BRANDING STRATEGIES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CONSUMER PREFERENCE IN THE MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY.

A CASE STUDY OF MOBILE PHONE USERS IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS

BY

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A project work presented to the Business Studies Department of Christian Service University College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Business Administration.

JULY, 2011
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

We have read the university regulations relating to plagiarism and certify that this report is all our own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any other source. We also declare that we have been under supervision for this report herein submitted.

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SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision laid down by Christian Service University College

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ABSTRACT

This study traces branding strategies and its influence on consumer preference in the mobile telecommunication industry. The general objective of the study is to critically examine the branding strategies and the nature of influence it has on the consumer preferences. The study involves both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from the people who patronize mobile telecommunications in the Kumasi metropolis. The people were selected using non-probability sampling and a questionnaire design. The secondary sources were the information gathered from books and previous studies and other valuable materials. It was found that customers were aware of the existence of branding strategies and its influence on their choices. Customers were however divided on the exact nature of influence branding has on consumer preference. The study recommended that the firms in the telecommunication industry should redefine their branding tools in order to effectively measure its impact on the customer.
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DEDICATION

Special dedication to the almighty God for taken us through it all.

To Mr. Sarpong Appiah (Lecturer; CSUC)

To our Supervisor, Mr. Frederick Santouh (Lecturer; CSUC)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Branding plays an essential role in the success of a business, especially in a competitive environment where survival of a business depends on the customers’ preferences. In the mobile telecommunication industry where consumers have many alternatives to choose from importance of effective branding prevails. Companies are anxious to separate themselves from their competitors in a unique and inimitable way; brands play an enormous role in achieving these objectives and are almost invariably considered to be the most effective way to attain a strong position in the market.

The path of branding in the mobile telecom industry in Ghana has seen a lot of interesting strategies as the decision by the national communication authority to increase the network operators to six (6) has created a fierce competition. Companies (MTN, TIGO, VODAFONE, EXPRESSO, AIRTEL) in the industry are therefore struggling for increase marketing and survival. Creating customer friendly, receptive and attractive image has become highly important and development of branding strategies has been a vital issue in the industry.

Effective Branding efforts are considered a transition to success, which will continue to prevail on customer attitude towards the choice of brand in the industry.

According to Mooij (1998) brand is a name in every consumer’s mind and it is characterized by a noticeable name or symbol which can differentiate the goods and services from the rivals’
(Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998). In addition to a specific brand name, a brand is also composed of products, packaging, promotion, advertising, as well as its overall presentation (Murphy, 1998). From the consumers’ perspective, brand is a guarantor of reliability and quality in consumer products (Roman et al., 2005). Added to this, consumers would like to buy and use brand-name services with a view to highlight their personality in different situational contexts (Aaker, 1999; Fennis and Pruyn, 2006).

Nowadays, consumers have a wide range of choice to choose from when they decide to use mobile telecommunication service. Patrons of mobile telecommunication services in the Kumasi metropolis for instance has variety of networks to choose from. These include MTN, AIRTEL, EXPRESSO, VODAFONE and TIGO. It is found that consumers’ emotions are one of the major determinants which affect their buying behaviour (Berry, 2000).

According to a research conducted by Freeriden Media LLC (1998) on shopping habits, nearly one-fourth of respondents are likely to be involved in impulse buying due to brand influences. When deciding which products to purchase, consumers would have their preferences, which are developed in accordance with their perceptions towards the brand. Successful branding could make consumers aware of the presence of the brand and hence could increase the chance of buying the company’s products and services (Doyle, 1999).

In the mobile telecom industry like many industries, severe concentration of selected producers is evident, which is an indicator of triumph of companies with the right branding strategies and disappearance of those without such strategies. What are the branding strategies leading to
triumph and what influence them. How the mobile telecommunication operators in Ghana address those and how those branding strategies influence consumer brand decisions is what this research seeks to study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The important role of branding has been studied extensively. The popular view has been that brand has positive impact on consumer behaviour. The effective branding strategies and its subsequent influence on consumer decision according to Davies (2000) depends on developing new organizational norms, so that the brand would report directly to the top of the organization; creating new organizational entities, such as responsible for branding; motivation and reward system for employees and effective internal communication. According to Aaker (1991), measuring the influence of branding strategies largely depends on brand loyalty which is a measure of the attachment the customer gives to a brand. Aaker (1991) maintains that what influences customers most include treating the customer right by fulfilling customer expectation, staying close to the customer through creating customer culture, measuring and managing customer satisfaction, creating switching, and providing some unexpected extra services for the customer. This assertion by Aaker (1991) seems to suggest that branding can be considered a effective tool to influence consumer behaviour only as a supporting strategic tool. This makes it difficult for one to understand the exact influence branding has on consumer behaviour. The study therefore aims at studying the uncertainty surrounding the exact impact of branding strategies of consumer brand preference in the mobile telecommunication industry in Ghana, with particular attention in the Kumasi metropolis.
1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine branding strategies by the mobile telecom operators and its influence on consumer preference. This research work is also designed to achieve the following specific objectives.

- To examine the nature of branding strategies commonly used in the mobile telecommunication industry
- To assess the influence of brand colours on consumers preference in the mobile telecom industry
- To determine the influence of brand name on consumer preference of mobile network
- To examine the influence of brand logo on consumer preference in the mobile network
- To examine the influence of brand slogan on consumer preference of mobile network
- To suggest and make recommendations based on the critical factors that determine consumer brand preference in the mobile telecom industry.

1.3 Research Questions

- What is the nature of branding strategies commonly used in the mobile telecommunication industry
- What is the influence of brand colours on consumers preference in the mobile telecom industry
- What is the influence of brand name on consumer preference of mobile network
- What is the influence of brand slogan on consumer preference of mobile network
1.4 Scope of the study

The study on the branding strategies and its influence on consumer brand preference will be conducted only in the Kumasi metropolis. The scope of the study will also cover all mobile phone users in the Kumasi Metropolis. A study of this nature should have covered the entire country for a broader generalization but the researchers considered proximity, time and availability of funds. The time frame for conducting this study was between January 2011 and June 2011.

1.5 Justification of the study

The study on the branding strategies and its influence on the consumer brand decisions are relevant due to several reasons. First branding strategies in the mobile telecommunication industry, where competitive nature is rising. Secondly, the mobile telecomm industry is often associated with high levels of marketing activities and strategies thereby offering interesting insights into the study area. The study is again relevant because the findings could help companies in the industry to fortify their existing branding strategies.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The researchers encountered some difficulties in the process of gathering information on the subject under study. Among such problems were;

- Finance; The researchers faced financial difficulties such as printing of questionnaires, printing of many copies of the work to supervisor. Also it cost so much having to move from one place to the other to interview respondents. This financial problem prevented
the researchers to conduct a more detail work to cover every corner of the Kumasi Metropolis.

