

Influence of Personal Selling on Brand Performance of Retail Shoe Companies in Nairobi Central Business District

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ABSTRACT

Many organizations all over the world are currently engaged in branding themselves or their products in order to position themselves competitively in the market. Organizations and businesses in general embrace the concept of branding as a dominant strategy because a strong brand provides added value to both the seller and buyer, which is attributable to the concept of brand equity. The branding is usually done along the theme of the day and is informed by the perceived demands of the market and the target clients. The branding can range from a simple facelift to a complete overhaul of both operations and products. However, though through observation it is evident that many businesses at some point engage in personal selling, most do not involve the promotion of their own brands save for few firms such as retail shoes companies in Nairobi central district. However, the power of personal selling on the brand performance of even well-known brands such as retail shoes companies is lacking. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to assess the influence of personal selling on brand performance focusing on retail shoes companies in Nairobi central district. It specifically wanted; to determine how promoting brand knowledge through personal selling influences brand performance; to establish how enhance communication through personal selling influences brand performance; to examine how increased interaction time through personal selling influences brand performance; to assess how relationship building through personal selling influences brand performance. The study adopted the survey research design targeting the marketing management and sales staff of all the three retail shoes companies in Nairobi central district. The target population of this study comprised of marketing management and sales staff of all the three retail shoe companies Nairobi central district. A census collected all information about every member of the population. In this case the research collected a census of 100 percent of the sample survey.

The study used primary data which was collected directly from the respondents using questionnaires. The data was then be analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. There was a statistically significant strong positive correlation coefficient of .68 ($p =$

0.03<0.01) between brand knowledge and personal selling at retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district. The study found statistically significant weak positive correlation coefficient of .155($p = 0.08 < 0.01$) between communication in personal selling on brand performance. There was also a statistically significant strong positive correlation coefficient of .655 ($p = 0.03 < 0.01$) between interaction time and personal selling at retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district. The study concludes that personal selling has influenced brand performance in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central business district. The study finally concludes that there has been significant brand performance in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central business district. It was recommended that adequate and timely personal selling should be encouraged especially for brands of products that are performing dismay in the marketing. Those products in product life cycle that are in decline stage in organization. It was recommended that organizations should have adequate and competent marketing management and sales team with equipped skills in knowledge of brands, communication skills, interaction and relationship building to all potential and existing customers in the organization. The study recommended that there should be reward system for sales teams that performs excellently in the organization and customers who make frequent purchases. It was recommended that further study should be done in relationship to influence of personal selling brand performance in franchised and non- franchise products.

INTRODUCTION

Many organizations all over the world are currently engaged in branding themselves or their products in order to position themselves competitively in the market. Organizations and businesses in general embrace the concept of branding as a dominant strategy because a strong brand provides added value to both the seller and buyer, which is attributable to the concept of brand equity. The branding is usually done along the theme of the day and is informed by the perceived demands of the market and the target clients (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Well promoted brands serve as powerful marketing tools for products, services, concepts and even organizations as a whole. The success of the branding exercise depends largely on the strategies employed by the organization in promoting the brand and usually entail branding the products, branding the organization and differentiation from competitors. Over time, these approaches have been instrumental in improving the power of the brand to increase the firm's competitiveness. Safaricom is an example of an organization of personal selling that continuously recruitment, training, polishing attitudes/culture of seller to gather with other promotional methods for example advertising. Personal selling has seen over the years made safaricom monopoly in the communication industry. Customers loyalty, repeat customer growth and expansion of organization through- out the country has been witnessed. Rephrase to talk about the only logical reason/ justification on why rance and that's what precisely your study is seeking to mer variety of goods and services in the market. This makes brand promotion increasingly necessary as brands increase loyalty. The brand resides within the hearts and minds of customers, clients, and prospects. It is the sum total of their experiences

and perceptions, some of which one can influence, and some that one cannot. A strong brand is invaluable as the battle for customers intensifies day by day. An entire brand is the source of a promise to the consumer. Though through observation it is evident that many businesses at some point engage in personal selling, most do not involve the promotion of their own brands save for few firms such as Bata Shoe Company. However, the power of personal selling on the performance of even well-known brands such as retail shoes companies is lacking. Existing research has so far managed to link personal selling and brand performance but has not explicitly linked personal selling with brand performance. Continue to use personal selling despite expense in its influence on brand performance and that's what precisely your study is seeking to determine.

