

## Brand Image and Customers' Patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the effect of brand image (personality, association, awareness and identity) on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water and was conducted in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and primary data were collected with the use of questionnaire. A sample size of 246 was extracted for the study using Topman formula since the population was infinite. A 4-point structured Likert questionnaire was developed, validated and tested for reliability using test-retest method. Data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis which results indicated that brand personality had a t-cal value of 14.771, brand association - 3.297, brand awareness - 14.569 and brand identity 14.922 respectively. Since the t-cal was greater than the t-tab value of 1.972, the alternative hypotheses were accepted. The multiple linear regression analysis models were also used to test the combined effect of brand personality, awareness, association, and identity. The results revealed that there was 51.3% significant combined effect of brand personality, brand awareness and brand identity on customer patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. However, there was no significant combined effect including "brand association" on customers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis. The study concluded that brand image strongly has an effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The study recommended that in order to enhance brand association UNIUYO Table Water Company should introduce more values that can connect customers to its product. It concluded that brand image has an effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water.*

**Keywords:** Brand image, brand personality, brand association, brand awareness, brand identity, customer patronage and UNIUYO table water

### Article information

Received 13 September 2024;

Accepted 26 October 2024;

Published 11 November 2024

<https://doi.org/10.26765/DRJMSS1172438640>

Citation: Ukeme, V. R., Uford, I. C., and Etuk, A. J. (2024). Brand Image and Customers' Patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Nigeria. *Direct Research Journal of Management and Strategic Studies*. Vol. 5(3), Pp. 23-34.

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### INTRODUCTION

Many marketing firms in the global market have realized that branding is a vital initiative that can ensure survival in the market. This led to the increase of brands and branding activities as firms were aggressively looking for mechanism to emerge and stay on top of the competition in the market. Branding thus, turns a generic product into an entity with a name and attributes which can evoke feeling and which has distinctive personality (Emodi, 2019). According to Ezra (2020), a brand is a collection of

feelings towards an economic producer. Feelings are created by the accumulation of experiences with the brand, both directly relating to its use, and through the influence of advertising, design, and media commentary. A brand is a symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to a company, product or service. A brand serves to create associations and expectations among products made by a producer. Uford (2017) defined brand as a firm's intangible assets with some identities

which includes an explicit logo, fonts, and colour schemes, symbols, which are developed to represent implicit values, ideas, and even personality.

Brand image is a combination of brand personality, brand association, brand awareness and brand identity. Brand personality entails the distinctive character of a brand that makes up certain personalities as human being.

Brand associations are those specific things that are always associated with a brand. Brand awareness is the creation of awareness about a brand in terms of promotion. It entails consumers' ability to see, distinguish and bring to mind a brand in different situation (Aaker, 1997). Branding is a strategy used by firms to differentiate themselves and their products, and to deliver value to consumers and other stakeholders. Manufacturers, who provide constant quality, attract more customers and such customers are willingness to pay price premium (Uford, 2017).

Brand identity deals with the visible elements of a brand. Brands identity is denoted by their names, logo, colour, tag line etc. That identity is done to give the brand a value and attracts customers to the product. in appreciation to those values make customers form a brand image in their minds.

In a business environment that is so competitive, differentiating an organization's product from that of the competitors is very crucial to achieve business objectives. It is important to have a brand image that reflects the organization's values, and allows customers to identify and recognize it.

Water was given freely by nature, but the moment man decided to commercialize water, water became a product. Water as a product is homogeneous in nature which made branding a necessity for differentiation. In table water industry customers' patronage is very crucial and it is measured through sales volume and market share.

A positive brand image helps an organization to have competitive advantage over others by attracting patronage to its product (Etuk et al., 2023).

Despite the vital role, the brand image plays in building originality, credibility, trust, equity, loyalty, reliability etc. among actual and potential customers as well as distinguishing an organization brand from its competitors, it seems that some brands lack clear identity and inconsistent in positioning both the organization and its product., and also many factors constitute branding, one is not sure if these elements play equal role in influencing user's choice or if some play a higher role than others. It is against this back drop; the researchers were motivated to carried out this study to examine the effect of brand image - brand personality, brand association, brand awareness, and brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

## Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of brand image on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were:

- (i) To examine the effect of brand personality on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
- (ii) To assess the effect of brand association on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
- (iii) To ascertain the effect of brand awareness on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
- (iv) To find out the effect of brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.
- (v) To determine the effect of brand personality, brand association, brand awareness, and brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

## Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised:

- (i) What is the effect of brand personality on customers' patronage in UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?
- (ii) What is the effect of brand association on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?
- (iii) What is the effect of brand awareness on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?
- (iv) What is the effect of brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?
- (v) What is the effect of brand personality, brand association, brand awareness and brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State?

