

BRAND ASSOCIATION AND CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF MALT DRINKS IN ANAMBRA STATE OF NIGERIA

¹Anetoh, John Chidume & ²Moguluwa, Shedrack Chinweuba

¹Department of Marketing, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State

²Department of Marketing, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria

E-mail: anetohjohn@yahoo.com, shedrack.moguluwa@unn.edu.ng

Corresponding author: Anetoh, John Chidume

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of brand association functions on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to: determine the influence of status function on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria; evaluate the influence of guarantee function on consumer patronage; investigate the influence of personal identification function on consumer patronage; ascertain the influence of social identification function on consumer patronage; assess the extent status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions jointly predict consumer patronage of malt drinks; determine the influence of interaction of stand-alone variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) on consumer patronage of malt drinks. The undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli formed the unit of analysis. The study utilized 357 usable copies of the questionnaire for analysis. Cross-sectional survey method was used while the data source for analysis was primary. Data generated were analyzed while the formulated hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. The result revealed that the status and guarantee functions as well as the interaction of stand-alone variables have strong positive significant influences on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria while personal identification and social identification functions of brand association have less significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. The result also revealed that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are jointly significant contributors to prediction of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The major finding is that the guarantee and status functions of brand association as well as the overall result of interaction of stand-alone variables have significantly and positively influenced consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. It was also discovered that among all the brand association functions, guarantee and status functions are major determinants of consumer patronage while others seem to have played minor role in terms of influencing consumer patronage. Based on the findings, the study recommends the formulation and operationalization of consumer-oriented strategies geared toward improving on personal and social identification functions of brand association for enhanced and sustainable consumer satisfaction & patronage toward the purchase and consumption of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria and beyond.

Key words: Brand Association Functions, Consumers' Patronage, Malt Drinks, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of manufacturing sector in Nigeria and throughout the world cannot be over emphasized. Many Nigerians are sustained by manufacturing-based economy. Records have shown that beverage, food and tobacco manufacturing

industry have contributed to Nigerian. Gross Domestic Product; 4.21% in 2010; 4.24% in 2011; 4.40% in 2012; 4.76% in 2013; 4.76% in 2014; 4.56% in 2015; and 4.04% in 2016 (CBN Statistics Database, 2017). Recently, the beverage producing firms in Nigeria is growing rapidly while consumers' need for improved product is rising drastically. Etymologically, beverage generally implies drinks while malt specifically is a non alcoholic beverage produced from barley or other grains. Many brands of malt drink abound in Nigeria; Vitamalt, Grand malt, Amstel malt, Malta Guinness, Hi-malt, Royale malt, Malta Gold, Nasmalt, Champ malt, Maltina, Maltex, Dubic malt, Beta malt etc. Significantly, the importance of brand association of malt drinks has become obvious in recent years because of increasing competition and growing consumers demand (Yung, Lee & Lai, 2009). Brand association provides consumers with purchasing reasons. Brand associations are linked to brand attributes, attitudes and functions/benefits that consumer needs, which eventually form the foundation of brand patronage and consumer purchasing decisions (Len, Cindy & Lynn, 2007). Powerful brands create meaningful images in the minds of consumers and this is what is simply called brand association (Keller, 2001). Increasing quantities of products are sold on self-service basis and branding must perform many of those sales tasks in the mind of numerous consumers through brand association. A brand is any word, letter, symbol, device, design, term or a combination of any of these that is used by a manufacturer or seller to identify his goods or services and to differentiate them from those of the competitors (Olakunori, 1999).

The importance of brand association functions cannot be over gain said since they portray brand values, benefits, advantages and promises in satisfying consumers (Yung et al., 2009). Brand association functions bring brand prestige; approval, reputation and credibility which make consumers develop positive brand experience (Len et al., 2007). Pertinently, Keller (1993) classified brand associations into three major categories: attributes attitudes and functions/benefits. Research literatures abound in attributes and attitudes components of brand association (Low & Lamb, 2001; French & Smith, 2013; Chen, Yeh & Jheng, 2013) while the functional part still have scanty literature. However, attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand, such as what a consumer thinks the brand has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Attitudes are consumers' overall evaluations of a brand. Functions are the personal value consumers attach to the brand attributes, that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them. However, this study focuses on the functional aspect of brand association. Brand association function which is the focus of this study reduces the difficulty and time consuming task by consumers in determining the brand to choose. It is pertinent to emphasize

that many products are sold on self-service or choice basis. Therefore branding must perform special tasks in the mind of consumers through brand association functions. Branding should target to have a strong force because a powerful brand name is said to possess consumer franchise (Adirika, Ebue, and Nnolim, 2001). Apart from the herculean task that is associated with trying to decide what manufacturer's product to buy from in the midst of the unbranded products, other product management decisions would have been practically impossible (Okafor, 1995). Brand association functions play very important role in consumer purchase decision making (Boisvert and Burton, 2011).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The motivation for this study emanated from the fact that it has always been a difficult task to say exactly which factors motivate the consumer to prefer a particular product/brand to another. Some brand managers have paid more attention to price and other factors which in their own estimation determine consumers' choice for their products selection without giving due consideration to brand association functional properties which are deeply rooted in customers' memories and experiences and perhaps influence their purchase decisions and patronage. The resultant effect is that company's strategies for a particular product may fail to capture the desired and targeted goal due to the fact that customers are unpredictable in their purchase decisions. In addition, multiple brands such as those of malt brands seem to pose purchase decisions challenges. Consumers of malt brands may evaluate the brand functions or benefits accrued to a particular brand and compare it to other alternatives prior to purchase. Extant studies on brand association have been carried out by researchers in different parts of the world but with varying findings. Such studies include; Kim, Jin-Sun, and Kim (2008); Rio, Vazques, and Iglesias (2001); Ogba and Tan (2009); Kim and Lee (2010); Rauyruen and Miller (2009). Specifically, Kim, Jin-Sun, and Kim (2008) examined the effect of brand association and equity on guests satisfaction in hotels; Rauyruen and Miller (2009) investigated the relationship between brand loyalty and willingness to pay a price premium as one of the key indicators of brand association; Ogba and Tan (2009) assessed how brand image influences consumer loyalty; Kim and Lee (2010) investigated the relationship between brand association and customer loyalty. However, based on the available reviewed literature, there is no substantial documented evidence that revealed that a study has been conducted on the influence of brand association functions on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. Apart from that, the interaction of variables is still unique in brand association literature. Therefore, it is against this lacuna in literature that this study

attempts to close the gap by investigating the influence of brand association functions on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate the nature of influence brand association functions have on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

1. Determine the influence of status function on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
2. Evaluate the influence of guarantee function on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
3. Investigate the influence of personal identification function on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
4. Ascertain the influence of social identification function on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
5. Examine the extent status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions jointly predict consumer patronage of malt drinks.
6. Determine the influence of interaction of stand-alone variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) on consumer patronage of malt drinks.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on research objectives, the following research questions are put forward;

1. How does status function of brand association influences consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria?
2. To what extent does guarantee function of brand association influences consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria?
3. How does personal identification function of brand association influences consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria?
4. How does social identification function of brand association influences consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria?
5. To what extent do status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions jointly predict consumer patronage of malt drinks?
6. What is the influence of interaction of stand-alone variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) on consumer patronage of malt drinks?

