

The Impact of Brand Awareness on Customer Loyalty

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Abstract

Despite the fact that brand awareness is good and an intelligent way to help increase the purchasing of good and services, it is underutilized and relatively unknown among many business developers and persons, especially Melcom. This study therefore sought to explore the impact of brand awareness on customer loyalty: a case study of Melcom – Agona Swedru. A qualitative research design guided this study and the interviewing method of data collection was used in extracting information from the respondents. The respondents of this study were both staff and customers of Melcom. A simple random sampling was used in selecting 27 respondents for the study. The researcher analyzed the data using STATA and Microsoft Office. An informed consent was sought from the respondents and all ethical issues were adhered to. From the study, 15(55.6%) were males and 12 (44.4.0%) were females. The researcher divided the ages of the respondents into groups of four age differences per the outcome of the interview starting from age of 15-19years and ended at ages of 40-44. Of these groups, the table shows that, the majority of the respondents 10 (37%) were in the ages of 35-39years and also few, 3.7% (1 person) each was in the age group of 20-24 and 40-44 years. The third socio-demographic variable from the table (level of education) reports that, 14 (51.9%) respondents had Senior High School as their highest level of education, while few of the respondent, 5(18.5%) have ever had tertiary education. Also, among the 27 respondents, 92.6% (25 respondents) were Christians while the remaining 7.4% (2 respondents) were Muslims. The researcher recommended that the Government should endeavor to initiate ventures (workshop centers, business branding awareness joints) for businesses in Agona Swedru in order for them to meet some of their societal and educational obligations in the society. There is a need for policy makers (the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Media and Business Management Team for instance) to increase information and awareness of businesses through outreach programmes Agona Swedru. It is recommended that, the studies should be conducted in other part of the country to help identify more questionable problems relating to brand awareness and communication related issues.

Keywords: Branding, Brand Awareness, Customer Loyalty, Marketing & Promotion

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Consumer loyalty is a condition in which a consumer received the same kind of product or service over time from varying vendors. Loyalty is an extent of commitment that a consumer purchases a particular brand of services or products of a particular firm. It is the final goal as far as the marketing of any organization is concerned. Firms make use of branding as a strategic tool with enhanced business regularity conditions. Branding itself has a history that dates back to over 100 years. Numerous literatures confirm that firms use brands as a way of attracting and sustaining consumers by promoting its value, lifestyle, and overall image. Rooney (1995), also concur that branding is a method for building sustainable competitive advantage by appealing to human nature. This leads to the assumption that only human element can link the meaning and feeling to inanimate items. Recently, relationship marketing gathered popular momentum by academics and marketing practices. It is generally applied in the antecedent industrial form of marketing to both the services and also in marketing of commodities. As time goes on researchers explore relationship marketing as a process of integrated marketing, promotion of sales, public relation and straight marketing and creating and maintaining valuable links with consumers.

Ultimately, vendors aspire to win consumers 'satisfaction, loyalty and trust. In a study conducted by Shani and Chalasaniand (1992), showed that relationship marketing is the ability to enhance the loyalty of consumers. The link between brand and consumer on the level of loyalty is an important relevance to marketing practitioners. Duncan and Moriarty (1998), asserted that modern marketing practices are integrating consumer centricity, relationship marketing, and marketing communication. It is understood

in marketing practice that consumer loyalty and satisfaction are related inextricably (Oliver, 1999). The numbers of brands in the service sector particularly are increasing at a fast rate across the globe. Hence, the satisfaction of consumer plays a crucial role in brand loyalty.

This study is a follow up on a previous study that explored the impact of brand image on customer perceived quality and satisfaction in Melcom, Agona Swedru. The study seeks to extend on existing researches examining brand awareness and its impact on customer behavior. In specific terms, the need for this study arose as a result of the identified issues from studies on the impact of brand image on customer perceived quality and satisfaction. While evidences from similar studies show that brand image has strong impact on customer perceived quality and satisfaction, there are however lack of extensive empirical studies exploring the implication and outcomes of customer perceived quality and satisfaction. Although theoretically it can be argued that perceived quality and customer satisfaction will lead to customer loyalty as brand image is considered to represent the aspect of market offering that enables organizations create associations in the minds of the customers and add extra value in form of emotional benefits, which extend beyond product attributes and functional benefits (Martensen et al., 2004; Cronin and Taylor, 1992). This assumption is, however, yet to be substantially tested across Western and Non-western markets.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The problem that lies in this isn't limited to only literature but the studies of other people in similar setting. There are many businesses in Agona Swedru since the setting is a fast growing setting as far as business and marketing is concern. The researcher sees this a problem which numerous literatures have documented. So the researcher's ability to identify and see this as a problem, creates an atmosphere of gaps where studies will be conducted taking Agona Swedru Melcom as a case study. This study therefore has an objective to investigate the impact of brand awareness on customer loyalty using Swedru Melcom as case study. The results of the study will be significant to the institutions in which it is being carried out and many others to enable them better communicate. To academia it will serve as a reference for future research and to the members of the general public who may want into the marketing field it will serve as a guide as to how to reach out to their prospective clients.

1.2 Main Objective

The main objective of the study is to find out the impact of brand awareness on customer/brand loyalty: a case study of Melcom – Agona Swedru. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To better understand the determinants of brand loyalty in the Melcom
2. To also better understand consumers' satisfaction towards brands awareness.

