level of importance to packaging and labelling, some may not bother about it at all.

*Table 4.3 Statistics on Determinants of Preference of Bottled Water Brand*

| Statistics | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Easy Availability of your favorite brand of bottled water | Price of your favorite brand of bottled water | Taste of your favorite brand of bottled water products | Water color of your favorite brand of bottled water | clarity of labeling on your favorite brand of bottled water products | overall quality of bottled water products on the market |
| N | Valid | 170 | 168 | 163 | 164 | 166 | 167 |
| | Missing | 5 | 7 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 8 |
| Mean | | 3.9176 | 3.6250 | 3.9509 | 4.0122 | 4.0602 | 3.8982 |
| Median | | 4.2441[a] | 3.6698[a] | 4.2241[a] | 4.2439[a] | 4.2595[a] | 4.1885[a] |
| Mode | | 5.00 | 3.00[b] | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| Std. Deviation | | 1.32978 | 1.05925 | 1.20597 | 1.15641 | 1.08822 | 1.29705 |

Source: Field data, July 2015.

## 4.3.8 Comparison of Determinants of Consumers' Choice of Brand of Bottled Water

By comparison of means of the independent determinants of brand suitability considered in the study, the determinant with the highest mean represents the most considered attribute of a "good" brand of bottle water from the perspective of the consumer.

The least mean of 3.625, suggest that the price of the bottled water product is the least of the determinants that will make them choose a brand. By inference, this means that consumers will not look at price in isolation or enter the market looking for the cheapest brand of bottle water to purchase. The next mean 3.918, suggests that the availability of a brand is also considered more critical above its price. Consumers will appreciate a

44

brand that is well dotted in supply in all the shops, supermarkets, restaurants and every public location they visit.

The mean 3.951 which represents the value consumers attribute to the taste of the water. By comparing this mean to 3.625 and 3.918 of price and easy availability of bottled water respectively, it is clearly established that the average consumer considers the taste of the water above its price and availability. It is very imperative to constantly reflect on the fact that majority of these respondents are not very price sensitive and expect some degree of differentiation in product offerings. The next mean of 4.012 which represent the respondents" attribution of importance to the colourlessness of the water. This could also be described as the clarity or cleanness of the water. From the response gathered in terms of means, consumers ascribe more value of the clarity of water they will want to consume high above the first three elements discussed. The highest mean of 4.060 which stood for the level of importance consumer respondents associated with the packaging and labelling of bottle water. This was rated most important than the other four determinants by majority of the respondents.

With modernity and exposure to tragic experiences such as food poisoning and other health implications consumers have become more inclined to what they consume. This has ignited    keen interest in some pertinent information about products on the markets especially the consumables like packaged water, medicine, fruit juice, canned foods etc. Consumers will therefore want to patronise products that provides enough information about the content of product, brand information, location of production, manufacturing and expiry dates etc. All these salient information comes in the labelling not forgetting the beauty value labels add. A well packaged bottle product like that of bottle water protects the content from contamination.

## 4.4 Findings of Distributors Perception on Bottled Water with reference to Objective 1.

**4.4.1 Most Selling Brands**

Indicated in the chart below is the summary of testimonies given by distributors and retailers on the most patronized brand of bottle water. The outcome reveals here again that Voltic is the most preferred with 46% of the respondents voting that stance. Closely following Voltic is Everpure brand with 39% of respondents identifying it as most preferred brand. The performance of Everpure is phenomenal because it is a new brand compared to Bonaqua which polled only 10.4%.The opportunity was given to respondents to write the brand they believe to be most preferred if it happens not to be one of the listed. The few brands that came up were quite insignificant except Special ice which measured up to Bonaqua. This revelation is actually a confirmation of the fact that Voltic is really the market leader (www. spyghana.com).

**Figure 4.1 Distribution of Ratings for Brands of Bottle Water**
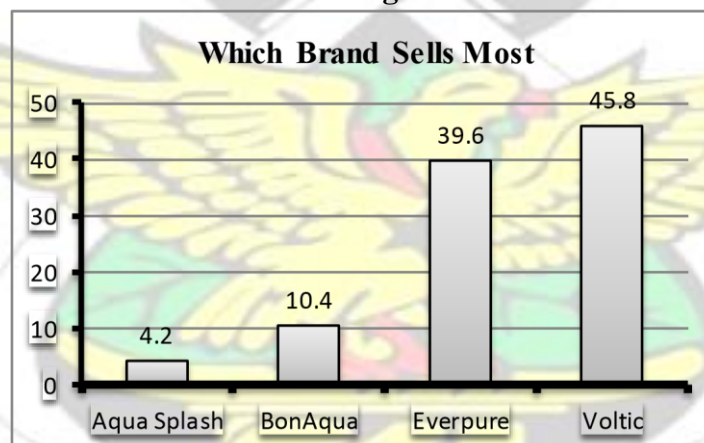


Source: Field Data, July, 2015

**4.4.2 Frequency of Supply**

All the 50 merchants (Distributors/retailers) considered for the study responded to the question. A mean of 4.160 with standard deviation of 0.618 represents the respondents who established that the frequency of supply of bottle water to them (merchants) was encouraging. Quite a higher number of them represented by the mean 4.300 with standard deviation of 0.614revealed that they received regular supply of the most selling

brands from their producers/suppliers. On the scale of 1 to 5, the respondents who

alluded to this question in the least affirmative even ticked 3

"average" and many others ticked 4 and 5 representing "Good" and "Very Good".

