ISSN 2411-7323

Int Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship 3(1): 83 - 96, April 2019
 www.sagepublishers.com

INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE BRANDING ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA

OWINO FAITH OCHIENG'

Abstract

Branding strategies are undertaken with the main aim of differentiating products from a pool of competitors and positioning them within the market place. Globalization and regional integration have contributed to increased numbers of competitors operating within the same context. Competing organizations seek market dominance by increasing corporate profitability through the growth of market shares. The clinical approach to corporate branding as a reputation management tool has evolved to the application of corporate branding as a strategy for the formation and shifting of consumer attitudes and behavior. The objectives of the study were to assess the influence of corporate branding on brand awareness and to determine the influence of corporate branding on consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. This study employed a descriptive research design approach and was targeted to a section of the population that had been exposed to the brand and actively consumed their products. The study focused on customers within the confines of Nairobi County. Convenience sampling strategy was used to draw a representative sample from the population. The data was collected from students and staff in tertiary institutions within the Nairobi CBD. In addition, the study surveyed 384 respondents using questionnaires. The data was subjected to SPSS version 20 system in which the researcher undertook descriptive and inferential data analysis. Further, the researcher drew inferences on the influence of corporate branding on the perception of organizations using correlation and multiple regression analysis. The study found that corporate branding had significant positive association with brand awareness. The study also established that corporate branding had significant positive association with consumer perception. The study recommends that organizations should use corporate branding as a strategy for increasing brand awareness. In addition, the study proposes that corporate brand communication be employed across diverse channels to achieve optimum market coverage. In addition, the study advocates for the use of corporate branding as a reputation management strategy to achieve positive perception across all consumer segments. Finally, the study advances the application of corporate branding to differentiate and position organizations thereby enabling them to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage within their industry.

Keywords: Corporate Branding, Brand Awareness, Consumer Perception, Brand Equity

Introduction

In response to growing competition in the market place, organizations have tweaked corporate strategy to embrace a consumer-centric approach. This idea is operationalized through its enactment as an organization's core value or the overhaul of corporate structures and processes in favour of those that prioritize the needs of the consumer. The present age consumer wields power acquired through technological advancement and the availability of multiple channels of communication that facilitate the sharing and dissemination of information. Corporate branding has been embraced as a strategic response to increasing competition and diminishing market shares. The application of branding has been widely embraced to improve organizational image and create favorable perceptions among consumers. The drive also gives greater focus to the organization as a force for differentiation by conveying messages on product benefits (Schiffman, Kanuk & Hansen, 2008).

Corporate branding can therefore be viewed as a strategy aimed at attaining competitive advantage and market share. Business branding has been limited to logos and taglines. Organizations have leveraged the use of visual identity as a basic tool for corporate reputation management. However, consumer preference has shifted from the buying of product brands and has been extended to the evaluation of organization brands in the making of purchase decisions (Hawkins, Motherbaugh & Mookerjee, 2011). Extensive research focused on product, person and place brands has precipitated discourse on the brand equity dimensions such as loyalty, awareness and association. However, Keller's (1993) CBBE model shifts brand equity definition from organizations to consumers. It is important that brands be examined through the identity, meaning and response deduced from customer interaction with the brand and response to the brand.

In making decisions, consumers seek to minimize financial, social, performance and obsolescence related to the product purchase (Lantos, 2015). Perception is an important element in the evaluation of brands and the organizations from which the product brands originate. Consumer perception of corporate brands has become an important consideration in the evaluation of products, their quality and effectiveness in fulfilling needs. In addition, corporate brands influence consumer perception through advertisements that position the organization and its products within the market environment. It is important that messaging generated by corporate brands be aimed at projecting a favourable image and perception among consumer segments.

The corporate brand concept draws its existence from the product brand, an approach that focuses on brand essence, benefits and individual visual identities. While this perspective presents a conservative view of the concept, liberal perspectives construe corporate branding as a strategic and integrated field. Corporate branding therefore can be envisaged as a 'strategic concept' aimed at crafting a framework for the development of an image that resonates with the organization's stakeholders. According to Zhang (2015), corporate brands play an important role in influencing consumer decision. While different approaches have been adopted to improve brand equity, organizations have leveraged on the latent potential of corporate branding to create awareness, convey brand quality and inspire brand loyalty. Corporate branding strategies have adopted a consumer centric focus, targeting the consumer with the goal of swaying perceptions in favour of their brands. Corporate strategy has evolved to accommodate corporate branding as a means of achieving competitive advantage.