## Research Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant effect of brand personality on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant effect of brand association on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo

metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

**HO<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant effect of brand awareness on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

**HO<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant effect of brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

**HO<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant effect of brand personality, brand association, brand awareness and brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

### **Significance of the study**

The findings of this study would be of immense benefit to the manufacturers of table water and specifically to UNIUYO table water. It would help the management of UNIUYO table water in the formulating of policies on brand image as well as identify the brand image component that mostly enhanced customers' patronage of its products. The findings would add to the existing body of knowledge on brand image and customers' patronage. It would also serve as a reference material for researchers and scholars who want to carry out a study on similar or related topics.

### **Literature review**

#### **Concept of brand image**

Mazn (2021) described brand image as the perception consumers have about a product. Brand image is defined as the perception the consumer have about a brand which is reflected by the cluster of associations that consumers connect to the brand name in memory (Ezra 2020). According to Ezra (2020), consumers create an image of a brand by selecting some or few impressions from the total number of impressions they have towards a product. These selected impressions are then expanded, embellished as well as stored in the customers' memory. Brand image is considered to be a reflection that is held in the mind of a customer and it is basically the thing that comes to mind when a brand is presented in front of the customers (Diallo, 2022). Ahmed & Maham, (2020) considered brand image as an associate entity of all available information regarding products, services and brands of the company. This information is obtained by the consumer through: first, direct experience that implicates on functional and emotional satisfaction.

According to Egele et al. (2022), brand image is indispensable for marketing where customers infer the quality of product by the brand image and are further stirred up the behaviour of the purchaser. They further defined brand image as the material property associated with the brand, such as the product name and the packaging. Emodi (2019) described brand image as a

symbolic construct created within the mind of people and consists of all the information and expectations associated with a product or service. Therefore, brand image could be recognized as a representation of individual imagery that customers collaborate with the brand, which incorporates a large portion of brand related information. Akpoviroro et al. (2020) asserted that brand image has three dimensions namely: mystery, intimacy and sensuality, and these dimensions represent aspects of the sensual, rational, and poignant dimensions.

Carr and Awaji (2020) considered brand image as a representative of all overall perception formed from information and knowledge on the brand. It is the general impression of a product held by real or potential customers. Brand image closely related to attitude and believes that form choice (preference) to a brand. Hossain et al. (2020) opined that brand image allowed customers to recognize their relevant needs and understand the effective mechanism for achieving fulfilment through the brand. People engaged in branding seek to develop or align the expectations behind the brand experience, creating the impression that a brand associated with a product or service has certain qualities or characteristics that make it special or unique Brand image is the reputation of the firm with the various audiences that are important to it. These groups that have a stake in the company are known as stakeholders. Stakeholders are affected by the actions of the establishment and, in turn, their actions can affect the company. Brand image is a representation of the overall perception formed from information and knowledge on the brand. Brand image is closely related to attitudes and beliefs that form choice (preference) to a brand. In certain conditions, brand can be described by certain characters as human beings. The more positive the description is the stronger the brand image and the more opportunities also for brand development (Umair, 2021).

#### **Dimensions of brand image**

##### **Brand personality**

Aashish (2021) described brand personality as the association of human characteristics and traits with a brand to which the customer can relate. According to Aashish (2021), the most important aspect of brand personality is that it is imperative in differentiating products in consumers' mind. It comes into existence when human like adjectives such as unique, caring, trustworthy, creative, etc. are assigned to a brand (Adindu and Aniuga, 2022). Brand personality, because of its distinctiveness and relatively difficulty to imitate is believed to be reflection of an organization's culture, values, and traits as well as the qualities of its shareholders (Attor et al., 2022). Sharahi and Heshmat (2021) asserted that customers often give a human

dimension by giving brands a personality and marketers often create or reinforce these perceptions with the help of positioning. Brand personality traits provide a symbolic concept or emotional value that can lead to customer inference from the brand and make it more sustainable and functional. According to Kim and Phua (2020), brand personality is developed by associating a company's image with human-like emotions and qualities as it may capture many features of real-life.