Justification and significance of the Study

This study was meant to be valuable to the various stakeholders who include the target firm, that is retail shoes companies, the business community, marketers and brand developers, government, and researchers in this area. For the target firm, retail shoes companies, it is anticipated that the findings of the study was also to help strengthen their personal selling approaches in order to improve their brand performance especially with the growing competition in the footwear industry. The business community, marketers and brand developers may find the findings of this study useful in enlightening them on brand marketing. The policy makers was obtained knowledge of the brand dynamics and thus obtain guidance from this study in designing appropriate practices that was to regulate brand marketing. The government through the line ministry can use this study to educate business organizations on the importance of branding. Finally, the study was identified the knowledge gaps and provide suggestions for further research. This formed bases for scholars who are interested in conducting research in this area in future.

Objectives

The main objective of this study was to assess the influence of personal selling on brand performance focusing on retail shoes companies in Nairobi central district. It specifically seeks;

- i. To determine how promoting brand knowledge through personal selling influences brand performance
- ii. To establish how enhanced communication through personal selling influences brand performance
- iii. To examine how increased interaction time through personal selling influences brand performance
- iv. To assess how relationship building through personal selling influences brand performance

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Personal selling is considered an art by some and a science by others and has produced two contrasting approaches to the theory of personal selling.

Corporate Rebranding Theory

Re-branding may occur in different levels in organizations; corporate, business unit, or product level (Muzellec and Lambkin, 2006). Product re-branding is a widely studied area in the marketing discipline, but corporate re-branding is quite a new phenomenon in an academic context. This study concentrates on corporate re-branding only. The literature gives a variety of definitions of what corporate re-branding is and what issues are included in it. Therefore the type of corporate re-branding is examined first. Daly and Moloney (2004) describe that the level of change in corporate brand may include minor, intermediate or complete change. According to them, the minor changes are about aesthetics, and vary from a simple face lift to restyling or revitalizing the brand which may need a change. Intermediate change is about repositioning, and use of marketing tactics, especially communication and customer service techniques to favorably reposition an existing brand name, thus giving it a new image.

In complete change, the name is new to stakeholders and they do not know what the brand stands for. Values and image of the new brand are communicated to all stakeholders through an integrated marketing communications campaign. Daly and Moloney (2004) call complete change rebranding. Stuart and Muzellec (2004) suggest a continuum of corporate rebranding varying from evolutionary changes in slogan or logo only, to revolutionary change incorporating the elements of name, logo and slogan. They suggest that the types of changes made by corporate re-branders fall into three categories; name, logo, and slogan change. They suggest that permutations possible are a) name and logo, b) name, logo and slogan, c) logo only, d) logo and slogan, e) slogan only. They do not clarify why name only cannot change. According to them, change in only one of the elements will result in evolutionary change to the brand, whereas changing name, logo and slogan simultaneously will cause revolutionary change.

Muzellec & Lambkin (2006) suggest that corporate re-branding occurs either in an evolutionary or revolutionary manner. Evolutionary rebranding describes a fairly minor development in the company's positioning and aesthetics that is so gradual that it is hardly perceptible to outside observers. Revolutionary rebranding describes a major, identifiable change in positioning and aesthetics that fundamentally redefines the company. According to them, this change is usually symbolized by a change of name. In addition to these contributions Kaikati (2003) suggest that re-branding consists of rebranding, re-structuring and re-positioning, but does not define any of these. Muzellec *et al.*, (2003), on the other hand, suggest that rebranding consists of re-positioning, re-naming, redesigning and re-launching. Re-positioning is often considered as an objective-setting phase (Daly and Moloney, 2003) where decisions are taken to try to create a radically new position in the minds of its customers, competitors and other stakeholders (Kotler and Keller, 2006; Keller, 2008).