Precisely the greatest number of them gave a score of 4 represented as the mode.

Concretely this finding implies that the supply of bottle water to the merchants is

encouraging. This bothers on the issue of availability to the consumer also. Most

consumers switch to another brand if they repeatedly are not able to access their

preferred brand.

## 4.5 Findings of Management and Employees of Bottled Water Firms with reference to Objective 1.

### 4.5.1 Imitation Checks and Quality improvement

Findings from the study shows that the means of 3.72 and 3.68 with standard deviations,

0.730 and 0.741 respectively representing number of respondents who gave affirmation

that the bottle water producers have strong measures to protect their brands from

imitation and also have the tradition of continuously improving on the quality of their

brand. For both concerns, the least rating was 2 and the maximum was 5. However the

mode (highest number rated) 4, implying that majority of the respondents established

the position that generally, imitation is checked and quality is continually advanced.  If

this outcome is anything to go by, then it is a good picture for the industry because, the

neglect of these activities has the potential of destroying the players in the industry.

## 4.6 Findings of Objective 2: to ascertain some common challenges bottled water companies encounter in branding their products.

### 4.6.1. Perspective of Consumers on Challenges

Key among the possibly prevalent quality challenges that may be considered about bottled consumables include; unpleasant smell, unpleasant impurities and dusty bottles and corks.

*Table 4.5 Quality Challenges of Bottled Water*

| Statistics | | presence of bad smell or odor in your favorite brand of bottle | presence of impurities/product in your favorite brand of bottle | Dust particles on the bottle of favorite brand |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **N** | Valid | 162 | 162 | 162 |
| | Missing | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| **Mean** | | 3.6481 | 3.7593 | 3.4815 |
| **Median** | | 4.1373[a] | 4.2381[a] | 3.8000[a] |
| **Mode** | | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |
| **Std. Deviation** | | 1.63225 | 1.59115 | 1.52504 |
| **a. Calculated from grouped data.** | | | | |

Source: Field data, July 2015.

**4.6.1.1 Bad Odour, Impurities and Dusty Bottles**

From table 4.5, 162 out of the 175 consumer respondents who gave answers to this question on quality challenges they have experienced revealed that, smell, impurities and dusty particle on bottles have been encountered but in varied frequencies.

Impurities in some bottled water were reported to be the most experienced by the customer respondents represented by a mean of 3.759 with a standard deviation of 1.591. This was followed closely with the challenge of smell in some bottle water represented by a mean of 3.648 with the standard deviation of 1.632. The least recorded quality challenge recorded from the consumer respondents was the presence of dust particles bottles represented by the mean 3.481 with a standard deviation of 1.525. The complex

impression created by this report is of great concern and perhaps this owes significantly to why some brands are struggling to grow and others dying out of the market.

*Table 4.6 Distributors/retailers perception as interface between producer and consumers*

|  | Frequency of supply of bottle water product | Frequency of supply of most selling brand | Relationship with suppliers/producer | Absence of product defect | Continues improvement in produce quality over the years | Producers response to complaints | Profitability of business venture | Producers effort against counterfeit products (imitation) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N Valid | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 |
| Missing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mean | 4.1600 | 4.3000 | 4.1000 | 3.9200 | 3.6800 | 3.3600 | 3.9800 | 3.7200 |
| Median | 4.1818[a] | 4.3261[a] | 4.1842[a] | 3.9211[a] | 3.6667[a] | 3.3514[a] | 3.9744[a] | 3.6905[a] |
| Mode | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00[b] | 4.00 | 4.00 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Std. Deviation | .61809 | .61445 | .86307 | .75160 | .74066 | .87505 | .68482 | .72955 |
| Minimum | 3.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 |
| Maximum | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 |

Source:          Field                                                        data, July 2015.

49

### 4.6.2 Perspective of Distributors

#### *4.6.2.1 Complaints Responses*

A mean value of 3.360 with a standard deviation of 0.875 represents the merchants that indicated that the complaints they periodically make to the producers/suppliers concerning the bottle water products receive favorable response. The minimum and maximum ratings made by the respondents were 2 and 5 respectively. The mode representing the most rated score was 3(average). This points to some significant level of dissatisfaction in this area because the masses perceive a gap.

#### 4.6.2.2 Product Defect

On the question of defect (loosed sealing, poor labeling, insufficient product information, dents on bottle etc.) on the bottle water products, a mean value of 3.920 with standard deviation of 0.752 represented the merchant respondents who indicated that there are usually no defects on bottle water products that they receive from producers to distribute or retail. The minimum and maximum ratings assigned this in answer to the question were 2 and 5 respectively but the mode is 4, implying that the majority of the respondents accepted that the cases of absence of defects on bottle water is extreme rare and therefore rated it good. However, the minority that indicated having some experience of bottled water defect calls for attention to avoid the recurrence.