### **Brand awareness**

Brand awareness is defined as the buyer's ability to identify the brand in sufficient aspects to make an attitude towards the purchase (Hameed et al., 2023). If consumers are not aware of the products first, it is likely to be impossible to experience the other elements of the brand (Attih, 2021). Tariq et al., (2017) described brand awareness as the ability of brand to attain a level of deliberate recognition which people can identify brands, which helps shape their attitudes. According to Sharma et al, (2021), customers frequently choose to buy products and services from the companies that are more well-known and comfortable for them. Sayden and Dulek (2019) opined that companies must target consumers in a way that makes it easy for them to recall and remember the product in their minds based on the awareness they are providing to the customers. According to (Hameed et al, 2023), brand awareness is imperative in making in consumer decision and raising brand awareness increase likelihood of purchasing the brand.

### **Brand association**

Brand association refers as the perception about a brand as reflected by the cluster of images that consumers connect to the brand node in memory. Brand association is the worth of the brand (Chidume and Chinweeuba, 2019). According to Attih (2021), brand association is anything that connect consumer to a brand. It is anything that linked a customer memory to a brand. Usman and Aryani (2019) opined that consumers who are strongly associated with a product brand tend to share their positive experiences with others, leading to increased referrals. Widjaja (2019) established that brand association provides value to companies, among others, to help the process of compiling information, to differentiate brands form another, to stimulate positive feelings towards products as foundation for brand expansion. Jaafaru (2019) opined that brand association helps to retrieve and process information about a brand, create positive (or negative) attitudes feelings towards the brand and generate reasons for making purchase decision.

### **Brand identity**

Brand identity refers as an internal construct that emanates unilaterally from the organization-what managers want the brand to be-and that requires stability over time (Naeini et al., 2017). By identity, brands are recognized by customers and are differentiate form competitors. According to Karemu et al., (2023), brand identity encompasses how a brand portrays itself to the world, including its values, messaging, visual elements, and overall image. Brand identity is important in shaping buying decisions as it helps customers recognize and distinguish a brand from others in the market. Christoph et al. (2023) noted that consistency in brand identity builds trust and credibility with customers encouraging them to feel more confident in their purchase decisions. Cai and Mo (2020) asserted that a well-crafted brand identity triggers emotional responses from customers, which can evoke feelings, memories, and associations that make the brand relatable and memorable, and emotional connections often lead to stronger brand loyalty and repeat purchases. According to Shetty and Fitzsimmons (2021), a well-designed brand identity can elevate the perceived value of a company's products or services making customers be willing to pay more for products from the brand they trust and perceive as of higher quality.

Christoph et al. (2019) established that customers make decisions based on rational and emotional factors, and therefore, a compelling brand identity can tap into the emotional aspects of decision-making, influencing customers to choose a brand based on it aligns with their values, aspirations and lifestyles. Vaesen (2018) noted that the strongest brand identities are instantly recognizable and also convey a message about a business. For instance, large companies like Apple, Coca Cola, Nike, etc. spend millions of dollars, pounds and euros every year to promote and develop their brands, because they know it directly affects their sales and market share. According to Valette and Valette (2020), a consistent and memorable brand identity fosters brand loyalty, leading to repeat business and customer retention by shaping customer behaviour, creating recognition, trust, and emotional connections, and influencing decision-making, ultimately driving customer loyalty and business success. Keremu et al. (2023) asserted that brand identity is a powerful tool that can influence consumer buying behaviour by building trust, fostering loyalty, differentiating a brand, and creating emotional connections.

### **Brand personality and customer patronage**

Attor et al. (2022) in their study examined the influence of brand personality dimensions on consumer buying decision. The study examined the relationship between

brand personality-brand sincerity, brand excitement, brand competence, brand sophistication, brand ruggedness, and consumer buying decision and found out that brand sincerity, brand excitement and brand competence have a significant relationship with consumer buying decision. Gupta (2023) examined the impact of brand personality on consumer purchase decision making. The findings showed that consumer buying behaviour depends on how well a brand and a consumer's personality mesh and that people may also utilize brands to enhance their own personalities. Sharahi and Heshmat (2020) studied the effect of brand personality on dimensions of consumer behaviour mediated by brand love. The results revealed that brand personality had a significant effect on brand love. Shetty and Fitzsimmons (2021) investigated the effect of brand personality congruence, brand attachment, and brand love on loyalty among Henry's in the luxury branding sector. The findings revealed that brand personality had a significant relationship with customer loyalty. Coelho et al. (2019) examined brand communities' relational outcomes through brand love. The results showed that brand personality is one the most significant variables that have an influence on customers' choice. Adindu and Aniuga (2022) investigated the influence of brand personality on purchase decision of buyers of smartphone in Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a positive and significant effect of brand personality and customer patronage.

