

THE IMPACT OF BRAND IMAGE ON CONSUMER CHOICE

A CASE STUDY OF UNILEVER

UGANDA

BY:

MUBICHI NGESU DENNIS

BIB/17203/71/DF

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DECLARATION

I, Mubichi Ngesu Dennis (BIB/17203/71/DF), declare that this research report is a result of my own efforts. To the best of my knowledge, it is original and has never been submitted to any university or institution for any academic award.

NAME:

MUBICHI NGESU DENNIS (BIB/17203/71/DF)

SIGNATURE:



.....

DATE:

11/05/2010
.....

APPROVAL

This research report compiled by Mubichi Ngesu Dennis (BIB/17203/71/DF), under the topic, “The Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Choice”, has been under my supervision and guidance. It is ready for examination and therefore submitted with my approval.

NAME: MR. MICHAEL RUTEGANDA (ACIS)

SIGNATURE: 

DATE: 11/05/10

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covered the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study and the conceptual framework.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Almost every business has a trading name, from the smallest market trader to the largest multinational corporation which is used to distinguish the company's themselves and their products.

Brand is a distinctive symbol or name created with the intention to identify and recognize the goods or services of one seller or a particular group of sellers. Another purpose is to differentiate such goods or services from its competitors. As such a brand signals to its customers the specific source of product and attempts to protect both the producer and customer from competitors who ultimately endeavour to provide products that seems to be identical. (Kotler, P and Armstrong, 1996).

Brand image is the perception of a product or company in the mind of potential consumer. Brands represent things they value and like, whether it's fun, power, money, intelligence or numerous other qualities (www.brandidentityguru.com2009).

Consumer choice is an economic term describing how individuals make decisions on what to consume (association of consumer research). Brand occupies space in the perception of consumer, and it is what results from the totality of what the consumer takes into consideration before making a purchase decision (Pickton and Broderick 2001). Consumers often choose products, services and activities over others because they associate these attributes with a certain

life-style, a self-image or an ascribed status. They attempt to preserve or enhance their self-image by buying products that they believe are agreeing with that self-image and by avoiding products that are not (Sirgy, 1982). For example, when a consumer goes to a shop to buy medication for a headache, despite the many brands available a brand with a stronger brand image like panadol is preferred. Marketing academicians and practioners see the symbolic image of products or services as more important in their success than their physical characteristics and attributes (Aaker, 1991).

Customer benefit refers to the particular needs and demands that are satisfied by products or services, for example control of cavity by toothpaste is termed as customer benefit which may be psychological, rational or self expressive benefit. A rational benefit is closely associated with an attribute of product and would be an integral part of reasonable decision process. As different roles are performed by consumers, most of them have an associated concept and a need to narrate that concept. The purchase and utilization of brands is one method for the fulfillment of need. The example of a consumer can be quoted who could define her/himself as powerful and successful by driving a particular car, say Mercedes Benz. (Galician, Mary-Lou, 2004)

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many companies are not adept at disseminating a strong, clear brand image that not only distinguishes their brand from the competitors, but also distinguishes it in a memorable and positive manner to create a broad brand image that recognizes a brand in the mind of the consumer in order to influence consumer choice. Therefore this research sought to examine the impact of brand image on consumer choice.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between brand image and consumer choice.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

The study generally examined whether brand image determines consumer choice.

Specific objective

Specifically, the research was to:

- Assess the elements that make up brand image.
- Examine the theories of consumer choice.
- Examine the relationship between brand image and consumer choice.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What elements make up brand image?
- What are the models explaining consumer choice?
- What is the relationship between brand image and consumer choice?

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Kampala city, Uganda. This is because Kampala has shown growth with regard to brand image. The study involved a number of respondents within Kampala and it equally aimed at gender sensitivity in the selection of respondents to ensure that both men and women participated equally.