- Time; the researchers needed to complete the work in a short period of time and therefore could not have done a detail work to cover more mobile phone users other than the four hundred respondents.

- Lack of adequate Information; the researchers did not get enough information especially, secondary information on the topic. On the primary data some mobile phone users were not willing to participate.

1.7 Research Design

To be able to achieve the research objectives and provide answers to the research questions mentioned above, the research design adopted include the use of both primary and secondary data. In order to gather the primary data a survey will be used with interviews and questionnaires. The sample size to be interviewed will be four hundred (400). This is because the population of mobile users in the Kumasi Metropolis is in hundreds of thousands and estimated 400 views can help achieve the research objectives. The secondary data to be used include existing material such as publications in journals, relevant literature on the topic, books and internet material. Data obtained will be analyzed with the use of Microsoft excel. Tables and charts will be used for effective interpretation and generalization of the data.
1.8 **Organisation of the study**

The study is outlined into five chapters. Chapter one states the research objectives, research questions, problem statement, research design and justification of the studies. Chapter two reviews relevant literature on the problem at hand, include concept of branding, branding strategies, branding in the services industry and the relationship between branding strategies and consumer preference. The appropriate methodology that will be used in the studies is presented in chapter three, which includes the research design, population, sources of data, sample and sampling technique, data collection tools and data analysis tools. This is followed by chapter four which presents data of the survey and the analysis of the findings which will be done to answer the proposed research questions. Chapter five which is the final chapter presents conclusion and suggestions based on the implication of the findings.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the various literature reviews on the research objectives and the research questions. The area captured in the review includes concept of branding, importance of branding, branding strategies and characteristics, consumer buying behaviour and how branding affect consumer purchasing decisions.

2.1 Concept of Branding

Bennett (1995) defines brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, that is intended to identify the goods and services of one business or group of businesses and to differentiate them from those of competitors”.

A traditional definition of a brand was: “the name, associated with one or more items in the product line that is used to identify the source of character of the item” (Kotler 2000). The American Marketing Association (AMA) definition of a brand is “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. Within this view, as Keller (2003) says, “technically speaking, then, whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand”.

A brand can be seen as a line brand which image is then constructed on a single product or a service, or a brand can be defined as a corporate brand which then represents an organization and its identity (McDonald et. al 2001). Brand can also be identified as an umbrella when several
products or services are placed under a single, coherent brand (Hakenes & Peitz 2008). Values, colours, name, symbols, words and slogans are most commonly recognised entities which a holistic brand image integrates. It has been argued, that once an organization establishes a favourable brand image its main task is to ensure consistency. (de Chernatony et. al 2003). The strength of brand is thus determined by the consistency of the different brand identity components (Burmann & Zeplin 2005). For a brand to flourish, mature and evolve a constant, persistent input of the brand manager and also of employees is required; a brand needs to be lead and developed, or its strength will inexorably perish. In other words, for a brand to be strong, it needs to have more than just appealing advertising (Burmann & Zeplin 2005).

Before the shift in focus towards brand and the brand building process, brands were just another step in the whole process of marketing to sell products. “For a long time, the brand has been treated in an off-hand fashion as a part of the product” (Urde 1999). Kotler (2000) mentions branding as “a major issue in product strategy”. As the brand was only part of the product, the communication strategy worked towards exposing the brand and creating brand image. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) mention that within the traditional branding model the goal was to build brand image; a tactical element that drives short-term results. Kapferer (1997) mentioned that “the brand is a sign -therefore external- whose function is to disclose the hidden qualities of the product which are inaccessible to contact”. The brand served to identify a product and to distinguish it from the competition. “The challenge today is to create a strong and distinctive image” (Kohli and Thakor 1997).
2.2 Branding Strategy

Many authors have proposed that branding strategies can have influence on consumer purchasing decisions. Davies (2000) discusses five important branding strategies; positioning, brand extension, distribution channels and pricing strategies. Positioning means that the brand has unique, credible, sustainable, and valued point at customers’ mind and it evolves around a benefit that helps the product or service stand apart from the competition. Positioning gives the right basis and direction for developing new products, pursuing new markets, communicating and setting prices as well as gives clarity and guidance for internal employees. Davies (2000)

Brand extension means developing new products and services under the brand name. Brand extension should be consistent with brand vision, help to uphold and strengthen brand picture and be consistent with overall position, Davis proposes a process of four steps for developing brand extension strategy; identifying problems and needs, generating brand-based new product ideas, developing brand-based concept and conducting business analysis.

Brand-based communications strategy is the basis for successfully communicating the brand’s positioning to the target market. It covers external as well as internal communication, sponsorships, sales promotions and public relations. Davies (2000)

Distribution channels are very important agents between the company and its customers. In order to best understand and control the effect of channel effort, it is important to identify the channel members and their tasks and to evolve them in creating brand picture and positioning, to keep them updated with extension and innovations. Davies (2000)
Davies (2000) explains branding strategy through setting the appropriate pricing strategy. A premium brand is worth also a premium price and loyal customers are able and willing to pay additional price for the brand they know and trust. Davies (2000)

According to De Pelsmacker (2001, 38), a brand strategy starts with the decision whether or not to put a brand name on a product. Briefly, the strategies applied are the use of individual brand names, family brand (or house brand) names, and the combination of those with single products and/or product lines.

According to Rooney (1995), a branding strategy is essentially aimed at building the brand image, increasing the brand’s value to the customer and leading to brand loyalty. Branding is considered as a major success factor of many products and services, both in consumer and industrial markets. “The value of branding has also been recognized by suppliers who produce ingredients or components that are incorporated into final products” (Norris, 1992). Ingredient branding is an alliance between two brands, based on their cooperation for designing and signing the product (Michel and Cegarra, 2003). “Mixing two or more brands to create a co-branded product has become a common strategy during the last decade, especially in the food industry” (Bengtsson, 2002a). As co-branding strategies develop, Simonin and Ruth (1998) highlight that “the line of research focused on consumer perceptions becomes even more critical for academics and practitioners alike.”

Ingredient branding is not suited for all companies or brands. This strategy can be very beneficial to both partner brands if successfully implemented (Norris, 1992), but can also entail some risks (Boad, 1999). Consequently, when contemplating entering an ingredient branding strategy, host
brand managers have to select the right partner to be the ingredient brand. Moreover, Simonin and Ruth (1998) argue that “brand alliance evaluations have spillover effects on attitudes toward each partner brand.” As a particular type of brand alliance, ingredient branding may modify consumers’ evaluations and perceptions of the brands involved.

Zeithaml (1998) defines perceived quality as the consumer’s judgment about a product’s overall excellence or superiority. This definition can be transposed to brands: “A brand will have associated with it a perception of overall quality not necessarily based on a knowledge of detailed specifications” (Aaker, 1991). It constitutes an intangible, overall feeling about a brand, but is usually based on dimensions including characteristics of the products to which the brand is attached. Perceived quality is an important brand characteristic because it directly influences purchase decisions and brand loyalty. According to Aaker (1991), it provides a reason-to-buy and a point of differentiation.