Consumer perception is formed through a process that involves the evaluation of marketing messages received through advertising, sales promotions, public relations and consumer experience with products (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009). Perceptions are important in the formation of attitudes and mental scripts that help individuals in their understanding of different contexts. Consumers respond to brands based on perception, which is subjective in nature rather than objective reality. The exposure of individuals to stimuli yields varied outcomes as each individual relies on their personal interpretation, emotions, needs and preferences to evaluate the situation (Schiffmann & Kanuk, 2009). In the making of purchase decisions, consumers place more premium on the emotional value accrued in the course of their interaction with brands (Choo et al., 2012).

Safaricom holds the largest market share, success that can be attributed to innovation leadership and fast mover advantage. While Kenya's market environment is characterized by competition, the company has been able to retain its market share through aggressive marketing campaigns targeted and favorable positioning and influence of consumer perception. The adoption of a consumer focus in its operations has been manifested in the company's corporate branding campaign and replicated through its product development and service delivery frameworks. In addition, the company has leveraged its brand values and brand heritage to achieve resonance with Kenyan consumers. Safaricom has been unable to achieve differentiation through cost leadership, maintaining premium pricing for most of its products despite the price reduction strategies initiated by industry competitors. However, the company has effectively made use of corporate branding to induce feelings of patriotism among consumer segments and influence perception of a brand dedicated to serve the needs of the Kenya population. This is also reflected through the corporate slogan, *'Safaricom, Twaweza'* that seeks to draw on the collective aspirations of Kenyans to pull together to achieve positive impact.

Finally, the telecommunications industry has experienced a significant shift in strategy. This has emanated from globalization and the amalgamation of regional markets to create global market segments and universal products that appeal to diverse groups of consumers. The need to appeal to the shrinking market share has yielded innovativeness and dynamism in an effort to refine corporate identity through branding.

Research Problem

The ability to influence consumers through brand advocacy and referrals alludes to shifting ideals in which the power of brands is no longer determined by marketers, but by consumers (Leone et al., 2006). In a market characterized by constant disruptions and proliferation of competitive forces, it is increasingly important for organizations to curve a niche for products. With growing competition and product homogeneity (Court et al., 2006), organizations have shifted focus from manipulative marketing to the use of branding as differentiation strategy aimed at swaying consumer perception. While most of the research is focused on product brands and consumer perception, there is scant research on the influence of corporate branding on consumer perception.

The analysis of corporate branding within the confines of marketing has been limited to the scope of visual identity, symbolism, organization nomenclature and transferable equity to products without due consideration for consumer involvement. In addition, while studies have examined corporate brands in the context of equity transferred to product brands, there needs to be critical assessment of corporate brands in lieu of direct influence on consumers. While independent studies have been done on branding and consumer perception, the influence of corporate branding in particular and the resultant impact on consumers is yet to be established. There lacks a holistic view of corporate branding that engages the reputation of an organization and perception of its products across heterogeneous stakeholder landscapes at varied touch points (Mckinsey, 2013).

Kenya's telecommunication industry has experienced political, economic and technological disruptions in recent times. This has precipitated a change in corporate strategy that gives greater emphasis to the consumer and the perceptions that they have of the organization. Further, companies within the industry have adopted aggressive corporate branding campaigns aimed at reinforcing brand dominance while advancing salient product features that fulfill consumer needs. Globalization, competition, a fluid market environment, rigid policy frameworks and aggressive marketing have contributed to the creation of a complex operational context which necessitates that the consumer becomes the organization's main focal point. The dynamics of branding campaigns have evolved to include corporate brands that compete beyond the price advantage communicate quality and value of the products to the consumer, thereby influencing perception altogether.