1.3 Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between brand awareness and brand loyalty.

H2: There is a significant relationship between brand awareness and brand commitment.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the objectives set above, the study attempts to seek answers to the following questions:

- a. What is the relationship between brand awareness and consumer's loyalty?
- b. What is the relationship between brand awareness and quality of service?
- c. What is the relationship between brand awareness and consumer's satisfaction?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study will be beneficial to societies/organizations interested in understanding and exploring on the impact of brand awareness on customer/brand loyalty. While the study is being conducted at the Melcom- Agona Swedru, the findings can clearly be extrapolated to similar settings to say, Melcom (Cape Coast and Accra), MaryKing Supermarket, Setmay Supermarket and others. The Melcom headquarters, Ministry of trade, office of the Directorate of Supermarket Association (DoSA), Agona Swedru and other Non-Governmental Organization could use the findings in addressing issues relating to marketing and brand awareness. The research further seeks to inform Marketing officials and

other business related department to expand knowledge on the specific challenges encountered by marketers on their brands of products. Finally, the findings will serve as a guide to other researchers who will undertake similar research in the setting to know the scope and the areas to address.

1.6 Limitation to the Study

The research is limited to Melcom, Agona Swedru. As a result, the sample size is not large enough to generalize the results to the whole nation, but the ability to be generalized in half of the supermarkets in Ghana. Also this research is only focused on the impact of brand awareness on customer loyalty.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One comprises background of the study, statement of problem, research objectives, hypothesis, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study. Chapter Two consists of review of related literature. Chapter Three presents the methodology of the study, including the study area, the type of study, target population, sampling, instrument used in the research, data collection and analysis, ethical consideration and challenges encountered. Chapter Four is made up of findings and discussions and Chapter five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explains some terminologies used in the study such as brand awareness, consumers' loyalty, quality of service, consumers' satisfaction. The chapter also reviews literature on the impact of brand awareness on customer satisfaction and quality of service on customer satisfaction.

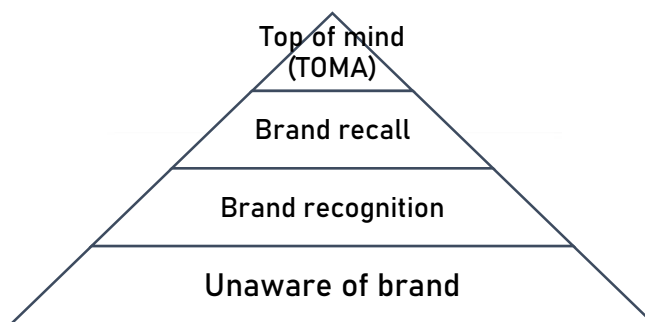
2.1 Branding

The definition and meaning of brand Brands has been used for centuries to distinguish the products or services of different companies from each other. In principle, whenever a marketer creates a new name, symbol or logo for a new product, she or he created a brand. (Keller 2008, 2.) Brand is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is traditionally defined as name, symbol, concept, sign, or some other feature (Malmelin & Hakala 2008,17-18). The meaning of that is to distinguish the product or a service from competitor (Keller 2008, 2). Creating differences is what branding is all about (Kotler & Keller 2016, 387). In the Finnish media guide (Brand 2016) it has been told that brand is a positive reputation, which is formed around a trademark. The factors that influence on the formation of brand value are its name or logo's awareness, customer loyalty, the feeling of quality which comes with a brand and images attached to a brand. Brand can also be seen as a summary of content or identity of the product or service. Brand makes the product attractive in the eyes of the customer and promises quality. Successful and well-known brand creates added value for the product. It is a mindset that guides the organization, as well as unifying vision of activities and communication. Although brand gets its final form in peoples' minds and it can be very different image when asking from different people. Behind the attitude and image there are always each values, interest, the information received and acquired, and possible experiences of the brand. (Von Herten 2006)

Kapferer (2012) defines a brand as a name with the power to influence. A brand can have a name that is easily pronounceable and spontaneously evokes desirable association but a name to become a brand it needs to command trust, respect, engagement and passion. Brands must convey trust, certitude and emotion as well as be a risk reducer. This is why it takes so much time to build a brand awareness, trust and emotional bonding. The product or service, together with the people at points of contact with the market, the places, the price, the communication makes a name acquire the power of a brand. Firms make use of branding as a strategic tool with enhanced business regularity conditions. Literature confirms that firms use brands as a way of attracting and sustaining consumers by promoting its value, lifestyle, and overall image. It also concurs that branding is a method for building sustainable competitive advantage by appealing to human nature. This leads to the assumption that only human element can link the meaning and feeling to inanimate items. Ultimately, venders aspire to win consumers' satisfaction, loyalty and trust. In a study conducted by scholars showed that relationship marketing is the ability to enhance the loyalty of consumers.