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study is primarily of great benefit to the following; marketing researchers, marketing practitioners, consumers, malt manufacturers and brand managers as well as the government. Marketing researchers are expected to use the findings of this study to expand the literature on brand association as well as its functional role towards eliciting consumer patronage. Also future researchers are expected to benefit from this study since this study will serve as secondary source of data to them. Marketing practitioners are expected to use the findings of this study to form database information and intelligence that will help them to communicate the benefits associated with malt brands as well as while making strategic brand decisions. For the consumers, this study would help them understand other factors besides price that influence their purchase decisions. They can with the report of the findings of this research study be in a position to understand the functional dimensions of brand association especially in eliciting patronage of malt drinks as well as and brand loyalty. This study is expected to be the threshold for policy making among the beer manufacturers and brand managers. This study is expected to serve as a means of ascertaining the true position of customers' experiences, associative memories and preferences; thereby increasing the consciousness of the producers towards formulating good brand policies and strategies. Finally, this study is expected to be of great value to the government through tax as the resultant vibrancy from this study will reveal the potentiality of malt industry in Nigeria.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is limited to the subject scope, content scope, geographical scope and unit of analysis scope. The subject scope of this study is limited to investigating the influence of brand association function on consumer patronage of selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. The content scope of this study focuses on the status function of brand association, guarantee function of brand association, personal identification function of brand association, social identification function of brand association, their combined contributions as well as the interaction of stand-alone variables: thus being the proxies for brand association (the independent variable of the study) while consumer patronage is the dependent variable of this study. However, the geographical scope of the study is limited to Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University all in Anambra State of Nigeria. The unit of analysis is consumers using undergraduate students of government-owned universities in Anambra State, namely; Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. This was informed by the level of enlightenment of this category of people and the fact that they used to drink malt drinks. The selected malt brands for this study are; Grand

malt, Amstel malt, Malta Guinness and Maltina. The justifications for their selection were based on pilot study brand preference by the respondents coupled with their popularity, high market share and availability.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Branding

Branding is a process of intending to identify and distinguish a product from those of the competitors. It is about providing a means of differentiation and has to do with the efforts a firm makes in choosing, developing, projecting and establishing its own brand(s) of products. Branding has been said to be as important as a child's naming ceremony and also as old as creation (Okpara, 2002:160). Branding is such a strong force that hardly anything goes unbranded. Our personal names are branding attempts on us by our parents (Okpara, 2002:161). The popularity of a brand has often been said to be a direct push for sales turnover (Ogbuji, 2008:247). Branding is a fixation of special and unique image or attribute to a particular product which makes it to be exceptional among other products in the eyes and minds of consumers (Ehikwe, 2005:176). Brand serves a lot of valuable functions; brands can simplify choice, promise a particular quality level, reduce risk, and engender trust (Okpala, 2012). Brands reflect the complete experience that customers have with products. Brand plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of marketing efforts. It also brings an asset in the financial sense.

Brand Association

Brand association could be defined as perceptions about a brand as reflected by the cluster of images that consumers connect to the brand node in memory. Brand association is the worth of the brand. It is the inestimable value of brands common to both the manufacturer and consumers, constituting the totality of exceptional values in name, quality, distinguishing marks, consummate personality, acceptable price and standardized distribution network and absolute undiluted customer loyalty. To a consumer, it is the brand or nothing else, and to a manufacturer, brand is the organizational ramification (Ehikwe, 2005:177). Brand association has also been defined as the value consumers assign to a brand above and beyond the functional characteristics of the product though it is generally derived from its features (Adirika, et al., 2001). Brand Association entails the attributes, functions/benefits and attitudes of brand which come into consumers mind when the brand is talked about. Thus, brand associations are the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers. One way to distinguish between brand associations is by their level of abstraction, that is, by

how much information is summarized or subsumed in the association. In line with this criterion, Keller (1998) classifies brand associations into three major categories: attributes, function/benefits and attitudes. Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand, such as what a consumer thinks the brand is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the brand attributes, that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them. Brand attitudes are consumers' overall evaluations of a brand. The associations related to the functions or benefits represent a greater degree of abstraction than those referring to the attributes, and so are more accessible and remain longer in the consumer's memory (Alexandris, Douka, Papadopoulos, Kaltsatou, 2008). Based on working with dimension of brand associations functions, this study is concerned with examining the influence of brand associations concerning the functions on consumers' patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

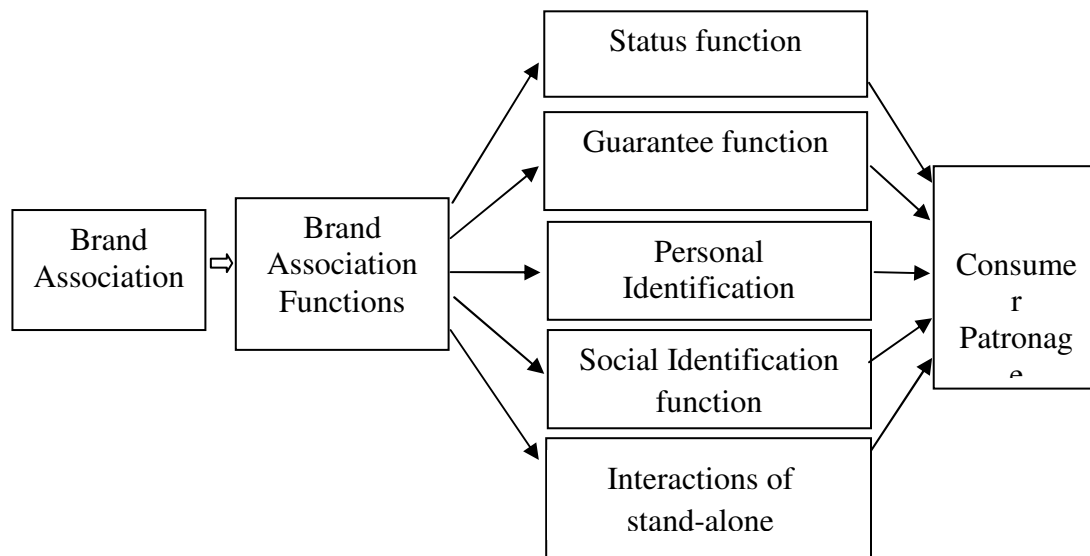


Fig 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Developed by the researcher, 2018

