

Direct And Indirect Effect Of Store Awareness And Store Perceived Quality On Store Brand Choice. Empirical Evidence From Selected Supermarket Retail Industry In Kenya.

Simiyu Gabriel¹, Dr. Ronald Bonuke²

¹(Marketing & Logistics Department, School of Business and Economics, Moi University, Kenya.)

²(Marketing & Logistics Department, School of Business and Economics, Moi University, Kenya.)

Abstract: *The aim of this study was to examine the direct and indirect effect of store awareness and store perceived quality on store brand choice. Explanatory research design and systematic sampling technique was used to collect data with the aid of a questionnaire from a sample size of 384 of shoppers. Reliability test of the research instrument was done by the use of Cronbach alpha. In order to test the hypotheses, and the mediation effect, bootstrapping procedure was followed by testing the direct and indirect effect. The findings shows the significant direct effect of store awareness on both store brand choice and store perceived quality. Store perceived quality was also found to significantly, positively and directly affect store brand choice. Lastly the result shows that Store perceived quality mediates the relationship between Store awareness and Store brand choice, hence providing new knowledge in research literature. Marketers have to recognize the central role of perceived product and service quality through creation of awareness strategies like having unique symbols or logos of their stores in order to be able to anticipate store royalty from customers and consequently purchase behavior.*

Keywords: *Store awareness, Store brand choice, Store perceived quality.*

I. Introduction

Due to the diversity in the consumer markets and increasingly saturated supermarkets in the retail industry, stores that offer quality products and better services will definitely have an advantage over the others [1]. In recent times consumers choose their favorable and familiar brands or stores due to the rise in their consciousness. Consequently in order for stores to compete with others they must create love for their brands in the minds of consumers. This desire for differentiation is responsible for the development of brands which leads to store brand choice that satisfies the consumers' needs and wants [1]. According to [2], brand is a name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or service as distinct from those of other sellers. A brand is also a company's promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits, services and experiences consistently to buyers. It can be thought of as a contract to the customer regarding how the product or service will deliver value and satisfaction [3]. Many writers agree that brand loyalty is one of the most sought-after goals of modern marketing management, but also one of the most difficult to achieve [4]. In modern competitive retail markets, growth markets are increasingly scarce and consumers are sovereign in dictating what shape the market will take. Returns can only be made if the customer decides to purchase and purchase again, as a part of a relationship with the store and the brand. [5]. contends that, in today's low growth and highly competitive markets, retaining loyal customers is vital for survival. He says keeping customers is a more efficient strategy than attracting new customers. Keeping customers loyal has however been a hard task to achieve since modern consumers have become more confident and demanding. They simply want products and services that satisfy them and have no time for the ones, which do not. Today's customers are tougher and more informed and so sensitive to poor service that they often walk away and never come back [5]. [6] asserts that as consumers are confronted with more choices than ever before, it is inevitable that making the right store choice can rather be confusing or even intimidating. Consumers subsequently make use of a few evaluative criteria when considering a retail store to shop at. Store choice is of vital importance to success in modern business. Research has shown that store choice is a dynamic decision and can be conceptualized as a problem of deciding when and where to shop. Customers bypass several supermarkets located within same proximity, stocking almost similar products and offering almost same customer services with the mind of visiting only one shop. According to [7], it is not factories which make profits but relationships with customers and it is a company and brand names which secure these relationships. This means that loyalty to the brand or store often determines whether a company makes a sale or not due customer choice. Although past studies have proposed that store awareness and store perceived quality have a direct influence on Store Brand Choice; to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined the moderating effect of loyalty cards on the relationship between these variables and Store Brand Choice in the supermarket retail industry in Kenya. The aim of this study was to fill this gap.

II. Literature Review

2.1 The concept of Store Brand Choice

Store choice is classified in literature as primarily a cognitive process. Store choice behavior of shoppers has been found to be similar to brand choice, the only difference being the importance of the spatial dimension [6]. While brand choice is devoid of any geography, the choice of a store is very much influenced by location [8]. It has much information processing behavior as any other purchase decision. In a study of store choice behavior among audio equipment shoppers, [6] found that the level of pre-purchase information regarding the brand determined the type of store chosen. Shoppers who had higher level of pre-purchase information generally shopped at the specialty store, whereas shoppers with low pre-purchase information bought at departmental stores. This is mainly attributed to customers adopting a risk reduction policy with regards to their impending purchase. A store is chosen based on the self-confidence that the customer has regarding the store about the nature and quality of product and service he would receive. The importance placed on the customer's familiarity with the store will depend upon the perceived risk in making an erroneous purchase and the importance of the product category to the shopper.