Brand equity is defined “as the added value that a brand brings to a product” (Changeur and Dano, 1996). It can be viewed as a set of assets linked to the brand, these assets including brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, and associations (Aaker, 1991). Faircloth, Capella, and Alford (2001) define brand image as “a holistic construct formed from a gestalt of all the associations related to the brand”, while Keller (1993) views it as “the perceptual beliefs about a brand's attribute, benefit, and attitude associations, which are frequently seen as the basis for an overall evaluation of, or attitude toward, the brand.” Brand associations correspond to “the mark left in consumers’ memory by all the communications and products of the brand” (Changeur and Dano, 1996). They are informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory, which
contribute to and ultimately define the brand's image to the consumer (Keller, 1993). These associations play an important role in consumers’ product evaluations and choices (van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001). Changeur and Merunka (1999) add that “the main basis of added performance relies on the brand specific associations”.

2.3 Services branding Strategy

There has been a noticeable amount of discussion whether the principles of branding services differ from those of products (e.g. de Chernatony & Segal-Horn 2003; de Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley 1999; Moorthi 2002). Each discussion shares a common belief that it is the emphasis given to different elements of the branding strategy that differentiate services branding from product branding, yet the conceptual basis of “the brand” remains rather similar. Hence, the service experience and service performance are important in building service brands (Matear, Gray & Garret 2004). De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003) emphasise the uniqueness of services by pointing out that since service depends on the culture of an organization and the attitudes and training of its employees, it is more difficult to build and sustain successfully, but is more difficult to copy by competitors.

Accentuating this, Doyle (1989) has pointed out that service is perhaps the most sustainable differential advantage. The critical task of services branding, according to Shivakumar (2008) and de Chernatony, McDonald and Harris (2001), is to bring tangibility to the intangible. However, this task becomes more difficult when the brand represents a network of independent organizations.
Having devised a core set of functional and emotional values for a service brand, these then need to be supported by an appropriate executional strategy (de Chernatony & Dall’ Olmo Riley 1999). According to de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2003), the execution of a services brand strategy needs more consideration due to factors such as the intangible nature of services, the variable perceived quality of a services brand which is reliant on all employees acting in the same way and the numerous interfaces through which customers interact with the service brand. It is also argued, that successful service brands, and thus effectively implemented service branding strategy, derives from carefully nurtured relationships, which develop employee’s and consumers’ respect for certain functional and emotional values of the brand. Thus the execution of a service brand also requires greater emphasis on internal marketing. (de Chernatony, McDonald & Harris 2001)

De Chernatony et al. (2001) suggest that service brands can be developed through a process which consists of setting clear brand objectives, defining a clear positioning and selecting appropriate values. Supporting this process, Dobree and Page (1990) have further developed it by listing five steps for branding services. These are building a brand proposition, which is consistent with defining a brand positioning, overcoming internal barriers, which comprises of assuring employees from the benefits of the brand strategy and thus attenuating the possible counteraction, measuring delivery against the proposition, continual improvement and expansion. Expansion means that organizations must continually re-evaluate their brand proposition and increase the amount and qualities of their services offered and reach towards new consumers in order to create a thriving brand. These rudiments should thus be included in an organizations’ long term strategy for securing the continuous evolvement of the brand.
2.3.1 Elements of a successful service brand

Some of the important issues that affect branding services are characteristics of services, importance of symbols, empowerment of staff and consumer participation in developing the brand (Moorthi 2002). Moorthi also suggest that successful service brands can be developed based on the principles of the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) branding, although with modifications. These principles of the model are product definition, clear product benefit identification, brand differentiation, consumer motivation and measurement of product strength.

De Cherna-tony and Segal-Horn (2003) have identified themes specific to services brands in their research and through those, they recognised three criteria of importance in the success of services brands. These are focused position, consistency and values. A clearly focused position can provide a key competitive tool to attract customers from competitors’ brands and it is strongly linked with communication to ensure comprehension among both employees and consumers. Consistency reflects to the fact that it must extend to encompass the experience of the brand by all stakeholders, not just consumers; there must thus be common perceptions of the brand among all stakeholders. Values are something managers need to represent in their own behaviour in order to commit employees to the brand vision. The point that has been stressed here is the responsibility of managers in creating an organisational culture where management commitment precedes staff commitment. (de Chernatony and Segal-Horn 2003)

Hence, these elements can be assumed to be in a crucial position in long-term brand development. Through a clearly and strongly focused position a service brand can, in addition to achieving a competitive advantage, survive in the unstable market environment and through the times of increasing competition. Further through consistency, a coherent brand image can be created and sustained. In addition, values, when successfully embedded, ensure the true
commitment of the employees to the brand vision in a network and thus through enthusiasm, makes the consistent behaviour and actions of employees possible.

2.3.2 The characteristics of successful brands

A brand can be an everlasting and lucrative asset as long as it is maintained in a good manner that can continue satisfying consumers’ needs (Batchelor, 1998; Murphy, 1998). Although successful brands can be totally different in nature, they share something in common, for instances well-priced products and consistent quality (Murphy, 1998).

As mentioned by Levitt (1983), there are four elements for building a successful brand, namely tangible product, basic brand, augmented brand and potential brand. Tangible product refers to the commodity which meets the basic needs of the customers. Basic brand, on the other hand, considers the packaging of the tangible product so as to attract the attention from the potential customers. The brand can be further augmented with the provision of credibility, effective after-sales services and the like. Finally and most importantly, a potential brand is established through engendering customer preference and loyalty. By doing so, the image of the brand could be well instilled in the customers’ mind.

2.4 Brand equity

The term ‘brand equity’ refers to a set of assets and liabilities associated with a brand, including its name and symbol, which could impose beneficial or detrimental effects on the values arising from the products or services (Aaker, 1991; Yasin et al., 2007). Added to this, Keller (1998) points out that brand equity signifies the unique marketing effects imposed on the brand.
Concerning the positive side of brand equity, it happens when consumers are willing to pay more for the same level of quality just because of the attractiveness of the name attached to the product (Bello and Holbrook, 1995).

Past purchasing experiences and familiarity with the brand could be attributable to the perceptions generated from the consumers (Aaker, 1991).

Besides, brand equity could also allow higher margins through premium pricing and reduced reliance upon promotional activities (Aaker, 1991). Owning to the positive image, consumers no longer focus on the short-term promotion but the brand on the whole.

Brand equity is a broad concept which can be further subdivided into four main areas, namely brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality and brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998).