Content scope

Content scope dwelt on brand image and consumer choice. It also assessed the contribution of brand image to consumer choice and the extent to which possible solutions of improving brand image can be derived.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

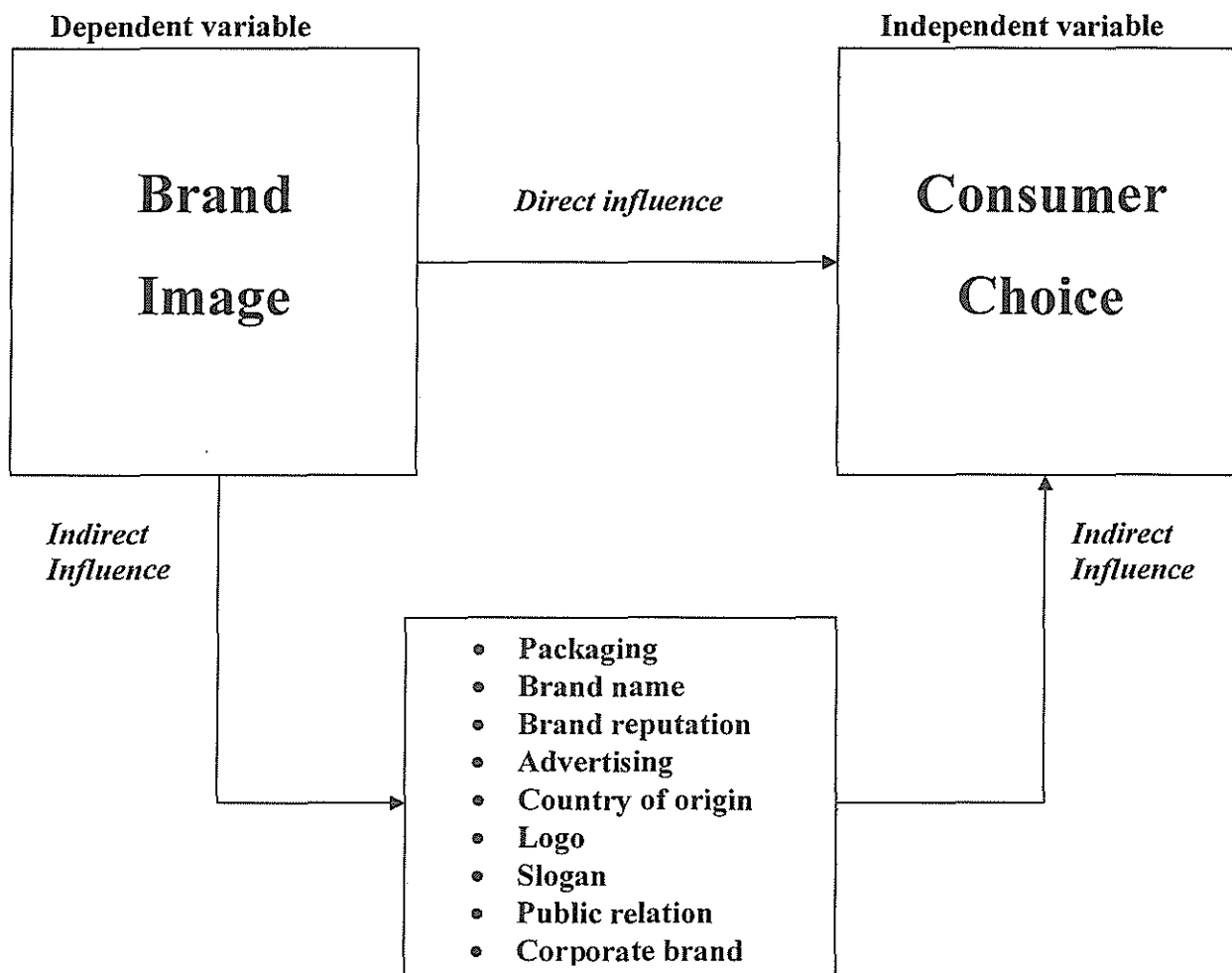
- The study helped marketing managers to understand the relevance of brand image and the means of creating a strong brand image.
- The enabled marketing managers to appreciate the importance of maintaining a strong brand image.
- The study helped marketing managers to be able to market products better by influencing consumer choice.

1.8 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework helped the researcher to explain the topic of research by defining the variables in the topic. There is the independent variable which predicts, controls, determines and influences the dependent variable. There are also intervening variables which work with the independent variable to influence the dependent variable. For the purpose of this research the independent variable was be the brand image, the dependent variable was consumer choice and the intervening variables were: Product packaging, corporate brand, logo, slogan, advertisement, country of origin, public relation, brand name and reputation. This was illustrated using a diagram as shown below.