This study is anchored on the conceptual framework depicted on fig.1. Brand association function is an aspect of brand association as depicted in fig 1, we measure brand association functions through the dimensions of brand status, guarantee, personal identification, social identification as well as interaction of status and social identification of brand association.

Conceptualization and Contextualization of Brand Association Functions

Extant literature shows that there exists both product and brand functions. Some scholars do not make an explicit distinction between the two concepts. When conceptualizing brand association functions, the greatest task lies on examining their dimensionality. Perhaps, product functions are associations related to the physical or tangible attributes, and so are present in all products, even in those sold without a brand or with an unknown brand. Brand functions on the other hand are associations related to intangible attributes or images possessed as a result of the values accrued from the brand. They represent benefits that can only be obtained from products with a brand like malt.

The Status Function of Brand Association

Status function depicts the feelings of admiration and prestige that the customer may experience upon using the brand of product (Solomon, 1999). Vigneron and Johnson (1999) opine that this function is based on five characteristics of the brand: symbol of the individual's power and social status; reflection of social approval; exclusivity or limitation of the offer to a small number of people; contribution of emotional experiences; and technical superiority. On the other hand, the status function corresponds to the individual's desire to achieve prestige and recognition from others, without this necessarily meaning that the brand is representative of their social group. The status could even impede the individual's identification with certain social groups. The status of a brand of a product is recommended by famous people with who you can identify (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001).

The Guarantee Function of Brand Association

Guarantee function is the promise or guarantee of quality that a particular product or brand is reliable, efficient to carry out its performance or meet the generated expectations. The guarantee function, understanding by this the promise or guarantee of quality, is based on the appraisal that the brand is reliable, efficiently carries out its performance qualities and meets the generated expectations (Ambler, 1997). Similarly, it is fitting to associate this function with the perception that the brand is linked to products with a suitable level of performance and is concerned about conveniently satisfying consumer needs, contributing variety and innovation (Dubois and Duquesne, 1995). The guarantee function of a brand makes the brand reliable, credible, and trustworthy as well as having the best value for money spent on the brand (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001). Branding is about living up to a promise. It provides customers with the ability to clearly identify with the promise that each brand has to offer. Brand promise refers to the unique offering that the brand means to deliver, whether it is an expected utilitarian function or an emotional experience. The relationship

that the brands establish with the customer will enable the brand to consistently stick to its promise. Brands that fail to fulfill their promises will strain the relationship with their customers and lose their trust. On the other hand, brands that continuously live up to their promise will strengthen their relationship with the customer. Ultimately, it is a win-win scenario for both brand and customer. Brands also provide people with the avenue to construct and maintain their identity (Belk, 2005).

The Personal Identification Function of Brand Association

Personal identification function is related to the fact that consumer is identified with a particular brand of product and develops feelings of affinity towards them. The personal identification function is related to the fact that consumers can identify themselves with some brands and develop feelings of affinity towards them. The personal identification function of a brand of a product make a consumer develops a particular likeness to that brand, make that brand suits his/her lifestyle. It is recommended by famous people or celebrity who is easily identified (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001). In the literature on brand influence, a basic theory refers to the congruence between the consumer's behavior, his self-image and the product image. This theory is based on the idea that individuals can enrich their self-image through the images of the brands they buy and use. In this way, the theory upholds that the greater the consistency between the brand image and the consumer's self-image, the better the consumer's evaluation of a brand and the greater his intention to buy it (Hogg et al., 2000).

The Social Identification Function of Brand Association

Social identification function is based on the brand's ability to act as a communication instrument allowing the consumer manifesting the desire to be integrated or, on the contrary, to dissociate him/her self from the groups of individuals that make up his closest social environment. The social identification function is based on the brand's ability to act as a communication instrument allowing the consumer manifesting the desire to be integrated or, on the contrary, to dissociate himself from the groups of individuals that make up his closest social environment (those people with whom he currently interacts or aspires to do so). The social identification of a brand of a product makes the brand a leader and also makes the brand being recommended by famous people with who you can identify (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001). Consumers interested in this function will positively value those brands that enjoy a good reputation among the groups with which they belong to or aspire to form part of (Long and Shiffman, 2000). Even our social environment has also become more complex. In each specific social environment, different personalities are preferred or expected for a person to express an identity that fits well into the social group.

The Interaction of Stand-alone Variables

The status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions of the brand portray the need for individuals and group to communicate certain impressions and promises about the brand to people in their social environment. They bring prestige and social approval for using a particular brand. They bring feelings of admirations and help to perceive a particular brand as brand leader. They facilitate personal reputations, social symbols and credibility as well as social recognitions and superiority. They contribute to group acceptance and emotional experiences (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001). Specifically, the difference between the status & social functions of the brand lies in the fact that the social identification function is related to the desire to be accepted and feel by members of certain groups in the society. However, the status and social identification functions are respectively related to ego and social needs as reflected in Abraham Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory. The status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions of a particular brand enhances the need for individuals and groups recommendations by the famous people and even the celebrities (Rio, Vazquez & Iglesias, 2001).

Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage refers to the extent to which a customer exhibits repurchasing behaviour, possesses a positive disposition toward the brand/product and considers using the brand/product when the need arises (Gremler and Brown, 1999). Consumer patronage is used to measure the behaviours of repeat customers and also those that offer good brand ratings, reviews or testimonials (Kumar and Advani, 2009). Behavioural patronage represents repurchase behaviour, and attitude patronage means psychological commitment to a brand (Aaker, 1996). Measures of consumer patronage include; repurchase intention, price tolerance, recommending to others (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Other measures of consumer patronage include; commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver, 1999); number of repeated purchases (Keller, 2003); intention to buy the brand as the first choice (Yoo & Donthu, 2001); willingness to pay higher price for a particular brands in relation to other alternatives (Aaker, 1996). Consumer patronage can also be measured by the number of brands purchased, percent of purchases, and future purchase intention (Keller, 1998). When a consumer is satisfied with a brand, he or she purchases that particular brand continuously notwithstanding that the brand may change in quality, may have an increase or decrease in price or even alter in its features (Aaker, 1991).