2.4.1 Brand awareness

Brand awareness is one of major determinants of brand equity. It refers to the ability of a potential consumer to recall and recognize the brand, linking the brand with its corresponding product class (Aaker, 1991). The level of brand awareness lies in a continuum, with brand recognition being the lowest level and the first named brand with unaided recall being the highest level.

It is important for the potential consumers to be aware of a product so that it can become one of the purchasing choices. This is due to the fact that the product needs to enter the awareness set before it comes to the consideration set (Blackwell et al., 2001) and an increase in brand
awareness is conducive to a higher chance of entering the later set (Nedungadi, 1990). In this way, brands with higher level of awareness would be more likely to be purchased (Yasin et al., 2007). This could probably explain why consumers tend to buy a recognizable brand rather than an unfamiliar one (Hoyer, 1990; Macdonald and Sharp, 2000).

Several factors can alter the level of brand awareness. In case of China, its geographical location and politics could affect the consumer brand awareness level seriously. According to research conducted by Delong et al. (2004), owing to geographical differences, Chinese consumers cannot distinguish US apparel brand names from the European ones. In addition, brands from Taiwan and Hong Kong are sometimes confused, due to their political separations. For long time, Taiwan would like to become politically independent from China owing to their different political standpoint whereas Hong Kong, being a special administrative region since 1997, has once been a colony of the UK.

As mentioned by Keller (1998), brand awareness can be enhanced through repeat exposure to the brand. In order to achieve brand awareness, two tasks are to be accomplished, namely increasing brand name identity and associating it with the product class. Advertising and celebrity endorsement could be some useful tools for raising brand awareness. It is found that advertisement attitude is attributable to the influence on brand attitudes, affecting consumer’s intention to purchase (Mackenzie et al., 1986; Tsai et al., 2007).

In recent decades, there is an increasing number of advertising campaigns around the world. Consumers are hence well-equipped with comparative elements to judge which product or
service to purchase (Alvarez and Casielles, 2005). Moreover, celebrity endorsement can give rise to source credibility and source attractiveness. For source credibility, as pointed out by McGuire (1978), celebrities can disseminate messages to particular consumers and hence increase the brand awareness. As for source attractiveness, successful endorsement can associate the culture of the celebrity world with the endorsed product (McCracken, 1989). This association can raise the public awareness towards the brand.

2.4.2 Perceived quality

Another important attribute to brand equity is perceived quality. It is defined as the customer’s perception of the overall quality or superiority of a product or service (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998; Yasin, 2007). Since it is a kind of intangible, overall feeling towards a brand, it is subjective in nature and hence the knowledge of actual detailed product specifications could have little correlation with the perceived quality. Perceived quality of a brand could help generate values by providing a pivotal reason-to-buy, differentiating the position of a brand, charging premium price, motivating channel members to perform well and also introducing extensions into new brand categories (Aaker, 1991). In addition, it is found that perceived quality is of utmost importance in determining brand loyalty as well as repeat purchase (Delong et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, it is becoming more difficult to obtain satisfactory level of perceived quality owing to the fact that fast and continuous product advancement has already strengthened consumers’ expectations on product quality (Sherman, 1992).
Similar to brand awareness, perceived quality is determined by a number of factors. To be more specific, perceived quality can further be classified into product quality and service quality. Regarding product quality, there are seven dimensions which affect the consumers’ perception, namely performance, features, conformance with specifications, reliability, durability, serviceability as well as fit and finish. Service quality, on the other hand, is judged by its corresponding tangibles, reliability, competence, responsiveness and empathy (Aaker, 1991). In addition to the aforementioned dimensions, the country-of-origin of a product is found to affect its perceived quality (Khachaturian and Morganosky, 1990) and also the perceptions towards the purchased value (Ahmed and d’Astou, 1993).

As mentioned by Srikatanyoo and Gnoth (2002), consumers are inclined to develop stereotypical beliefs about the products from particular countries. Hence, consumers could have their preferences for products made from one country over another (Papadopoulos et al., 1991). Moreover, price is one of the important cues to evaluate perceived quality (Aaker, 1991). It is found that price is more relevant in judging the perceived quality of a product given that a person lacks the ability to evaluate the quality of a product.

2.4.3 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is one of the core components of brand equity and also positively and directly affected brand equity (Atilgan et al., 2005). Under the influence of brand loyalty, consumers continue to buy the brand, regardless of the superior features, prices and convenience owned by its competitors (Aaker, 1991). The more loyal the consumers are towards the brand, the less vulnerable the customer base would be. Based on the practice that repeat buying is one of the
indicators for brand loyalty, Keller (1998), however, challenges that such measure may not be totally accurate. This is due to the fact that some consumers make habitual purchase towards a particular brand just because of its prominence in stock and effective promotions.

For many companies, having loyal customers is a kind of blessing. Brand loyalty is regarded as valuable asset under different circumstances. First, it can help reduce the marketing costs of doing business (Aaker, 1991). Loyal customers confer to a higher possibility of repeat purchases and it is less costly to keep customers than to get new ones. Second, loyalty to a brand can enhance trade leverage. Some consumers with strong affiliation to one brand would switch to the shop in which a designated brand is sold. Third, loyal customers could influence the others to purchase the brand. This is typically true when the product concerned is somewhat risky. In this case, consumers are assured to buy the product if they have some friends or relatives who recommend the same model of product. This suggests why word-of-mouth communication is one of the most powerful tools in the marketplace (Henricks, 1998; Marney, 1995; Silverman, 1997; Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Consumers usually depend on informal, as well as personal communication sources in making purchasing decision rather than more formal and organizational advertising campaigns (Bansal and Voyer, 2000).

Finally, brand loyalty can help provide ample time for the firm to response to competitors’ newly launched products. Hence, the firm could make good use of the time lapse to develop more superior products in order to compete with its rivals.

Due to the values obtained from brand loyalty, many firms would devise different strategies to maintain and enhance the loyalty from customers.
According to Aaker (1991), it is important to treat the customer with respect in order to keep them loyal. Moreover, customer satisfaction level needs to be properly managed through conducting consumer research. Customers can also be rewarded for their loyalty towards the firms so that they will continue to buy the products. For instance, several airlines like Cathay Pacific, KLM and chain stores such as TOPMAN provide club-cards or loyalty cards to reward their customers with discounts and other benefits.

2.4.4 Brand association

The last dimension for brand equity is brand association. It is defined as the specific linkage between the memory and the brand (Aaker, 1991). Keller (1998) and Yasin et al. (2007) further note that equity of a brand is largely supported by consumers’ associations towards the brand, which contribute to a specific brand image. Brand association is such a complicated concept that connects to one another, consisting of multiple ideas, episodes, examples, and facts that create a brand knowledge network (Yoo et al., 2000). In addition to the tangible products, the intangible qualities, for instances innovativeness and distinctiveness are also taken into account as brand associations.