Re-naming or name changing is the most discussed issue in corporate re-branding studies. The brand name is the core indicator of the brand. It is the basis for awareness and communications. It is a medium by which a corporation sends signals about corporate identity to stakeholders, and the brand image results from the decoding of those signals by the receiver. (Daly & Moloney, 2003.) Choosing a name is not an easy task. Muzellec (2006) presented different kinds of corporate name types: descriptive, geographic, patronymic, acronym, associative and freestanding. There are alternative routes – or processes – to choose corporate

name (Kohli and LaBahn, 1997; Kollmann and Suckow, 2007), and employee participation in name development is suggested (Kollmann and Suckow, 2007; Lomax and Mador, 2006).

Corporate rebranding necessitates synergy between marketing, human resource management and strategy (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Context determines the involvement of different stakeholder groups in the process. Staff, customer and agency involvement at varying levels are found. Agencies help especially with communications, advertising, media buying and/or in new brand development. Often the process is more complex and time consuming than the companies anticipate. (Lomax and Mador, 2006.)

Empirical Review

Past studies have shown that empathy can have beneficial influence on the personal selling in service quality, sales performance and successful selling. Personal selling helps, in other words a service skill may have an influential impact on customer emotions (Beatty, 1996) and further lead to customer loyalty. If customers perceive a salesperson acts trustworthy they are likely to think the behaviour is praiseworthy, thus creating positive relationship and brand performance. (Beatty et al. 1996) Personal selling will affect the way they feel about the salesperson. When interacting with a salesperson possessing good expertise, customers are likely to feel fulfilled, pleased and comfortable. Friendliness is also important as it is crucial in increasing satisfaction. The amount of salespeople's increase personal selling and thus positively related to buyer satisfaction. By this is meant the way a salesperson is animated, motivated and excited (Dubinsky, 2003). According to Etzel et al.(2007) personal selling is a direct communication between a sales representative and one more prospective buyers in attempt to influence each other in purchasing situation. According to Futrell (2008) Personal selling refers to the personal communication where one unselfishly persuade a prospective customer to buy something a good or a service, an idea, or something else that satisfy the individual. Personal selling is the most effective tool at certain stage of the buying process, particularly in building up buyers preference, convictions, and actions. It involves personal interaction between two or more people, so each person can observe the other needs and characteristics and make quick adjustments (Peter and Donnelly, 1998).

Research Gap

Recent research indicates that personal selling, rather than brand performance alone, is a key requirement for superior business. In addition, there is growing recognition that the high failure rate of organizational initiatives in a dynamic business environment is primarily due to poor personal selling of new brands. This study has identified that the various studies carried out on the influence of personal selling on firms brand performance are not comprehensive. While they have given the study a good basis for information, the studies are not elaborate enough and therefore one cannot draw generalized conclusions based on some of these studies.

Most past local done in Kenya concur that good brands have been introduced but very little has been achieved in their relationship to personal selling and their performance. They give a good insight about brand performance and their measurements but they do not explain personal selling in relation brand performance. For example, the study by (Murianki, 2015) pays a casual

