

CUSTOMER LOYALTY THROUGH BRANDING AND PACKAGING OF PRINTED FABRICS OF MAJOR TEXTILE FACTORIES IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the branding and packaging strategies employed by major textile factories in Ghana to maintain and attract customers, improve customer loyalty of their printed fabrics. The qualitative research approach was considered because of social and cultural phenomena of the study with interview, questionnaire and observation as the main instrumentations for data collection. The administration of questionnaire to customers was done through a systematic sampling technique where every third customer who came to purchase a fabric was selected. Again, accidental sampling was also used to select retailers where any retailer who came to serve a customer was also selected. The evaluation of customer loyalty through branding focused on the customers' willingness to purchase and repurchase a particular brand of a locally printed fabric. This, to the respondents, can be achieved if loyal customers are made to feel secure and satisfied with a particular brand they purchase from a particular textile company. The study found that the main benefit that loyal customers receive by purchasing from the textile factories in Ghana is economic value with no indication of functional and aesthetic benefits which emanate from strategic branding and packaging. The study concludes that domestic textiles companies can adapt the Offensive and Defensive strategies, Decision-making Process strategy, Customer Loyalty Programme and Building and Sustaining Profitable Customer Loyalty to be able to help boost patronage. It is recommended that to be able to maintain and attract customers, multiple strategies must be well practised by the Textile Factories in Ghana.

Keywords: Customer loyalty; Branding; Printed fabric; Offensive/Defensive Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organisations today are using branding as a strategic tool with increasing regularity in their business environment. Brands and branding are not new ideas; business historians contend that branding itself is over 100 years old and the role of branding is becoming more important (Rooney, 1995). Branding is a symbol, design, or some combination which identifies the product of a particular organisation as having a substantial differentiated advantage (Duffy, 1998). The purpose of branding is essential to build a product's image which influences the perceived value of the product and increase the brand's value to the customer, leading to brand loyalty (Rooney, 1995; Schriver, 1997). If

a company practices loyalty marketing, they must first know who their loyal customers are, which is easier for many business-to-business marketers than for most consumer goods marketers (Dowling & Uncles, 1997). When consumers choose between different products and services, they begin by identifying and selecting a set of acceptable alternatives from what is available and limit their purchase to these alternatives. This set of possible choice is known as evoked set or consideration set and the limitation of alternatives to a manageable level enables customers to make a rational choice (Wirtz & Mattila, 2003).

It has been observed that many people are now embracing brands more than before by creating brands of their own and participating in marketing campaigns for their favourite brands in unprecedented ways. In the process, they have begun to funnel cultural, political and community activities through connections with brands. Buyers adopt products, not just as consumer choices, but also as conscious expressions of their identities (Wood, 2000). Hence, sustainable packaging design that considers the full life cycle of the package which recognises the principle of shared responsibility has become the order of the day. Companies now seek to minimise the total packaging system cost through efficient and safe package life cycle design.

Looking at the marketing environment today, there are so many competitors seeking to get their market shares. Getting this market share helps individual industries to make profits so as to sustain their businesses. A profit cannot be made without considering the raw materials that have gone into a product. That is to say, a profit margin is made by considering the total cost of a product which includes branding. Observation made by Schriver (1997) of the alcoholic industry shows a high rate of customers patronising alcoholic products compared to fabrics of the textiles industry. One may ask, is it that people are becoming more fashionable in drinking than clothing? Is it because of day-in-day-out occurrences of occasions such as birthdays, funerals, and other social gatherings where both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks of different brands are used to grace the occasion? One will attest to the fact that such occasions do not go without clothing. The issue of customer loyalty seems to be the case.

Customers are becoming more tactical and many of them have tried to switch brands. Each time a customer tries to switch to a new product, he or she gains a broader experience, which inevitably hastens the evolution of the new market environment. The future, according to Schriver (1997) will involve customers who are faster and more eager to switch between brands. Schriver predictably expounds that, tomorrow's customers might be too busy to focus, too worried to care, too sceptical about listening, too confused to connect and too savvy to be sold; therefore, meeting customers' needs, keeping them loyal and happy is very important for a company's survival. He, however, admits that being able to satisfy all customers is a big challenge since they have different preferences.

It is obvious from Schriver's assertion that the alcoholic industry is doing much to attract more customers and maintaining them also. The question is what special strategies are alcoholic industry using to attract and keep more customers that the textile industry is not paying attention to? Although the strategies might not be appropriate as the two entities operate on different ideologies and technologies, they may be applicable when it comes to the satisfaction of basic human needs. The obvious conclusion is that the alcoholic industry is doing much in terms of branding by constantly changing and rebranding their products where packaging plays a vital role. It is obvious that the alcoholic industry uses different forms of advertisement and employ the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) in marketing their products which the textiles industry is paying little attention to and for that matter had resulted in low patronage of locally-made printed textiles compared to the foreign ones due to the lack of branding and poor packaging (Duffy, 1998). It is based on these theoretical