2.1 Brand Awareness

One of the fundamental dimensions of brand equity is brand awareness, often seen as prerequisite of peoples' buying decision (Kotler & Keller 2016, 235). Generating and maintaining brand awareness has long been held one of the main goals of marketing. The set of brands also defined as consumer's consideration set, to which a consumer gives a serious attention when making a purchase decision. The brands that enter consumer's consideration set, is strongly affected by the brand awareness (McDonald & Sharp 2000.) Kotler and Keller (2016) define brand awareness as fostering people's ability to recall or recognize the brand in sufficient detail to make a purchase. Keller (2008, 54) sees brand recognition in a way that, are the consumers, who have prior exposure to the brand, able to recognize the brand when given it as a cue. Brand recall is defined as consumers' ability to seek the brand from memory when for example given a cue of a purchase usage situation or product category. Brand recall is more important for online brands when the consumer decisions are not made at the point of purchase but settings away from the point of purchase. Recall is not that easy to achieve than recognition since consumers more likely recognize for example the color than the name of the brand. Top of mind awareness (TOMA) is the brand that comes to mind when thinking of a particular product class, without a cue. These levels of brand awareness are presented on figure 2.1



Brand awareness is not a mere cognitive measure in fact; it is correlated with many valuable image dimensions. When a brand is known, every individual knows it is known and this leads to spontaneous inferences. Awareness is mostly correlated with aspects such as trust, reliability, high quality, closeness to people, a good quality/price ratio, accessibility and traditional styling. (Kapferer, 2012)

2.2 Benefits of Creating High Brand Awareness

The benefits of creating high level of brand awareness are consideration advantages, learning advantages and choice advantages. Strength and the formation of the associations that make up the brand image are influenced by brand awareness. Marketers must first establish a brand node in memory to create a brand image. Registering the brand in the minds of consumers is the first step in building brand equity. Whenever consumers are making purchase decisions, they must consider the brand or as mentioned earlier, be a member of the consideration set. Consumers more likely have a handful of brands that receive a consideration for purchase instead of having only one brand they are loyal to. Also, it can affect choices among brands in the consideration set. This in turn is affected by consumers purchase motivation and purchase ability. For many consumers choosing a brand is not a life-or death decision. If among brand category, there is a lack of perceived differences it is likely to leave the consumer unmotivated about the choice process. Many times consumers do not have the necessary knowledge or experience to judge product quality even if they so desired. These are for instance products with a high degree of technical sophistication. (Keller, 2008)

2.3 Consumers Loyalty

Consumer loyalty is a condition in which a consumer received the same kind of product or service over time from varying vendors. Loyalty is an extent of commitment that a consumer purchases a

particular brand of services or products of a particular firm. It is the final goal as far as the marketing of any organization is concerned. The link between brand and consumer on the level of loyalty is an important relevance to marketing practitioners. Literatures have asserted that modern marketing practices are integrating consumer centricity, relationship marketing, and marketing communication. It is understood in marketing practice that consumer loyalty and satisfaction are, related inextricably. The numbers of brands in the service sector particularly are increasing at a fast rate across the globe. Hence, the satisfaction of consumer plays a crucial role in brand loyalty. Organizations with stronger brand loyal are notably improving their return of investment (ROI) and market share.

Purchasing decisions made by consumers are influenced by higher level of brand awareness. Perceived quality and brand awareness are important actors in consumers' purchasing decision. Chi & Yeh, further asserts that product with higher market share goes through superior quality evaluations and tends to enjoy higher level of brand awareness. Malik *et al.*, further asserts that increasing awareness leads to consumer choosing familiar and favorable brands. Brand awareness is found to be especially important when consumers buy a given product for the first time; it is also viewed to be a tactical decision by consumers. Further purchases are made with emphases on the practical attributes of the product, such as, quality, taste, fragrance or functionality. If a given product or service has satisfied consumer's expectations, brand awareness tends to have strong influence on subsequent purchases. Brand awareness according, is consumers' ability of to identify and remember a brand. Brand recognition and brand recall make up brand awareness. Trust is still an elusive concept. This is because it is still conveyed in many cognate terms such as trustworthiness, confidence etc. Trust is one aspect that is multi-faceted and multidisciplinary, as well manifested in various types of relationships, and its definition is far less agreed uniform. Researchers have identified various aspects of trust. For instance, trust is structural in sociology, whereas it's an aspect of one's personality or character traits and interpersonal phenomenon. It's considered as a mechanism of rational choice in economics, whereas it's based from moral sides in ethics. For stable and collaborative relationships in business, trust is deemed as the best relevant antecedents.

Trust is considered to be a vital element in the selling process, as it contributes to competitiveness, lessens transaction costs and boosts long-term relationships. Trust is found to enhance motivation in relationships development and preserves consumers' commitment, particularly during business down turns. Brand trust correlates with purchase intention and loyalty, which is attitudinal. While Saeed *et al.*, contend that loyalty is gained via trust. Park (2009) stresses that trust positively impacts consumer loyalty. Foi (2016) on the other hand asserts that ultimately, it is the consumer who defines the criteria for evaluating service quality. Foi further identifies ten such criteria that consumers uses to evaluate service quality. The first five is related to the quality of the service outcome, whereas the next five are related to the quality of the process of delivery. Consumers then are highly influenced by their perceived satisfaction (Shani, 1992). Perceived consumer satisfaction, adds value to the products and services, and positively contribute to brand's reputation.