Amegbe, Owino and Kerubo (2017) initiated a study seeking to investigate the behavioral responses to corporate image building through social media advertising. The study confirmed the existence of a positive behavioral response from consumers towards social media advertising and its significance in building a good corporate image among stakeholder segments thereby leading to improved perception. This study established a conceptual link between a positive corporate image generated through corporate branding and its implications on consumer perception of companies. The study also evaluated corporate branding through brand equity parameters such as brand awareness and perceived quality.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

i. To assess the influence of corporate branding on brand awareness
ii. To determine the influence of corporate branding on consumer perception of organizations in Kenya

Theoretical Framework

Brand Relationships Theory

Today's marketing environment is characterized by constant disruptive forces, fluid policy frameworks and evolving consumer preferences. It has become increasingly important for organizations to differentiate themselves to acquire sustained competitive advantage. Organizations must position their brands to respond to issues within their operational context as a way of engaging consumers (Jimenez-Zarco et al., 2014). The paradigm shift from the classical approach in which consumers were engaged for the sole purpose of satisfying primary utility while meeting fiscal bottom lines brings to the fore the nascent need for consumers to be engaged at a much deeper level.

The brand relationship theory illuminates the existence of a relationship between brands and consumers (Keller & Lehmann, 2007) and postulates that a brand is deduced from consumers' perception (Blackston, 1992). Empirical evaluation of this paradigm expounds on emotional constructs across a broad spectrum that define the relationship between brands and consumers at various points of interaction. Descriptive words such as brand loyalty, brand trust, brand passion, brand attachment, brand romance, brand fidelity and brand love have been used to define the intensity of the consumer-brand relationship (Reimann & Aron, 2009). The use of social relationship metaphors to describe consumer-brand relationship reinforces the belief that objects possess souls, a paradigm that has been widely accepted in product domain (Gilmore, 1919).

This theory takes cognizance of the fact that consumer interaction with brands has shifted beyond addressing primary utility. Consumers no longer perceive brands as products, but as relationship partners capable of satisfying emotional and psychosocial desires (Keh et al., 2007). Emotions are central to the determination of attitudes and perception. The theory scopes out the various dimensions of the feelings that consumers develop for brands and their potential in influencing the perceptions held by consumers. The theory therefore, provides a framework on which consumer-brand relationships can be anchored and response towards to brands rationalized.

The adoption of the brand relationship theory into contemporary marketing literature is not without controversy. The brand relationship theory is based on two distinct foundations that display mutual incompatibility in theory as well as application. The theory imputes human-like characteristics on brands considered as inanimate objects. The adoption of animism and anthropomorphism from the human psychology paradigm attempted to explain the humanizing of brands, arguments advanced by Aaker (1997) and Fournier (1998). However, theorist's point of departure is centered on specific issues concerning consumer perception of brand itself. Fournier (1998) asserts that brands possess human-like qualities and views the consumer-brand interaction through the social relationship lens. Conversely, Aaker (1997) presents the human-like descriptors of brands as a metaphorical element aimed at constructing and understanding consumer interaction with brands. According to Fillis and Rentschler (2008), the human-like perception of brands catalyzes creative thinking and aids in the connection of two or more thought dimensions. The apparent schism in the theoretical foundation of the brand relationships theory has caused confusion over which framework to apply with different literature making application of both frameworks in their analysis of brands.

Finally, theoretical gaps begun to emerge as theorists questioned the significance of consumer's perception of brands in the influence of consumer behavior. According to Avis (2012), different theoretical foundations offer different explanations for human behavior. The theory undermines the moderating role played by social relationship norms in framing consumer perception as depicted in empirical studies presented by Aggarwal (2004). In his analysis of brand relationship norms and consumer behavior, Aggarwal draws a conceptual link between social relationship norms and consumer evaluation of brands. Empirical literature reveals that consumer assessment of brands is guided by social norms. According to Aggarwal, consumer evaluation of brands is dependent on whether brands conform or violate social relationship norms. The argument concludes by asserting that brands are evaluated much like any other member of the society. Brands are positively evaluated if they conform to social norms and negatively evaluated if they violate social norms.

Consumer Based Brand Equity Model (CBBE)

Organizations are now leveraging on the power of consumer groups to increase brand awareness and inspire brand loyalty. Similarly, the determination of brand equity is dependent on consumer response. While organizations measure brand equity in terms of monetary value of the brand (Simon & Sullivan, 1993), a comprehensive approach to the determination of brand equity is an outcome of consumer responses to brands (Christodoulides & de Charnatony, 2010). The evaluation of brands from the consumer's perspective has led to the adoption of models that measure brand equity based on certain variables drawn from consumer interaction with the brands.