Keller (1993, 1998) further divides brand associations into three categories, namely attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes refer to the specific characteristics a product has. Attributes can be further categorized into product-related attributes as well as non-product related attributes. For product-related attributes, the overall features of the product or service are concerned. As for non-product related attributes, price information, packaging, user imagery as well as usage imagery are to be considered. Benefits are another category in brand associations. They can be
classified into functional, experimental and symbolic. Function benefits signify the physical or basic advantages a brand may have. For experimental benefits, they are related to consumers’ emotional feelings. Symbolic benefits, on the other hand, refer to the signal effect that a brand may impose on the consumers. Signal effect is determined by the image of consumers and also the personality of the brand.

Consumers are attracted by the signal when they purchase a product in a particular brand. Finally, attitudes are regarded as the consumers’ overall assessments towards a brand. They incorporate summary evaluations of information which represent how consumers feel in a long run, lying in a continuum from positive to negative (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). Different brands have different associations to their prospective customers.

Such kind of associations can provide bases for them to make purchase decisions and even become loyal to the brand (Aaker, 1991). Associations towards a brand can create value for the firm and so its customers in a number of ways. First of all, they help the customers to process or retrieve information (Keller, 1998). Customers are sometimes forgetful and associations towards a brand serve as a brief summary for the customers to make their purchasing decision. Associations can also be used to trigger the customers to recall their past experiences, making the customers remember the brand by heart.

Second, brand associations can differentiate one brand from another. It is about brand positioning that a well-positioned brand will find it hard to be attacked by its competitors due to its uniqueness. This can make the brand unbeatable but it is quite difficult to achieve since consumer taste changes quite rapidly. Third, brand associations may include some product attributes or consumer benefits which encourage the consumers to purchase the brand.
Forth, some associations can engender positive feelings. For examples, adidas slogan ‘Impossible is nothing’, Madonna appearance in H&M’s collection advertisement can stimulate customers their positive feelings about the products.

Once brand associations are constructed in a meaningful way, a vivid brand image is established. Brand image possibly affects how consumers perceive the brand and hence their purchasing behaviour. There may be products on the market with similar quality and design, however, the specific brand image attached to a product may differentiate itself from the others, contributing to its higher premium price.

2.5 Consumer buying behaviour

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2000), consumer behaviour is about how people make their decisions on personal or household products with the use of their available resources such as time, money and effort. Gabbott and Hogg (1998) and Blackwell et al. (2006) further provide a holistic view that defines consumer behaviour as the activities and the processes in which individuals or groups choose, buy, use or dispose the products, services, ideas or experiences.

The study of consumer behaviour is of utmost importance in a number of aspects. First of all Consumer behaviour can influence the commercial health of an industry (Blackwell et al., 2006). Consumers would have their preferences in purchasing products from specific retailers and hence the remaining retailers are selected using the rule of ‘survival of the fittest’. Therefore, consumers’ decisions can provide a clue for which industry to survive, which companies to succeed, and also which products to excel. Second, through understanding the reasons for consumers to buy the products and their buying habits, the firms can make use of such
information to devise corresponding marketing strategies in response to the consumers’ needs (Blackwell et al., 2006). For instance, tailor-made products can be made to enhance customer value and thus facilitate repeat purchase (Gabbott and Hogg, 1998). Moreover, present consumer behaviour studies regard consumers as important determinants of organizational success and it is found that the most successful organizations are customer-centric (Blackwell et al., 2006). The notion ‘the consumer is king’ should be deep-rooted in every business people’s mind that they should try to please these kings using their innovative methods.

Consumer behaviour is thus important to the firms in the mobile telecommunication industry. It will help them to develop tailor-made services which enhance customer value and thus facilitate repeat purchase. Considering the nature of competition in the industry understanding consumers will help the firms to devise corresponding marketing strategies in response to customer’s needs.

### 2.5.1 Consumer Behaviour Decision Process

Several models are developed with a view to provide explanations for the consumer buying behaviours. Although they vary in form of presentation, most of them are composed of stages such as pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2001; Rayport and Jaworski, 2003).

Blackwell et al. (2001) define consumer behaviour as a summation of acquisition, consumption and disposal of products or services. However, such definition falls short of the continuity of the processes. Based on this loophole, Arnoud et al. (2004) further propose the circle of consumption that recognize purchasing processes as a loop, comprising acquisition of goods and services, consumption, as well as disposal of used goods.
As far as the consumer decision process model is concerned, consumers need to go through seven steps before reaching their final decisions. These seven steps include need recognition, search for information, pre-purchase, evaluation, purchase, consumption, post-consumption evaluation and divestment (Blackwell et al., 2006). Rayport and Jaworski (2003) propose a similar model with slight differences regarding the terms used. Blackwell et al. (2006) add that most consumer research would primarily base on these seven stages and how different elements affect each stage of consumers’ decisions, regardless of the different terms and consolidation of stages.

Stage one is need recognition which occurs when an individual is aware of a difference between their perception and the actual satisfaction level (Solomon et al., 2006). The buying process is initiated when people recognize their unsatisfied need (Levy and Weitz, 1992). There are two kinds of needs, namely functional needs and psychological needs. Functional needs are related to the performance of the product whereas psychological needs are intrinsically obtained when customers feel contented with shopping or owning a product which they long for.

Stage two is the search of information. The length and depth of search vary for different customers and depend on variables like personality, social class, income, size of purchase, past experiences, prior brand perceptions (Moorthy et al., 1997), as well as customer satisfaction. As mentioned by Solomon et al. (2006), search of information can further be divided into pre-purchase search and ongoing search. Pre-purchase search is initiated when consumers recognize a need and hence look for more information from the marketplace.
Ongoing search, on the other hand, is more likely to be based on personal interest on a particular brand. Customers pursuing this kind of search would like to obtain the most updated information about the designated brand.

Stage three comes to the pre-purchase evaluation that consumers compare between different products and brands to make a purchasing decision. In this stage, consumers pay particular attention to the attributes which are most relevant to their needs (Kolter et al., 2005). Attributes like quantity, size, quality and price are commonly used to judge a brand by customers. Any changes in these attributes can affect consumer decisions on brand or product choices (Blackwell et al., 2006). According to Porter (2004), firms can create value by providing lower price or unique offers to the customers so as to excel their competitive advantages over the others.