2.4 Factors Which Influence Customer Satisfaction

Studies have examined in literatures that there are factors that are found influential for customer satisfaction or service quality. As the objective of the research focuses on the factors influencing customer satisfaction in contact centers has traditionally been on identifying factors with influence rather than without influence. The studies examined here represent different types and use different kind of approaches. Some scholars like Feinberg, Kim, Hokama, de Ruyter & Keen (2000) use statistical methods to test for the impact of several individual factors on customer satisfaction while others like Rafaeli, Ziklik & Doucet (2008) rely on qualitative methods among other things to uncover factors behind customer perceived service quality. One of the most comprehensive studies, when it comes to the number of variables influencing customer satisfaction in contact centers, is conducted by Feinberg et al. (2000). They based their selection of factors for the research on a contact center manual by Anton (1997). Feinberg et al. (2000) focus was on confirming which factors are linked to customer satisfaction with an academic research. Feinberg et al. (2000) found correlation between seven of the factors and customer satisfaction. These factors are the average speed of answer, caller queuing time, calls closed on first contact, caller

abandonment rate, contact center representative's average work time after call per call, percentage of calls blocked and service levels.

The speed of answering refers to the time elapsed before a caller even gets on a queue thus separating it from the factor of caller queuing time. A call blocked refers to the number of callers who never even get to the queue but instead receive a busy signal. Service levels means the number of calls answered in less than a certain predefined number of seconds divided by the number of total calls. De Nucci (2011) also examined the factors affecting service quality in call centers but in a more general level. According to him, high quality customer service is about a balance between people, processes and technology. Complete training, management of employee turnover, measurement and reporting of relevant results that reflect quality and accessible, easy-to-use technology are four factors that can be used to create the balance.

2.5 Service Quality

Service quality is an integral part of service marketing concept and most of the service providers are largely depends on the service quality process as it is the ultimate determinant to satisfy the customers and gain long term benefits. Measuring quality service is a difficult task and thus makes it difficult to understand the exact nature of the service quality and subsequent improvement in the customer satisfaction. Most of the time quality is defined by the customers and if a service failed to meet the customer expectations then it will fail in the market. So, it is important to know how a consumer evaluate and perceive the services and make necessary changes in the service delivery to meet the customer requirements. Today, the market competitiveness stands at two points, viz. customer service and service quality. Be it physical products or service related products, these two dimensions are becoming an integral part to be remained in the competition. The main challenge is to determine the components of good service and the indicators of poor service. The difference will either help to retain or lost the customers. The main advantage of service quality improvement is to create a group of satisfied customers. If a customer is satisfied, then there is every possibility that the customer will spread a positive word of mouth about the service and the company on the contrary on dissatisfied may create lot of existing and prospective dissatisfied customers due to spread of negative word of mouth.

2.6 Measuring Service Quality

Though it is very difficult to measure or define quality still it is important to get a conceptual understanding about the term quality. It is more important from the perspective of service industry because of intangibility nature of service related products. If quality is identified and a criterion can be set, then this will be the best possible way of dealing with the customer satisfaction. Klaus (1985) was developed three distinguished meanings of quality and each of these meaning went on targeting three different groups in the service industry, viz. clients, employees and general public. Among the three groups, clients or customers are the main point of discussion. Clients are dividing the service that they are receiving into two broad groups, viz. the actual service delivery expectations and the manner in which the services are delivered. Actual service is the service expectations which may vary during service delivery time due to heterogeneous nature of the service products. But actual service creates expectations in the mind of the consumers and this should match with the manner in which services are delivered. If there is a difference between the two, then it will be going to create dissatisfaction among them. This may be the beginning point of creation of negative word of mouth. But it is not the customer angle which is crucial; the employees of the organization should understand the importance of the service quality. It is mainly related to organizational policy which determines the service standards. Some tangible elements like customer feedback form, employee manual, service blueprints are important factors which help to set the service quality standard. The third angle is general public who believes in quality of life, work environment, good health and good product or services. These are all available in the society and the general public is using it by paying certain prices. Once the services are purchased, expectations grow and this expectation should transform into a positive feeling which ultimately transform the customer into a loyal customer.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Brand awareness is the level of consumer consciousness of a company. It measures a potential customer's ability to not only recognize a brand image, but to also associate it with a certain company's product or service. Brand awareness is best spread through both inbound and outbound marketing efforts. When competition in an industry is high, brand awareness can be one of a business's greatest assets. With the vast amount of products options, having a differentiated message and an audience that can distinguish a company's brand from its competitors is crucial. It can mean the difference between success and failure for a company. Entire marketing campaigns can be constructed around promoting awareness of a brand. Spreading brand awareness is especially important during a company's first few years, when they are trying to make a name for themselves. When consumers are aware of the product a company offers, they will more likely go straight to that company if they need that product, instead of researching other places that they can acquire that product. Businesses with strong branding are viewed as accepted by the market. Therefore, they are trusted more by consumers who are looking to purchase a new product.

3.1 Research Question

The researcher posted the following research questions that served as a guide to achieve the set objectives.

- d. What is the relationship between brand awareness and consumer's loyalty?
- e. What is the relationship between brand awareness and quality of service?
- f. What is the relationship between brand awareness and consumer's satisfaction?

3.2 Research Design

The type of study used for this research is qualitative. This method is preferred for the study because it aims to study reality from the inside but not from the outside and therefore aid researchers to genuinely understand issues from the perspective of the respondents. Qualitative study aims to understand people rather than measuring them (Sarantakos, 2005). In light of this and considering a topic as the impacts of brand awareness on customer/brand loyalty, such an approach will be of much benefit for the researcher to fully understand what actually brands awareness on customer/brand loyalty. The use of this design allows for objectivity and reduces subjectivity of judgment (Kealey and Protheroe, 1996), yet giving room for the personal experiences of participants to be expressed. Use of this design will allow flexibility in data collection, subsequent analysis, and interpretation of collected information (Matveev, 2002).