FIGURE 1.1

THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Source: Researcher's concept

This led us to the topic of research as stated, "The Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Choice".

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter involved a presentation of views by different authors about brand image and how it affects consumer choice. It considered how different authors look at the elements of brand image, models explaining consumer choice and the relationship between brand image and consumer choice.

2.1 BRAND IMAGE

Brand image has been defined differently by various scholars. Keller's 1993, defined brand image as, "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory". His definition of brand image is consistent with that of other authors-Newman (1957), Dichter (1985), Aaker (1991), Engel, Blackwell & Miniard (1995).

The importance of brand image cannot be overlooked. Aaker (1991), for example, says image creates value in a variety of ways, helping consumers to process information, differentiating the brand, generating reasons to buy, giving positive feelings, and providing a basis for extensions.

Whether you are competing on a local or global scale, having a great product is no longer enough. There are lots of great products and because there are more products to choose from, the customer's expectations are higher. Furthermore, consumers are bombarded with promotional messages, so it's much harder to capture the customer's attention. Companies have to establish a distinctive identity – like a thumbprint – in the minds of the customers by ensuring their brand image is instant, positive and unique among competitors.

2.2 ELEMENTS OF BRAND IMAGE

At each level in which it is attempting to manage the image development process, an organization has available a wide variety of elements of its identity. Olins (1989), defines corporate identity in terms of four key elements; product/services, physical environment, information, and staff behaviour. Topalian (1984), agrees with this concept of constituent elements of corporate identity, but restricts his classification to three key elements, physical, operational, and human characteristics.

In the creation of a brand, certain key elements connect. These include the corporate brand, product and its abilities, the brand name, slogan logo, advertising and its name, the brand symbolism and imagery and the consumer.

2.2.1 Corporate brand

Corporate brand is the coherent outward expression of your company's mission statement, business strategy and activities. Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Olins, 1989; van Riel, 1995; van Riel and Balmer, 1997) – marketing scholars and practitioners, have consistently sought to keep the issue of identity on the agenda of senior managers and to integrate concerns about external environments in the planning and execution of corporate identity programs. Moreover, with the growing media attention and increasing critique of private business corporations by various interest groups, marketing has – along with related disciplines – begun to consider the value of a positive corporate image or estimation in the public e.g. Dowling (1993), Kennedy (1977), van Riel (1995).

2.2.2 Product packaging

Product packaging, can illicit positive consumer affect, or positive feelings about the product or brand. Purchases are made as a result of cognition, or thought/reasoning and/or positive effect for the brand or product, which can be a result of effective packaging. (Ted Mininni, www.designforceinc.com). Many individuals, for example, are interested in a health conscious diet and may purchase a product, they might not otherwise purchase, if the packaging reflects a healthy lifestyle. The feelings, or effects here, are associative in nature. Structural packaging needs not be complicated or overly expensive in all cases. The graphics and photography should support the brand in conveying the appropriate message, to the appropriate target audience or demographic segments, as the case may be.

2.2.3 Logo

A logo is a graphical element that, together with its logotype, forms a trademark or commercial brand (www.wikipedia.com 2009). Typically, a logo's design is for immediate recognition which in turn influences the brand image.

2.2.4 Slogan

In the world of branding, the slogan is generally used as the positioning factor. Its purpose is to convey your brand promise to the customer. Consumers are exposed to millions of messages every day whether or not they decide to pay attention to them. The brand's tag line needs to be clearly understood to avoid any confusion or misinterpretation. Max Sutherland, author of "Advertising and the Mind of the Consumer: What Works, What Doesn't, and Why", summarized that most brand names, being only one or two words, can't stand alone as compressed communication. As a result, the brand slogan plays a key role and the usage of this slogan should be disciplined. Discipline means keeping sight of the need for each message to reinforce previous messages and to reinforce the précis of the brand's DNA...it should not

change. If it does, then pretty soon the brand loses sight of its own essence. Buyers get confused and wonder if the brand truly stands for anything or if it keeps switching. Slogan presents the benefits that consumers will derive from their products.

2.2.5 Advertisement

Advertising develops attention-grabbing ads that reinforce the brand image and communicate brand value to the customer. The ads are placed in strategic locations that attract your target market.