The store choice problem has also been studied using the framework of diffusion of innovation propounded by Cunningham cited by [6]. They found that the perceived risk attached to the product is also transferred to the store and such transfer is more likely for product categories that do not have strong brands associated with them. [9] establishes five criteria that affect consumers' supermarket choices as; reliability of the supermarket; short waiting period on check-out lines; correctness of the price tags on the shelves; broad merchandise assortment, and; impressive in-store atmosphere. A study by [10] on Australian consumers ranked influencers of supermarket choice as follows; competitive price; good quality products; freshness; convenience; close proximity to home and; location. While, a study based on Malaysian consumers by [11] ranked influences as; store personnel and physical characteristics; adversity by the store; store merchandise selection; store location; peer influence; product variety and quality; and services offered by the store. This study looks at the impact of store awareness and the mediating effect of Store perceived quality on store choice.

2.2 Store Awareness and Store Brand Choice

Store identity is defined as the name and/or the logo associated with the store. The awareness of the store identity may have an impact on store recall or recognition processes by the consumer [12]. Today, retailers take advantage of changes in the competitive environment to transform store identity into an intangible asset with great value and difficult to imitate [12]. Thus, consumers' knowledge about the store name may lead to success or failure. Looking at the brand arguments of [13] in terms of a store, store knowledge comprises both store awareness, measured by the strength of the store name as a node in the memory network, and store image, measured by the attributes associated with the store. Therefore, store image researchers' dominant conceptualization of store image as congruent to the definition of brand image of Keller and can be defined as the perceptions of a store as reflected by associations with the store held in the memory. Store awareness, which is the ability of a consumer to recognize the store name and to recall the store name, which will activate associations in memory that form a consumer's store image.

Store awareness is the informational node associated with the store name. The strength of store awareness in the memory is reflected by the ability to identify the store under different conditions, including store recognition or the ability to recognize previous exposure to a store when given the store name as a cue and store recall or the ability to retrieve the store when given the retailing category or some other cue [13]. Store awareness plays an important role in decision making; hence it has an impact on store choice. Based on the above discussion, the following hypotheses are presented:

H1: The store brand awareness significantly, positively and directly affects store brand choice.

H2: The store brand awareness significantly, positively, and directly affect store perceived quality.

2.3 Store Perceived Quality and Store Brand Choice

Perceived quality of store is defined as "the consumer's judgment about a retailer's overall excellence or superiority". This definition is adopted from [14] which emphasize consumer's perception over the actual or objective quality of a retailer. Perceived quality is believed to be a type of association warranting elevation to the status of a separate dimension of a retailer's equity. Satisfaction and perceived quality are believed to be highly correlated [15]. The development and management of a favorable store image is a critical aspect of a retailer's capability to maintain his market position [16]. So called power retailers must maintain the consumer's view of their company as distinctive enough to become loyal to them and to go out of their way to shop at their stores [17]. This can be achieved by being price oriented and cost efficient, convenience oriented, customer service oriented, innovative, offering a dominant assortment, and being upscale. The most noteworthy factors for power retailing are the sharp definition of customers and the wants of the customers [18]. [19], suggested that store image dimensions such as quality of merchandise, quality of service, and pleasantness of shopping can

be used to improve retailers' value to the customer. [14] proposed that closing the quality perception gap, identifying key intrinsic and extrinsic attribute signals, acknowledging the dynamic nature of quality perceptions, understanding how consumers encode monetary and nonmonetary prices, and recognizing multiple ways to add value are used to enhance store value. As the store's image is the most valuable asset of a supermarket store, it can be used for establishing a store's competitive advantage via positioning or differentiating from its competitors [12]. Furthermore, a good store image, like perceived store value, is based on a customer's overall perception and evaluation of a particular store [12]. This perceived value is what leads customers to choose where to shop. Based on the discussion made above, the following hypotheses are presented:

H3: Store perceived quality significantly, positively, and directly affect store brand choice

H4: Store perceived quality exerts a significant, positively, and indirect effect on store awareness and store brand choice.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Explanatory research design was used in this study as it was found ideal to describe the characteristics of the variables and at the same time investigate the cause effect relationship between variables [20].