Stage four refers to the purchase decisions made by the consumers after evaluating the offers from different retailers. As stated by Blackwell et al. (2006), there are two phases contributing to the decision making processes, including retailer and in-store selection. Retailer selection is made by judging which retailers to buy after investigating the attributes from the previous stage whereas in-store selection is affected by the selling skills of salesperson, visual displays inside the shops, as well as point-of-purchase advertising. In addition to in-store purchase, Rayport and Jaworski (2003) further point out the significant impact of internet on consumer purchasing decision. As pointed out by Dholakia and Uusitalo (2002), this new kind of non-shop retailing format has begun replacing the fairly established catalogue and TV shopping and its development is rapid albeit it is more recently found in comparison with the existing non-shop retailing modes.
Stage five, stage six and stage seven are under the category of the post-purchase stage. In stage five, customers begin consuming the products whereas in stage six, customers evaluate the consumption process. This gives rise to satisfaction when consumers’ expectations are higher than the perceived performance and vice versa (Blackwell et al., 2006). Last but not least, stage seven comes to divestment, in which consumers dispose or recycle the products and at the same time. The firms need to think about the possibility of remarketing. This stage is crucial since customers could be possible to make repeat purchases provided that they are satisfied with the aforementioned stages (Rayport and Jaworski, 2003).
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an outline of the methods and techniques for the design of instruments and the collection of data for the research. This includes the research design, the population, sample, sampling technique, research instruments, data collection procedures and the method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

There are three main ways of designing a research study. They are exploratory design, descriptive design and explanatory design. In order to examine the Branding strategies and its influence on consumer preference in the mobile telecommunication industry, provide answers to the research questions and achieve the research objectives, a descriptive design was used. The study is therefore design to describe the relationship between branding strategies by the mobile telecommunication companies and consumer brand preference.

3.2 Sources of data

The study is designed to use both primary and secondary data. The primary data was gathered from the four hundred (400) respondents through a structured questionnaire. The primary data forms the core information needed to achieve the research objectives. This is because; researchers have to go to the field to identify the people who have experienced the influence of branding on their preferences of mobile telecommunication services. The secondary data to be
used include existing material such as publications in journals, relevant literature on the topic, books and internet materials. The secondary data is also important to the researchers because it helps to identify concepts, perspectives, models which relate to the topic at hand.

3.3 Population and target population

The study takes into consideration the entire population of the Kumasi metropolis which is estimated be to one million nine hundred and fifty six thousand (1,956,000) according to the 2010 population and housing census. Such a population is too large in a research of this nature. It is therefore important to determine a target population which will provide a focus and narrow scope for effective sampling of it members. The target population for the study is therefore all mobile phone users which stand at 17,000600 million according to National Communication Authority. MTN leads the industry with 9012018(53%), Vodafone 2313782 (14%), TIGO 3784334(22%), Airtel 1599756(9%), Expresso 290710(2%). Even though the number of mobile phone users in the Kumasi Metropolis is readily not available it is believed the figure will also be too large to survey the entire users. The determination of the sample size was based on these assumptions.

3.4 Determination of Sample size

A total number of four hundred (400) users of mobile telecommunication services were selected using the convenient sampling or non probability sampling for the study. The target population of the study area is too large for the researchers to attempt to survey all of its members. A small, but carefully chosen sample can be used to represent the population. The sample reflects the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn.
3.5 Sampling technique

In this research a combination of accidental and convenience sampling techniques were used to select the four hundred (400) respondents. The use of probability sampling techniques to select the 400 respondents was due to the scattered nature of the population under study. The use of non-probability sampling techniques means that the members of the target population were selected without given equal chance to all the people who patronize mobile telecommunication services in the Kumasi Metropolis.

3.6 Data Collection Method

The instruments available in conducting research of this nature may include questionnaire, interview schedule, observation, Focus Group Discussion and experiment. The instrument use in a particular research depends on the research problem, research objectives and the research questions. In this study the researchers used questionnaire. This is because questionnaire design asked a specific question and a specific response is provided. The questions were specifically designed to illicit information necessary to achieve the purpose of the research. This research instrument was used because it is the best through which accurate information can be collected in a study of this kind where the research topic under investigation requires statement of facts and personal (customers) opinions. The questions also targeted measuring of the perception that customers have on the importance of branding in the mobile telecommunication industry and the nature of influence branding strategies have on the choice of mobile telecommunication services.
3.7 Data Collection Procedure

In order to ensure that there is high response rate, all the five (5) researchers’ decided to partake in the administering of the questionnaire. Each researcher administered about eighty (80) questionnaires on the respondents. The questionnaires were personally distributed by the researchers. The researchers administered the questionnaire to those who were willing to complete them and waited for the respondents to complete them. By this procedure the researchers were able to retrieve all the four hundred (400) questionnaires. This data collection procedure enabled the researchers to have personal interaction with the respondents and to explain the significance of the study to them and also some of the issues which needed clarification.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The responses gathered from users of mobile telecommunication services were tallied and tabulated according to the items on the various sections of the questionnaire. The results obtained were recorded and put in percentages using tables and charts provided in each section. Analyses were presented using Microsoft excel (spread sheet) to provide descriptions of the data which were made for generalizations and interpretation of the data.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction
In this chapter the data collected from the 400 respondents in the Kumasi metropolis is presented and analyzed. The analysis is done based on the research objectives and the research questions. The area captured in the analysis includes demographic characteristics of the respondents, mobile network used by the respondents, branding tools used by respondents to identify the network they patronize and the influence of branding tools on consumer brand preference of mobile telecommunication network. The responses rate of the research is 100%. This is because of the convenience sampling employed which ensured that exactly 400 hundred people have filled the questionnaire, therefore making the responses rate 100%

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
The demographic characteristics of respondents include age, gender, educational background, income levels and occupation. These items were indicated in the questionnaire because the researchers believed they have significance in the behavior of the respondents.

4.1.1 Age background of respondents
The age of respondents was item one on the questionnaire. The respondents indicate their age in a range in the questionnaire which shows different age levels who uses mobile phone. Their responses are presented in table 4.1.
### Table 4.1: Age of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Researchers Field Survey 2011

In the table above respondents who are less than 20 years recorded 27 representing 7% of the total respondents. 20-29 years recorded 182(46%), 30-39 were 79(20%), 40-49 years were 94(24%), 50-59 years were 12(3%), whiles respondents who are 60 years and above recorded 6 showing 2%. This means that ages within 20 and 29 years were dominating.

#### 4.1.2 Educational background of respondents

The researchers believed that a person level of education means a lot in determining his/her understand and appreciation of issues which eventually affect the perception, behavior attitude. The respondents were therefore asked indicate the level of educational. The responses are shown in table 4.2.
Table 4.2: Educational background of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Graduate</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HND</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHS</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011

In the table above respondents who do not have formal education recorded 21 representing 5% of the total respondents. Respondents with postgraduate qualification recorded 43 showing 11%, undergraduates who participated in the study were 134 indicating 34% of the respondents. Certificate holders were 34(9%), HND holders 41(10%), SHS 99(25%) and diploma holders recorded 28(7%) of the total sample size. This means that majority of the respondents have formal education and they are in a better position to interpret and understand the branding strategies of the mobile telecommunication companies.