### 4.6.3 Perspective of Employees on Challenges

### 4.6.3.1 Employee Motivation and Empowerment

Generally, skill training, capacity building and performance-related reward for employees play very pivotal role in bringing out the best in them.

### 4.6.3.2 Incentive for Achieving Quality Targets and Innovation

41 out of 50 employee respondents provided answers to this question. A mean value of 3.00 with the standard of 0.866 represented respondents who indicated that their companies have adequate incentives in place to encourage employees to work assiduously to attain targets set by managers to achieve quality standards in the water bottling factory. The minimum rating scored by respondents was 1 (poor) and the maximum rating scored was 4 (good). The mode rating was 3(average). The mode scored implies that the provision of incentives for employees is generally not sufficient. This may impede the ingenuity of some employees and the ability to give off their best. Companies that give incentives to their employees are well placed to demand high standards of performance than those who do not. In like manner, the mean 2.778 with standard deviation 0.833 for respondents who indicated that their companies provide incentives for employees that exhibits innovativeness and creativity. The mode, minimum and maximum ratings were the same as that of the quality target. The score of the level of satisfaction on incentives and motivation given to the employees is not appreciable and likely not to relate positively with the company"s performance.

### 4.6.3.3. Relationship with Managers, Customers and Other Employees

It is identified that, 41 out of 50 respondents answered the questions on their relationship with managers, customers and their work colleagues. The respondents who indicated that they have cordial relationship with their customers were represented by a mean

value of 4.778 with a standard deviation of 0.441. The minimum and maximum ratings in answering this question are 4 and 5 respectively. However the modal rating was 5(very good). This revealed that they have a very customer-centred attitude and this is very crucial factor for customer retention.

In the case of employees" relationship with their managers, the findings established that a mean value of 4.00 with a standard deviation of 0.701 was well related with their managers. The minimum and maximum ratings in answering the question are 3 and 4 respectively. The modal rating was 4 (good). This finding is ideal for a work environment in that employees should be in the position to establish a healthy rapport between them and their superiors. This will foster collaboration and team spirit to advance the course of the water bottling company.

Dwelling on the relationship between employees and colleagues, a mean of 4.667 with the standard deviation of 0.500. The minimum and maximum ratings the respondents issued on this question were 4 and 5 respectively. The modal rating accrued was 5 (very good). This is ideal for team-work, a tool for high performance.

Generally the employees" relationship with their colleagues and other stakeholders of the water bottling business. Comparatively, the employees" relationship with their managers (superiors) was identified to be quite less rated than with customers and coworkers.

### 4.6.3.4 Employee Participation in Brand Building
The group of respondents who revealed that they personal involve themselves in the brand building of their company were represented with a mean value of 2.889 with a standard deviation of 0.928. The minimum and maximum ratings in answering the question were 1(poor) and 4(good) respectively. The modal rating was 4 (Good).

Overall, majority of employees indicated that they were actively involved in the brand building of their companies. This is style of management where every employee is tuned in to personalise the challenges of the company and contributes significantly to address them. On the question of employee participation in making decisions and attaining recognition by achieving bringing on board brand enhancing modification, a mean value of 3.222 with a standard deviation of 0.833 represented the employee respondents who answered in the affirmative. The minimum and maximum ratings given by the respondents were 2 and 4 respectively. The mode for the ratings was 4 (Good).

### 4.6.3.5 Company Employment Policies

A mean value of 3.888 with standard deviation of 0.782 representing the section of respondents that indicated satisfaction with their company"s style of administrations and employment. The respondent"s minimum rating for the question was 3(average) and the maximum was 5(very good). The modal rating was 4 (Good). This reveals that most employees working in the bottle water companies are might not have significant reservations to the way their companies" administration is run. These administrative policies include their employment conditions.

On the question of existence of opportunities for career advancement and promotion, a mean of 3.333 with a standard form of 0.500 representing the category of respondents who expressed that there are opportunities available for upgrading and climbing higher on the company"s ladder. The minimum and maximum ratings were 3 and 5 respectively. However, the modal rating was 5(very good). This suggests that the most of the employees alluded to the fact that, there exist policies bothering on career advancement and promotion. This is a one good motivating factor to grow an organisation.

### 4.6.3.6 Skills/Qualifications and Job Suitability/Superior Support

Respondents were asked to rate the suitability of their jobs in the bottle water companies considering their qualification. A mean value of 3.444 with a standard deviation of 0.726 represented the employee respondent who answered in the affirmative. The minimum and maximum ratings given by the respondents were 2(below average) and 4(good). However, the modal rating scored was 4(good). Given the job descriptions assigned the employees in the companies considering their qualifications; they established the view that the job/qualification match is good. However there were a few respondents that expressed the contrary.

When respondents were questioned whether they receive assistance from their managers when faced with difficult work challenges, A mean of 3.444 with standard deviation of 0.527 represented the numbers that answered in the affirmative. In answering, the minimum rating was 3(average) and the maximum rating was 4 (good).Majority of the respondents gave the rating of 3(average) which is the mode. This means that many Superiors in the selected companies do not shirk their monitoring and are readily available to offer sufficient technical support to their subordinates when they are approached to assist and guide.