3.2 Study area and Target Population

Four major supermarkets located in Eldoret town, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, served as the sampling frame. The study was carried out between 20th February-18th March 2016 targeting shoppers of; Khetia's, Uchumi, Tuskys, and Naivas supermarkets. The high urban population growth rate has led to the sprawling of supermarkets within the town which makes it a better place to study consumer choice. A survey done by the researcher from the four supermarkets' management on their customer base was summarized in TABLE 3.1 below:

Table 3.1-Target Population

Name of Supermarket	Approx. daily number of Customers	Approx. monthly customers	Percentage Customer base.
Khetia's	4,000	120,000	32%
Uchumi	2,000	60,000	16%
Tuskys	2,700	81,000	22%
Naivas	3,700	111,000	30%
Total Customers	12,400	372,000	100%

Source: Researcher survey, (2016).

3.3 Sampling Design

Systematic sampling technique was used to collect data from shoppers of the named supermarkets. The sample size was determined by the use of [21] formula and distributed according to the percentage of customer base of the stores as indicated by TABLE 3.2.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where:

n = the desired sample size

z = the standard normal deviate at the required confidence level (1.96)

P = the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured (0.5)

q = 1 - p (0.5)

d = the level of statistical significance set (0.05)

$$n = \frac{(1.96^2 * 0.5)(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} \text{ giving us a sample size of 384.}$$

Table 3.2 Distribution of respondents (sample size)

Name of Institution	% share of customers	Sample size-(respondents)	No. of respondents per store
Khetia's	32% (0.32)	384	123
Uchumi	16% (0.16)	384	61
Tuskys	22% (0.22)	384	85
Naivas	30% (0.30)	384	115
TOTAL	100% (1)	384	384

Source: Researcher, (2016)

3.4 Types of data, Sources and collection instruments

Primary data collected from shoppers was utilized to produce quantitative information by the use of a closed ended self-administered questionnaire. The development of questionnaire was divided into a number of steps and guided by the objectives of the study. The first section comprised of variables to be measured using previously developed instruments 5-points Likert scale of (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree, which emphasized on the measurements of independent variable (store awareness), the mediator (store perceived quality) and dependent variable (store brand choice).The second section contained the demographic variables of the respondents, such as county of residence, gender, age, education, income; shopping frequency and monthly average spending.

3.5 Measurement of Variables

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree/disagree with a series of statement about their perceptions concerning the variables. Store awareness, items were adopted from, [22], [23], & [24], (cited by [25], store perceived quality scale items was adopted from, [26], and [27], with few modifications to suit the current study. The dependent variable, Store brand choice, with its items adopted from [28].

IV. Data Analysis

The data contained responses from customer’s questionnaires of the four sampled Supermarket store. 384 Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, out of which 354 were returned, indicating a response rate of 92%.However only 346 questionnaires were used as 8 of them were not properly filled, hence excluded from the final tally. This response rate therefore shows a good representation of the study population as it was above the adequate 50% as recommended by [29].

4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This study included 346 valid questionnaires for the analysis. It comprises 74.30%, (n=257) of respondents from Uasin Gishu county, and 25.70 %, (n=89) from other counties. The gender distribution was 57.80% (n=200) female and 42.20% (n=146) male, with predominant age group being 18-35 years (83%, n=287). Majority, (88.10%, n=305) of the total respondents’ income level was above Ksh 10,000 and 61.50% (n = 213) possessing graduate degree and above. The study also shows that most respondents, 80.6 %, (n=279) do their shopping in a supermarket more than 2 times monthly with 74.8 %, (n=259) of them spending above Ksh. 5,000 of their monthly income shopping in supermarkets. Thus the present study has the well composition of demographical characteristics.

4.2 Descriptive statistics for the constructs, Scale Reliability and factor analysis

TABLE 4.1 describes the summary statistics for the sampled variables. Store Brand Choice shows a mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of .677, followed by Store awareness with a mean of 4.1 and standard deviation of .560, while Store perceived quality had a mean of 3.8 and standard deviation of .642.This signifies that majority of the respondents have the same opinion that this variables influences their choice of shopping store.