2.2.6 Country of origin

Country of origin image refers to the image from where the brand originated or is manufactured. Consumers tend to recall the stored information about the brand and the country in question and then they relate the brand name with the country of origin to form a brand image and infer the product evaluation (Scott and Keith, 2005). The effect of country of origin on brand image is moderated by both brand and country reputation (Hui and Zhou, 2003). That is to say that the brand image of a well-known brand of a given product produced in a famous country for that product is likely to be affected differently from the brand image of a well-known brand produced in an unknown country and vice-versa.

2.2.7 Brand name

A great brand name is one of the most powerful forces in branding, marketing and advertising. It is at once the story about what makes firms different from their competitors and the emotional tug that connects with consumers (www.wikipedia.com 2009)

2.2.8 Public relation

Public relation, an important component of brand image, is cost effective and has proven to be a very effective means of generating more sales. Public relation is a powerful tool when it comes to establishing credibility in the mind of the customer (Ries, Al and Laura Ries 2002). People are sceptical about claims made in ads and marketing materials because they are subjective.

2.3 CONSUMER CHOICE

Consumer choice is an economic term describing how individuals make decisions on what to consume (Association for consumer research). Consumer choice can be explained in relation to the following models.

2.3.1 Cognitive- rationale models

This refers to the currently popular, information processing approach to consumer behaviour theory. Here, the consumer is viewed as a 'thinker' who goes about solving his consumption problems in a rational and analytical way. The models with this approach have been termed 'cognitive-rational' models because the process is viewed as being goal-directed, calculated, and predicated upon some knowledge of costs and benefits of alternative choice (Paul Peter and Tarpey 1975). Central to this paradigm are the concepts of perceived return and perceived risks.

2.3.2 Perceived Return

The concept of perceived return is inherent in the economists' assumption of consumers acting to maximize utility subject to resources constraints. To the rational consumers of the economists' model, utility flows chiefly through the functional benefits of the performance attributes of a product. The unrealistically restrictive nature of these assumptions was highlighted when Veblen (1899) presented his theory on the social aspects of consumption. The possibility of a third class

of benefits, in addition to the functional and social benefits, was postulated when in 1923, Copeland attempted to classify consumer goods on the basis of the rational and/or emotional motives (Horton 1984, p. 7-8). Today the consumer researchers acknowledge the role of functional, social and personal psychological benefits, although most models do not deal with that.

2.3.3 Perceived Risk

With the increasing complexity of the economic society, consumption decisions have to be made under greater certainty and there is an ever-increasing demand on people's skills as consumers. Therefore, before they can derive the benefits of consumption of goods, they successfully go through a process beset with risk. This risk relates not merely to the uncertainty of the desired outcomes, but the possibility of potentially negative outcomes (Bauer 1967). Further, the uncertainty may not necessarily relate only to the characteristics of the alternatives the consumer faces, but also to his or her buying goals themselves (Moller 1979). It is obvious that the perceived risk will affect the consumer strategy and that risk reduction has become a major objective of the choice process in the increasing complex consuming environment.

2.3.4 Bounded Rationality

Advanced in 1958 (March and Simon 1958), the concept argues that consumers act rationally when viewed realistically in the light of the constraints. The concept relates to the profitability of the task. Stigler (1961) argues that the consumer will weigh the cost of additional information (in terms of time, money, effort, and delayed consumption) against the value to him, of such information. In fact, McCall (1977) has gone further as to suggest that "convenience may replace price in economic theory".

2.4 HEDONIC MODEL

This paradigm views the consumer as a 'feeler', who consumes products for certain abstract, intangible, aesthetic, symbolic, and hedonic benefits, through a process very different from the one used in the cognitive-rational model. Copeland (1923) classified consumption motives into rational and emotional in recognition of this fact. Among the emotional motives mentioned by Copeland are "Expression of artistic taste," "Happy selection of gifts", Romantic instincts, "Pleasing sense of taste, and -Pleasure of recreation,

2.4.1 Hedonic Benefits

The hedonic benefits refer to the personal psychological relationship. These benefits range from hedonic (pleasure, fun) and aesthetic (beauty) to emotional (happiness, surprise, poignancy) and symbolic (self-identity, self-exploration, self-expression). Hedonic aspect relates to pleasure anticipated from the behaviours.