### 4.7. Findings of Management Perception on Bottled Water with reference to Objective 3: to assess the effect of branding on market shares, growth and profitability of bottled water companies in the market.

### 4.7.1 Performance Indicators of Case Study Companies

The performance indicators for any organization include;

Growth, 

Market Share and 

Profitability.

It was the objective of the study to quantitatively evaluate the performance indicators in relation to branding of the selected companies. However, this could not be achieved due to the unavailability of such quantitative data required for the analysis and also the reluctance of some companies to provide such data for confidentiality reasons. So these performance indicators were alternatively analysed qualitatively using data obtained through observation and through interviews with the Brand Managers.

### 4.7.1.1 Growth
The selected companies have attained and chronicled stable organizational growth within the past years after executing their brand management strategies. Everpure Limited for instance has in recent times added a second factory located in Kumasi to serve the northern sector market in Ghana. This is obviously a mark of growth considering that the company has been in the trade for less than six years. In addition, SBC at the time of the call was in the process of expanding its production facilities and branding techniques. Voltic has perpetually realized steady growth in its assets and quantity of franchises awarded. Voltic has also grown on the back of its branding strategies through serious quality and packaging management and has over the years extended to other regional markets Togo and Benin. The performance in terms of growth achieved by the study companies as a result of their branding efforts. This confirms Finding A of Cho and Pucik (2005), which states that "The higher the quality, the popular the brand and the greater the growth performance". This

responds to specific objective one of the study.

### 4.7.1.2 Market Share

It has been time-honoured that all the case study companies have been able to attain substantial market shares in the bottled water market by leveraging comparatively superior brand management practices. Moreover, the data obtained for the study specified that Voltic has 45% market share, Everpure 25%, SBC 9%, Coca-Cola with 9% and Special Ice 6%. These market share data are comparatively high especially Voltic and Everpure. The perception of customers, distributors and retailers, management execution of branding techniques and the employee commitment to branding of the bottled water products translates in high market shares of the case companies. This confirms the research findings C of Cho and Pucik (2005), which states "The higher the quality, the popular the brand and the greater the market value performance".

### 4.7.1.3 Profitability

The Brand Managers interviewed pointed out that their companies since applying their various branding and quality strategies have continually logged high levels of profit from year to year. None of the companies approached reported having recorded losses after implementing brand management systems. This finding endorses Finding B of research by Cho and Pucik (2005), which states that "The higher the quality, the more impact the branding makes on sales and the greater the profitability performance".

### 4.8 Commonalities of Findings from Respondents

➤ Managers" response to effect of implemented branding techniques on the performance of the Company is in direct alignment with trend of responses from consumers and Distributors.

- Distributors, Employees and Consumers expressed inadequate platforms for receiving consumer feedback which is critical for product brand innovation.

- Distributors/Retailers respondents" ratings for most selling brand of bottled water tallies with Consumers highest preference.

- Employees of producing companies and Distributors/retailers of poor involvement or engagement in brand building.

- Consumers and Distributors/ Retailers expressed that price of the products is less influential for brand selectivity than quality and marketing techniques.

- Both Consumers and Distributors/Retailers were of the view that some good brands are not appealing by way of their packaging.

## 4.9. Difference in Findings from Respondents

- Managers generally expressed that, branding and quality management strategies are perfectly being adhered to whereas employees revealed that the resources allocated to brand improvement is insufficient.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1. Introduction

This part provides the summary and conclusion on the discoveries of the research and provides endorsements for decision making and execution built on the discoveries of the study. Suggestions are also offered for further research on the bottle water market in Ghana.

### 5.2 Summary of Main Finding

The research primarily tries to assess the effect of branding on the performance of bottle water producing companies in Ghana. In achieving this goal, employees and managers of bottle water companies, retailers/distributors and consumers of bottled water products were engaged to explore the prevailing perception of the general public on some brands, what factors constitute the brands, the value consumers place on some brands, the key determinants that inform consumers choice of brand of bottle water and also make appropriate recommendations for a more competitive bottled water market.

### 5.3 Consumer perception and effect on Brand/Organizational performance It is

crucial for organizations to sustain a close relationship with their customers in order to know their wants and measure how it has been fruitful in meeting up to customer‟s want (Filippini and Forza, 1998).

It is identified that, the degree of quality issues raised and the level of response by producers affects the loyalty to the brand of bottled water. More so, media advertisements of brands yield good response from consumers. This is believed to work on the perception of consumers and appeal to their taste.

### 5.3.1. Brand Quality and Customer Response

One of the specific aims of the study was to assess the effect of branding of bottle water on customer loyalty. It was therefore realized that branding is the complex collection of everything the consumer will want in one package. In view of this, bottle water companies whose brands are soaring in the industry adopt a holistic management approach of ensuring that both the content, the packaging of their products as well as their customer service are excellently pursued.

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. The brand as much as practicable must represent the absolute need of the customer. It was discovered from the study that the most preferred brand of bottle water on the market received the least rating for quality complaints. This finding confirms the direct proportionality between quality and performance of a product brand. Therefore a bottled water producing company that is proactive in ensuring quality improves in performance

The study also made a discovery that the brands that had few or no records of quality complaints simultaneously received the greatest rating of preference.