The CBBE model draws a conceptual link between consumer behavior and branding. This concept elucidates the consumer response to branding efforts by defining the differential response that brand knowledge has on consumer response (Keller, 1993). This model posits that consumer based brand equity is a derivative of consumer knowledge of a brand and the sum total of associations to the brand. The CBBE model expresses the value of a brand in terms of knowledge of the brand and strength, uniqueness and favourability of its associations. In addition to high marketplace value, a high equity brand has the ability to create a positive differential response in the context of its operation (Pullig, 2008). The CBBE model hinges on brand knowledge, brand awareness and brand image to determine brand value. Brand knowledge is a prerequisite element in the determination of consumer based brand equity. Therefore, the CBBE model is anchored on the assumption that consumers have had prior exposure to the brand. Further, brand awareness can be operationalized using brand recognition and brand recall. An increase in brand awareness translates to an increase in chances of a brand becoming part of a consumers' consideration set (Nedungadi, 1990). Brand recognition is a key tenet of brand equity. It is a consumer's ability to identify a certain specific brand from a pool of brands in the same product category whereas brand recall is the consumer's ability to bring a brand to memory when provided with a cue. Brand recall is based on a consumer's past interaction with the brand.

Brand images constitute the visual imagery conjured in the minds of consumers as a result of their interaction with brands. Brand equity largely anchors on brand image. Consumers attribute certain images to brands based on the perceptions developed as a result of associations relating to attributes, attitudes and benefits. Attributes denote the functional and non-functional features of a brand (Merrilees, 2016). Consumers leverage on both product and non-product attributes to determine the value of brands (Aaker et al., 2010). Functional attributes refers to the physical appearance or the 'more colourful aspects' of a brand (Keller, 2012). Descriptive terms such as reliability, competence, skillfulness, usefulness and quality have been used to scope out the functionality of a brand (Sinclair & Keller, 2014). The non-functional aspects of a brand include self-concept connections, image, emotions, trustworthiness, attachment and symbolism (Jimenez & Voss, 2014). According to Fishbein's Multi-attribute Model, consumer beliefs about brand attributes and their evaluation of these attributes is critical in the formation of consumer attitudes. Consumer attitudes and perceptions are therefore deduced from key brand attributes (Mullen & Johnson, 2013).

According to the CBBE model, consumer evaluation of brands is attached to the value of associations borne by the brand. The primary aspects of association under consideration are functionality, strength and uniqueness of brand associations held in the consumer schema. These associations play an important role in crafting a brand image, determining brand uniqueness and value and scoping out ways in which brand equity can be leveraged competitively (Mohan et al., 2017). In addition, the measurement of brand equity based on knowledge and a network of brand associations ignores important aspects of the business and context specific dimensions at the expense of less objective indicators. In his study of brand equity determinants, (Battistoni et al., 2013) postulates that consumers look for dialogues with brands and for companies that take care of their feedback and needs while directing their desires towards brands that are emotionally consistent with their values. Belk (1988) evaluates consumer preference for brands based on their ability to satisfy functional needs and wants apart from symbolizing the aspects which consumers can relate to with actual or aspired personality associations. The one dimensional analysis of brands with rigid variables has created the need for a more dynamic approach in the evaluation of brand equity. Empirical evidence advocates for the addition of new variables relevant to the context (Ebrahimi et al., 2012).

Different organizations have created brand equity measurement models that allow for the inclusivity of a wider variety of variables that were previously left out of the brand resonance model. The creation of Brand Asset Valuators (BAV) has greatly influenced the industry analysis of brands thereby signaling a departure from academic models that are deemed to be inflexible. Further, organizational theorists postulate that consumers interact with brands and leverage corporate brand messages to create meaning (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). In addition to the dimensions presented in brand equity evaluation models, there is need for an analysis of brand communication and the role it plays in aiding in the construction of meaning. A critical evaluation of consumer-brand dialogue contributes to the understanding of brand expression, the meanings derived and the precipitated perceptions as a result of these meanings.