4.3 Scale Reliability and factor analysis

Reliability is whether the concept and the results are reliable and if the study can be replicated with the same result [30]. To get a measurement of how reliable the gathered data is, the statistical measurement Cronbach’s alpha was used as shown in TABLE 4.1.The reliability coefficients of all the variables is higher than 0.7 and overall validity of items as 0.873.This concurs with the suggestion made by [31].Hence the questionnaire is reliable and accepted for the study.

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics for the constructs, Scale Reliability and factor analysis

Variable	No.of items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Crownbach’s Alpha
Store Awareness	4	4.094	.55968	-.884	.811	.720
Store perceived quality	5	3.779	.64171	-.234	-.442	.772
Store Brand Choice	5	4.149	.67673	-1.327	2.154	.834
Overall items and validity	14					.873

N=346 *Five point scale: 1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree

Source: Research Data (2016)

4.4 Factor analysis

In order to assess the construct validity, items were examined by principal components extraction with varimax rotation. The Kaiser Meyer- Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was used to compare the magnitude of the observed correlations coefficients and that of partial coefficient correlations. KMO values below 0.5 do not permit the use of factor analysis. The factor loading for Store awareness four items as shown in TABLE 4.2 are; 0.706, 0.764, 0.824, 0.685 and has Eigen values of 2.230 with accumulative percentage variance of 55.741. This means that more than 56% of the common variance shared by the four items can be explained by these four factors. Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) had a measure of 0.706 which is above the threshold of 0.5 [32] hence Bartlets test of this construct is significant with chi-square of 307.077 (p-values 0.000). Store perceived quality five items had a factor loading of; 0.712, 0.810, 0.718, 0.771, 0.598 and Eigen values of 2.632 with accumulative variance of 52.646. Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) had a measure of 0.762. Bartlets test of this construct is significant with chi-square of 455.309 (p-values 0.000). The Factor loading for Store Brand Choice as indicated, shows Kaiser Mayer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0.818 which meets the threshold of over 0.5. Bartlett’s test in the data sets is significant with chi-square of 688.806, with (p-value) at 0.000.

Table 4.2: Factor analysis for all variables

Variable	Scale items	Factor loading	Eigen values	% of variance	KMO	Chi-Square	P-value
SA	I can quickly recall the symbol/logo of this particular supermarket	0.706	2.230	55.741	0.706	307.077	.000
	I know how this shopping store looks like	0.764					
	I can recognize this particular supermarket store in comparison with other stores	0.824					
	Some characteristics of this supermarket come to my mind quickly whenever i think of shopping	0.685					
SPQ	This supermarket provides prompt services at the promised time	0.712	2.632	52.646	0.762	455.309	.000
	The supermarket handles customers' complaints effectively	0.810					
	This supermarket offers quality products that are fully guaranteed	0.718					
	The supermarket gives individual customer attention	0.771					
	The supermarket offers latest products in response to changing trends	0.598					
SBC	I choose this supermarket because it has a large variety of products	0.786	3.072	61.437	0.818	688.806	.000
	I like this supermarket because it offers high quality products	0.828					
	I prefer this supermarket because its layout makes it easier for customers to find what they need	0.820					
	I choose this supermarket because employees' behavior instills confidence in customers	0.689					
	I choose this supermarket because it has a clean , attractive and convenient physical facilities	0.789					

SA=Store awareness, SPQ=Store perceived quality, SBC= Store Brand choice.
Source Research Data (2016)

4.5 Correlation analysis

Since a single construct in the questionnaire was measured by multiple items, the average score of the multi-items for a construct was computed and used in further analysis such as correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis [33]. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables. The correlation coefficient value (r) range from 0.10 to 0.29 is considered weak, from 0.30 to 0.49 is considered medium and from 0.50 to 1.0 is considered strong [34]. However, according to [32], correlation coefficient should not go beyond 0.8 to avoid multicollinearity. Based on the results in TABLE 4.3, the correlation between Store awareness and Store brand choice was the strongest with r = 0.612, p-value, 0.01, followed by Store perceived quality and Store brand choice, r =0.477, p-value, 0.01. Since the highest correlation coefficient is 0.612 which is less than 0.8, there is no multicollinearity problem in this research.