attention on the effects of personal selling on sales: A Case of Women Groups in Imenti North District, Meru County, Kenya. In addition, these studies were not based on the shoes industry. This study therefore seeks to fill the existing research gap by carrying out a case study on the effective of personal selling on brand performance a case of Bata shoe company production centre.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey research design. A survey focused on opinions or factual information depending on its purpose, but all surveys involve administering questionnaires to individuals. Survey research design is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad spectrum of individuals and educational settings. A survey design involves asking a large group of respondents' questions about a particular issue. The researcher then used statistical techniques to make conclusions about the population based on the sample. The target population of this study comprised of marketing management and sales staff of all the three retail shoe companies Nairobi central district. A census collected all information about every member of the population. In this case the research collected a census of 100 percent of the sample survey. This population is chosen because it was highly accessible given all three retail shoe companies are in Nairobi central district. After retrieving the questionnaires from the respondents, the questionnaires were first sorted and the data in them was edited and then coded before being entered into the computer software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for further analysis. The data was then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies and percentages helped to provide the basic characteristics of the data. Inferential statistics involved the use of correlation, chi-square independence and multiple regression models to determine the nature of the relationship between the variables. The multiple regression model was assumed to hold under the equation;

$$y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + e$$

Where; Y= Brand performance

a = Constant

X1 = Brand Knowledge

X2 = Communications

X3 = Interaction Time

X4 = Relationships Building

b, c, d and e, are the coefficients of the variables determine by the model

e = the estimated error of the regression model

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative data obtained was analysed using both descriptive (means, standard deviations, frequencies and illustrations) and inferential statistics (correlation analysis ANOVA and t test were used for testing significant differences and multiple regression for determining relationships). Descriptive statistics provides the means and standard deviations of the scores

relating to each of the variables used. Means and standard deviations for all the variables were also calculated in order to get an idea about the direction of all the variables.

Research Results for All Sectors

Correlation Analysis

Inferential analysis is used to determine whether there is a relationship between an intervention and an outcome, as well as the strength of that relationship. It uses statistical test to see if a pattern observed is just due to chance or is due to the program or intervention effects. This section shows how the researcher with came up with relevant inferences in line with the study objectives. This section presents and discusses findings resulting from correlation analysis involving brand knowledge, communication, interaction time, and relationship building how influence brand performance in retail shoe companies in Nairobi Central business district.

Brand knowledge through personal selling

The respondents' rating in the statements related to brand knowledge were cumulated to obtain a composite score for brand knowledge and its influence on personal selling. The total scores were then used to compute the pearson's correlation coefficient to establish whether there was relationship between brand knowledge and personal selling in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district. The finding of the correlation analysis are shown in table 4.12

Table 4.12 Influence of Brand knowledge through personal selling on Brand performance

		Brand performance	Brand knowledge through personal selling
Brand performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.680**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	24	24

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

From the correlation analysis shown in table 4.12 it was established that there was a fairly strong positive relationship between brand knowledge and personal selling at retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district ($r=0.680$). The correlation was significant at the level of 0.05. Although the correction was fairly strong, the positive nature of the relationship implies that higher levels of personal selling can be associated with availability of adequate brand knowledge. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there was significant relationship between brand knowledge and personal selling.

4.5.2 Communication in personal selling

The respondents' rating in the statements related to communication was cumulated to obtain a composite score for communication and its influence on personal selling. The total scores were

then used to compute the pearson’s correlation coefficient to establish whether there was relationship between communication and personal selling in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district. The finding of the correlation analysis were as depicted in table 4.13

Table 4.13 Influence of Communication in personal selling on Brand performance

		Brand performance	Communication in personal selling
D	Pearson Correlation	1	.155*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	24	24

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

From the correlation analysis it was established that there was a fairly weak positive relationship between communication in personal selling on brand performance ($r=0.155$). The weak positive relationship implies that high levels of brand performance at retail shoe companies can be associated to some extent to the personal selling used by the companies. Based on these findings, the study concluded that there was a significant relationship between personal selling and brand performance.