Corporate Branding and Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is an important parameter in the measurement of brand equity. It also plays a critical role in sculpting consumer's perception and influencing purchase decisions by ensuring that a particular brand is constantly within a consumer's consideration set when confronted with alternative brands. Consumer tendency to default to certain brands is drawn from their ability to identify or recall a particular brand among other brands within the same product category. Therefore, brand awareness is a source of competitive advantage, ensuring that a particular brand is constantly in a consumer's mind by blocking competitor brands and amplifying a brand's relative advantage to its substitutes (Sharma, 2017). Corporate branding is the strategy through which organizations achieve awareness, ensuring that the brand attains mental visibility in the mind of the consumer.

Corporate Branding and Consumer Perception

Corporate branding has been applied as a key strategy in reputation management for organizations. Concepts drawn from public relations and consumer psychology have been crucial in developing corporate branding strategies that reflect the attributes of the brands they produce. Corporate branding plays a critical role in the formation of brand image which in turn influences consumer response based on the perception drawn from brand associations (Keller, 1993). In addition, corporate brands have the inherent ability to influence perception and behavior and frame consumer perceptions (Chun & Davies, 2006). Keller (2003) proposes the building of strong brands through the establishment of correct brand identity. The establishment of brand identity and the crafting of a compelling brand image is a key function of branding. Organizations have leveraged the power of branding to influence consumer perceptions of their brands.

Traditionally, branding has been approached through visual identity and nomenclature for products. However, there is latent potential in the development of compelling identities for the organizations that engage in the production and marketing of products. The need to develop credible corporate image is brought to the fore by the increasing association consumers draw between products and the reputation of their organizations. Further, the adoption of monolithic brand architectures owing to the benefits of association between brands and their parent organizations portends the need for synchronized identities between products and organizations. Of greater significance is the perception imputed by organizations on their brands and the sum total of consistent associations drawn from their attributes. According to Mohan et al., (2018), consumer evaluation of a brand is enhanced when the association between a corporate brand and a product is included.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2016), organizational marketing is undertaken to influence the attitudes and behaviors of consumers towards organizations. Marketing effort focused on organizational image results in building of successful brands through which consumers evaluate the corporation and its products (Blythe, 2013). The creation of a strong corporate conveys messages on quality, performance and status of products and allows brands to compete beyond price dimensions. In addition, consumer buying habits stretch beyond evaluation of products to that of the corporate image. Organizational buyers are keen on the attributes, values and associations generated by corporate brands and are willing to pay a premium for products affiliated to a desirable corporate brand (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh & Mookerjee, 2011).

Finally, the associations drawn from corporate branding strategies are important in the determination of the favorability, strength and uniqueness of brands in relation to its competitors (Heding, Knudtzen & Bjerre, 2009). Brand image and brand associations, key outcomes of corporate branding efforts, contribute to the formation of perceptions that influence consumer response to brands. The sum total of associations drawn between corporate brands and product brands of the same company plays a significant role in determining the perception of consumers towards corporate brands and their products.

Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design approach. The adoption of the descriptive design allowed the researcher to test the hypothesized relationships between variables in the study. According to the Communications Authority (2018), the total number of active subscribers to the Safaricom brand is 29.5 million. This study targeted a section of the population that had been exposed to the brand and actively consumed their products. The study focused on customers within the confines of Nairobi County. This avoided the time and financial constraints that would have accrued as a result of extending the research to other counties

The data was collected from students and staff in tertiary institutions within the Nairobi CBD. The study surveyed 384 respondents derived from a population of 29.5 million subscribers. The sample size was ideal as it allowed the research to achieve a 5% margin of error and a 95 % confidence level. The study employed the use of similar copies of the same questionnaire. The questionnaire included open ended and close ended questions to collect information from subscribers. The questionnaires were self-administered to eliminate interference by the researcher thereby reducing bias and influence. The questionnaire focused on the measurement of corporate brand awareness and corporate brand perceptions about the organization.

The data was subjected to SPSS version 20 system in which the researcher undertook descriptive and inferential analysis. The data was analyzed descriptively using mean, median and mode parameters that constitute the measures of central tendency. Further, the researcher drew inferences on the influence of corporate branding on the perception of organizations using correlation and multiple regression analysis. The influence of corporate branding on brand awareness and corporate brand perceptions were also determined through multiple regression analysis.