Table 4.3: Correlation results

	1	2	3
1.Store Brand Choice	1		
2. Store Awareness	.612**	1	
3. Store Perceived Quality	.477**	.454**	1

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Research Data (2016).

4.6 Hypotheses Testing

In order to test the hypotheses, and the mediation effect of store perceived quality between the independent variables and the dependent variable, Bootstrapping procedure was followed by testing the indirect effect according to the recommendations of [35]. Bootstrapping is a powerful statistical method for testing indirect effects and computes better accuracy for confidence intervals (CI) of indirect effects in comparison with other statistical methods, such as the causal steps strategy [36] and Sobel test. In this study, both direct and indirect estimates of the generated model were calculated to test the mediating effect of store perceived quality between store awareness and store brand choice with [35] with 5000 bootstrap samples. As presented in TABLE 4.4, bias-corrected confidence intervals were reported at the level of 95%.

4.7 Analysis of results

The procedure for testing mediation as presented in TABLE 4.4 shows the direct effect of store awareness on store brand choice with Coefficient effect of $=.6023$, $SE=.0684$, $t=8.8097$, and $p\text{-value}=.0000$, 95% CI. (See path coefficient c' in “Fig 4.1” and TABLE 4.4). With both LLC1 and ULC1 coefficients above zero (0), it indicate that there was influence of store awareness on store brand choice independent of the mediator store perceived quality, hence hypothesis H1 is supported. Furthermore store awareness was also found to positively influence store perceived quality (see path coefficient “a” in “Fig 4.1” and TABLE 4.4), suggesting that customers prefer stores perceived to have higher quality either in products or services with coefficient value of $.5210$, $SE=.0676$, $t=7.7020$ with $p\text{-value}=.0000$. Since $p<.001$ and both the values of BootLLC1 and BootULC1 are above zero (0), hypothesis H2 is also supported. Additionally, store perceived quality positively predicted store brand choice while controlling for store awareness (see path coefficient “b” in “Fig 4.1” and TABLE 4.4), meaning that those customers who perceives higher store quality also shows higher store brand choice. This is confirmed in the study with coefficient effect value of $.2639$, $SE=.0596$, $t=4.4251$ with $p\text{-value}=.0000$. The BootLLC1 and BootULC1 values above zero (0) and $p<.001$, H3 is supported. Accordant with our 4th hypothesis, there was evidence of a significant indirect effect of store perceived quality on store brand choice through store awareness ($a \times b = .1375$). The total effect model shows coefficient effect of $.7398$, $SE=.0633$, $t=11.6802$ and $p\text{-value}=.0000$. With $BootLLC1=.6150$ and $BootULC1=.8646$. The partial mediation is confirmed with coeff. Effect of $.2031$, $SE=.0583$, $BootLLC1=.0966$ and $BootULC1=.3270$ and full mediation was confirmed with Coefficient effect of $.1137$, $SE=.0327$, $BootLLC1=.0548$ and $BootULC1=.1828$. Sobel Normal theory test shows coefficient effect of $.1375$, $SE=.0361$, $Z=3.8129$ with $p\text{-value}=.0001$ meaning that store perceived quality indeed function as a mediator of the interaction in this study, therefore, H4 and is supported. The result is a contribution to the research field as no other known study has been done using store perceived quality as a mediator between store awareness and store brand choice.

4.8 Conceptual model

In this diagram (“Fig 4.1”), Store awareness represents the independent variable; Store choice, the dependent variable and Store perceived quality represents the mediator variable. It reflects a causal sequence in which Store awareness affects store brand choice indirectly through mediator variable Store perceived quality. This indirect effect represents the mechanism by which store awareness transmits its effect on store brand choice. According to the model, Store awareness can also affect Store brand choice directly – the direct effect of Store awareness – independent of Store awareness’s influence on Store perceived quality [35].



Figure 4.1: A conceptual diagram of the simple mediation model. **Source:** [35].

Table 4.4: Regression coefficients (Coeff.), standard errors (SE), and model summary information of the simple mediation model depicted in “Fig 4.1” for the direct, indirect influence of Store awareness and store perceived quality on store brand choice.