underpinnings of branding that this study delves into the evaluation of branding strategies used by Akosombo Textiles Limited (ATL) and Textstyles Ghana Limited (TGL) to improve customer loyalty. The aim is to provide the textile industry with a sense of direction to boost the marketability of their printed fabric for maximum returns.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the mixed-method approach involving triangulation of qualitative and quantitative studies. The qualitative approach (Descriptive case studies method) was considered because of the social and cultural phenomena of the study which focuses on the evaluation of the branding concepts of the two (2) most prominent textile companies in Ghana. The quantitative approach (Descriptive survey method) on the other hand was employed to solicit numerical data from retailers to authenticate the data obtained from qualitative studies. The target population constitutes staff and printed fabrics of GTP and ATL, retailers and consumers of locally-printed textiles. The population under study comprises people with diverse educational backgrounds, age, and sex, ethnic, geographical and social status making it heterogeneous. Their reactions and approaches to concepts and issues differ and as a result, varied responses were received. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the population, the accessible population was sampled by simple randomised stratification (Figure 1).

Personnel in marketing and advertising department (ATL)	20	ST - 1
Workers in design section (GTP)	26	ST - 2
Wholesalers	30	ST - 3
Retailers (Adum, Kumasi)	26	ST - 4
Customers who purchase from the Wholesalers and Retailers	50	ST - 5

Accessible Population = 152

ST: Stratum	ST - 1	ST - 2	ST - 3	ST - 4	ST - 5
Equalization Level = (152) →	20	26	30	26	50
Randomization (50%) →	ST - 1	ST 2	ST 3	ST 4	ST 5
	10	13	15	13	25

Total randomised stratified sample (Data Level) → 76 respondents
 Figure 1: Stratification of respondents

The stratified sampling was appropriate because the total population is divided into sub-groups or strata. This allowed grouping of the population which is heterogeneous in nature into sub-homogeneous categories to aid in random and purposive selection of the right calibre of personnel for the collection of relevant data. The use of purposive sampling technique ensured that both genders of the local textile manufacturing companies with common characteristics of interest were selected. The use of simple random technique, on the other hand, ensured that all the sampling units had equal chances of being selected for the study. The study employed an interview and questionnaire supported by observation for collecting relevant data through triangulation. The use of different research tools was done to track down any issue that a particular instrument would not have been able to capture. Also, opinions about certain concepts were also sought where necessary.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Qualitative study through interviews and observation

3.1.1 Keeping Loyal Customers (ATL)

The Senior Supervisor in the Advertising and Marketing Department - ATL (Personal Communication, 5th April 2015) opined that customer loyalty is a process, a programme, or a group of programmes geared toward keeping a client happy and to love a product. He added that customers stand by the company in patronising their products because of certain beliefs that they found in the products of which nothing can let them switch to a brand of other company. He further stated that a company could not maintain customer loyalty without knowing a type of customer relationship. The kind of customer relationship ATL has with his customers is a mutually beneficial relationship. He explained that the mutual relationship as "give and take" thus, ATL makes sure that whatever they produced serve the need of the customer which brings profit to the company. He emphasised that customer satisfaction is the best strategy that ATL always considers because if a company produces and it does not meet the customer's need, the satisfaction of a customer is not achieved and if that happened, the so-called customer loyalty might not be established. So for ATL to produce commercially viable products, the company must do more research to know the customers' needs, what competitors are offering to produce something unique but needy.

SWOT analysis comes in here, he said. First of all, ATL always analyses its internal factors that help the company to compete with its competitors. In dealing with internal factors, there comes in strengths (S) of ATL and the weaknesses (W) about the company to know what they must do or not. This is followed by the external factors; Opportunities (O) and Threats (T) to know what other companies are doing or not. If able to analyse these factors properly, penetrating into the market for a company to have its market share or target market is, of course, possible, he said. The company cannot prevent customers from switching a brand but due to the trust that has been established with customers and a proper SWOT analysis system in place, a customer might switch a brand for comparison though but ATL has the belief and trust that these customers will return to the company's brand because of the customer satisfaction, uniqueness, original, quality but affordability of products that they offer to their customers.

Attracting new customers involves a lot of spending, so why can't the company use that amount to offer some bonuses, discounts, other promotions to their loyal customers to let them know that the company cherishes and appreciates them, he added. It is more profitable to keep existing customers than to attract new customers. This is why ATL put so much effort into their promotions and incentives given where they believe they have their most loyal customers and at the same time always look ahead and

continuously develop both the organisation and the activities to keep existing customers and to attract new ones. This suggests that ATL uses the defensive strategy rather than the offensive and this confirms the theory of Fornell (2009) that customers must be well maintained and kept than to attract new ones. In this respect, ATL develops a good relationship with its customers to make them feel more secure with their purchases. Again, ATL attests to the fact that the large marketing efforts laid on the loyal customers' results in high wage costs but the benefits generated from the loyal customers, in the end, exceeds the high marketing costs.