2.4.2 Hedonic Process

The hedonic paradigm postulates a spontaneous, emotional, simultaneous, and holistic consumer process which is an integral part of the consumption experience itself. Hirschman (1982) defines hedonic consumption as consumers' multisensory images, fantasies and emotional arousal.

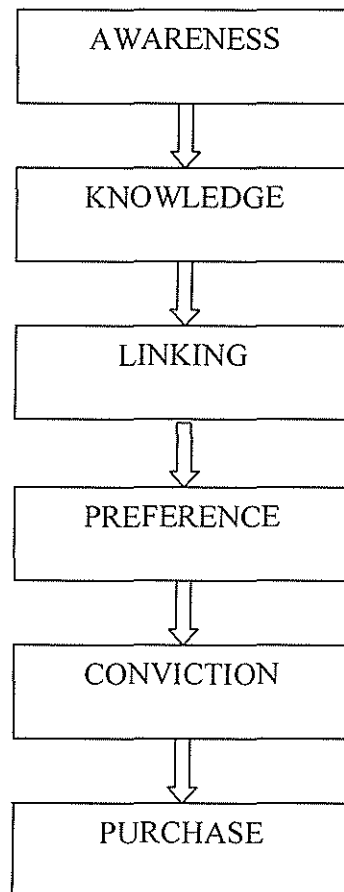
2.5 MULTISTAGE MODEL

A different aspect of the consumer choice issue relates to the series of mental stages that the consumer is thought to go through in arriving at a purchase decision. Two approaches are found in the literature with respect to this issue.

2.5.1 Hierarchy of Effects

Lavidge and Steiner (1961) proposed that consumers go through a series of stages as shown in Fig. 2.1. The six steps can be conveniently viewed as being made up of three basic psychological processes: cognitive, affective, and conative (Horton 1984, p. 57).

FIGURE 2.1



Source: Primary data

Ray (1973) developed this model further, and proposed that consumers use one of three decisions hierarchies based on the above model (differing only in sequence) depending on the buying situation.

2.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND IMAGE AND CONSUMER CHOICE.

Levy (1959) suggested that, “people buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (p. 118). The concept of brands as social signals is now well accepted with congruity between brand and user self-image regarded as a key motivational factor in consumer choice. Belk (1983), Sirgy (1982), Lannon and Cooper (1983), suggest that: Brands are used as a sort of language. Brands tell you a great deal about who you are, where you are in life, what you are and where you are going. Brand choices are as much a part of ourselves as the way we speak, the words we use, our dialect, dress, gestures and language. Brands are part of ourselves and we are part of our brands (p. 205).

According to Aaker (1991), there are at least nine brand associations. The associations convey either the concept, or the meaning of the product in terms of how it fulfills a customer’s need. In today’s highly competitive environment, a distinctive product image is most important. As products become more complex and the market place more crowded, consumers rely more on the products brand image than its actual attributes in making purchase decisions.

One of the brand associations that a firm can use in differentiating its product is:

2.6.1 Customer benefits

Customer benefits refer to the needs that are satisfied by a product. For example, cavity control by toothpaste is a customer benefit. Customer benefit may be rational, psychological (emotional) benefit, or self- expressive benefit. A rational benefit is closely linked to a product’s attribute and would be part of a rational decision process. A psychological benefit relates to what feelings are engendered when buying and or using the brand (Aaker, p.119).

The self-expressive benefit relates to the ability of a brand to help a consumer to communicate his or her self-image. Since consumers have multiple roles, the consumer has an associated self-

concept and a need to express that self-concept. The purchase and use of brands is one way to fulfill the need for self-expression (Aaker, 1991).

2.6.2 Product attributes

These refer to a product's characteristics. Attributes are associated with a product's rational benefit. For example, a Volvo car's attribute is durability. Similarly, a shampoo's attribute would be its safety to use every day. A marketer requires identifying an attribute that is important to a major segment and not already claimed by a competitor, e.g. an attribute that offers something extra, like features or services that offer something better. The identification of an unmet customer problem can sometimes lead to an attribute previously ignored by competitors (Aaker, p. 115). Indeed, unmet needs are strategically important because they can represent opportunities for firms that want to make major moves in the market.