Effect														
Antecedent	M SPQ						Y SBC							
	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLC1	ULC1	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLC1	ULC1		
Constant	iM	1.646	.2795	5.890	.000	1.0956	2.190	iY	.6855	.2701	2.5378	.0118	.1533	1.2178
X(SA)	a	.5210	.0676	7.702	.000	.3877	.6543	C'	.6023	.0684	8.8097	.0000	.4676	.7371
M(SPQ)	-	--	--	--	--	--	--	b	.2639	.0596	4.4251	.0000	.1464	.3814
TEM (Constant)									1.12	.2617	4.2794	.0000	.6043	1.6356
Interaction									.7398	.0633	11.680	.0000	.6150	.8646
								NTT	.1375	.0361	Z=3.8	p<001		
								M-1 R²	.2065	F1 =	59.322	P<001		
								M-2 R²	.4240	F2 =	83.563	P<001		
								M-3 R²	.3744	F3 =	136.43	P<001		

Source: Research study (2016). Significant at 0.001.

Notes: M-Mediator, SPQ- Store perceived Quality, X (SA) Independent variable Store awareness, Y-Dependent variable, SBC-Store Brand Choice, TEM-Total effect Model, M-1=Model 1(Direct effect), M-2=Model 2(Indirect Effect), TEM-Total Effect Model-3(M-3), NTT-Normal Theory Test, F1-3-F-statistics tests

All the interaction produced significant model fit of F1=59.3215***, F2=83.5634***, F3=136.4262***, thus confirming the fitness of the models in the study. The inclusion of the mediator in the interaction (Model-3) produced an overall model fit of F=136.4262, which was significant at 0.001% level thus confirming the fitness for the mediating model. The coefficient of determination for model-1 was R²=.2065 which means store awareness explains variance of over 20.7% on store brand choice. The inclusion of perceived quality in the interaction (Model 2) improved R² to .4240 which means that the combination of the two variables explains variance of over 42.4% of store brand choice. The total effect model produced an improved R²=.3744. The results show an increment in variance of .1679 (R² of M3-M1) in explaining store brand choice. Therefore the model is a better fit with the inclusion of store perceived quality as a mediator.

Table 4.5 Summary of hypotheses tests results

	Hypothesis	Coeff. effect	SE	t	P-value	Decision
H1	Store brand awareness significantly, positively and directly affect store brand choice	.6023	.0684	8.8097	.0000	Supported
H2	Store awareness significantly, positively and directly affect store perceived quality	.5210	.0676	7.7020	.0000	Supported
H3	Store perceived quality significantly, positively and directly affect store brand choice	.2639	.0596	4.4251	.0000	Supported
H4	Store perceived quality exerts a significant, positive and direct effect on store brand awareness and store brand choice	.7398	.0633	11.6802	.0000	Supported

Source: Research study, (2016)

V. Discussion And Conclusion

Theoretically, this study provides new knowledge in the literature as it achieved its main objective by discovering the significant, positive and direct mediating effect of store perceived quality on store awareness and store brand choice. The findings show that store choice is enhanced by the influence of perceived store quality and store recognition or recall. This plays the most important role in enhancing consumers' purchase intention [37]. Therefore a renowned store would be associated with a certain level of product or service quality sold under it. This way, consumers perceive the store in highly reliable, trustworthy, inspiring confidence and meeting their quality expectation [37]. The study reveal that perceived quality of a specific store was found to have a significant positive impact on creating awareness in the mind of customers which leads to store choice. Successful businesses define their strategy around the pursuit of quality. Marketers have to recognize the central role of perceived product and service quality through creating of awareness strategies like having unique symbols or logos of their stores in order to be able to anticipate store royalty from customers and consequently purchase behavior [38]. Businesses should employ strategies that put emphasis on store, product/service features

and cues that will enhance customers' perceived quality. According to [38], cues such as brand name, price, and objective quality information to be related to perceived product or store quality [39], [40]. Businesses should utilize these cues to enhance customers' perceptions of product or store quality. Thus, the ability to provide a high degree of customer satisfaction services is crucial to businesses in differentiating themselves from their competitors [38].