3.1.2 Keeping Loyal Customers (GTP)

With respect to GTP, the Design Manager (Personal Communication, 4th April 2015) affirmed that keeping customer loyal to a product is beneficiary to every company. According to him, the benefits are grouped into three (3), namely: Relational benefits to the company, Brand loyalty benefits and Relational benefits for the Customer. The Design Department of GTP reiterated that it is difficult to build and sustain customer loyalty, but it is more economical for a company to keep customers loyal than if the company have to replace them. This suggests that GTP also uses the defensive strategy which aligns with Fornell, (2009) theory with the focus on maintaining and keeping a customer. A company that gains loyal customers receives different types of benefits and the most known are that: loyal customers are fewer prices sensitive, loyal customers spend more time with the company and loyal customers pass on their positive feeling about the company or the brand to others. This assertion supports the view of Marzo-Navarro, Pedraja-Iglesia, and Rivera-Torres (2004) that customer loyalty leads to improve business because they provide a communication route to strengthen the brand image making it difficult for competitors to entice customers and allows setting higher prices. It can be deduced therefore that loyal customers are the main backbone for the company's survival.

Respondents from GTP were of the view that no customer can be made brand loyal if they are not satisfied and this is what drives companies to improve customer satisfaction. They further asserted that the concept of loyalty could be interpreted in two ways: affective loyalty and behaviour loyalty. Affective loyalty has a positive attitude towards a brand or a company, which is generated through an internal evaluation process. The behaviour loyalty reflects the degree of purchase repetition that an individual makes. There are also other determinants than satisfaction to create loyalty, for example, brand capital and management of communication with the customers. Satisfaction is a feeling that generates a higher rate of customer retention in terms of profit increment and spread of a positive word of mouth which increases the reputation and the image of the brand (Kumar & Shah, 2004; Uncles et al., 2003). In order to make customers brand loyal, the companies must act both effective and affective in their relationships to create both social and personal bonds with their customers.

3.1.3 Branding Strategies by ATL

ATL sees branding as a name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers to differentiate their product from competitors. The company considers the following as key priorities in branding its product to gain a high reputation. The big idea (what lies at the heart of your company); Value (what do you believe in?); Vision (where are you going?) and Personality (how do you want to come across?). The study found that ATL employs four (4) strategies when it comes to branding. These are Brand Domain, Brand Reputation, Brand Recognition and Brand Affinity.

3.1.4 Brand Domain

A brand domain involves a specialist (products/services, media, distribution, solutions) who pre-empt or dictates particular domain developments. This requires intimate knowledge, not only of the technologies in shaping the brand but of pertinent consumer behaviour and needs. The lifeblood of a brand domain specialist is innovation and creative use of its resources such as name, design, the logo and other elements found in the fabric (Plate 1).

With such a branding strategy the name of the print makes customers feel a sense of belonging to a wealthy class and will do anything to own the product.

3.1.5 Brand Reputation

Brand reputation specialists develop specific traits of their brands to support their authenticity, credibility or reliability over and above competitors. A brand reputation specialist needs to have some kind of history, legacy or mythology.

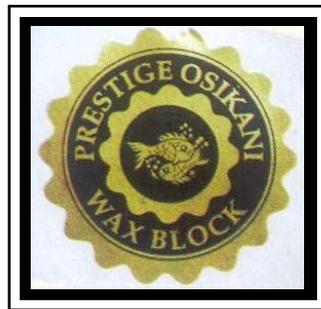


Plate 1: ATL Brand Domain
(Curtsey of ATL, Field Survey, 2015)

ATL always make sure that its brands carry simple but understandable messages in a convincing manner to develop specific traits of their brands to support their authenticity, credibility or reliability over and above their competitors. Plate 2 exhibits one of ATL brands which reflect brand reputation.

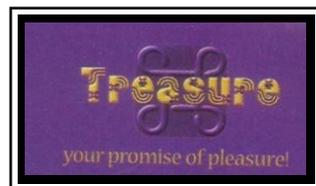


Plate 2: Brand Reputation
(Curtsey of ATL, Field Survey, 2015)

With this branding strategy, it is the logo and the colour that make customers loyal to the product.

3.1.6 Brand Recognition

Brand Recognition is the third ATL's brand strategy where Brand recognition specialists distinguish themselves from the competition by raising their profiles among consumers. The brand recognition specialist either convinces consumers about the product difference as the case is for niche brands or rises above the melee by becoming more well-known among consumers than the competition. Moreover, ATL seeks to it that its unique features that help customers to recognise their fabrics easily are incorporated. Brand recognition strategy according to him is shown in products in Plate 3.