2.6.3 Use / application

A marketer can associate a brand with a particular use or application. For example, a beer can be associated with good friends in a warm social setting. A study of the coffee market revealed that there were nine relevant use contexts for coffee (Glen, et al, 1984).

2.6.4 User / Customer

Another way of positioning a brand is to associate it with a type of user or customer. This involves identifying the brand with its target segment. For example, a brand can be associated with those who are interested in weight control as would be the case of a new drug.

2.6.5 Celebrity

This is the individual who endorses a brand. Linking a celebrity with a brand can transfer associations such as reliability, strength, performance, and so on. The extent to which the association can be linked to the celebrity depends on how credible the person is perceived by the

audience. Specifically, a source is more persuasive when the audience perceives him or her more highly credible than when perceived as being low in credibility (DeLozier, 1976). In other words, the person needs not be credible but it is how the consumers perceive him.

2.6.6 Lifestyle / Personality

The brand can be viewed as a person. Like a person, a brand can be perceived as being competent, trustworthy, active, or youthful (Aaker, 1996). A brand personality may help communicate a product's attribute and thus contribute to a functional benefit. Similarly, it can help create a self-expressive benefit that becomes a vehicle for the customer to express his or her own personality.

2.6.7 Competitors

A firm positions its brand using the organization's attributes such as innovation, a drive for quality, and a concern for the environment. A firm can position its brand with respect to a competitor. Sometimes it is not important how good customers think a firm is, but how they believe it is better than a given competitor. While this brand association can be accomplished by comparative advertising, it is not usually allowed in some countries (Cateora, 1996).

2.6.8 Country of Origin

One more strategic option that a marketer has is to associate a brand with a country. The country of origin has an effect on the market's perception of a product - either a positive or a negative perception. Cateora (1996) asserts that a company competing in global markets may manufacture products world-wide and when the customer becomes aware of the country of origin, there is the possibility that the place of manufacture will affect product/brand image (p.349). The influence may be to add credibility or to lower it.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented the methodology was used to attain the research objectives, beginning with the research design, target population, sample size and selection, measurement of variables, research procedures, reliability and validity of instruments, data collection tools ,data processing and analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used mainly quantitative analytical and descriptive aspects of research. The design was chosen in order to enable the researcher describe the attitudes and behaviour of respondents regarding their marketing operations in the field of product branding. It also showed the extent to which Unilever faces challenges in determining the contributions if brand image to consumer choice.

3.2 AREA OF STUDY

The study was carried out in Kampala, which is the capital city of Uganda. Kampala is considered to be the busiest town and the population is big. Selected heads of departments, including the marketing department, were used as a source of information to the study.

3.3 THE STUDY POPULATION

The target population was the management, marketing department and customers, who made a total of sixty (60) respondents. The heads of departments were used as informants on the challenges faced by the production sector. This is because as the heads of the departments, they experience the impacts of these challenges which critically need to be investigated.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Respondents

| Department | No. of Respondents |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Customers | 20 |
| Marketing Department | 23 |
| Management | 17 |
| Total | 60 |

Source: Primary Data

3.3 SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

The selection of respondents employed both probability and non-probability sampling methodology. Both purposive and convenient sampling methods were also be employed. A list of staff in the selected departments was used as a sampling frame .Then stratified sampling was used to ensure that both men and women participate equally. The picking of respondents ensured that the sample was sufficient enough. The survey received a total of seven (17) management members, thirteen (23) employees, and twenty (20) customers hence making a total of sixty (60) respondents. The expectation was that the sample justifiably would give equal reliable and representative information.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources included relevant documents and reports. The primary source included data collected from selected respondents and was gathered using the following instruments:

3.5.1 Instruments for data collection

The questionnaire

The semi structured questionnaire was the main instrument of the study that was administered to the staff of the selected departments. The questionnaire was designed to explore key variables of factors affecting the brand image. The researcher used this method because of its ability to solicit information from respondents within a short time as supported by Gupta (1999). Moreover, respondents were given time to consult records. Sensitive questions were truthfully answered (proctor 1997:40-45). Both open and closed ended questionnaires were administered. This is because closed ended questionnaires are easier to analyze since they are in an immediate usable form and again each item was followed by alternative answers. Open ended questions permit a great depth of response, when a respondent is allowed to give a personal response, usually reasons for the response given may be directly or indirectly included. They are simpler to formulate mainly because the researcher does not have to labour to come up with appropriate response categories

Structured interviews

Interviews were administered to the department heads at Unilever Uganda Limited, concerning challenges faced due to brand image. Structured questionnaires were designed in such a way that more specific and truthful answers related to challenges faced by firms were got. Interviews were used because according to Amin (2003), they give an opportunity to probe and obtain detailed

information on an issue. Interviews make it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study. Interviews are more flexible than questionnaires because the interviewer can adapt to the situation and get as much information as possible.