The result shows a significant relationship between perceived value and brand consciousness or awareness which in turn leads to store choice. Consumers would perceive renowned and familiar stores as caring about their needs and offering an acceptable quality. This result is in line with prior studies by [41], [42]. In conclusion marketers should therefore put emphasis on perceived quality programs by providing prompt services at the promised time, handling customer's complaints effectively and offering latest products and services of high quality in response to the changing trends. These marketing programs could mediate the effect of other variables such as store awareness and store choice as proposed in the current findings.

VI. Limitations And Suggestions For Future Study

Due to the limited geographical scope of this research, this study should be replicated in other areas, since it is expected that retail distribution, culture, and consumer habits in each country exert an influence on consumer perceptions. Moreover, this study focused on a single industry (supermarket), results for the proposed model should be compared across different industries such as hotels, airlines, drug store chains or even fuel/oil industries as it might present different results. Lastly, this study looked at the decisions customers make in selecting their choice of supermarket stores at one point in time (cross sectional), a longitudinal time span research would provide more insight on customer's choices and how they build their loyalty with these shopping stores.

References

- [1] Asena David M, Otuya & Maina W. Effect of Customer Loyalty Schemes on Competitiveness of Supermarkets in Kenya. *European. Journal of Business and Management* ISSN 2222-1905. (paper), ISSN 2222-2839 (Online). Vol.6, No.16 2014.
- [2] Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. *Principles of marketing* (11th Edition, New Jersey; Prentice Hall 2004).
- [3] Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. *principles of marketing* (2nd Ed. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India 2001).
- [4] Okutoyi Robin. *Factors Influencing Brand Loyalty amongst Buyers of Passenger Motor Cars in Nairobi*. A research project, University of Nairobi Kenya 2012.
- [5] Kuloba E. Phoebe & Wesonga Justus Nyongesa. *Factors That Influence Consumer Preference for Retail Outlets in Kenya (A Case of Supermarkets in Kisii Town)*, *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development* ISSN 2422-846X Vol.14 2015.
- [6] Kumar P. S., Arindam B., & Dwarika P.U. *Deciding Where to Buy: Store Choice Behavior of Indian Shoppers*. Research article. Vol. 27. No.2 2002.
- [7] De Chernatony, L., McDonald, M. & Wallace, E. *Creating powerful brands* ((4th Ed.). London: Butterworth-Heinemann 2011).
- [8] Meyer, R. J. & T.C. Eagle "Context-Induced Parameter Instability in a Disaggregate-Stochastic Model of Store Choice," *Journal of Marketing Research*, vol.19, February 1982, pp. 62-71.
- [9] Kursunluoglu, E. *The criteria that influence consumers' supermarket choices*. International Conference on Business, Economics & Management. (Yasar University, Izmin, Turkey 2014).
- [10] Batt, P.J. *Factors influencing the consumer's choice of retail store*. (Curtin Business School, Curtin University of Technology, Australia 2009).
- [11] Wel, C., Hussin, S.R, Omar, N.A. & Nor, S.M. *Important determinant of consumers' retail selection decision in Malaysia*. *World Review of Business Research*, 2(2), 2012, 164-175
- [12] Hartman, K.B., & Spiro, R.L. *Recapturing store image in customer-based store equity: a construct conceptualization*. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(8): 2005, 1112-20.
- [13] Keller, M. L. *Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity*. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1993, 1-22
- [14] Zeithaml, V. A. *Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: A means-end model and synthesis of evidence*. *Journal of Marketing*, 52(3), 1988, 2-22.
- [15] Olsen, S. O. "Comparative evaluation and the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and repurchase loyalty", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(3): 2002, 240-249.
- [16] A Coskun Samli, J Patrick Kelly, and H Keith Hunt, 'Improving the Retail Performance by Contrasting Management-and Customer-Perceived Store Images: A Diagnostic Tool for Corrective Action', *Journal of Business research*, (43)1998, 27-38.
- [17] Piyali Ghosh, Vibhuti Tripathi, and Anil Kumar, 'Customer Expectations of Store Attributes: A Study of Organized Retail Outlets in India', *Journal of Retail & Leisure Property*, (9), 2010, 75-87.
- [18] Stern, L.W., El-Ansary, A.I. *Marketing Channels*, (NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.1996)
- [19] Mazursky, D., Jacoby, J. *Exploring the development of store image*. *Journal of Retailing* 62(2), 1986, 145-165.
- [20] Malhotra, N. K., Birks, D. F., Palmer, A., & Koenig-Lewis, N. *Market research: An applied approach*. *Journal of marketing management*. 2003, 1208-1213.
- [21] Olufunke M Ebuehi, and IA Akintujoye, 'Perception and Utilization of Traditional Birth Attendants by Pregnant Women Attending Primary Health Care Clinics in a Rural Local Government Area in Ogun State, Nigeria', *Int J Womens Health*, (4), 2012 , 25-34.
- [22] Arnett, D. B., Laverie, D. A., & Meiers, A. (2003). *Developing parsimonious retailer equity indexes using partial least squares analysis: A method and applications*. *Journal of Retailing*, 79 (3). 2003 161-170.
- [23] Yoo, B., Donthu, N., & Lee, S. C. *An examination of selected marketing mix elements and brand equity*. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(2). 2000, 195-211.
- [24] Aaker, D. (1991). *Managing Brand Loyalty: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*. (New York: The Free Press, 12-25).
- [25] Gil-Saura , María E. Ruiz-Molina , Geraldine Michel & Amparo Corraliza-Zapata, (2013). *Retail brand equity: a model based on its dimensions and effects*. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 23: (2). 2013, 111-136.