### **Brand awareness and customer patronage**

Hameed et al. (2023) examined brand awareness and purchase intention in the age of digital communication: A moderated mediation model of celebrity endorsement and consumer attitude. The findings of the study revealed that brand awareness in the presence of celebrity developed a positive attitude and had a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. Chen (2024) studied the impact of brand awareness on purchase intention. The results found that the brand awareness is significantly related to consumer purchase intention. The association implies that the higher degrees of brand awareness, the more are consumers who would consider whether to buy a company's products or services. Findings from this research highlight the significant of brand awareness and its ability to influence purchasing decisions.

### **Brand association and customer patronage**

Chidume and Chinweuba (2018) examined brand association and customer patronage of Malt drinks in Anambra state, Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that the guarantee and status functions of brand association as well as the overall result of interaction of stand-alone variables have significantly and positively

influenced customer patronage of Malt drinks in Anambra state, Nigeria. It was also discovered that among all the brand association functions, guarantee and status functions were the major determinants of customer patronage. Jaafaru (2019) studied of brand association on consumer patronage of GSM service providers in Kano metropolis, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that perceived quality of service was found to be significantly influence consumer patronage of service provider. The findings also revealed that the use of the celebrity for promotional activities of GSM operators has no effect on consumer patronage of service providers. It was also found that consumer patronage of GSM service providers was not influenced by the fact that GSM companies engaged in sponsorship of notable events. Widjaja (2019) examined the effect of brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty on purchasing decision:

A case study on ACE hardware Indonesia consumers, the results of hypotheses tests obtained that simultaneously all brand equity variables have a significant effect, but partially the results are varied. Brand awareness and brand association have no significant effect, while perceived quality and brand loyalty have a significant effect on purchasing decisions. Grigaiunaite and Pileliene (2018) investigated how do brand associations affect purchase intention: A case of organic products? The research results revealed that brand associations have a huge impact on consumer purchase decision intentions in a framework of organic products. Proper and positive association development positively and directly influences consumer purchase intentions.

### **Brand identity and customer patronage**

Karemu et al., (2023) studied the effect of product brand identity on consumer buying behaviour: A case of De Monte Company in Kenya. The research findings revealed that the three elements of brand identity-brand image, brand quality, brand packaging had positive and significant correlations with customer buying decisions. Valette-Florence and Valette-Florence (2020) examined the effects of emotions, brand identity and brand personality on consumer commitment, via the mediating effects of brand trust and attachment. The results of study showed positive and significant effect of the variables with customer brand loyalty. It revealed that a consistent and memorable brand identity fosters brand loyalty, leading to repeat business and customer retention.

Habib (2019) conducted a study on brand identity and its impact on behaviour: Empirical analysis. The findings revealed that brand identity had a significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour.

## Customer patronage

Customer patronage represents the degree to which buying units concentrate purchases over time to a given product or brand based on positive reinforcement and expressed through repetitive buying behaviour (Harcourt and Ikegwuru 2019). The authors further described customer patronage as the act of an individual regularly buying a particular product or brand. It is based on customer's perception, brand image, and positive attitude formed from experience. Customer patronage is a combination of psychological factors that influence purchase behaviour and these factors are considered important by consumers as yardsticks in determining which firm to patronize (Udo et al., 2024). It has been measured by various authors in different dimensions, including store traffic flow; willingness, word of mouth, repeat purchase, customer retention and customer referrals, customer satisfaction and referrals (Umair et.al, 2021) and willingness to pay price premium (Uford, 2017).

Customer patronage also deals with the processes that customers engage in when selecting a product or brand among alternatives; as well as the factors and attributes used in the selection. Behavioural scientists thus propose that customer patronage results from a trial that gets reinforced through satisfaction, and leads to repeat purchase; while cognitive psychologists contend that customer patronage builds through mental processes, based on the believe that consumers engage in extensive problem solving behaviour involving services (Nyakweba et al., 2015). Today's highly competitive environment require firms to focus primarily on customer satisfaction, if they seek to win and retain customers' patronage, hence, marketers strive to determine customers' preference with a view to adapt or generate value that elicits customer patronage.