4.4.3 Interaction time in personal selling

The respondents’ ratings in the statements related to interaction time were cumulated to obtain a composite score for interaction time and its influence on personal selling. The total scores were then used to compute the pearson’s correlation coefficient to establish whether there was relationship between interaction time and personal selling in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district. The finding of the correlation analysis are shown in table 4.14

Table 4.14 Influence of Interaction time in personal selling on Brand performance

		Brand performance	Personal selling
Brand performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.655**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.030
	N	24	24

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

From the correlation analysis shown in table 4.14 it was established that there was a fairly strong positive relationship between interaction time and personal selling at retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district ($r=0.655$). The correlation was significant at the level of 0.05. Although the correction was fairly strong, the positive nature of the relationship implies that higher levels of personal selling can be associated with availability of adequate interaction time. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there was significant relationship between interaction time and personal selling.

Relationship Building

The respondents' rating in the statements related to relationship building was cumulated to obtain a composite score for relationship building and its influence on personal selling. The total scores were then used to compute the Pearson's correlation coefficient to establish whether there was relationship between relationship building and personal selling in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district. The findings of the correlation analysis were as depicted in table 4.15

Table 4.15 Influence of Relationship Building on Brand performance

		Brand performance	Relationship Building
Brand performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	24	24

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

From the correlation analysis shown in table 4.13 it was established that there was a fairly strong positive relationship between relationship building and personal selling at retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district ($r=0.702$). The correlation was significant at the level of 0.05. Although the correlation was fairly strong, the positive nature of the relationship implies that higher levels of personal selling can be associated with availability of adequate relationship building. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there was significant relationship between relationship building and personal selling.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the dependent variable and all independent variables pooled together. This analysis was used to answer the questions; how do the independent variables influence the dependent variable collectively; to what extent does each independent variable affect dependent variable in such a collective set-up, and; which are the more significant factors? Table 4.16 gives the model summary of the multiple linear regressions.

Regression Model Summary

The study carried out a regression to see how the researcher came up with relevant inferences in line with the study objectives. The section presents and discusses findings resulting from regression analysis of the study variables.

Table 4.16 Multiples linear regression model summaries

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.889 ^a	.790	.731	.299

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand knowledge, Communication, Interaction Time, Building relationship

b. Dependent Variable: Brand performance

The R² the coefficient of determination shows variability in dependent variable explained by the variability in independent variables. These values tell us how influence of brand performance in retail shoe companies can be explained by brand knowledge, communication, interaction time and relationship building. The R² value of 0.790 implies that 79.0% of the variations in the influence of brand performance in retail shoe companies in Nairobi central district can be explained by the variations in independent variables. This therefore means that other factors not studied in this study contribute to 21.0% of the influence of personal selling in brand performance.

Table4.17 Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1.898	.334		.000
Brand knowledge	.085	.068	.152	.028
Communication	.132	.074	.233	.017
Interaction Time	.146	.056	.160	.043
Building relationship	.171	.066	.173	.011

a. Dependent Variable: Brand performance

From the regression model in Table 4.16, the regression equation was obtained. Using the unstandardized beta coefficients, the following regression equation was developed.

$$Y = 1.898 + 0.085X_1 + 0.132X_2 + 0.146X_3 + 0.171X_4 + \epsilon$$

From the full regression model, the beta values were obtained which explain the regression equation. The standardized beta coefficients give a measure of influence of each variable to the model. Regarding the influence of factors affecting performance, the study revealed that building relationship had the greatest influence on brand performance ($\beta=.171$), followed by

interaction time ($\beta=.146$), while the least influence on brand performance was brand knowledge ($\beta=-.085$).

Conclusions and Recommendations

After drawing inferences in line with study objectives, the researcher has proposed pertinent recommendations. The recommendations are based on the inferences drawn from the correlation and regression analysis and the conclusions drawn. It was recommended that adequate and timely personal selling should be encouraged especially for brands of products that are performing dismay in the marketing. Those products in product life cycle that are in decline stage in organization. It was recommended that organizations should have adequate and competent marketing management and sales team with equipped skills in knowledge of brands, communication skills, interaction and relationship building to all potential and existing customers in the organization. The study recommended that there should be reward system for sales teams that performs excellently in the organization and customers who make frequent purchases.

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