- [26] Sweeney, J.C., Soutar, G.N. Consumer perceived value: the development of a multiple item scale. *Journal of Retailing* 77, 2001, 203–220.
- [27] Kaul subhashini. Measuring Retail Service Quality: Examining Applicability of International Research Perspectives in India. *Indian Institute of management. W.P. No. 2005, 10-02*
- [28] Hans S. Solgaard & Torben Hansen. A hierarchical Bayes model of choice between supermarkets formats. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. 10, 2003 169–180.
- [29] Kinyuru R. Njuguna, Muathe S. Makau, & Kerre P.Francis. The Moderating Effect of Industrial Context on the Relationship between Brand Equity and Consumer Choice in Branded Bottled Water Nairobi, Kenya. *European Scientific Journal*, vol.10, (4), 2014, ISSN: 1857 – 7881
- [30] Ahlstrom, S. & Wangsell, N. (2014). The impact of club card on store loyalty: An empirical study of a Swedish grocery retailer. MBA Thesis. Gävle: University of Gävle, 2014.
- [31] Nunnally, *Psychometric Theory*, (McGraw-Hill, New York, NY, 1978).
- [32] Field, A. *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS*, (2nd ed., Sage, London 2005).
- [33] Wang, S. and Barnes, S. “Exploring the acceptance of mobile auctions in China”, *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the Management of Mobile Business*, Toronto, Canada. 2007.
- [34] Wong,C.C. and Hiew, P.L. (2005),”Diffusion of mobile entertainment in Malaysia: drivers and barriers”,*Enformatika*, Vol.5, 2005, pp.263-6.
- [35] Hayes Andrew F. & Preacher Kristopher J. Statistical mediation analysis with a multicategorical independent variable. *British Journal of Mathematical and Statistical Psychology* 67, (2014), 451–470
- [36] Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1986, 1173–1182
- [37] Calvo C. P, Juanatey O. B, Alejandro V. M.F, Pierre J L.M. What matters to store Brand Equity? An approach to Spanish large retailing in a downturn context. *European Research on management and Business Economics* 2013.
- [38] Wahid A. Mohd Kassim,Oswald A. Igau, Amran Harun,Sulaiman Tahajuddin. Mediating effect of customer satisfaction on perceived product quality, perceived value, and their relation to brand loyalty. *International Journal of Research in Management & Business Studies* Vol. 1 (2) 2014.
- [39] Dodds, W.B. (2002) The effects of perceived and objective market cues on consumers’ product evaluations. *Marketing Bulletin*, (13), 1–15.
- [40] Tsiotsou, R. (2006). The role of perceived product quality and overall satisfaction on purchase intentions, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 30(2), 207–217.
- [41] Dodds, W.B., Monroe, K.B. and Grewal D.“Effects of Price, Brand, and Store Information on Buyers’ Product Evaluations.” *Journal of Marketing Research*, 28, (3), 1991, 307-319.
- [42] Baltas. Determinants of store brand choice: a behavioral analysis. *Journal of product and brand management*, 6 (5), 1997, 313-324