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the study was Agona Swedru Melcom staff and workers. They were the key individuals who could really tell the impact of the brand awareness on customer/brand loyalty, Agona Swedru Melcom as a case study.

3.4 Sampling Method

Descriptive case study of 3 respondents was conducted and these respondents were chosen purposively by the researcher and these respondents were the three supervisors of the Melcom. Descriptive case study permits researchers to obtain in-depth explanation or description of the subject of interest. Descriptive case study further presents facts in current conditions concerning the nature of a group of people, a number of objects or a class of events and may include the procedure of induction, analysis, classification enumeration, or measurement (Van Dyk & Van Dyk, 2003) and these features qualify it to be used for such a study. The choice of respondents was dependent on their availability, co-operation and readiness to be interviewed. A semi-structured interview was conducted because of its tendency to assist researchers to explore other essential dimensions of topics in course of conducting interview which will aid to establish relationship between issues and a better understanding of the topic.

3.5 Sampling Size

The total number of staff at Melcom captured by the researcher from their workers and staff data was 26. If this 26 were only students, the researcher drew a sample size from this figure. Since the researcher was interested in the impacts of brand awareness on customer/brand loyalty, the researcher found these workers on a weekend of visiting the field for pre-testing to test his sample frame. Also, the 3 supervisors were also targeted as part of the cohort that would be used in the research. A Power calculation was performed using Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967) in order to determine the number of people required to select a representative sample for the study. Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the number of people required for a representative sample because it is simple to understand and yet yields reliable samples (American Journal of Applied Mathematics and Statistics, 2016). Power calculation is important during research in order to ensure that adequate number of people is recruited for the study; a smaller sample size will yield a less-powered study and hence yield results which cannot be generalized; a sample with so many people could be a waste of limited resources (Yamane, 1967). The researcher chose a precision of 5% to narrow the error of margin that may occur due to the size of the sample size.

Hence the equation: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ (Yamane 1967:886))

N = sample size

N=population at 26

e=level of precision at 5%=0.05

$n = 26 / (1 + 26(0.05)^2)$

$n = 24.41315$.

Therefore, number of workers involved in the study was 24.

N = sample size

N=population at 3

e=level of precision at 5%=0.05

$n = 3 / (1 + 3(0.05)^2)$

$n = 2.98894$.

Therefore, number of staff involved in the study was 3. Hence, one can say, a total number 39 individuals were involved in the whole interview process.

3.6 Research Instrument

The instrument used for data collection is interview guide. This instrument was chosen because it has the strength to allow the researcher to probe and explore key and sensitive issues which other instruments might not be able to. The instrument was developed based on the objectives of the study in order to elicit information pertinent to the objectives.

3.7 Data Collection Method

The data collection method used in this study was semi structured interview. The researcher chose this method because it is cost-efficient, speeds results, and protects participants' anonymity. The researcher met the respondents on regular working days at the Melcom, Agona Swedru. Since the workers all do not come on the same time, mostly running through and making business, in order not for the researcher to waste their time, the researcher in addition to the three field workers met them when they were at work. While, they were working, the interviewers did the interview while the workers were less busy at work.

The responses were both recorded and written in order to capture every bit of the responses provided by the respondents. Both recording and writing helped to validate the responses. The field assistant is a research assistant at the University of Cape Coast. A short orientation was organized for the field assistant as to how the questions should be interviewed. The field assistant was selected based

on the fact that he could read, write, has knowledge about the research topic and has the ability to handle interview when it comes to research. The average time for the data collection was 20 minutes.

2.8 Sources of Data

The source of data for this study was primary data. Interviews were conducted to the respondents where data was obtained.

3.9 Data Analysis

The written and recorded data were stored as MS Word and audio files respectively and transcribed shortly after the interview had taken place. These files were presented as findings and further discussed in relation to the literature reviewed to identify gaps, differences and points of intersection in order to make these findings more interactive and meaningful.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Permission was sought with an introductory letter from the School of Business (Bachelor of Business Administration – Marketing) to the interviewees at Agona Swedru Melcom. The permit was specifically obtained from the interviewee each, which permission was granted after they had gone through and were satisfied with the content of the interview intended to be used by the researcher, and the overall research methodology. The consent of respondents was sought by providing sufficient information about the study in order to make informed decision about participation or non-participation. The respondents either provided written or verbal consent depending on their ability to read or write. The participants participating in the study were assured of confidentiality considering the nature of the topic studied. They were also assured that the results of the study would be reported in aggregates so that it will be hard for anyone to trace a particular response to any of them. Pseudonyms were used for identification rather than the actual names of respondents to ensure anonymity.

3.11 Challenges Encountered

The major challenge faced was difficulty in gaining access to respondents for the study owing to the fact that some respondents within the university were reluctant to avail themselves to researchers because of fear of breaching the privacy and confidentiality. This immensely delayed the data collection process and therefore prolonged the duration anticipated by the researcher for the study. Another challenge encountered on the field is the fact that some respondents declined being recorded because they believed that their voice could be detected by anyone who comes across the recorded interview despite the prior assurance of absolute confidentiality and anonymity. This left the researcher only one option, that is to write as much as he could in order not to miss any cogent issue or response provided by the respondents.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented and discussed. The findings report the responses obtained from this study, and the discussion presents the relationship between the findings from the current study to those from related studies that have been conducted in the past. This section is grouped under four major topics; Socio- demographic characteristics; why people keep working with people, brand awareness, quality of service and consumer's satisfaction under which sub themes are further presented.