Brand Association and Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage is a predisposition to buy, displayed by consumers who are establishing brand loyalty (Yuen and Chen, 2010). Consumers could equally be

made to buy a particular brand of product at a higher price than it is worth. Brand associations have positive influences on consumer choice, preferences, purchase intentions, brand patronage, willingness to pay a price premium for the brand, brand extensions and recommending the brand to others (Yoo et al., 2000). Based on the previous studies, brand association has focused on grouping all the functions into a single dimension apart from the work of Hutton (1997). It is pertinent to investigate and analyze the individual brand association functional influence. This would enable brand managers to guide brand decisions more appropriately, identifying the associative functions that need to be strengthened in order to achieve the desired consumer patronage. Sequel to the above stated points, this study attempts to investigate the influence exerted by each of the dimensions of the brand association functions on consumers' patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The following hypotheses, stated in their null forms, are formulated to guide the study:

- HO₁: Status function has no significant influence on consumer patronage of the selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
- HO₂: Guarantee function has no significant influence on consumer patronage of the selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
- HO₃: Personal identification function has no significant influence on consumer patronage of the selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
- HO₄: Social identification of brand has no significant influence on consumer patronage of the selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.
- HO₅: Status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are not jointly significant predictors of consumer patronage of malt drinks.
- HO₆: Interactions of stand-alone variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) do not have any significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Customer-Based Brand Association Theory by Keller (2003)

Keller (2003) propounded customer-based brand association theory which states that brand association is the effect brand knowledge has on consumer response toward the purchase of a brand. The effect occurs when the brand is known and when the consumer possesses favorable, strong and unique brand associations toward the brand. According to Keller, the customer-based brand association (CBBA) has a 'branding ladder', with four steps; each step depends on achieving and fulfilling the

previous one. The first step of the CBBA is the 'brand patronage'. The purpose is to create brand identification and association with a specific product class. The second step is the 'brand salience'. The aim is to establish 'brand meaning' in consumers' minds as well as linking brand associations based on certain properties such as 'performance' and 'imagery'. The third step is 'brand response' where proper customers' responses to the brand identification and meaning are elicited. 'Brand relationships' constitutes the final step in the CBBE pyramid where brand response is converted to an intense, active loyalty relationship, resonance and functional relationships between the customers and the brand. Therefore, this study is anchored on this theory.

Review of Empirical Studies

Ogba and Tan (2009) investigated how brand association influences customer loyalty and customer commitment in Chinese mobile phone market. Data were gathered from 250 participants via questionnaire having 26 items. Items related to commitment and brand was adapted from Ogba (2008). Exploratory factor analysis was used to analyze the data. ANOVA, and correlation analysis were used for the assessment of association as well as differences of variables. Perceived quality, customer satisfaction, customer commitment, brand image and loyalty were extracted after principal component analysis, containing 25 usable items. The findings of the study revealed that brand image positively influences customers loyalty ($r=0.777$) and possibly boosts customer commitment (0.809).

Rio, Vazques, and Iglesias (2001) investigated the functions performed by product and brand associations in the attainment of differential advantages in terms of the benefits perceived by consumers of particular brand of shoes in Spain. Non-specialised sport shoes were selected for the study. Pilot study was conducted in Spanish sport shoes market and the following brands of sport shoes were selected for the study, namely; Adidas (64%), Fila (17%), Kelme (27%), Jhayber (16%), Nike (57%) and Reebok (65%). 1000 usable copies of the questionnaire were valid out of 1054. Product functional benefit, product symbolic benefit, brand name functional benefit, brand name symbolic benefit were the four main constructs used in the study. Items for comfort, safety and duration of the sport shoes were included in the product functional benefits. The symbolic and aesthetics benefits of the sport shoes were measured. Four items measuring the guarantee attributes that the brand gives to the consumer in terms of perceived quality, trust, improved performance and value-for-money were also used. The brand name symbolic benefits were evaluated by eight items. The findings of the study revealed that the benefits perceived by the consumer were highly correlated and depend on the brand-based benefits.

Kim, Jin-Sun, and Kim (2008) examined the effect of hotel brand equity on guests' perceived value as well as hotel revisit intention in mid-priced hotels in USA. The study investigated the proposed model (Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association) versus competing model (Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association) which seemed to fit better in the lodging industry. Convenience sampling method was used. The questionnaire used contained 24 items in three sections; the 1st section was based on brand preference of six hotels under review. The 2nd section comprised of the items as regards to brand equity dimensions; brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association, followed by perceived value and revisit intent. The third section focused on demographic data about the respondents. Brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association had three items while revisit intent had two items. All the items were rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The model used displayed a good fit. The results revealed that brand loyalty and perceived quality have significant influence on perceived value while brand awareness and brand association do not significantly affect perceived value in the mid-priced hotel industry. Also, perceived value has a positive effect on hotel revisit intent.

Kim and Lee (2010) examined the relationship among corporate image, brand awareness, service price, service quality, customer support services and customer patronage in Korea. The key drivers affecting customer patronage to mobile telecommunications service providers were also investigated. Data were collected from Korea via web based survey. Customer patronage was measured by two items, one assessing satisfaction with a particular mobile communications service provider and the other the intention to continue using the service provider. The findings of the study indicate that service quality, service price, corporate image and brand awareness are strong antecedents for establishing customer patronage. Furthermore, the study therefore concluded that the corporate image of mobile communications service providers is most significantly related to customer patronage.