### 5.3.2 Pricing and Consumer Response

It was also realised that the price of a brand was not of most concern to the consumer than the quality of the content such as being odourless, colourless, devoid of impurities. Basically, the greater size of the populace that regularly consume bottle water are not very price sensitive. They are characterised most with the demand for quality to meet their high taste standard. This most probably explains why Voltic, the leading brand is

most price inelastic (still sells more in volumes at a higher price) even in the midst of many other brands in the market.

### 5.3.3 Lack of Adequate Platforms for Consumer Feedback

It was also identified that even though management of bottle water establishments adapt to the client-friendly concept, it is not practiced efficiently. It was revealed that the enterprises were rather found to be more bent on achieving efficiency and lucrativeness high above attaining client gratification. There was no clear substantiation to proof that client involvement was incorporated in the production practices of bottle water firms. The brand managers cross-examined gave no convergent impression or clear records attesting to any customer feedback input in their production procedures. Furthermore it detected that there were either no prevailing suitable channels in the bottle water industry for receiving consumer reaction which is necessary in realizing consumer contentment and therefore improving in brand innovation.

### 5.3.4 Impact of Advertisement on Consumers' Choices

The outcome of the study also registered clearly that the electronic and print media advertisement, influences the choice of many consumers as to what brand to purchase. This evidently applied to those who are not strictly acclimatised with a particular brand or two. A few consumers of bottle water are "die hard" patrons of specific brands and this category appears to be more regular in the consumption of bottle water than the "floater" patron, therefore more influential on the demand side of the market.

### 5.3.5 Distribution of Brands

It was established from the study that, one of the factors costing the performance of most water bottling companies in terms of relative market share and growth is the insufficient distribution channels instituted by the companies themselves. This has resulted in a demand deficit is certain packets of the broad market. Consumers, who desire to

purchase a particular brand, end up patronising another brand just because the former is unavailable. The leading brands such as Voltic, Everpure, Bonaqua and Special Ice were found to be widely distributed on the market; on shop shelves, depots, restaurants, recreational centres, market centres, bus terminals and even on the streets. The least available brands on the market are perceived to be the ones.

## 5.4 Prominent Determinants of Brand Selection

Consumers of bottled water have expectations like any other consumer of any product or service. In a case where the variable that defines the particular product are numerous, the prospective consumer weighs the variables in according with his priority of needs that the product/service is intended to meet.

From the study, a number of variables that consolidates into a brand were presented to respondents to determine which was of primary importance to them. The outcome of the exercise revealed that, consumers are very particular about how odourless, tasteless, colourless bottle water is. Interestingly, the packaging and labelling of the bottles were identified to be very influential in the selection of brands. This owes to the reason that, the quality of the top brands of bottle in terms of the taste, colour and odour are very similar. This is due to the common regulatory and supervisory role of the Ghana Food and Drugs Authority on all the registered brands, ensuring that the companies operate within a slim range of standard. When key determinants of quality water do not differ significantly across different brands, other supporting determinants such as design, package, labels as well as strategic marketing techniques become imperative for brand performance. Consumers in modern times are very critical about information about the product they consume such as location of production, ingredients of products, batch numbers, manufacturing and expiry dates. Considerations like appropriate sealing and handling of the product along its supply chain was also of concern to most regular

consumers. These considerations also inform consumers" decision to stay loyal to a brand resulting in performance of producing companies.

## 5.5. The Business Outlook for Distributors and Retailers

95.9% of distributors and retailers of bottled water products revealed that the trade was lucrative. Furthermore the start-up capital needed for vending bottled water is not much. This makes the venture very lucrative and attractive to most people, especially females. The research revealed that most shops sell bottle water as an addition to other products. Most distributors and retailers trade in more than one brand of bottled water products. By so doing, sellers are able to serve their clients with their different brand choices in other to sell in high volumes. This also means high revenue of distributors and retailers. However the volume of sales of bottled water made is highly faced with competition by the sachet category of water which is most highly patronised basically due to its cheaper price. Customers who are not strict bottled water users may lift the sachet over the bottle when both are available just to save money. Majority of the bottled water merchants indicated that their motivation for entering the venture was due to the high turnover and also the high rate of sale.

## 5.5.1 Highest Selling Brand

From the responses of the distributors and retailers of many brands of bottled water, they revealed that Voltic was most patronised, followed by Everpure then Bonaqua came third. Special Ice brand was identified to be the fourth. Everpure however was seen to be the fastest growing bottled water brand given its few years of being in existence.

### 5.5.2 Responses of Distributors to Customer Complaints

From the study, it was realised that the responses of distributors to customer concerns on various quality-related issues on bottled water was just average. This suggests that there is much more to be done to facilitate and augment the responsiveness of bottle water producers are to customer complains.

### 5.5.3. Training/Education of Merchants of Bottled Water

The study revealed that a high number of retailers and vendors lacked adequate education on quality and safe handling of bottled water. The data sourced from the survey even indicates that 53% of respondents revealed that no bottled water producer/company had given them any form of education or training concerning proper handling of packaged water.5.6. The Role of Employees and Management in Promoting Brands

The study revealed some measures put in place by managers and workers of selected bottled water producing companies to enhance branding of their products to boost the performance of the companies in the industry.