4.1 Socio- Demographic Characteristics

This section presents the socio-demographic data of the respondents. The variables considered include sex, ages, level of education and religion. The researcher will point out the variables in relation to other literatures available and highlight on some common findings and other contradictory findings. The research was conducted Agona Swedru Melcom, in the central region of Ghana. Yes, the interview that consisted of people who were fully employed at the company, not only them but also, customers who existed coming from Melcom and were willing to be interviewed at the time of study.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

VARIABLE	WORKERS	CUSTOMERS	FREQUENCY (F)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Sex				
Male	2	13	15	55.6
Female	2	10	12	44.4
Age				
15-19	0	3	3	11.1
20-24	0	1	1	3.7
25-29	3	5	8	27.6
30-34	0	4	4	14.8
35-39	1	9	10	37.0
40-44	0	1	1	3.7
Level of education				
Junior high school	0	8	8	29.6
Senior high school	1	13	14	51.9
Tertiary	3	2	5	18.5
Religion				
Christian	4	21	25	92.6
Muslim	0	2	2	7.4
Traditional	0	0	0	0.0
Total	4	23	27	100.0

Table 4.1 shows the profile of the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents. The results show that out of the 27 respondents, 15(55.6%) were males and 12 (44.4.0%) were females. The researcher divided the ages of the respondents into groups of four age differences per the outcome of the interview starting from age of 15-19years and ended at ages of 40-44. Of these groups, the table shows that, the majority of the respondents 10 (37%) were in the ages of 35-39years and also few, 3.7% (1 person) each was in the age group of 20-24 and 40-44 years. The third socio-demographic variable from the table (level of education) reports that, 14 (51.9%) respondents had Senior High School as their highest level of education, while few of the respondent, 5(18.5%) have ever had tertiary education. Also, among the 27 respondents, 92.6% (25 respondents) were Christians while the remaining 7.4% (2 respondents) were Muslims.

4.2 Why people keep working with people

During the interview the researcher found that most people do not want to leave a particular company or the other because of some factors which most workers working with Melcom have considered. Many companies spend a great amount of time money investigating the causes of employee turnover for example, through programs of exit interviews. Usually the intent behind such studies is to find out why people leave the idea being that if a company can identify the reasons for terminations, it can work to hold terminations, and turnover, down. The feedback derived from why people keep staying in the job for a long time is a clear indicator that most people leave because of unfavorable conditions. One worker, unknown indicated that:

".....I have always loved to work with Melcom when a friend advised me to apply for employment in 2012. Being here has helped me get my degree in accounting from UCC College of Distance Education. Basically, the flexible nature of the work has kept me for long....."

This gets back to the message of Vincent S. Flowers and Charles L. Hughes, which in their paper titled, "Why People live their Job". The consistency of it indicates that if a company wants to keep its employees, then it should also study the reasons for retention and continuation, and work to reinforce these. An obvious point in evidence is that one individual will stay in a job under conditions that would cause another to start pounding the pavements. This tends to assume a perfect correlation between job dissatisfaction and turnover. Many at times, a company works for low turnover because it thinks a low rate implies that its employees are pleased with their jobs. This is not necessarily true, by any means. A low rate may just be the effect of a tight job market. Perhaps, the company has put golden handcuffs on its employees through a compensation scheme that emphasizes deferred benefits. There are many factors involved. This is what reflects another worker in Swedru Melcom, who decided to stay in the job over the last eight years.

From the interview conducted the researcher identified that there are two relevant factors within the company and also two relevant factors outside the company. These are; the issue of job satisfaction within the company and the company environment and the degree of comfort an individual employee feels within it. This is also consistency to the writings of Flowers & Hughes (2018) that, one must consider an employee's perceived job opportunities in other institutions. An employee's perceptions of his outside job opportunities are influenced by real changes in the job market and by self-imposed restrictions and personal criteria. This is one of the factors Melcom (Swedru), have failed to consider and also address making most people hide their main motive of staying in the job for a long time. From this section, it could be identified that, if managements concentrate on understanding why employees stay, then they can act to reinforce the right reasons and stop reinforcing the wrong reasons. In other words, they can take a positive approach to managing retention, which will be more effective over the long run than the ordinary, negative approach of simply reducing turnover.

4.3 Branding Awareness

Brands have been used for centuries to distinguish the products or services of different companies from each other. In principle, whenever a marketer creates a new name, symbol or logo for a new product, she or he created a brand. (Keller 2008, 2.) Brand is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is traditionally defined as name, symbol, concept, sign, or some other feature (Malmelin & Hakala 2008, 17-18). The meaning of that is to distinguish the product or a service from competitor (Keller 2008, 2). Creating differences is what branding is all about (Kotler & Keller 2016, 387). The preconditions of an organization are positive images and meanings. Nowadays, it is not only the material markets that companies are competing in, but also intangible markets. The images of an organization in consumers' minds are the ones that control the consumption. For consumers, brands primarily occur as images and perceptions and these are personal for every individual. (Malmelin & Hakala 2008, 124-126.)