4.1.3 Income levels of Respondents

The researchers believed that the income levels of a person may also influence his/her behaviour and attitude. In the mobile telecommunication industry because firms charge different price level, the income of respondents therefore becomes an important item. The various income levels of the respondents are presented in table 4.3.
Table 4.3: Income of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income levels</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-400</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-600</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700-800</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-1000</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000+</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011

In the table above respondents whose income less than 50 recoded 6 (2%). Respondents whose income ranges between 1000-2000 were 34 representing 9%. Income range of 300-400 recorded 71(18%). 500-600 recorded 188(47%), 700-800 were 48(12%), 900-1000 were 32(8%). The respondents whose income is above 1000 recorded 21 showing 5% of the total respondents. This means that majority of the respondents are income earners and they may be in a better position to patronize mobile services from the companies.

4.1.4  Gender of respondents

Gender defines the status of a person whether a male or female. The respondents were asked to indicate their gender group. The categories of gender who participated in the study are shown in table 4.4.
In the table above male participants of the research recorded 289 which represent 72% of the total respondents of the total respondents. Female participants were 111 which indicate 28% of the respondent. This means that both sexes are represented in the study, male participants dominating.

### 4.2 Mobile Network Patronize by Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate the mobile network that they patronize. This item in the questionnaire was important to the research. This is because respondents may be in a better position to assess the mobile telecommunication industry and the influences of the various banding strategies use by the companies. The responses are shown in chart 4.1.
The chart above shows that respondents who patronize MTN recorded 212 representing 53% of the total respondents. Respondents who patronize TIGO recorded 49 showing 12% of the total respondents EXPRESSO users who participated in the research recorded 12 indicating 3%. VODAFONE users were 88 showing 22%, whiles respondents who subscribe to AIRTEL recorded 39(10%) of the total respondents. From the data, the implication is that majority of the views on how branding strategies in influence consumer brand preference of mobile come from MTN users.

4.3 **Branding tools use by respondents to identify mobile networks**

In order to assess the nature of influence branding has on consumers it is important to understand the various branding tool use by consumers as indicated to identify the product which they
patronize. In this research respondents were asked to indicate how they identify the mobile network they patronize using branding tools. The responses are shown in chart 4.2.

**Chart 4.2: what respondents use to identify their network**

![Chart showing percentages of respondents using different brand identifiers](chart.png)

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011

The chart above shows that majority of the respondents identify the mobile network with the brand names. This shown by 289 of the respondents representing 72% of the total respondents. The significance of brand colours identification recorded 54 showing 14% of the respondents. Respondents who use brand logo for identification recorded 23 indicating 6% of the respondents, whiles 34(9%) use slogan of the company to identify their products and services.

4.4 **Influence of brand colours on consumer preference of mobile network**

The researchers believe that in assessing the nature of influence branding strategies has on consumer preference, brand colours become significant. The respondents were asked to indicate
the extent to which they agree or disagree that brand colours has influence on the mobile network they patronize. The responses are shown in chart 4.3.

Chart 4.3: influence of brand colours on respondents

The chart above represents the extent to which respondents agree or disagree to the influence of branding strategies. Respondents who strongly agree recorded 28 indicating 7% of the total respondents. 121 respondents showing 30% agree to the influence of brand colours. 168(42%) respondents decided to remain neutral on this item. However, 21(5%) strongly disagree to the influence of brand colours on consumer preference, whiles 62 respondents representing 16% disagree to the influence of brand colours on consumer preference.

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011
preference. This means that majority of the respondent do not either agree or disagree to the influence of brand colours on consumer preference of mobile telecommunication network.

4.5 Influence of brand name on consumer preference of mobile network

Brand name recorded high points as a major indicator for respondents to identify the network that they patronize. Respondents were asked again to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree to the statement that brand name influence consumer preference of mobile telecommunication network. The responses are provided in chart 4.4.

Chart 4.4: influence of brand name on respondents

![Chart 4.4: influence of brand name on respondents](chart.png)

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011

The chart above shows that respondents who strongly to the statement that brand name influence consumer preference of mobile network recorded 89 indicating 22% of the total respondents. 172 respondents agree that brand name has influence on consumer preference of mobile network. 68
respondents representing 17% decided to remain neutral. 29(7%) strongly disagree, while 42 respondents representing 11% disagree that brand name has influence on the choice of mobile network. This means that majority of the respondents share the view that brand name has influence on consumer preference of mobile network.

4.6 Influence of brand logo on consumer purchasing decision of mobile network

Another important element of branding is the logo of the representing the company’s product or service. The respondents were therefore asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree to the question that brand logo influence consumer preference of mobile network. The responses are presented in chart 4.5.

**Chart 4.5: influence of brand logo on respondents**

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011
Chart 5 above depicts respondents’ views on the influence of brand logo on consumer preference of mobile network. 45 (11%) respondents strongly agree to the influence of brand logo. 101 (25%) agree to the influence of brand logo. 212 respondents however decided to remain neutral, while 18 (25%) and 24 (6%) strongly disagree and disagree respectively. This means that more 50% of the respondents do not either agree or disagree to the influence of brand logo on consumer preference of mobile network.

4.7 Influence of brand slogan on consumer preference of mobile network

Firms in the mobile telecommunication industry use very interesting slogan for the products and services. The researchers wanted to find out the extent to which brand slogan influence consumer preference of mobile network. The responses are shown in chart 4.6.

Chart 4.6: influence of brand slogan on respondents

![Influence of brand slogan on respondents](chart.png)

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011
Respondents who strongly agree to the influence of brand slogan on consumer preference recorded 78% of the total respondents. 192 (48%) respondents agree to the influence of brand slogan. 83(21%) remain neutral. 21(5%) however strongly disagree, while 26 of the respondents representing 7% of the total respondents disagree to the influence of brand slogan on consumer preference of mobile telecommunication network.

4.8 Perception of customers on why mobile network firms engage in branding

The use of different branding strategies has been interpreted by many in the field of marketing. Respondents were asked to indicate what they perceive is the reason for mobile telecommunication company to introduce branding strategies. The views of the respondent are shown in chart 4.7.

Chart 4.7: Perception on why firms use brand strategies

Source: Researchers Field Survey 2011
The respondents' perception on why firms in the mobile telecom industry use different branding strategies show that 67(17%) of the total respondents perceive penetrating the market as the reason. 98(25%) mentioned that firms introduce branding because they want to create corporate identity, 163(41%) respondents revealed that firms branding because they want to increase subscribers. 72(18%) respondents said the firms use branding because they want to encourage patronage.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of findings

- Demographic characteristics of respondents

The study found that the respondents qualified to provide answers to the questionnaire. On age background of respondents, the study found that all categories of ages use mobile phones or patronize services from the telecommunication firms. However, the dominant age group found in the study is between 20-29 years which make up 182 (46%) of the total respondents.

The study revealed that majority of the respondents has formal education. This was indicated by 95% of the respondents, while the 5% have no formal education. The dominant educational qualified in the research was undergraduate which make up 134 (34%) of the total respondents.

The dominant income level of respondents found in the study was 500-600 which represent 188 (47%) of the total respondents.