### 5.6.1 Imitation Checks and Quality Improvement

It was realised that the registered companies have legal protection and intellectual property rights on their brands to avoid imitation. Most of the companies selected also indicated that they have Quality Management Plans featured in their business plans to ensure that quality of water is not compromised.

### 5.6.2 Employee Training and Motivation

One of the outcomes of this research supported the hint that many bottle water businesses often organise quality management training and workshops for their employees as part of strategies designed to promote the brands they work for. However, majority of the employees revealed that almost all of the trainings held are more of

instructional than interactive, meaning employees are merely told what to do to safeguard superiority of brand, and are not made to comprehend the consequences of what they do. This serves as a disincentive to employees of the companies that act like that and this militates against the objective of building brands to attain competitive edge.

### 5.6.3. Relationship of Employees with Other Stakeholders

It was also established that most of the employees of the water bottling companies were in very healthy relationship with their co-employees, managers and most importantly, their customers.

It was also established through the study that, management of bottled water businesses have a focal role to play in improving the brand of bottle water products. Management formulates policies for the company but fails to do proper internal monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance to the quality standards. Majority of managers indicated they have interactive platform to receive feedbacks from their customers so that at every point, the company is in tandem with the consumer‟s perception of the brand it is offering. However, there were no clear details given about these platforms. Employees are also given the opportunity in water bottling companies to contribute their ideas, skills and innovation to build a brand.

### 5.7 Quality Challenges

The study revealed that consumers encounter some quality challenges which include mild stench, impurities, inappropriate sealing of the bottles, dust on bottles and erasure of labels. These reports were mostly reported of the lesser known brands of bottle water. Producers do not receive sufficient feedback from consumers concerning how they find their brand.

**5.8 Recommendation**

With reference to the research objectives and questions, the findings of this study is employed as the basis for the following recommendation necessary for improving the performance of bottled water companies, especially the less growing ones:

- Companies operating in the bottle water business should employ a more customer focused approach just as much as they concentrate on productivity and profit. There should be a creation of platforms for receiving feedback from Ghanaian consumers. Customer satisfaction should beat the heart of every business dreaming to grow. Once customers" standard of expectation is met by way of quality, they are very likely to be retained and they become loyal to the brand.

- Managers of bottled water companies should strictly comply with quality standards. Sufficient funding and other resources should be provided to the departments responsible for the quality assurance to enable they achieve required quality standard. Also, a holistic integrated approach by all departments in the company to table ideologies bordering on hygiene and brand quality.

- Employee empowerment should be taken more serious through operative teaching to ensure efficiency. This is one of the crucial recipes required to advance the performance of every line of business including the bottled water sector. Not only will regular training build their capacity to solve quality related problems, but enable them to market the brands in a more strategic manner.

- The managing of brands requires high level of multi-disciplinary efforts. The crusade to promote a brand of bottled water will be fruitless if the distributors and retailers that serve as the interface between producers and consumers are not adequately trained to handle water products safely. In view of this, companies

should endeavour to identify and engage merchants of their brands in a comprehensive training on how to promote the brand.

- It is also recommended that, companies do not consider producing bottled water at a cheaper cost at the expense of the quality in an attempt to fix low price. This is because the study has revealed that the categories of people who regularly consume bottled water are not very price sensitive. Their choice of brand is primarily influenced by quality of content and packaging. It is therefore very important and profitable in the long term for producers to note that, investing enough resources into producing a highly competitive brand will be a smarter decision than rather resorting to a low-cost strategy in an attempt to sell cheaper below the market price.

- It is also recommended that, television and radio advertisement is adopted as part of the marketing strategies. As established by the study, many consumers are not strict loyals to any particular brand of bottled water and are prone to influence by advertisement in choosing a brand. Less popular companies can adopt this approach in target for the consumers who are yet to settle on a brand.

## 5.9 Conclusion

Many bottled water companies in Ghana are dying out because they are unable to compete in the market. Key in these reasons includes the inability to build and manage their brands through adherence to quality standards, researches into what informs the consumer‟s choice of brand. An integrated approach that involves all stake-holders; producers, distributors, retailers and the consumers is highly required for ones brand to sear into the minds of consumers. The enforcement of quality and branding of bottled water product has a positive relationship with Companies performance in terms of

growth, market share and profitability. This study has provided findings which will be instrumental to lesser-known brands to improve in performance in the industry.

The determinants that inform consumers" choice of brand of bottled water vary and are weighted differently by them. The low price of a brand of bottle water is identified not to be a strong reason why many consumers will choose a brand. Quality of the water, packaging and labelling are very imperative for customer interest.

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APPENDIX A

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

ABOUT BRAND MANAGEMENT IN CASE STUDY COMPANY

The purpose of this interview is to understand the business profile of your company and also establish and review the type of brand promotion and management strategies being used.