Research Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Corporate Brand Awareness

The slogan for Safaricom was changed from 'Safaricom, The Better Option' to 'Safaricom, Twaweza' although most of the respondents were aware of the change. The study also found that the most popular channels in which people heard of Safaricom brand were through Television/Radio advert (88.6%), Sales Promotions (79.3%), Friends/family (76.2%), Social media advert (71.4%), Billboards and Posters (68.9%), and the least popular was Newspaper adverts (55.2%).

Table 1: Opinion on Safaricom Brand

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
The Safaricom colors are unique and exciting	4.359	1.146
The Safaricom slogan is easy to remember	4.379	1.143
The Safaricom logo is easily recognizable	4.369	1.155
I can easily recognize the Safaricom brand among other brands	4.279	1.083
It is easy to access information on Safaricom tariffs	4.331	1.140
It is easy to locate Safaricom customer service outlets	4.376	1.151
My decision to use Safaricom is based on my knowledge of the company and its products	4.331	1.163
I have visited the Safaricom website at least once to learn more about the company and its products	4.117	0.918
I have read through a Safaricom flyer or brochure to help me make a purchase decision	3.724	0.661
Product information sent to me through SMS is helpful	4.021	0.952
I have seen a Safaricom advert at least once a day over the last 30 days	4.028	0.864
Whenever I see advertisements from other companies offering the same product, it is easy for me to remember information on Safaricom and compare it those companies	3.979	0.885
I can easily tell that Safaricom is a Kenyan company by looking at the adverts	4.117	0.918

From the findings, the participants agreed that the Safaricom slogan is easy to remember as shown by a mean of 4.379. It is easy to locate Safaricom customer service outlets as shown by a mean of 4.376, the Safaricom logo is easily recognizable as shown by a mean of 4.369 and Safaricom colors are unique and exciting as shown by a mean of 4.359. Participants' decision to use Safaricom is based on their knowledge of the company and its products and as shown by a mean of 4.331. In addition, it is easy to access information on Safaricom tariffs as shown by a mean of 4.331 and easy to recognize the Safaricom brand among other brands as shown by a mean of 4.279. The surveyed participants have visited the Safaricom website at least once to learn more about the company and its products as shown by a mean of 4.117 and can easily tell that Safaricom is a Kenyan company by looking at the adverts as shown by a mean of 4.117. Further, the participants have seen a Safaricom advert at least once a day over the last 30 days as shown by a mean of 4.028 and whenever they see advertisements from other telecommunication companies, it is easy for them to remember information on Safaricom and compare it to other companies as shown by a mean of 3.979. Finally, product information sent to through SMS is helpful as shown by a mean of 4.021 but participants relied on Safaricom flyers or brochures to help them make a purchase decision as shown by a mean of 3.724.

Table 2: Corporate Brand Perception

Statement	Mean	Std.Dev.
Safaricom offers the best services in the market	4.379	1.201
Safaricom's internet speed is fast	4.169	1.048
Safaricom's internet service reasonably priced	4.266	1.089
Safaricom's calls are reasonably priced	4.103	0.986
Safaricom has good network coverage	4.331	1.203
I easily connect to Safaricom's customer care whenever I need help	4.266	1.089
Safaricom customer service has efficiently resolved the queries I have raised as a consumer	4.197	1.014
Safaricom's product and services adequately fulfills my needs as a consumer	4.207	1.038
Safaricom provides me with value for money spent on its products	4.269	1.113
The Safaricom corporate brand conveys my aspirations as a customer	4.259	1.107
Safaricom staff are polite, courteous and pleasant to talk	4.066	0.908
Being with Safaricom is a rewarding experience	4.172	0.979
Safaricom actively engages its consumers and puts their needs into consideration when developing its products	4.131	1.008
I consider myself a long-term customer of Safaricom products	4.162	0.978

From the findings, the respondents agreed that Safaricom offers the best services in the market as shown by a mean of 4.379, has good network coverage as shown by a mean of 4.331 and provides value for money spent on its products as shown by a mean of 4.269. Participants easily connect to Safaricom's customer care whenever they need help as shown by a mean of 4.266 and that Safaricom customer service has efficiently resolved the queries they have raised as consumers as shown by the mean of 4.197. In addition, Safaricom staff are polite, courteous and pleasant to talk as shown by a mean of 4.066. Safaricom's product and services adequately fulfills their needs as consumers as shown by a mean of 4.207, internet service reasonably priced as shown by a mean of 4.266, and respondents enjoyed fast internet speeds and reasonably priced voice calls as shown by a mean of 4.169 and 4.103 respectively. The Safaricom corporate brand conveys participants' aspirations as shown by a mean of 4.259 and being with Safaricom is a rewarding experience as shown by a mean of