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS

Validity of the questionnaires

The validity of the questionnaire was established by expert judgment method proposed by Gay (1996). Two experts in the field of research in addition to my supervisor were contacted to judge the materials. The researcher adjusted the materials according to the experts' recommendation.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data was collected by use of questionnaire. Data was entered into the computer, edited, sorted and coded to minimize errors. It was then grouped into tables. The collected data was analyzed, interpreted and discussed

3.7 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The researcher obtained a letter from the Kampala International University to enable him visit the Unilever Uganda Limited office in Kampala to inform them formally about the forthcoming study. A list of employees was obtained from the human resource department and this was used to make up the sampling frame. Key informants were purposively selected during the administering of the questionnaire. The research instruments used were designed to capture qualitative data. The questionnaire was administered to thirty-three (33) respondents. The open ended question was expected to capture perception and explanation to the quantitative aspects. The interview schedule for twenty seven (27) key informants was expected to enable narration and free expression of informants and to facilitate deeper probing into the topic and other issues

not otherwise captured in the other techniques mentioned above. The technique also enabled the researcher to learn new information relevant to the study.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The anticipated costs involved during this research were quite high.

Another problem faced was the failure of some respondents to fill in their questionnaires as required.

The other problem that was encountered was limited access to relevant information especially from respondents, internet where passwords were required and public library was not sufficiently equipped with up to date literature relevant to the study variables.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the presentation, interpretation and discussion of findings to give answers to the research questions. The chapter first covers the background information about the respondents and also presents the findings on the research objectives. The responses used in this chapter were obtained from 40 respondents out of the desired population of 200. The findings were obtained from primary sources and were presented using frequency tables, percentages, pie charts and bar charts.

4.1 FINDINGS ON GENERAL INFORMATION

4.1.1 Gender respondents

Findings on the gender of the respondents were presented as below:

Table 1. 4.1: Showing the gender of respondents

| Sex of respondents | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Males | 35 | 58.3 |
| Females | 25 | 41.7 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Findings in the table shows that 58.3% of the respondents were males and 41.7% were females.

This means that the male respondents were more than the female respondents.

4.1.2 Age bracket

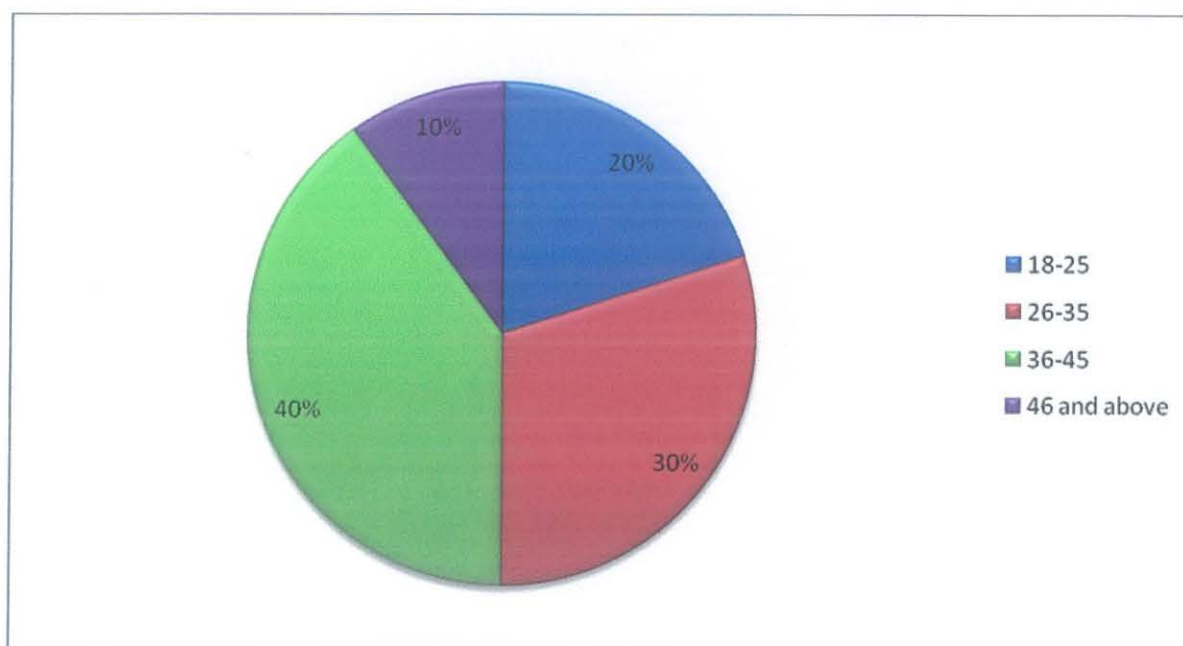
Table 2. 4.2: Showing the age bracket of respondents