Both males and females represented in the research. The study found that 289 (72%) were male and 111 (28%) of the respondents were female

- Mobile Network Patronize by Respondents

The study found that the entire mobile telecommunication networks were being patronized by respondents. The network found includes MTN, TIGO, EXPRESSO, VODAFONE and
AIRTEL. The mobile network users dominated in the research was MTN which recorded 212(53%) of the total respondents.

- Branding tools use to identify mobile telecommunication networks

The study found that all the respondents use different branding tools as an indicator to identify the mobile networks. The dominant branding tool use by respondents in the study was brand name which recorded 289 (72%) of the total respondents.

- Influence of brand colours on consumer preference of mobile network

The study found that majority of the respondents does not either agree or disagree the influence of brand colours on consumer preference of mobile telecommunication network. This makes up 168(42%) of the total respondents.

- Influence of brand name on consumer preference of mobile network

The study found that majority of the respondents agrees to the influence of brand name on consumer preference. This was represented by a total of 261(65%) of the respondents.

- Influence of brand logo on consumer preference of mobile network

The study found that majority of the respondents does not either agree or disagree to the influence of brand logo on consumer preference of mobile telecommunication networks. This recorded 212(53%) of the total respondents.

- Influence of brand slogan on consumer preference of mobile network

The study also found that majority of the respondents agrees to the influence of brand slogan on consumer preference of mobile telecommunication network. This was shown by 270(68%) of the total respondents

- Perception of customers on why mobile network firms engage in branding
The study found that majority of the respondents believes firms in the telecommunication industry engage in different branding strategies because they want to increase subscribers. This was shown by 163(41%) of the total respondents.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations regarding this study are presented in this section. These are base on the objectives and the findings of the research:

- Marketing managers in the mobile telecommunication industry in Ghana should design their branding strategies to attract people within the ages of 20 and 29 years, since majority of the respondents fall within these age range.

- Marketing Managers in the industry should use branding tools that carry meaningful messages because the consumers have formal education and they are able to interpret branding messages.

- Marketing Managers in the industry should embark on programmes to project the brand name of the company, because consumers use brand name to identify the firms.

- Firms in the industry should introduce branding programmes that can increase their subscribers’ base.

- Marketing Managers in the industry should redesign their branding programmes in order to be fully assured of the influence of branding on the consumers. Brand tools such as name, colours, slogan and logo should be projected through promotional programmes so that it can fully influence consumer brand preference.

- The use of a non-probability sample which did not give equal chance to all mobile phone users in the Kumasi Metropolis to participate in the study also places a restriction for generalization. Therefore other researchers can use other methods to arrive at different conclusions.
5.3 Conclusion

This research focused on the relationship between branding strategies and its influence on consumer brand preference of mobile telecommunication networks in the Kumasi Metropolis. The findings of the study conclude that the research has achieved its objectives. The firms in the telecommunication industry indeed use various branding tools which include brand name, brand logo, brand colours and brand slogan. The respondents use various degrees of branding dynamics to identify the brand they use.

This study has shown that continuous use of branding tools by the mobile telecommunication industry may have influence on the consumers’ preference of a particular network. For the marketing managers and policymaker to realize the full potential of branding strategies, they need to do a lot more to provide different directions of the marketing programmes to capture other factors that influence consumer preference. The study has proven that many consumers of mobile telecommunication services are interested in the branding of the firms. It can however be concluded that the study has achieved its objectives.
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE TO COLLECT DATA FROM CUSTOMERS ON THE BRANDING STRATEGIES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BRAND PREFERENCE IN THE MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY.

1). Age of the respondents
   i) Less than 20
   ii) 20-29
   iii) 30-39
   iv) 40-49
   v) 50-59
   vi) 60 or over

2). Educational background
   i) None
   ii) Post Graduate
   iii) Under Graduate
   iv) Certificate
   v) Graduate
   vi) HND
   vii) Others

3). Sex of the respondents
   i) Male
   ii) Female

4). Occupation
   i) Student
   ii) Teacher
   iii) Health worker
   iv) Self Employed
   v) Trader
   vi) Journalist
   vii) Banker
   viii) Public servant
   ix) Others specify

5). Income of respondents (In Ghana Cedi)
   i) Less than 50
   ii) 100-200
   iii) 300-400
   iv) 500-600
   v) 600-700
   vi) 700-800
   vii) 900-1000
   viii) 1000+
6. Do you use a mobile phone?
   i) YES ii) NO

7. What are the most influential factors when making purchase decision on the mobile telecommunication services?
   i) Price
   ii) Service quality
   iii) Novelty of product/service
   iv) Advertisement
   v) Branding tools of the companies

8. How long have you been using the mobile phone?
   i) Days
   ii) Weeks
   iii) months
   iv) years

9. Which mobile telecommunication network do you patronize?
   i) MTN  ii) TIGO iii) EXPRESSO iv) VODAFONE v) AIRTEL

10. Can you describe the image of your favorite brand of the mobile telecom companies?
    i) YES ii) NO

11. How much do you spend on mobile telecommunication services each month?...........................

12. Do you enjoy using the brand you subscribe?
    i) YES ii) NO

13. If yes, is it because of any of the following reasons
    i) Brand name
    ii) Colour of the company
    iii) Logo of the company
    iv) Motto of the company
14. How would you rate your satisfaction level of the brand you patronize?
   
   ii) Very satisfied
   iii) Satisfied
   iv) Neutral
   v) Very dissatisfied
   vi) Satisfied

15. Which categories of services do you usually spend on?
   
   i) Calls
   ii) Text messages
   iii) Internet service

16. Are you able to identify the brand of the network easily?
   
   i) YES   ii) NO

17. What do you use to identify the network to subscribe?
   
   i) Brand name
   ii) Colours
   iii) Logo of the company
   iv) Slogan of the company

18. Does the brand colours of the company influence you to patronize the company’s service?
   
   i) Strongly agree   ii) Agree   iii) Neutral   iv) Strongly disagree   v) Disagree

19. Does the brand name of the company influence you to patronize the services?
   
   i) Strongly agree   ii) Agree   iii) Neutral   iv) Strongly disagree   v) Disagree

20. Does the brand logo or trademark influence your decision to patronize the network?
   
   i) Strongly agree   ii) Agree   iii) Neutral   iv) Strongly disagree   v) Disagree

21. Does the slogan of the company influence your brand choice in the mobile telecom services?
   
   i) Strongly agree   ii) Agree   iii) Neutral   iv) Strongly disagree   v) Disagree
22. Why in your opinion would the firms in the mobile telecommunication industry engage in different branding strategies?

i) Penetrating the market

ii) Create corporate identity

iii) Increase subscribers

iv) Encourage patronage

23. Any other comment on the branding strategies and its influence of consumer brand preference in the mobile telecommunication industry

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