The colour, name and simplicity make a customer loyal to such product because when they are worn, the customer feels pampered and unique in the brand.

the brand's past. The Head of the Design Department (Personal Communication, 4th April 2015) explained that the strategy-related factors are those that derive from the business strategy and the marketing strategy. Brand strategy in its turn guides marketing strategy and the business strategy is aimed at achieving particular consumer behaviour. Only when consumers actually purchase, use (more often), pay a higher price or donate (more) that the objectives of a business strategy will be met. These objectives may include a larger market share, increased returns, higher margins and increased shareholder value. Brands are designed to persuade consumers to exhibit the behaviour that will make these objectives come true for the organisation. Thus, the influence of business strategy upon brand strategy is direct and compelling. The marketing strategy aims to translate the brand strategy into actual products or services, with a specific price, to be sold at specific outlets, to be promoted through specific communications activities and channels, and to be supported by specific service. The influence of the marketing strategy is thus indirect in that the correct translation of the brand into the marketing-mix determines whether consumers get the correct impression of the brand.

The performance-related factors are dependent upon the marketing implementation, that is the actual production and delivery of the products and services, their accompanying messages to consumers, and the actual product or service experience. The implementation eventually determines whether consumers experience what the brand strategy set out to provide. The marketing implementation may make or break a brand at the moment that is of most importance to consumers: for example, they experience the brand through advertising, promotions, purchase, usage, and after-sales service.

Based on the brand strategy, fabrics from GTP are well known for a fact that, the factors that stem from the brand's internal legacy and its internal conventions. The brand's internal legacy is about who have developed it, who have managed it over the years, and what the role of the brand has become for the organisation. This influences how management, staff, partners, distributors and shareholders view the brand and its future potential. It may prove difficult to change such perceptions once a brand has been slotted into a specific position. The internal conventions of an organisation are such issues as how things are typically done, support systems, what the culture is like, who has the power to decide, who has the power to frustrate decisions, the structure of the organisation, its policies, and its (other) activities.

3.1.7 External Factors

This involves the strategies GTP use to externally curb situations that may hinder their fabrics from reaching customers. External influences upon a brand strategy come mainly from three quarters: competition, consumers and media. These external influences will vary between the markets and societies where a brand operates. Therefore, these influences need to be determined locally. GTP has design three (3) strategies to curb all these external factors. Category conventions are the unwritten rules that govern the way in which products or services are designed, advertised, distributed, serviced, priced, experienced, among others. Challenging such conventions may provide a brand with a competitive advantage. It is imperative that such a challenge has value to consumers and that they are willing to go along with the challenge. This is only the case if the particular convention is no longer rock solid. Such opportunities emerge when the competition is complacent and underestimates the effects of the challenge. Again, cultural conventions determine how people in a society interact, what they believe, how they make decisions and what meanings they attach to certain representations. Cultures are not static but develop through intergenerational and interpersonal learning and experience.

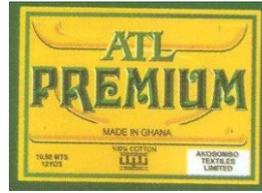


Plate 3: Brand Recognition
(Curtsey of ATL, Field Survey, 2015)

3.1.8 Brand Affinity

Brand affinity specialists bond with consumers based on one or more of a range of affinity aspects. A brand affinity specialist needs to outperform the competition in terms of building relationships with consumers. This means that a brand affinity specialist needs to have a distinct appeal to consumers, be able to communicate with them effectively, and provide an experience that reinforces the bonding process. ATL uses this strategy to determine how customers make decisions to bring on board a variety of brands for customers to make choices (Plate 4).



Plate 4: Brand Affinity (Curtsey of ATL, Field Survey, ATL (2015))

3.1.9 Brand Strategy

Brand strategy is aimed at influencing people's perception of a brand in such a way that they are persuaded to act in a certain manner, for example, buy and use the products or services offered by the brand, purchase these at higher price points, donate to a cause. In addition, most brand strategies aim to persuade people to buy, use, and donate again by offering them some form of a gratifying experience. As branding is typically an activity that is undertaken in a competitive environment, the aim is to persuade people to prefer the brand to competition. A global brand needs to provide relevant meaning and experience to people across multiple societies. To do so, the brand strategy needs to be devised that takes account of the brand's own capabilities and competencies, the strategies of competing brands, and the outlook of consumers (including business decision makers) which has been largely formed by experiences in their respective societies (Senior Supervisor, Marketing and Advertising Department, ATL, Personal Communication, April 2015).

3.1.10 Branding Strategies by GTP

GTP, on the other hand, consider branding as an attempt to harness, generate, influence and control the company to help the business perform better adding that any organisation can benefit enormously by creating a brand that presents the company as distinctive, trusted, exciting, reliable or whichever attributes that are appropriate to that business. GTP considers and pursues branding in the following ways: creating a difference, adding value and connecting with people. They do these from the perspectives of internal and external factors.