Yuen and Chen (2010) examined the impact of retail service quality and product quality dimensions on customer patronage. Data were collected through a survey method using customers of window fashion gallery. SERVQUAL scale and the retail service quality scale as well as four customized variables related to the retail service quality of fashion gallery were used to measure the retail service quality. Nine variables relevant to the product quality were used. Customer patronage was measured using six variables from the remodified behavioural intentions developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1994). Factor analysis was used while the

values of Bartlett's test of sphericity for the three constructs were significant, which made the factor analysis meaningful. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test of retail service quality, product quality and customer patronage were significant. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the multi-items used in the study. The findings of the study revealed that retail service quality is positively linked customer patronage whereas product quality does not have a positive significant influence on customer patronage.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted cross-sectional survey method to generate first hand data needed in order to get accurate information needed for proper decision-making. The population of the study is the consumers of malt brands using undergraduate students of government-owned universities in Anambra State of Nigeria, namely; Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK) and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU). The geographical scope of the study is limited to the selected University areas under review in Anambra part of Nigeria. The population size of this study is 32,590 (Source: University Registry of the two Institutions for 2017/2018 Academic Session). The population size consists of 20,100 and 12,490 respectively of above stated Universities in Anambra part of Nigeria. The sample size of the study is 395. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane (1973) formula, thus; $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$; Where: N = population size; n = sample size; 1 = constant; e = error margin (5% SL). $n = \frac{32,590}{1 + 32,590(0.05)^2} = 395.15 = 395$ approximately. Therefore the sample size is 395. A proportionate sampling procedure was achieved by adopting Adogbo & Ojo (2003) formula; $Q = \frac{A}{N} \times n$. Where: n is the sample size; N is the total population size; A is the population size of each of the university under review while Q is the sample size of each university. Based on the stated formula, 244 and 151 copies of the questionnaire were distributed at UNIZIK and COOU respectively. The distribution of the instrument for the study was done at Auditorium Hall in each of the two institutions. The justification for using a controlled avenue is due to the nature of the study coupled with the nature of the University system in Nigeria where students are spread across the faculties. To ensure fairness on the sampling method, students were given the opportunity to be evenly selected by picking a card through a lucky dip. Only those who picked (yes) through a simple random lucky dip were given copies of the questionnaire to fill and submit; thus totally 244 (UNIZIK students) & 151 (COOU students) respectively. Prior to the main study, the instrument was validated by three research experts. Their corrections and suggestions coupled with the modifications ensured the soundness, accuracy and as well, that the instrument measured what it is supposed to measure. The reliability for this study was established through test retest method.

20 pilot respondents (students) from Imo State University Owerri were used. The response scores from the first (X) and second (Y) administrations of the instrument were collated, compared and computed. A Cronbach alpha correlation coefficients of 0.962, 0.930, 0.971, 0.976 and 0.921 for status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions as well as consumer patronage respectively, proved the consistency, dependability, compatibility, reliability and appropriateness of the instrument for the main survey.

Questionnaire which was developed from the literature was structured to have three sections; A, B & C. Section A captured the demographic characteristics as well as general information about the respondents. Section B focuses on functional brand association variables while Section C measured consumer patronage. Likert five-point scale style of structured questionnaire was adopted; thus; Strongly disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Uncertain (UNC) = 3, Agree (A) = 4 and Strongly agree (SA) = 5. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the six formulated hypotheses at 0.05 significant levels. The Decision rule for rejecting or not to reject null hypothesis is thus; if the P-value is greater than 5% (0.05) significant level used as standard for rejecting or otherwise for this study, null hypothesis should not be rejected. Otherwise, reject null hypothesis (HO) if the P-value is less than 0.05, the stipulated significant level.

Model Specification & Operationalization of Dependent & Independent Variables

The researcher adopted the model by Rio, Vazquez and Iglesias (2001) and modified the model as thus;

Y = Dependent variable = Consumer Patronage (CP)

X = Independent variable = Brand Association (BA)

Model 1: Stand-alone Variables in Econometric form

$$Y = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 STA + \beta_2 GUA + \beta_3 PER + \beta_4 SOC + \mu$$

Model 2: Interaction of Variables in Econometric form

$$Y = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 STA * GUA + \beta_2 STA * PER + \beta_3 GUA * PER + \beta_4 PER * SOC + \mu$$

Where: α_0 = Constant (intercept), $\beta_1 - \beta_4$ = Coefficient of parameter $X_1 - X_4$, μ = Stochastic error term, STA = Status, GUA = Guarantee, PER = Personal Identification and SOC = Social Identification functions.

Status function: brand association through status function brings prestige which customer experiences when using a brand (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). Brand association brings feelings of admiration. Brand association facilitates status symbol of the individual's power. It brings social approval and superiority (Rio et al., 2001). Brand association contributes to emotional experience and social distinction (Bhat & Reddy, 1998). Guarantee function: Brand association portrays the promise of good

quality and best value for money (Martin & Brown, 1990). Consumers associate with brand because of its trustworthiness in satisfying consumer. It also portrays the promises that brand is reliable (Rio et al., 2001). It also ensures efficiency and good brand performance (Lassar et al., 1995). Also, consumers associate with brand due to its credibility in satisfying consumers. Personal Identification function: personal identification of a particular brand helps a consumer to identify with a particular brand of malt. It helps consumers to develop feelings of affinity with a particular brand (Mittal & Lee, 1989). Consumer enriches himself/herself with self image derived from brand image (Rio et al., 2001). It enhances consumer's likeness to a particular brand of malt. Personal identification with a particular brand suits my lifestyle (Lassar et al., 1995). Social identification function: brand social identification of product facilitates communication integration. Brand social identification helps consumers to associate as a group in a closest social environment (Martin & Brown, 1990). Consumer values the brand that has a good reputation amongst others (Rio et al., 2001). It helps to add value to the consumers. Social group influences the brand preference and acceptance (Lassar et al., 1995).

Consumer Patronage: the status of a particular brand influences consumers to buy the brand repeatedly. Promises made to customers on a particular brand leads to customer retention. Personal identification with a brand facilitates affinity to repurchase it frequently (Rio et al., 2001). Social identification of a particular brand positively influences consumer repeat purchase. I will be buying brand of malt due to its integrating and interactive influences in enhancing satisfaction (Selnes, 1993; Andreassen, 1994 and Hutton, 1997). Other measures of consumer patronage include; commitment to rebuy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver, 1999); number of repeated purchases (Keller, 2003); intention to buy the brand as the first choice (Yoo & Donthu, 2001); willingness to pay higher price for a particular brands in relation to other alternatives (Aaker, 1996).