## Brand image and customer patronage

Egele et al. (2022) examined the effect of brand image on customer patronage in selected shopping mall in Anambra State of Nigeria. The study found that brand image-brand equity, brand experiences and brand association have a positive significant effect on customer patronage. Abbas et al. (2021) studied the impact of brand image on customer loyalty with the mediating role of customer satisfaction and brand awareness in Pakistan. The result was based on the statistics test which displays that image of the brand and customer loyalty is very significant with customer satisfaction and brand awareness, but brand image is insignificant brand awareness. Diallo (2022) investigated the impact of brand image on customer loyalty in Istanbul. The correlation analysis was used to analyse the relationship existing between the variables, while regression was also used to

examine the impact of brand image on customer loyalty. The result showed that brand image significantly affects customer loyalty, and they were correlated. Carr and Awaji-Ima (2020) examined brand image and consumer taste preference of bottled water manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. The results of the study showed a significant relationship between brand image and taste preference, using brand trust, brand association, and brand graphics relate significantly with consumer taste preference.

The underpinning theory for this work is Love Marks Theory propounded by Robert in 2004 Suggests that two components of a "lovemark", "love" and "respect", are the main drivers of brand loyalty beyond reason. Respect represents the functional aspects of a brand and it basically reflects the brand's performance, reputation and trust. Love, on the other side, represents the emotional attributes of a brand which are used by consumers to develop emotional relationships with it. Roberts (2004) suggests that brands can be classified based on these two relationship-related dimensions: love and respect. The development of the lovemarks theory is strongly related to the evolution of branding theory and to the importance given to the development of consumer-brand relationships. Brands evolve into "lovemark brands" that are about building and strengthening emotional bonds between brands and consumers. According to him it takes three key ingredients for a product to qualify as a lovemark brand: mystery, rendered through impressive stories, ancient times, myths, dreams and a lot of inspiration, then the creation of a complete experience through the union of the five senses (sensuality), as well as a close relationship with the consumer (intimacy) provided by commitment and empathy). The theory of "lovemarks" may explain why consumers feel loyal and attached to one brand and not to another. As Roberts described it, the loyalty for "lovemarks" is "loyalty beyond reason"

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design to obtain relevant data from respondents from UNIUYO table water on brand image and customer patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis. The questions were structured in closed ended form. The questionnaire was divided into two part (part A and B). Part A focused on respondents' demographic characteristics while part B focused on while section "B" contained statements relating to proxies of the independent (brand image) and the dependent variable (customer patronage) of the study. In designing the questionnaire, the researchers used modified four point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (SA=4), agree (A = 3), disagree (D=2) and strongly disagree (SD=1). The instrument was subjected

**Table 1:** Simple Linear Regression Analysis Result on Effect of Brand Personality on Customers' Patronage in of UNIUYO Table Water In Uyo Metropolis.

Variables	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – Value
Constant	$\beta_0$	1.842	0.250	7.364 ***
Brand personality( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	0.710	0.048	14.771 ***
R-Square ( $R^2$ )		0.478		
Adjusted R – Square ( $R^2$ )		0.476		
F – Statistics Value		218.178		
F – Probability value		0.000		
Durbin-Watson stat.		1.971		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. (\*\*\*) = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively; t-tab value = 1.972, df = 238, a Dependent Variable: customers' patronage, b. Predictors: (Constant), brand personality  
 Source: Field Survey (2024). (SPSS Version 23 computation)

to appropriate validity and reliability procedures. The reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach Alpha Analysis which yielded reliability coefficient of 0.787. The multiple regression statistics served as data analyses technique. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The decision criteria adopted in the data analyses was: accept null hypothesis if P is less than 0.05 ( $P < 0.05$ ) and reject the null hypothesis, if greater than 0.05. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22) was used as the tool to enhance data analysis.

**RESULTS**

**Test of hypothesis one**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Brand Personality does not have any significant effect on customers' patronage in of UNIUYO Table water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The coefficient of brand personality ( $X_1$ ) was statistically significant and positively related to customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis at 1 percent probability level (Table 1). This implies that unit increase in brand personality leads to 0.710-unit increase in customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis. As reflected in the result, brand personality has a t-calculated value of 14.771 which is greater than 1.972 tabulated values at 0.05 degree of freedom. In effect, since the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the researchers rejected null hypothesis in favour of alternate hypothesis stating that, brand personality has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.478, which implies that 47.8% changes in the dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable, while 52.2% was unexplained by stochastic terms in the model. Thus, the independent variable, brand personality can only explain 47.8 percent

of changes in and customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water, leaving 52.2% unexplained. The  $R^2$  adjusted was 47.6% indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. The Durbin-Watson statistical value of 1.971 was observed which falls within 1.8 to 2.5, implying that there is no evidence of autocorrelation in the data analysis. More so, the f-statistical (calculated) value of 218.178 was observed in the analysis which is greater than 1.971 t-table value; and f-probability value of 0.040 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05 (95% of freedom), indicating that estimated regression model adopted in this study is statistically significant at 5% level. With this, the researchers rejected the null hypotheses and accept alternative hypothesis which states that brand personality has significant effect on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