3.1.11 Internal Factors

The internal factor strategy is very important to the company because these are the factors which GTP relies most on. They are categorised into strategy-related, performance-related and stemming from

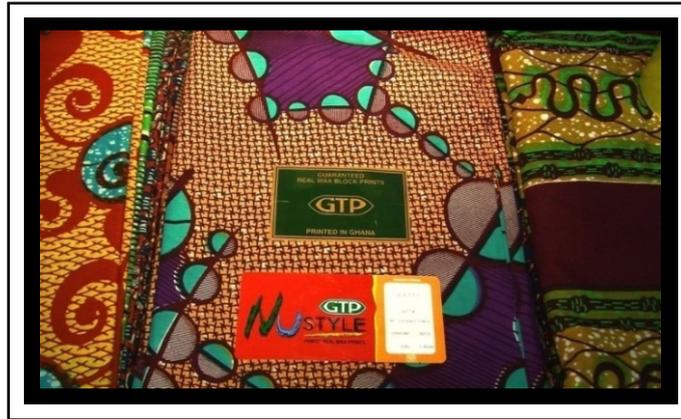


Plate 6: GTP Brand (Curtsey of GTP, Field Survey, 2015)

A cultural convention can be challenged if it is already losing its value to consumers and is ready to be replaced by something new. Therefore, one needs to be on the lookout for such cultural shifts. Once identified, it becomes a matter of deciding whether the challenge will be of perceived value to consumers and will provide a competitive advantage. Needs conventions determine the forms in which consumers' needs are manifested. Human needs are not universal, and neither is the importance placed upon each need. However, the major differences lie in the manner in which a need is articulated or the form of a solution that is provided to a need. The strategies discussed above that help GTP to curb factors both internally and externally to be able to strategise a brand (Plate 6) and to a market share as a whole (Head, GTP Design Department, Personal Communication, 4th April 2015).

3.2 Strategies to maintain Customer Loyalty

3.2.1 Defensive and Offensive Strategies

The study has shown that both market share and customer satisfaction leads to profitability, but it is not certain that market share and customer satisfaction have a positive connection. Loyal customers are not necessarily satisfied customers, but satisfied customers tend to be a loyal customer. Many authorities have established defensive, and offensive strategies as surest ways companies can maintain customer loyalty. Fornell (2009) established that companies' relationship with their customers could be divided into two separate business strategies, offensive and defensive. The offensive strategy deals with attracting new customers, and the defensive strategy deals with keeping existing customers. The objective of the defensive strategy is to minimise customers switching and maximise customer retention by protecting the brand and its market from competitors and by having highly satisfied customers. It is evident from the study both GTP and ATL are currently using the defensive strategy, but the offensive strategy is not considered as a priority. The use of the two (2) strategies can help maintain existing customers and attract new ones for the companies to maximise returns. This can be done through improving the mutual relationship, creation of customer satisfaction, prioritising complaints from customers in the brand, creation of switching barriers by offering the customers discounts, promotions and other incentives, and ensuring that both the company and the customers are trust-worthy.

3.2.2 Decision-Making Strategy

According to Baker, Hutchinson, Burk & Nedungadi (1986), there are three (3) stages within the consumer decision-making process. The first stage is defining brand alternatives, and then reviewing the relevant information concerning the brands and finally applying a decision rule. Although the customers have knowledge of a large number of brands in a product class, they only consider a few of

these for purchase; this range of alternatives is referred to the evoked set or the consideration set. The composition of an evoked set is highly significant since a brand that is not considered cannot be chosen. There are included in the evoked set; Stimulus based and Memory based choice. The stimulus-based choice is when a brand is recognised in the environment and memory based choice is when a brand is being recalled from memory. In both of these situations, brand familiarity facilitates the identification of the brand and the probability of the brand being included in the evoked set. This decision-making is relevance to the company in that, according to Kardes et al. (1993) customers passes through a sequential multi-stage process before a product is bought. Due to this, if a company is able to analyse these multi-stage process, a customer will purchase a product with no time because the so-called challenge has already been solved which may result in high turnover.

3.2.3 Benefits of Keeping Customer Loyalty

Based on the data collected from the respondents of ATL and GTP, it is evident that a good relationship between a company and a customer (i.e. when the customer is loyal towards the company) results in different benefits for the customer. These benefits can be divided into functional and social benefits. The functional benefits are time-saving, convenience, economic advantages, and reduction of risk and the types of social benefits are if the relationship is pleasant and comfortable, and trust towards the company. The study found that the main functional benefit that ATL and GTP loyal customers receive is economic advantages since the loyal customers receive discounts, premium checks and special offers. The responses, in summary, suggest the importance of loyal customers feeling secure with the company and with their purchase. This can be received through a very good reclamation policy and the personal relationships that ATL and GTP try to create with their customers. The other factors of functional benefits that can be deduced from the data collected from the respondents: time-saving, reduction of risk and convenience are adhered to by both two companies.