4.172. Participants consider themselves long-term customers of Safaricom products as shown by a mean of 4.162. Safaricom actively engages its consumers and puts their needs into consideration when developing its products as shown by a mean of 4.131.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

		Consumer perception	Brand awareness	Corporate branding
Consumer perception	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	290		
Brand awareness	Pearson Correlation	.776*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		
	N	290	290	
Corporate branding	Pearson Correlation	.785*	.344	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.062	
	N	290	290	290

The findings established the existence of a strong positive correlation between brand awareness and consumer perception of organizations as shown by r = 0.776, statistically significant p = 0.002<0.05; there was a positive correlation between corporate branding and consumer perception of organizations as shown by r = 0.785, statistically significant P = 0.002. This indicates that brand awareness, and corporate branding with consumer perception of organizations are related.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was applied to analyze the variation of dependent variable due to the transformation of independent variables. The study analyzed the variations of consumer perception of organizations in Kenya due to the changes of brand awareness, and corporate branding.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.871[a]	0.759	0.654	0.00464

Adjusted R squared was 0.759 implying that there was 75.9% variation of consumer perception of organizations in Kenya due to the changes of brand awareness, and corporate branding. The remaining 24.1% imply other factors which lead to consumer perception of organizations in Kenya existed and weren't discussed in the study. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the study variables. From the results the study established that a strong positive association between the variables being studied as shown by 0.871.

Table 5: **Analysis of variance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.862	2	8.931	98.752	.001b
	Residual	25.956	287	0.090		
	Total	**43.818**	**289**			

From the ANOVA statistics, the processed data (population parameters) had a significance level of 0.001. This shows that the data is ideal for making conclusions on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%. The F calculated was greater than F critical (98.752 > 3.027). This shows brand awareness, and corporate branding significantly influence consumer perception of organizations in Kenya.

Table 6: Beta Coefficients of the study Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.132	0.202		5.604	0.002
	Brand awareness	0.428	0.099	0.385	4.323	0.009
	Corporate branding	0.566	0.108	0.467	5.241	0.002

Brand awareness is significant to consumer perception of organizations in Kenya as shown by ($\beta = 0.428$, $P = 0.009$). This is an indication that brand awareness had significant positive association with consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. This suggests that a unit increase in brand awareness will lead to increase in consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. Corporate branding is significant to consumer perception of organizations in Kenya as shown by ($\beta = 0.566$, $P = 0.002$). This is an indication that corporate branding had significant positive association with consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. This suggests that a unit increase in corporate branding will lead to increase in consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. The regression equation derived was

$Y = a + bx + e$

Where: Y = Consumer Perception; a = Constant; b = Slope of the line; x = Corporate Branding; e = Error Term

$Y = 1.132 + 0.428X_1 + 0.566\ X_2$

The equation above reveals that holding brand awareness, and corporate branding constant, the variables will significantly influence consumer perception of organizations as shown by constant = 1.132.

Conclusion

Brand awareness is an important parameter as it plays a critical role in sculpting consumer's perception of organizations and influencing purchase decisions. The study also found that brand awareness had significant positive association with consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. The study therefore concludes that a unit increase in brand awareness will lead to increase in consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. Corporate branding plays a critical role in the formation of brand image which in turn influences consumer response based on the perception drawn from brand associations. The study revealed that corporate branding is significant in building consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. The study also revealed that corporate branding had significant positive association with consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that a unit increase in corporate branding will lead to increase in consumer perception of organizations in Kenya.