PRESENTATION/ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data generated from the 357 usable copies of the questionnaire returned (90.3% response rate) out of 395 copies distributed to respondents were presented and analyzed. The demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as the descriptive statistics of the variables were presented while Pearson correlation was used to show the relationships among the variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the prediction and statistical influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender:		
Male	129	36.1
Female	228	63.9
Marital Status		
Single	339	95.0
Married	18	5.0
Age Range		
16-18years	91	25.5
19-21years	144	40.3
22-24years	70	19.7
Above 24years	52	14.7
Average monthly Income Range		
Below ₦ 6,000	6	1.7
₦ 6,000 - ₦ 10,999	98	27.5
₦ 11,000 - ₦ 15,999	111	31.1
₦ 16,000 - ₦ 20,000	43	12.0
Above ₦ 20,000	99	27.7
Favourite Malt Brand		
Grand malt	45	12.6
Amstel malt	93	26.1
Maltina	72	20.2
Malta Guinness	89	24.9
Others	58	16.2

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 1: indicates that 129(36.1%) of the respondents are males while 228(63.9%) of the respondents are females. This implies that both sex were represented and also participated. 339(95.0%) of the respondents are single while 18(5.0%) of the respondents are married. This implies that both single and married people were represented and also participated. Table 1 also indicates that 91(25.5%) of the respondents are within the age range of 16-18years; 144(40.3%) of the respondents are within the age bracket of 19-21years; 70(19.7%) of the respondents are within the age bracket of 22-24years while 52(14.7%) of the respondents are above 24years. From the table, majority of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 19-21years. This implies that youth, strong and healthy people patronize malt brands when compared with underage and elderly people. Table 1 also depicts that 6(1.7%) of the respondents get an average monthly income range of below ~~₦~~6,000; 98(27.5%) of the respondents get an average monthly income range of ~~₦~~6,000 - ~~₦~~10,999; 111(31.1%) of the respondents get an average monthly income range of ~~₦~~11,000-15,999; 43(12.0%) of

the respondents get on the average, monthly income range of ~~₦16,000- ₦20,000~~ while 99(27.7%) of the respondents get on the average, monthly income of more than ~~₦20,000~~. This implies that consumers can afford to buy any brand of malt comfortably. Table 1 finally shows that majority of the respondents have as their favorites; Amstel malt and Malta Guinness. The implication could be due to their taste, popularity, corporate or brand image.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
STA	357	8	24	16.38	3.245
GUA	357	8	20	13.80	2.185
PER	357	8	24	17.14	3.304
SOC	357	9	24	17.29	3.224
CP	357	6	19	12.70	2.327
Valid N (listwise)	357				

Source: SPSS Computations Output, 2018.

Table 2: depicts that the mean scores for status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions as well as consumer patronage are; 16.38, 13.80, 17.14, 17.29 and 12.70 respectively. Based on table 2, the minimum score by the respondents under status function (X_1) responses was 8 while 24 was the maximum score. The minimum score by the respondents under guarantee function (X_2) responses was 8 while 2 was the maximum score. The minimum score by the respondents under personal identification function (X_3) responses was 8 while 24 was the maximum score. The minimum score by the respondents under social identification function (X_4) responses was 9 while 24 was the maximum score. Moreover, the minimum score by the respondents under consumer patronage (Y) responses was 6 while 19 was the maximum score made by the respondents. In addition, the standard deviation for status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions as well as consumer patronage are; 3.245, 2.185, 3.304, 3.224 and 2.327 respectively. The descriptive statistics as depicted on table 2 implies that the variables portrayed significant variations in terms of magnitude, thus suggesting varying estimation levels.

Table 3: Correlations of the Dependent and Independent Variables

		CP	STA	GUA	PER	SOC
CP	Pearson Correlation	1	.432**	.882**	.025	.395**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.638	.000
	N	357	357	357	357	357
STA	Pearson Correlation	.432**	1	.453**	-.025	.982**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.638	.000
	N	357	357	357	357	357
GUA	Pearson Correlation	.882**	.453**	1	.086	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.103	.000
	N	357	357	357	357	357
PER	Pearson Correlation	.025	-.025	.086	1	-.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.638	.638	.103		.870
	N	357	357	357	357	357
SOC	Pearson Correlation	.395**	.982**	.422**	-.009	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.870	
	N	357	357	357	357	357

Correlation is significant at the 0.01-0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Computations Output, 2018

Table 3: depicts correlation analysis which reveals the relationships among the variables. The table shows an absolute correlation value of 0.882 (p-value 0.000) for the relationship between guarantee function and consumer patronage (CP) which signals a strong positive significant link between guarantee function and consumer patronage. This implies that guarantee function has strong positive association with consumer patronage of malt drinks. Status and social identification functions have absolute correlation values of 0.432 (p-value 0.000) and 0.395 (p-value 0.000) respectively which imply weak positive significant link with consumer patronage of malt drinks while personal identification function has an absolute correlation values of 0.250 (p-value 0.638) which portrays a weak positive insignificant relationship with consumer patronage of malt drinks.

Multiple Regression Analysis Result

Table 4a: Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	STA, GUA, PER, SOC ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage (CP)

b. All requested variables entered.

Table 4a indicates that all the variables were entered and none of the variable was excluded from the analysis.

Table 4b: Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.337	.502		.671	.503
STA	.206	.098	.287	2.106	.036
GUA	.917	.030	.862	30.450	.000
PER	-.031	.018	-.044	-1.772	.077
SOC	-.181	.097	-.251	-1.875	.062

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage (CP)

Source: SPSS Computations Output, 2018.

Table 4b presents the regression coefficients (β) of the independent variables used in this study which measured the individual contributions of each of the explanatory variables to variations in the dependent variable. The result on table 4b indicates that status and guarantee functions have positive influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks since they have the unstandardized coefficient values of 0.206 and 0.917 (20.6% & 91.7%) respectively while personal and social identification functions have negative influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks since they have the unstandardized coefficient values of -0.031 and -0.181 respectively. The result as depicted on table 4b indicates that guarantee function contributes most towards consumer patronage of malt drinks while social identification function plays the least role. The implication is that guarantee function is the most significant determinant of consumer patronage of malt drinks and most important predictor of brand association while social identification function is the least as shown by the unstandardized coefficient (β) result. Table 4b also reveals that the t-statistics have the absolute values of 2.106, 30.450, 1.772 and 1.875 for status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions respectively. Their corresponding P-values are 0.036, 0.000, 0.077, and 0.062 respectively. Thus, since the t-statistics measures the individual's statistical significance of the explanatory parameters in the model; table 4b reveals that personal and social identification functions are not statistically significant at 5% significant level whereas the status and guarantee functions are statistically significant at 5% significant level since they have the p-values of 0.036 and 0.000 respectively that are less than 0.05 the stipulated significant level for this study.