A study (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2004) has shown that it is less costly for a company to retain loyal customers than to attract new customers. The respondents agree with this statement and say that their companies (ATL and GTP) try to concentrate their efforts on keeping customers through constant promotions by trying giving their customers discounts to develop the customer retention and creating new advantages for their loyal customers. The study found that even though the two (2) companies work assiduously in meeting the needs of their loyal customers, they also try to attract new customers. This is done even though both ATL and GTP agree that it is more expensive to attract new ones. In other to secure the future of the companies and sustain the operations of the companies, it will be economically prudent that the companies look toward the future and in other to attract new customers.

Another benefit for companies having loyal customers is that it generates profits. In this respect, respondents from GTP established that loyal customers buy more frequently and more products than non-loyal customers. This leads to higher turnover for companies who have a lot of loyal customers than companies with a few or no loyal customer at all (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2004). Again, loyal customers spread a positive word of mouth, which is very important for a company in order to build a good reputation. The data collected shows that building a good reputation takes time and costly and the company has to put in a lot of efforts to achieve this. It is therefore very imperative to have loyal customers who will spread positive words which are extremely valuable for a company. It was evident from the study that ATL measure the customers' opinion of the company at least two (2) times per year. This is done through surveys by special committees set by the company, but that of GTP is done three (3) times per year. This is done so that the companies can receive feedback of what their customers feel on the quality of the products for improvements. In light of this, the feedback is extremely important

for the companies to make their customers loyal to their products. The customers must feel that their opinion is of paramount importance to the company. Table 1 shows a summary of the comparison of previous theories and the empirical data from the study.

Table 1: Summary of analysis on the benefits of keeping a customer loyal to ATL and GTP brands

Variables	Previous theories	Empirical Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits for companies with loyal Customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decrease in marketing costs. Creates switching barriers. Positive word of mouth. Increased of profits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of profits. Positive word of mouth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits for loyal customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenience. Economic advantage. Reduction of risk. Relationships. Trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic advantage. Mutual Relationships. Trustworthy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is more Profitable; maintaining or attracting new ones? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More profitable to keep existing customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More profitable and sustainable to keep existing customers.

It could be inferred from Table 1 that all the empirical data support the previous theories which confirm that the strategies to keep loyal customers to the benefit of both the company and customers are practised by ATL and GTP which imply that both ATL and GTP customers are loyal to the companies and their products.

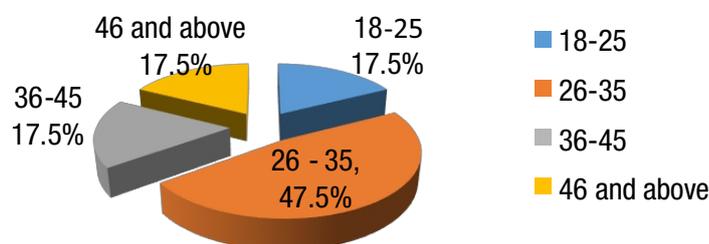
3.2.4 Quantitative study through questionnaire responses

This section presents the responses from the retailers and customers ATL and GTP brands based on the questionnaire administered. This was carried out to authenticate the qualitative data obtained through interviews and observation.

3.2.5 Age range of customers

The age of the consumers used in the study is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Age range (Field Survey, 2015)



The results show that customers who purchase the prints mostly fall within the ages of 26 to 35 years suggesting that printed fabrics of ATL and GTP are mostly purchased by the youth and young adults. Manufacturers should, therefore, target the youth and young adults when designing, branding and packaging.

3.2.6 Educational status of customers

To enable the manufacturers to ascertain the class of customers who purchase their products, the study assessed the educational backgrounds of the customers (Figure 3).

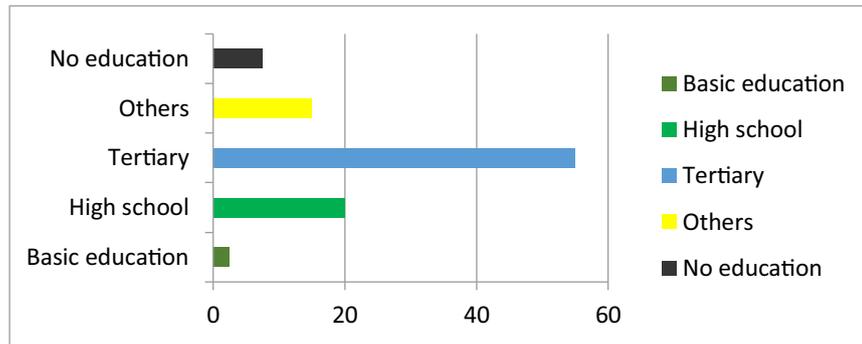


Figure 3: Educational Status of Customers (Field Survey, 2015)

Majority of respondents (58%) who purchase have tertiary education followed by high school. This implies that most of the customers who purchase the prints are well educated; a scenario which was not the case in the past and therefore manufacturers can use this as the basis to attract and retain them.

3.2.7 Rate of Purchasing by Males and Females

Table 2 shows the results of male and female purchasing rate of printed fabrics. It is evident that 55% of female respondents purchase the prints as against 45% of males. This implies that females purchase the prints more than their male counterparts and this could be used by manufacturers as the bases in branding and packaging to increase productivity and sales of the prints.