Interview Questions:

**Company profile**

1. Tell us about your company with emphasis on company‟s history, mission, vision and business model.

**Brand Management**

2. Who is responsible for ensuring product brand quality?

3. Which guiding principles does your company use in developing its brands?

4. Describe the challenges involved in implementing these guiding principles.

5. What brand quality management strategies do you employ?

6. How many years has the brand been in existence?

7. Who initiated this particular brand?

8. What role was played by upper management in establishing and managing the brand of the product?

9. Were there any problems introducing the brand into the market?

10. What improvements have been made to the brand over the years?

11. How do employees view this brand among others?  12. Describe the impact of the brand on company‟s overall performance ie. Competitive advantage, growth, productivity, profitability, production cost, customer satisfaction, loyalty and perception, market share, etc.

13. Do you think the regulatory agencies (GSB, AGI and FDB) are doing enough to ensure sustainability of quality best practices in the FMCG industry where bottle mineral water sector is identified?

**Employee Relations**

14. How many people does your company employ?

15. Describe the relationship between management and employees.

16. What incentives and welfare policies have been put in place for employees?

17. Are they adequate and, what more do management intend to do for employee welfare?

**Employee Training and Empowerment**

18. Do you organize training programs to improve the capacity of your employees?

19. What specific programs are organized and how often?

20. Are employees made part of decision making?

21. Are employees adequately compensated?

**Customer Relations**

22. What kind of relationship exists between customers and the company?

23. What do you do to keep your customers satisfied?

24. Do you receive complaints and feedback from your customers?

25. How are the complaints and feedback handled?

26. How has consumers" feedback/opinion specifically affected operations or processes?

**Business Model**

27. Who are your target customers?

28. Do you employ the services of distributors and retailers?

29. If yes, what criteria do you use in selecting your distributors?

30. What is the relationship between the company and the distributors?

31. Do you monitor the distributors and retailers?

32. Do you organize training programs for the distributors, retailers and vendors?

33. If yes, how often and how effective are these training programs?

Any other comments………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

ABOUT EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND INVOLVEMENT IN BRAND QUALITY

This questionnaire is for investigating the involvement of employees in achieving product brand quality. I would greatly appreciate if you would answer these questions which forms part of a graduate student thesis. Thank you very much for your help.

A. (Please tick (√) the correct answer as pertaining to you.)

Personal Information

1. Age: [Under 20] _____, [20-29] _____, [30-39] _____, [40 and above] _____.

2. Gender: [Male] _____, [Female] _____.

3. Educational background: [No Education] _____, [Elementary] _____, [J.H.S], _____, [S.H.S] _____, [Diploma] _____, [Degree] _____.

4. Company Name: _____

5. Job position (please specify): _____.

Indicate the level of satisfaction for each question with the following descriptions (Please circle the appropriate number).

Very Good [5], Good [4], Average [3], Below Average [2], Poor [1], Very Poor [0]

| FEATURE | V | P | B | A | G | V |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The work in totality | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Working conditions | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Importance of job to you | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Salary and welfare | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Management praise and punishment policies | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Safety conditions and Health insurance | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Steadiness of job | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Possibility of layoff and transfer | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Knowledge of brand promotion practices | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Regular training on brand quality issues | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Personal involvement in brand promoting programs | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Incentives for achieving quality targets | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Incentives for creativity and innovation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationship and communication with managers | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Relationship with other employees | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Relationship with customers | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Company policies and administration | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ability and skill of supervisor(s) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Assistance by managers with difficult problems | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Suitability of job to your skills/ability/qualifications | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Opportunities for promotion/career advancement | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Participation in making decisions<br>Achievement and recognition | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX C

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

ABOUT CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF BOTTLE WATER

This questionnaire is for investigating consumer view of bottle water products in Ghana. I would greatly appreciate if you would answer these questions which forms part of a graduate student thesis. Thank you very much for your help.

**A.** (Please Tick (√) the correct answer as pertaining to you.)

**Personal Information**

1. Age: [Under 20]_____, [20-29] _____, [30-39] _____, [40-49] _____, [50-59]____, [60 and above] _____

2. Gender: [Male] _____, [Female] _____.

3. Occupation: _____ , If a student, please specify level of education: _____

4. Location: [Accra] _____, [Kumasi] _____.

**Packaged Water Consumption & Purchasing Habits**

5. Do you drink sachet and/or bottle water? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

6. Which one of these do you prefer? Answer: [Sachet Water] _____, [Bottle Water] _____, Hand-Tied Sachet Water _____.

7. Which one of these do you normally drink? Answer: [Sachet Water] _____, [Bottle Water] _____, Hand-Tied Sachet Water _____.

8. How many bottles do you normally drink in a day? Answer: 1[ ] 2[ ] 3[ ] 4 [ ] 5[ ] 6[ ] Over 6[ ] – Please Specify capacity of Bottle 1.5litre [ ], 1litre [ ], 750ml [ ], 500ml [ ] }

9. Where do you normally drink bottle water? Answer: [At Home] _____, [In Public] _____, [Both at home & in public] _____.

10. Where do you normally purchase bottle water? Answer: [From shops] _____, [From vendors by the roadside] _____, [At lorry parks and stations] _____.

11. Which of brand of bottle water do you normally prefer and purchase? Answer: Aqua Splash ___, BonAqua _____, Everpure _____, Voltic _____, Other (pls specify) _____.