Based on the result on table 4b, the absolute value of t-statistic for status is 2.106 with a p-value of 0.036 which is less than 0.05 the stipulated level of significance. The decision is to reject H_0 , which states that status function does not have

statistically significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria. The t-statistic absolute value for guarantee is 30.450 with a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 the stipulated level of significance. The decision is to reject H_{O_2} which states that guarantee function has no statistically significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria. The t-statistic absolute value for personal identification function is 1.772 with a p-value of 0.077 which is greater than 0.05 the stipulated significant level. The decision is not to reject the H_{O_3} which states that personal identification function has no statistically significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria. The t-statistic absolute value for social identification function is 1.875 with a p-value of 0.062 which is greater than 0.05 the stipulated significant level. The decision is not to reject H_{O_4} which states that social identification function has no statistically significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria.

Table 4c: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1509.486	4	377.371	318.210	.000 ^b
Residual	417.444	352	1.186		
Total	1926.930	356			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer patronage (CP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), STA, GUA, PER, SOC.

Source: SPSS Computations Output, 2018.

The F-statistic tested the overall significance of the explanatory parameters used in the model. Table 4c shows that the F-statistic value is 318.210 and that its corresponding P-value is 0.000. Therefore the decision is to reject H_{O_5} which states that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are not jointly significant predictors of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The result on table 4c shows that the independent variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) statistically and significantly jointly predict the dependent variable (consumer patronage) since the P-value is less than 0.05 the stipulated significant level. The implication of the result is that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are jointly significant contributors to the prediction of consumer patronage of malt drinks.

Table 4d: Multiple Regression Analysis Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.885 ^a	.783	.781	1.089	1.841

a. Predictors: (Constant), STA, GUA, PER, SOC.

b. Dependent Variable: Consumer patronage (CP)

Source: SPSS Computations Output, 2018.

Table 4d shows that the multiple regression model (R) used in this study has a correlation coefficient value of 0.885 which signals a strong positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables used in this study. The R-squared (R²) value of 0.783 (78.3 %) which is the coefficient of determination or measure of goodness of fit of the model shows that 78.3 % of the variations in the dependent variable (consumer patronage) was explained by the variations in the independent variables (brand association functions). The remaining 21.7 % of the variations is attributed to other factors not included in the regression model which has been captured by the stochastic error term. The adjusted R² value of 0.781 means that 78.1 % of the variations in the dependent variable was explained by the variations in the independent variables after adjustments were. The Durbin-Watson result on table 4d is 1.841, which is approximately 2. This implies absence of auto-correlation among the explanatory parameters used in the study.

Table 5: Regression Result for the Interaction of Stand-alone Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.337	.502		.671	.503
	STA*GUA	.973	.034	.975	28.485	.000
	STA*PER	-.562	.204	-.552	-2.755	.006
	GUA*PER	.861	.044	.762	19.358	.000
	PER*SOC	-.362	.193	-.358	-1.875	.062
R = .885 R ² = .783 Adj. R ² = .781 F-statistic = 318.210 (P-value = .000)						

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Source: SPSS Computations Output, 2018.

Table 5 presents the result of the overall interaction effect of stand-alone variables. Based on the result, the F-statistic value of the interaction is 318.210 (P-value = 0.000). Since the P-value is less than the chosen level of significance (0.05); therefore, the decision is to reject H₀, which states that the interactions of stand-alone

variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) do not have any significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks. The implication is that the interactions of stand-alone variables significantly influence consumer patronage of malt drinks. Specifically, the interaction of status and guarantee functions (STA*GUA) have positive significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks ($B = .973$; $t = 28.485$; $p = .000$). The interaction of status and personal identification functions (STA*PER) have negative but significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks ($B = -.562$; $t = 2.755$; $p = .006$). The interaction of guarantee and personal identification functions (GUA*PER) have positive significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks ($B = .861$; $t = 19.358$; $p = .000$). In addition, the interaction of personal and social identification functions (PER*SOC) have insignificant negative influence on consumer patronage ($B = -.362$; $t = 1.875$; $p = .062$).

DISCUSSION OF RESULT AND FINDINGS

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of brand association functions on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. The specific objective one was to determine the influence of status function on consumer patronage of the selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. Based on tested hypothesis one result as depicted on table 4b (β -value = .206; t statistic = 2.106; p -value = 0.036). Since 0.000 is less than 0.05 the stipulated significant level; H_{01} is rejected. The decision is that status function has positive and significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This implies that status function of brand association has positively and significantly influenced consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This is in line with the findings of (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Rio et al., 2001; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999) who found that status function of brand association has positive and significant influence on consumer patronage of products. Specific objective two aimed to evaluate the influence of guarantee function of brand association on consumer patronage of the selected malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. Based on tested hypothesis two result as depicted on table 4b (β -value = .917; t statistic = 30.450; p -value = 0.000). Since 0.000 is less than 0.05 the stipulated significant level; H_{02} is rejected. The decision is that guarantee function has positive and significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This implies that guarantee function of brand association has positively and significantly influenced consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This is in line with the findings of (Keller, 2002; Solomon, 1999; Martin & Brown, 1990; Rio et al., 2001; Lassar, et al., 1995) who found that guarantee function of brand association positively and significantly influences on consumer patronage of products.

Moreover, the specific objective three sought to assess the influence of personal identification function on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. Based on tested hypothesis three result as depicted on table 4b (β -value = -0.031; t statistic = 1.772; p-value = 0.077). Since 0.077 is greater than 0.05 the stipulated significant level; H_{0_3} is not rejected. The decision is that personal identification function does not have any significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This implies that personal identification function of brand association has not significantly influenced consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This is in converse with the findings of (Hogg, Cox & Keeling, 2002; Mittal & Lee, 1989; Rio et al., 2001; Lassar, et al., 1995) who found that personal identification function of brand association significantly influences consumer patronage of products.