**Test of hypothesis two**

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Brand awareness does not have any significant effect on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

Table 2 shows the result of simple linear regression analysis on the effect of brand awareness on consumer's patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis. From the result, the t-calculated value of brand awareness was 14.569 while the T-tabulated value was 1.972, since the T - tabulated value is less than T - calculated value in absolute terms, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis, while accepting the alternative hypothesis which states that brand awareness has significant effects on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The result of coefficient of multiple determinations ( $R^2$ ) was not impressive with value of 0.471 which implies that, 47.1% variation in dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable, while

**Table 2:** Simple linear regression analysis result of effect of brand awareness on customers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	$\beta_0$	1.822	0.256	7.127***
Brand awareness ( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	0.713	0.049	14.569***
R-Square ( $R^2$ )		0.471		
Adjusted R – Square ( $R^2$ )		0.469		
F – Statistics		212.252		
F – Probability		0.000		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. (\*\*\*) = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively; t-tab value = 1.972, df = 238, a Dependent Variable: customers' patronage, b. Predictors: (Constant), brand awareness.

Source: Field Survey (2024). (SPSS Version 23 computation)

**Table 3:** Simple linear regression analysis model result on effect of brand association on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	$\beta_0$	4.362	0.245	17.791***
Brand association ( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	0.222	0.067	3.297***
R-Square ( $R^2$ )		0.129		
Adjusted R – Square ( $R^2$ )		0.124		
F – Statistics		10.869		
F – Probability		0.001		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. (\*\*\*) = 1%), (\*\* = 5%), and (\* = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively; t-tab value = 1.972, df = 238, a Dependent Variable: customers' patronage, b. Predictors: (Constant), brand association

Source: Field Survey (2024). (SPSS Version 23 computation)

52.9% was unexplained by the stochastic variables in the model. This means that, 47.1% positive changes in customer patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis can be attributed to brand awareness. The F-stat value of 212.252 which is greater than 1.972; and F-probability value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is greater than 0.05 (95% degree of freedom), indicating that, the estimated regression model adopted in this study was statistically significant at 5% significant level. With this, the researchers accepted the alternative hypothesis; brand awareness has significant effects on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

### Test of Hypothesis three

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant effect of brand association on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State

Table 3 shows the result of simple linear regression analysis on the effect of brand association on consumer's patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis. From the result, the t-calculated value of brand association was 3.297 while the T-table value was 1.972,

since the t-table value is greater than t-calculated value in absolute terms; the researchers accepted the alternative hypothesis; that brand association has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.129, which implies that 12.9% changes in the dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable, while 87.1% was unexplained by the stochastic terms in the model. Thus, the independent variable (brand association) can only explain 12.9% of changes in customer's patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, leaving 87.1% were unexplained. The  $R^2$  adjusted was 12.4% indicating poor goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically insignificant at 5% probability level. More so, the f-statistical (calculated) value of 10.869 which is greater than 1.972 t-table value; and f-probability value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05 (95% of freedom), indicating that estimated regression model adopted in this study is statistically significant at 5% level. With this, the researchers accepted the alternative hypothesis thus; brand association has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis,

**Table 4:** Simple Linear Regression analysis result on effect of brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water

Variables	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – Value
Constant	$\beta_0$	1.799	0.252	7.132 <sup>***</sup>
Brand identity ( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	0.720	0.048	14.922 <sup>***</sup>
R-Square ( $R^2$ )		0.483		
Adjusted R – Square ( $R^2$ )		0.481		
F – Statistics Value		222.669		
F – Probability value		0.000		
Durbin-Watson stat.		1.966		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. (\*\*\*) = 1%), (\*\*) = 5%), and (\*) = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively; t-tab value = 1.972, df = 238, a. Dependent Variable: customers' patronage, b. Predictors: (Constant), brand identity  
 Source: Field Survey (2024). (SPSS Version 23 computation)

Akwa Ibom State.