The brand awareness of Melcom was studied by asking if the respondent recognizes the branding item by showing first only the picture of the logo. Two - third (86%, n=29) of the respondents recognized the logo and the rest did not recognize it (14%, n=6). Only a few people did not recognize the logo of Melcom but surprisingly a bit over half of the respondents recognized the brand by its name. I would say that Melcom brand still has a high level of recognition. This can be partly explained by their high-budget marketing which is mostly social media marketing and search engine optimization. It can be concluded that Melcom should bring out their logo more since according to Kotler and Keller (2016, 20) consumers more likely recognize for example the color than the name of the brand. Although for the future they should aim for brand recall since Kotler and Keller (2016, 20) states it is more important for online brands than recognition when the consumer decisions are not made at the point of purchase but settings away from the point of purchase. The study showed that the respondents really have interest towards Melcom services. The interesting thing was that when was asked "why", few of the respondents answered "NO" was because they are new employees. Most respondents stated that,

"..... I know everything about Melcom, the main branding item is the logo which we have and no company in the world use the brand...."

Another respondent also stated that,

"....Melcom has always been Melcom and what it is today because of the uniqueness of the logo we use. Everyone identifies us from our logo and only few identify us with our products...."

One of the staffs also stated that,

"....People know Melcom not because of where we are, we are located everywhere in the world and our logo has a unique nature making us look so different, on the internet, our advertisement on the televisions and other social networks....."

Basically, there is a necessity for every company have a uniqueness in their branding items. That is a distinct item that separates them from another country and around the world. This is consistence to a Research analyses that was captured by Koniewski (2012), in his paper titled, brand awareness and customer loyalty. All these characteristics of the brand (packaging, name, advertising concepts and product prototypes) through consumer opinion research, interviews with experts and Internet word of mouth. We identify those components of the brand's image that have the greatest power to affect consumer choices and recommend the most effective directions for shaping the brand image (Koniewski, 2012). Brand awareness, as one of the fundamental dimensions of brand equity, is a prerequisite for the market success of both durables and nondurables brands. It represents a main factor for a brand to be included in the buying decision process consideration set, as most of the consumers prefer buying brands they are aware of (brands they are familiar with or, at least, they have heard of). Still, the importance of brand awareness in perceived risk assessment is significantly higher in the case of durables, which suggests that, in order to reduce the perceived risk associated to brand choice, it is essential for brand awareness to be generated (at least at the unaided level), especially in the case of durables.

4.4 Customer satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as latent satisfaction, which is the result of an implicit evaluation (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995).

"It's better in its own way. The relationship is direct, because most people believe Melcom have quality goods and services it makes their customers expect such and they get them too"

Over recent years marketing researchers have shown an interest in exploring satisfaction (Heitmann et al., 2007) and, more specifically, customer satisfaction (Preis, 2003). This is because the concept of satisfaction can be held responsible for the competitive advantage of an organization (Anderson et al., 1994; Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Edvardsson et al., 2000; Fornell, 1992; Hallowell, 1996; Reichheld et al., 2000; Soderlund & Vilgon, 1999), resulting in the increasing interest of companies around the world to monitor satisfaction on a continuous basis (Fornell, 1992). Durvasula et al. (2004) made this factor responsible for the investment of companies in improving their customer satisfaction. Fornell (1992) also agreed that companies need to dedicate significant resources for the improvement of customer satisfaction because satisfaction indicates the general health of the organization. His draws back to attention that Melcom has also come to understand this and is making sure these key are kept in touch and on point.

Scholars defined satisfaction based on Oliver's disconfirmation paradigm, which states that satisfaction is the notion of the consumer comparison between the expectation and performance (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995) and this is very consistence to the findings stated earlier. If the consumer is able to compare between expectation and performance, it is called manifest satisfaction (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995). However, in some situations it could be quite difficult to compare or the consumers might not be capable of forming expectations, evaluating performance, and comparing the two as independent elements.

4.5 Quality of Product and Services

In marketing, the focus of service performance has been on the quality of service, the quality of service and or the evaluation of the performance of service. For tens of years, the definition and measurement of service quality has occupied a significant position in services. The writings of Lewis and Booms (1983) define service quality as, "a measure of how well the service delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering service quality means conforming to customer expectations on a consistent basis." It has also been defined as the difference between customers' expectations and the service delivered (Parasuraman et al., 1985). During the interview, the researcher found that, the customers and staff both find, say that the services and products at Melcom show that the render good and quality services. Their products are also known to be of high quality. In a capture of one of the staffs, He stated that,

"Most of the things sold here are of good quality, I remember I bought a television set and home theatre in the year 2014, and since then, I have not even taken to a repairer."

"YES, with reference to the quality of goods sold. Most of their goods are with high quality and they are sincere about their prices. Customer care attendance isn't bad at all."

"For me if I don't buy my things in Melcom, I wouldn't buy anything o. This is because, Melcom is a place where we can really say, they have a very good customer care service." "You can come here and ask 1000 questions and they will answer all answers to with prices and their quality and they are mostly sincere."

"For me, I do not often buy things with Melcom but my encounter with the company made me believe what others have been saying about the company, the prices, the delivery, the customer service and the others. Melcom is really a nice place to purchase quality goods and services "

From these individuals, one may perceive this as a way of saying the goods are of high quality. This is due to the fact, this can be quantifying by the degree of discrepancy between customers' desired as opposed to predicted, expectations and their perceptions of service performance (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Service quality levels are higher when the gap between perceptions of performance and desired expectations is non-existent or small; the levels of satisfactory service quality exist when perceived performance exceeds predicted expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Another response we had also goes that,

"I must be sincere that every market has its own way of arranging the place bit on hint I have observed about Melcom is that, Melcom has a nice stores and their environment is such that getting things are easily and also you will never struggle getting something to buy and does not affect the service in relation to customers."