Moreso, the specific objective four aimed to investigate the influence of social identification function on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. Based on tested hypothesis four result as depicted on table 4b (β -value = 0.181; t statistic = 1.875; p-value = 0.062). Since 0.062 is greater than 0.05 the stipulated significant level; H_{0_4} is not rejected. The decision is that social identification function has no significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This implies that social identification function of brand association has positively but insignificantly influenced consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria. This is not in agreement with the findings of (Selnes, 1993; Martin & Brown, 1990; Rio et al., 2001; Lassar, et al., 1995) who found that social identification function of brand association significantly influences consumer patronage of products. Moreover, the specific objective five aimed to examine the extent status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions jointly predict consumer patronage of malt drinks. Table 4c result shows that the F-statistic value is 318.210 (P-value = 0.000). Since 0.000 is less than 0.05 the stipulated significant level; H_{0_5} is rejected. The decision is to reject H_{0_5} which states that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are not jointly significant predictors of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The implication of the result is that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are jointly significant contributors to the prediction of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The result agrees with the findings of (Ogba & Tan, 2009 and Yung, Lee & Lai, 2009). It also negates the findings of Kim, Sun & Kim (2008) who found that brand association does not predict consumer patronage of products. In addition, the specific objective six determined the influence of interaction of stand-alone variables (status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions) on consumer patronage of malt drinks. Table 5 result shows

(F-statistic value = 318.210 and P-value = 0.000). Since 0.000 is less than 0.05 the stipulated significant level. The decision is to reject H_{06} which states that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are not jointly significant predictors of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The implication of the result is that status, guarantee, personal and social identification functions are jointly significant contributors to the prediction of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The result agrees with the findings of (Len, Cindy & Lynn, 2007 and Boisvert & Burton, 2011) who found that brand association plays a very important and integrating role toward consumer patronage of products. Specifically, based on table 5; the interaction of status and guarantee functions (STA*GUA) have positive and significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks (B = .973; t = 28.485; p = .000). The interaction of status and personal identification functions (STA*PER) have negative but significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks (B = -.562; t = 2.755; p = .006). The interaction of guarantee and personal identification functions (GUA*PER) have positive and significant influence on consumer patronage of malt drinks (B = .861; t = 19.358; p = .000). While the interaction of personal and social identification functions (PER*SOC) have no significant influence on consumer patronage (B = -.362; t = 1.875; p = .062).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study concludes that status and guarantee functions of brand association are significantly instrumental in influencing consumers towards the patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria. The study concludes that the personal and social identification functions of brand association have less significant influence on consumers towards the patronage of malt drinks in Anambra part of Nigeria. This calls for urgent attention by the malt brand managers as well as their respective companies. The study therefore concludes that guarantee function is the most significant predictor of brand association and most significant determinant of consumer patronage of malt drinks. The study recommends the formulation and operationalization of customer-oriented strategies geared toward improving on the personal and social identification functions of brand association for consumer sustainable satisfaction and patronage toward the purchase and consumption of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria and beyond. Malt producing companies and managers should emphasize more on fulfilling promises through quality and taste as well as improve on brand status for sustained consumer patronage.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for Survey

Dear Respondent, please kindly spare a few minutes of your time by filling in this questionnaire for me. The data generated will be used solely for this study and will be confidentially treated.

Instruction: This questionnaire is meant for respondents who drink malt brands only.

Key for Evaluation: Brand Association & Consumer Patronage Scale for Section B and C

1. **SD** = strongly disagree, 2. **D** = Disagree, 3. **U** = Undecided, 4. **A** = Agree, 5. **SA** = Strongly agree

Section A: Personal Demographic Data and General Information

Please kindly tick (/) in the space provided beside each question and fill in appropriate answer:

What is the name of your school? 1. UNIZIK [] 2. COOU []

Have you ever taken any brand of malt before? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

If yes; for how long? 1. Below one year [] 2. 1-3 years [] 3. Above 3 years []

Which brand of malt is your favourite? 1. Grand malt [] 2. Amstel malt []
3. Maltina [] 4. Guinness malt [] 5. Others []

Gender: 1. Male [] 2. Female []

Marital Status: 1. Single [] 2. Married [] 3. Divorced [] 4. Widowed []

Age Range: 1. 16 - 18years [] 2. 19 - 21 years [] 3. 22 - 24 years []
4. Above 24years []

Average Monthly Income Range: 1. Below ~~N~~6,000 [] 2. ~~N~~6,000 - ~~N~~10,999
[] 3. ~~N~~11,000 - ~~N~~15,999 [] 4. ~~N~~16,000 - ~~N~~20,000 [] 5.

Above ~~N~~20,000 []

Section B: Brand Association Scale

Instruction: please tick (✓) by showing the extent to which these items reflect your opinion on brand association function of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.

	Attributes of X	SA = 5	A = 4	U = 3	D = 2	SD = 1
STATUS	St1	Brand association brings prestige which customer experiences when using a particular brand of malt.				
	St2	Brand association brings feelings of admiration on using a specific brand of malt.				
	St3	Brand association facilitates status symbol of the individual's power.				
	St4	Brand association brings social approval and superiority.				
	St5	Brand association contributes to emotional experience.				
GUARANTEE	G1	Brand association of malt brand assures the promise of good quality and best value for money.				
	G2	Consumers associate with brand of malt because of its trustworthiness in satisfying consumer taste				
	G3	Brand association of malt brand portrays the promises that malt brand is reliable.				
	G4	Brand association of malt brand ensures efficiency and good brand performance.				
	G5	Consumers associate with brand of malt because of its credibility in satisfying consumer taste.				
PERSONAL IDENTITY	Pi1	Personal identification helps a consumer to identify with a particular brand of malt.				
	Pi2	Personal identification helps a consumer to develop feelings of affinity with a particular brand of malt.				
	Pi3	Consumer enriches himself/herself with self image derived from brand image.				
	Pi4	Personal identification enhances consumer's likeness to a particular brand of malt.				
	Pi5	Personal identification with a brand of malt suits my lifestyle.				
SOCIAL IDENTITY	Si1	Brand social identification of malt product facilitates communication integration.				
	Si2	Brand social identification of malt brand helps consumers to associate as a group in a closest social environment.				
	Si3	Consumer values the brand that has a good reputation amongst others.				-
	Si4	Brand social identification of malt products helps to add value to the consumers.				
	Si5	Social influence leads to brand acceptance and brand preference.				

Section C: Customer Patronage Scale

Please tick (✓) by indicating the extent to which these items reflect your opinion on consumer patronage of malt drinks in Anambra State of Nigeria.

		Attributes of Y	SA = 5	A = 4	U = 3	D = 2	SD = 1
P A T R O N A G E	CP 1	The status of a malt brand positively influences consumers to buy the brand repeatedly.					
	CP 2	Promises made to customers on brand performance leads to customer retention.					
	CP 3	Personal identification with a brand facilitates affinity to repurchase it frequently.					
	CP 4	Social identification enhances recommending a particular brand of malt to others.					
	CP 5	I will be buying brand of malt due to its integrating and interactive influences in enhancing satisfaction.					