**Test of Hypothesis Four**

**H0<sub>4</sub>:** Brand Identity does not have any significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4 shows the result of simple linear regression analysis on the effect of brand identity on consumer's patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis. From the result, the t-calculated value of brand identity was 14.922 while tabulated value of 1.972, since the calculated value is greater than the tabular value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis thus; brand identity has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The estimated value of brand identity (X) was statistically significant and positively related to customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis at 5% probability level. The coefficient of brand identity is 0.720 indicating that a unit increase in brand identity will lead to 0.720 increases in customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Statistically, the t-calculated value of brand identity is 14.922 and t-tabulated value of 1.972, since the t-calculated value is greater than the tabulated value in absolute terms, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis thus, brand identity has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The result of coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) value was 0.483 which indicates that, 48.1% variation in the dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable, while 51.9% was unexplained by the stochastic variables in the model. This indicates that, 48.1% increase or positive changes in customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State can be attributed to brand identity. The Durbin-Watson stat value was 1.966 which is close to

2.5, implying that there is no evidence of autocorrelation. F-stat value of 222.669 which is higher than 1.972; and F-probability value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05 (95% degree of freedom), indicating that, the estimated regression model adopted in this study was statistically significant at 5% significant level. With this, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis and accepted alternative hypothesis which states that, brand identity has significant effect on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

**Test of Hypothesis five**

**H0<sub>5</sub>:** There is no significant combined effect of brand personality, brand association, brand awareness and brand identity on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test hypothesis five and the result is as follows: the coefficient of brand personality( $X_1$ ) revealed that the t-calculated value of brand personality was 13.465 which is greater than t-tabulated value of 1.972 and positively significant at 1% probability level (Table 5). Also, the t-calculated value of brand awareness and brand identity were 2.552 and 2.621 respectively which are greater than t-tabulated value of 1.972 and positively significant at 5% probability level. However, when testing the combined effects; the t-calculated value of brand association was -0.106 which is less than t-tabulated value of 1.972. Thus, brand personality, brand awareness and brand identity are significant brand image components that jointly affect customers' patronage UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, while brand association does not jointly affect customer patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

The coefficient of multiple determination ( $R^2$ ) was 0.513, which implies that 51.3% changes in the dependent variable was explained by changes in the independent variable, while 48.7% was unexplained by

**Table 5:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Result of the Combined Effect of Brand Personality, Association, Awareness and Identity on Consumers' Patronage.

Variable	Parameters	Coefficient	Std error	Tcal – value
Constant	$\beta_0$	2.341	0.429	5.455 <sup>***</sup>
Brand personality( $X_1$ )	$\beta_1$	0.680	0.050	13.465 <sup>***</sup>
Brand association( $X_2$ )	$\beta_2$	0.106	0.064	1.652 <sup>*</sup>
Brand awareness( $X_3$ )	$\beta_3$	0.167	0.065	2.552 <sup>**</sup>
Brand identity( $X_4$ )	$\beta_4$	0.126	0.048	2.621 <sup>**</sup>
R-Square ( $R^2$ )		0.513		
Adjusted R – Square ( $R^2$ )		0.504		
F – Statistics		61.802		
F – Probability		0.000		
Durbin-Watson stat.		2.137		

Decision Rule: If  $F_{cal} > F_{tab}$  accept the alternate and reject Null hypothesis. Otherwise accept the null hypothesis. (\*\*\*) = 1%), (\*\*) = 5%), and (\*) = 10%) denotes significance of coefficient at level respectively; t-tab value = 1.972, df = 235, a. Dependent Variable: customers' patronage, b. Predictors: (Constant).

Source: (Field Survey, 2024: SPSS Version 23 Computation)

stochastic terms in the model. Thus, the independent variables (brand personality, brand association, brand awareness and brand identity) can only explain 51.3% of changes in customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State, leaving 48.7% unexplained. The  $R^2$  adjusted was 50.4% indicating a goodness of fit of the regression model adopted in this study which is statistically significant at 5% probability level. The Durbin-Watson statistical value of 2.137 was observed which falls within 1.8 to 2.5, implying that there is no evidence of autocorrelation in the data analysis. More so, the f-statistical (calculated) value of 61.802 was observed in the analysis which is greater than 1.972 t-table value; and f-probability value of 0.000 was observed from the analysis which is less than 0.05 (95% of freedom), indicating that estimated regression model adopted in this study is statistically significant at 5% level. With this, the researchers rejected the null hypotheses and accept alternative hypothesis, in effect, there is 51.3% significant combined effect of brand personality, brand awareness and brand identity on customer patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo Metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. On the contrary, there was no significant combined effect of brand association on customers' patronage of UNIUYO Table Water in Uyo Metropolis.

## DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of brand image on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Five hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The dimensions of brand image used in this study were, brand personality, brand association, brand awareness, and brand identity.

Hypothesis one of this study states that there is no

significant effect of brand personality on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The result revealed that brand personality has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The result showed that brand personality has a t-calculated value of 14.771 which is greater than 1.972 tabulated values at 0.05 degree of freedom. In effect, since the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value in absolute terms, the researchers rejected null hypothesis in favour of alternate hypothesis stating that, brand personality has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study is agreed with the study of Sharahi and Heshmat (2020) which revealed that brand personality had a significant effect on brand love. The finding of study is also in line with the study of Shetty and Fitzsimmons (2021) which found out that brand personality had a significant relationship with customer loyalty.

Hypothesis two of this study states that there is no significant effect of brand association on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. From the result, the t-calculated value of brand association was 3.297 while the t-tabulated value was 1.972, since the t-tabulated value is greater than t-calculated value in absolute terms; the researchers accepts the null hypothesis that brand association has significant effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The finding is in line with Chidume and Chinweeuba (2018) which showed that the guarantee and status functions of brand association as well as the overall result of interaction of stand-alone variables have significantly and positively influenced customer patronage of Malt drinks in Anambra state, Nigeria. The finding also agreed with Jaafaru (2019) which revealed that brand association had positive and significant relationship with consumer

patronage of GSM service providers in Kano metropolis, Nigeria. The finding of this study disagreed with Widjaja (2019) which revealed that brand association had no significant effect with purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis three of this study states that there is no significant effect of brand awareness on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. From the result, the t-calculated value of brand awareness was 14.569 while the T-tabulated value was 1.972, since the T - tabulated value is less than T - calculated value in absolute terms, the researchers accepted the null hypothesis that brand awareness has significant effect on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The finding of the study is agreed with Hameed, Malik, Hadi and Raza (2023) revealed that brand awareness in the presence of celebrity developed a positive attitude and had a positive effect on consumer purchase intention. It is also in line with Chen (2024) which found that the brand awareness is significantly related to consumer purchase intention. Findings from this research highlight the significant of brand awareness and its ability to influence purchasing decisions.

Hypothesis four of this study states that there is no significant effect of brand identity on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. From the result, the t-calculated value of brand identity was 14.922 while the t-tabulated value was 1.972, since the t-tabulated value is less than t-calculated value in absolute terms; the researchers accepted the null hypothesis that brand identity has significant effect on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this agreed with Karemu, Kaaria and Kegoro (2023) which revealed that the three elements of brand identity-brand image, brand quality, brand packaging have positive and significant correlations with customer buying decisions. The finding also in line with Valette-Florence and Valette-Florence (2020) which found that there was positive and significant effect of the brand identity on customer brand loyalty.

Hypothesis five of this study states that there is no significant combined effect of brand personality, brand association, brand awareness and brand identity on consumers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test hypothesis five and the result is as follows: The coefficient of brand personality( $X_1$ ) revealed that the t-calculated value of brand personality was 13.465 which is greater than t-tabulated value of 1.972 and positively significant at 1% probability level. Also, the t-calculated value of brand awareness and brand identity were 2.552 and 2.621 respectively which are greater than t-tabulated value of 1.972 and positively significant at 5% probability level. However, t-calculated value of brand association was -0.106 which is less than

t-tabulated value of 1.972. Thus, brand personality, brand awareness and brand identity are significant brand image components that jointly affect customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. While brand association does not jointly affect customer patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The study was on brand image and customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water in Uyo metropolis, Akwa Ibom State. The results clearly showed that brand personality, brand association, brand awareness, and brand identity have a significant positive effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water. The result implies that when there is good brand image, there will be positive effect on consumer patronage of table water. Therefore, it is concluded that brand image has an effect on customers' patronage of UNIUYO table water.

The study recommended the following to improve customers' patronage:

- (i) UNIUYO Table Water Company should incorporate more brand personality variables into its product to attract customers' attention and patronage.
- (ii) UNIUYO Table Water Company in order to enhance brand association should introduce more values that can connect customers to its product.
- (iii) UNIUYO table water company should create more awareness about its product by embarking on aggressive brand awareness campaign through the use of various elements of promotion, namely, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity, word-of-mouth communication, and interactive marketing to attract consumers' attention and patronage.
- (iv) UNIUYO Table Water Company should take into consideration the overall improvement on its brand image to make the organization's product stand out among its competitors.

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