Table 2: Sex of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	18	45
Female	22	55
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Years of engagement of respondents in retailing of ATL and GTP brands

Figure 4 shows the working duration of the retailers who sell ATL and GTP brands.

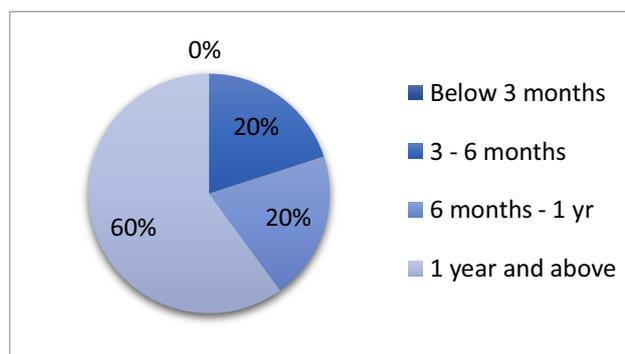


Figure 4: Years of retailing ATL and GTP brands (Field Survey, 2015)

From Figure 4, it is evident that 60% of retailers have over one year retail experience, 20% have worked between 3 to 6 months and from 6 months to 1 year. This means that more of the retailers have worked for a relatively longer period. This, therefore, suggests that they have experienced in both customer service and behaviour and for that matter, their inputs in branding and packaging are very crucial to increase sales of the prints.

3.2.8 Brands mostly Retailed by Respondents

The main motive in this regards is to find out the brands of fabrics retailers usually sell to their customers. Figure 5 shows brands of ATL and GTP that customers usually buy.

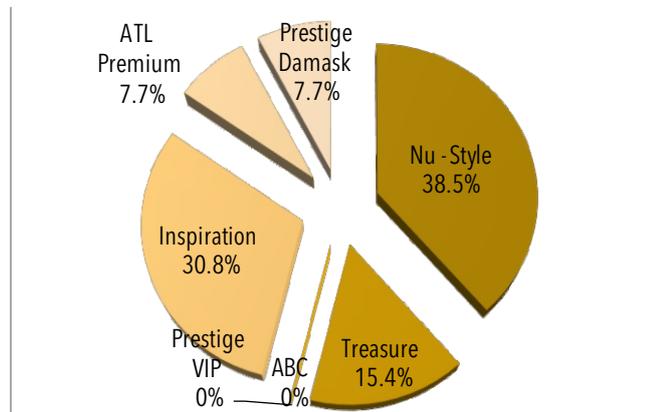


Figure 5: Brands of ATL and GTP that customers usually buy (Field Survey, 2015)

Figure 5 indicates that 38.5% majority of the retailers sell GTP Nu-style, followed by ATL Inspiration, 30.8%. This means that customers usually purchase a brand that conveys a simple message with conceptual meaning.

3.2.9 Favourite Brand Identification

This is to ascertain from retailers how customers identify their brands when they come to purchase.

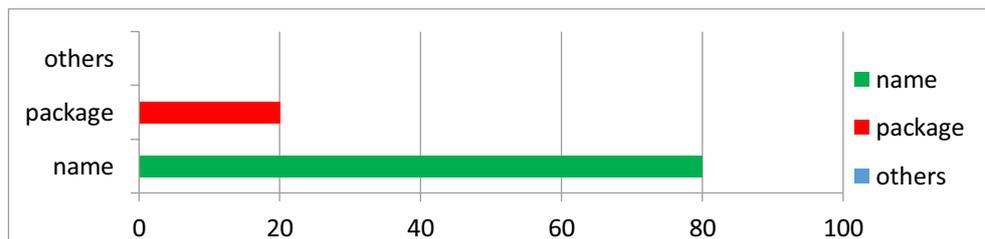


Figure 6: Favourite brand identification (Field Survey, 2015)

It is evident from Figure 6 that, 80% of the customers identify their favourite brands based on the name of the print while 20% do so by the package of fabrics. This means that manufacturers of locally printed fabrics should name their fabrics in a manner that customers can easily remember and compliment it with good packaging concept. This will help to differentiate their brands from that of their competitors for easy identification.

3.2.10 Customers' complaints about the brand and package of ATL and GTP prints

Retailers were assessed whether consumers have been making complaints about their favourite brand and the packaging concept of the prints.

Complaints	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	50
No	5	50
Total	10	100

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Table 3 indicates that 50% of customers do complain about the package of the printed fabrics whereas 50% have no problem with their brand and package of the printed fabrics. This means that customers have varied views on the brand and the package of printed fabrics. With 50% of the customers having issues with the type of packaging means the package needs to be improved.

3.2.11 Frequency of Purchase

Consumers were assessed on whether they usually purchase their favourite brand of printed fabrics (Figure 7).