Recommendations

The findings of this study established that corporate branding has a significant positive association with brand awareness. The study therefore recommends that corporate branding be employed as a strategy for increasing the levels of brand awareness among consumer segments. In addition, the study recommends that information on the corporate brand be disseminated through multiple communication channels to achieve optimum coverage of all consumer segments. In addition, the study concluded that corporate branding had significant positive association with consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. The study therefore encourages the use of corporate branding as a reputation management tool to manage the image of organizations among. Also, organizations should leverage on corporate branding as a strategy for influencing positive consumer perception. Finally, the study recommends that corporate brand identity be used to differentiate and position organizations. The establishment of a strong corporate image preserves the brand, builds awareness of its products and enables the organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. The use of corporate brands ensures that all its products are inoculated from competition from alternatives and substitutes within the industry.

Suggestion for Further Research

The focus of this study was to investigate the influence of corporate branding on consumer perception of organizations in Kenya. The study recommends replication in other organizations within the country to facilitate generalization of the research findings. The study also recommends that research to be done on the influence of corporate branding strategies on the performance of organizations in Kenya.

References

Abhishek Dwivedi, Lester W. Johnson, Robert E. McDonald, (2015). Celebrity endorsement, self-brand connection and consumer-based brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 5(24), 449-461.

Amegbe, H., Owino, J. O. and Kerubo, O.L. (2017). Behaviuoral Responses to Corporate Image Building Through Social Media Advertising: A Study Among Nairobi Students. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 12(2), 223-238.

Balmer, J.M.T, Powell, J.M., Kernstock, J. & Brexendorf, T.O. (2016). Advances in Corporate Branding. Springer.

Elyria Kemp, Carla Y. Childers, Kim H. Williams, (2012). Place branding: creating self-brand connections and brand advocacy. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 7(21), 508-515.

Etzel, M.J., Walker, B. J. & Stanton, W. J. (2001). Marketing. McGraw-Hill Education.

Hawkins, D.I. , Mothersbaugh, D. L. and Mokerjee, A. (2011). Consumer Behaviour. Building Marketing Strategy. McGraw-Hill Education.

Heding, T., Knudtzen, C.F., Bjerre, M. (2009). *Brand Management: Research, Theory and Practice.* London. Routledge.

Isabel Buil, Eva Martínez, Leslie de Chernatony, (2013). The influence of brand equity on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 1(30), 62-74.

Jin Su, (2016). Examining the relationships among the brand equity dimensions: Empirical evidence from fast fashion. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 3(28), 464-480.

Joep Cornelissen, Lars Thøger Christensen, Kendi Kinuthia, (2012). Corporate brands and identity: developing stronger theory and a call for shifting the debate. *European Journal of Marketing*, 7/8(46) 1093-1102.

Kerri-Ann L. Kuhn, Frank Alpert, Nigel K. Ll. Pope, (2008). An application of Keller's brand equity model in a B2B context. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 1(11), 40-58.

Kuo-Fang Peng, Yan Chen, Kuang-Wei Wen, (2014). Brand relationship, consumption values and branded app adoption. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 8(114), 1131-1143.

Lantos, G. P. (2015). Consumer Behaviour in Action: Real-Life Applications for Marketing Managers. Routlege.

Marc Fetscherin, Michèle Boulanger, Cid Gonçalves Filho, Gustavo Quiroga Souki, (2014). The effect of product category on consumer brand relationships. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 2(23), 78-89.

Mayoor Mohan, Fernando R. Jiménez, Brian P. Brown, Caley Cantrell, (2017). Brand skill: linking brand functionality with consumer-based brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 5(26), 477-491.

Mugenda, O. M and Mugenda, A. G. (2003). Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Acts Press.

Mullen, Brian and Johnson, Craig (2013). *The Psychology of Consumer Behaviour*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers. New Jersey.

Panchal, S. K., Khan, B. M. and Ramesh, S. (2012). Importance of 'brand loyalty, brand awareness and perceived quality parameters' in building brand equity in the Indian pharmaceutical industry. *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 12(2), 81-9.

Rajat Roy, Ryan Chau, (2011). Consumer-based brand equity and status-seeking motivation for a global versus local brand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 3(23), 270-284.

Schiffman, L.G. , Kanuk, L.L. and Hansen, H. (2008). Consumer Behaviour: An European Outlook. Prentice Hall.

Valéry Bezençon, Reza Etemad-Sajadi, (2015). The effect of a sustainable label portfolio on consumer perception of ethicality and retail patronage. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 5(43), 314-328.

Zhang, Y. (2015). The Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Behavior: A Literature Review. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 3, 58-62.