12. Do you always readily get your preferred choice/brand of bottle water to buy? Answer: YES[ ] NO [ ]

13. In case of non-availability of your preferred choice at the purchase point, do you purchase any other brand available? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

14. Have you ever encountered quality problems with any of the above named brands of bottled water products? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

15. If you answered yes to the above, did you report the problem to the employees of the company concerned? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ] N/A [ ]

16. If you reported the problem, what response did you get and how quick was the response?

……………………………………………………………………………………………
………..
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……….

17.     Do you think Voltic, the market and price leading brand is **doing enough** to ensure quality of bottle water products than the other brands? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

18.     Do you think Voltic, the market and price leading brand is **doing nothing extraordinary** to ensure quality of bottle water products than the other brands? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

19.     The retail price of Voltic is higher than the other brands; would you still prefer buying it to its competing brands? Answer; Yes {   } No {   }

**B**. Indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following features of bottle water products. (Please circle the appropriate number).
Very Good [5], Good [4], Average [3], Below Average [2], Poor [1], Very Poor [0].

Favourite Brand……………………………………….

| FEATURE | V | P | B | A | V | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Easy availability of your favourite brand of bottle water | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Price of your favourite brand of bottle water | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Taste of your favourite brand of bottle water products | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Water colour of your favourite brand of bottle water | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Clarity of labelling on your favourite brand of bottle water products | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall quality of sachet water products on the market | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Always [0], More often [1], Less Often [2], Sometimes [3], Few times [4], Never [5]

**Have you ever experienced any of the following?**

| FEATURE | A | M | L | S | F | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Presence of bad smell or odour in your favourite brandof bottle water | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Presence of impurities/particles in your favourite brand of bottle water | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Dust particles on the bottle of favourite brand | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Suggestion**

What would you like to be done to improve the quality of sachet/bottle water products?

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

ABOUT BRAND PREFERENCE OF DISTRIBUTORS/RETAILERS/VENDORS OF

BOTTLE WATER

This questionnaire is designed to determine the rationale behind the choice or trade of certain brands of bottle water by distributors, retailers and vendors. I would greatly appreciate if you would answer these questions which form part of a graduate student thesis. Thank you very much for your help.

**A.** (Please Tick (√) the correct answer as pertaining to you.)

**Personal Information**

1. Age: [Under 20]_____, [20-29] _____, [30-39] _____, [40-49] _____, [50-59]____, [60 and above] _____.

2. Gender: [Male] _____, [Female] _____.

3. Venture/Business Name: _____

4. Business Type: [Distributor] _____, [Retailer] _____, [Distributor & Retailer] _____
[Vendor] _____, (Other- Please Specify) _____.

5. Location: [Accra] _____, [Kumasi] _____.

**Business Aspect**

6.  How many years have you been in this business? Answer: 1 yr [ ], 2 yrs [ ], 3 yrs [ ], 4yrs [ ], 5 yrs [ ], Over 5 yrs [ ]

7.  What motivated you to start this business? Answer: _____.

8.  How did you raise the start-up capital? Answer: [Personal Funds] _____, [Loan] _____, [Sachet/bottle Water Company Start-up Credit/Stock] _____, [Other- Please specify] _____.

9.  How many cartons of bottle water do you usually sell in a day? Answer: [Please Specify] _____.

10. Is the bottle water selling business/venture profitable? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

11. Do you sell more than one brand? Answer: YES [ ] NO [ ]

12. If yes for above, please provide reason(s): _____.

13. Which of these brands do you sell? Answer: AquaSplash ____, BonAqua _____, Everpure _____, Voltic _____, Other (pls specify) _____.

14. Why do you sell this particular brand(s)? Answer: [High customer demand] _____, [Contract restrictions] _____, [Favourable Purchase Terms from supplier] _____, [Other- please specify] _____.

15. Has the company whose products you sell ever given you education or training on hygienic and safe handling of the water products? YES [ ] NO [ ]

16. {For those already in a contract with a particular supplier/producer} Do you also wish to deal in other brands? YES [ ] NO [ ]. Please Explain:
…………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………
……….

17. Have your customers ever complained or expressed quality concerns about the packaged water you sell? YES [ ] NO [ ]

18.     If YES, how did you handle the complaint(s) and what was the result?
        Answer:

………………………………………………………………………………………
……

   **B.** Indicate how you view the following features of sachet/bottle water producers
   and their products. (Please circle the appropriate number).
   Very Good [5], Good [4], Average [3], Below Average [2], Poor [1], Very Poor
   [0].

| FEATURE | V | P | B | A | G | V |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency of supply of bottle water products | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Frequency of supply of most selling brand | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Relationship with suppliers/producers | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Absence of product defects (eg. leakages) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Continuous improvement in products quality over the years | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Producer's response to complaints | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Profitability of business/venture | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Producer's efforts against counterfeit products(imitations) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Suggestion

1.          What would you recommendation that bottle water companies
            do to improve upon the quality and brand of their products?
………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………
…………
2.                Any  other  comments:
………………………………………………………………….......................................
......................................................................................................................................