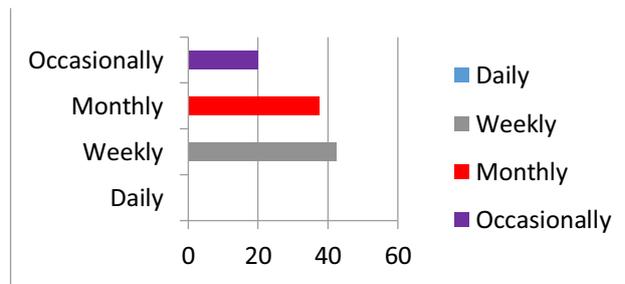


Figure 7: Frequency of purchase (Field Survey, 2015)

The results show that the purchase of the printed fabrics takes place on a weekly basis meaning that the prints among the fast moving consumer goods and the purchasing are usually done during weekends.

3.2.12 Improvement on ATL and GTP Brand and Package Strategies

Figure 8 shows the push by retailers for manufacturers to improve on brand and package strategies to attract customers.

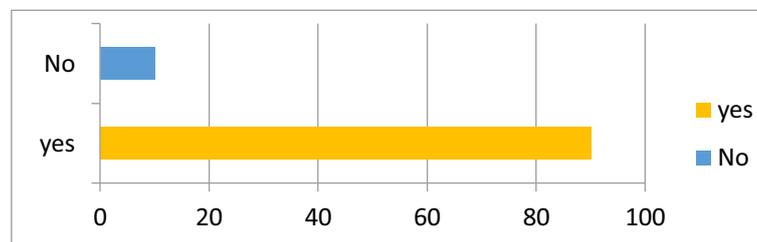


Figure 8: Improvement on brand and package strategies (Source: Field Survey, 2015)

The results show that 90% of the retailers want manufacturers to improve upon their branding and packaging strategies to attract more customers. In this respect, the retailers will make high sales to generate more income.

3.2.13 Attitude of Customers Towards Change of Brand and Package

To determine whether or not customers will switch brands should there be a change in the brand and package of their preferred printed fabrics, a simple question with YES or NO answer was asked.

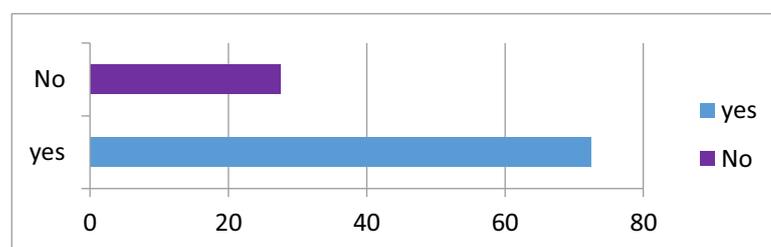


Figure 9: Attitude towards change of brand and package (Field Survey, 2013)

The results (Figure 9) indicate that 72.5% of the customers will switch brand whenever there is a change in brand and package while 27.5% of customers will maintain their brand. This implies that majority of the customers do switch brand whenever there is a change. It is therefore very imperative for the companies to see to it that brands are always maintained, but in an event where there is the need for re-branding, the customers should be well informed by the respective companies to prevent the customers from buying imitation prints from their competitors.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An evaluation of customer loyalty through branding and packaging emphasised how customers purchase and repurchase a particular brand of locally printed fabrics. Branding and packaging help manufacturers of printed fabrics in creating customer loyalty and thus enable them to enjoy a long term customer value as the study reveals. Branding is an essential part of the way a product is packaged, and every company will want the customer to ask for its product by name (Wood, 2000). The study concludes that there are strategies that keep customers loyal and the benefits of maintaining loyal customers are enormous. The most significant strategy to maintain customer loyalty is the creation and maintenance of good relationships between the companies and their customers. Again, the most important factor concerning the creation of customer satisfaction is the companies' personal service towards the customers. In light of this, companies have to achieve customer satisfaction in order to prevent their customers from switching brands.

Although a number of customer loyalty strategies such as offensive and defensive strategies as well as customer loyalty programmes have been established by scholars, the study revealed that both ATL and GTP mainly focus on the defensive strategy of customer loyalty based on empirical evidence that it is less costly for companies to work towards keeping customers loyal than to attract new ones. It is also established that keeping customers loyal generates profits through a positive word of mouth advertisement which is valuable for companies to build a good image and reputation. Arguably, the defensive approach is not a bad idea for the local textile firms to practice in the short and medium terms; but for sustainability of the companies in the competitive global industrial economy, the study recommends that domestic textile printing companies adopt multiple approaches involving both defensive and offensive strategies so as to maintain existing customers and also attract new ones to secure the future of their businesses. Continuous study should be conducted by manufacturers to determine the factors that hinder the creation of consumer loyalty due to the dynamic nature of today's consumers. Textile manufacturers must seek frequent information from retailers about customers' comments on their products and the situation on the market since retailers are closer to customers. These retailers can provide information towards the improvement of product quality involving branding and packaging to satisfy the needs and preference of customers.

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