There is one thing one ought to understand clearly that, Service quality evaluation takes place when the customer's perceptions of the service experienced are compared with the service expected. In contrast, product quality results from a comparison of customer's perceptions of product performance with the expected level of product performance. A Service quality gap results when service perceptions fall below expected levels. The gap that exists between the service provider's perception of quality and the customer's perception of quality is the perception gap (Oliver, 1999). Upon probing to find out more, one of the workers in her interviewed made it known that, the companies Melcom buys from are of quality products. To mention few will include, Samsung, LG and Akai. This was the outcome of the interview on measuring the quality of the product. As part of understanding clearly the nature of services and products,

the respondents were asked if they think they are making getting some items and their prices difficult. From this question, one response that came over was that;

“Not at all, things are easy getting and the way the place is organized once you enter into a particular place and you see kitchen appliances you will realized that almost everything about it is about kitchen appliances and when you go to a court and find cloths or shirts you will realize that all things around that place are about shirts and it makes finding things so easy. And also not only every item has gotten a price attached to it and it also help you not to worry the management other staff that are available.”

To also understand some of the elements that make people stay in network and also the reason of brand loyalty and keeping or being committed to companies, we must understand that communication is key variable we must consider. From a feedback captured in one of the respondents is;

“Well, I believe things like this are basically subjective, the way you may see the speech as offensive may not be offensive to me. Generally, because of the strict staff members, it makes the workers very friendly and professional. Communication is one thing that need not to be overlooked when it comes to business. Melcom is a place most people do buy from and I believe that will make them act very well when it comes to communication. I believe they know there are other online and structured company that are highly ready to be compete to and once it comes to factors such as communication, customer attendance, worker’s participation they are ready to give their best and I believe it really helps Melcom does very well in customer attendance. Their mode of communication is always positive. And I believe that’s is their hallmark, that is to being the best node of interaction among staffs and customer “

5.0 CONCLUSION

This final chapter provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations for the study. The study basically aimed to explore on the impact of brand awareness on customer loyalty – a case study of Melcom, Agona Swedru. The objective was categorized into major specific themes; brand awareness, consumers’ loyalty, quality of service, consumers’ satisfaction. These categories were to help the researcher better understand the specific issues surrounding the quest of brand awareness among customers and their loyalty. The instrument used for this study was an interview guide that was administered because of the qualitative nature of the work. This instrument assisted the researcher to explore the deepest recesses of respondents’ awareness on the branding, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction. The researcher’s main source of data was a primary data. This was done with the help of an interview guide. The study area was Melcom- Agona Swedru targeting both staff and customer. The necessary ethical considerations required to ensure the safety and comfort of all respondents.

5.1 Key Findings

Among the varieties of persons interviewed the results show that out of the 27 respondents, 15(55.6%) were males and 12 (44.4.0%) were females. The researcher divided the ages of the respondents into groups of four age differences per the outcome of the interview starting from age of 15-19years and ended at ages of 40-44. Of these groups, the table shows that, the majority of the respondents 10 (37%) were in the ages of 35-39years and also few, 3.7% (1 person) each was in the age group of 20-24 and 40-44 years. The third socio-demographic variable from the table (level of education) reports that, 14 (51.9%) respondents had Senior High School as their highest level of education, while few of the respondent, 5(18.5%) have ever had tertiary education. Also, among the 27 respondents, 92.6% (25 respondents) were Christians while the remaining 7.4% (2 respondents) were Muslims.

In the interest of the researcher to find out why people keep working with people, the researcher identified that, most people do not want to leave a particular company or the other because of some factors which most workers working with Melcom have considered. The researcher also found that, only few people did not recognize the logo of Melcom but surprisingly a bit over half of the respondents recognized the brand by its name. The study showed that the respondents really have interest towards Melcom services. The interesting thing was that when was asked “why”, few of the respondents answered “NO” was because they are new employees.

Basically, there is a necessity for every company have a uniqueness in their branding items. That is a distinct item that separate them from another country and around the world. This is consistence to a Research analyses that was captured by Koniewski (2012), in his paper titled, brand awareness and customer loyalty.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the brand awareness and customer satisfaction of products and services at Melcom not only dependent on the socio – economic, the demographic or financial readiness but also publicity, public awareness, advertisement of the management and other Stakeholders towards them.

5.3 Recommendation

The findings of the study have important implications for policy making and programme designing at both national and local level. Branding awareness have unique communication needs which are often ignored in marketing and business communication, policy making, programme designing, and service delivery. The neglect of these needs has created barriers and hindrances in knowing and making companies and businesses known to the public. Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

The Government should endeavor to initiate ventures (workshop centers, business branding awareness joints) for businesses in Agona Swedru in order for them to meet some of their societal and educational obligations in the society. There is a need for policy makers (the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Media and Business Management Team for instance) to increase information and awareness of businesses through outreach programmes Agona Swedru. It is recommended that, the studies should be conducted in other part of the country to help identify more questionable problems relating to brand awareness and communication related issues.

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