| Age of respondents | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 18-25 | 12 | 20% |
| 26-35 | 18 | 30% |
| 36-45 | 24 | 40% |
| 46 and above | 6 | 10% |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Findings show that 20% of the respondents were in age bracket of 18-25 years, 30% in the age bracket of 26-35, 40% in the age bracket of 36-45 and 10% were above 46 years. This therefore indicates that most of the information was got from a mature portion of the population making the information more viable. This information can be presented in a pie chart as follows.

Figure 1 . 4.1: Showing the age bracket of respondents



Source: Primary data

4.1.3 Education level

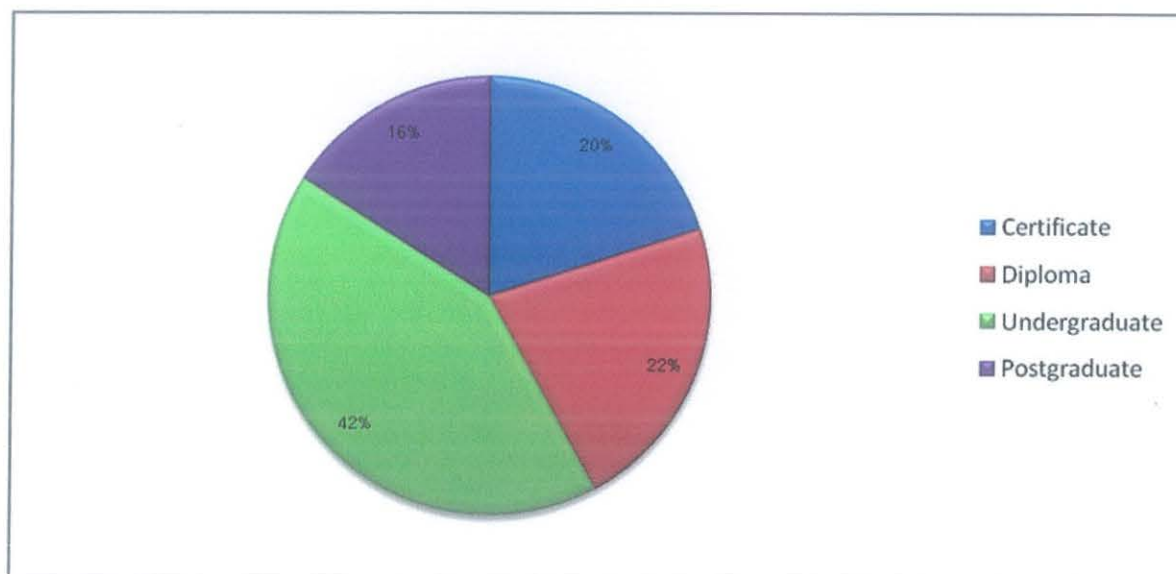
Table 3. 4.3: Showing the education level of respondents

| Level of education | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Certificate | 12 | 20 |
| Diploma | 13.2 | 22 |
| Undergraduate | 25.2 | 42 |
| Postgraduate | 9.6 | 16 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

The results above show that 42% of the respondents were at undergraduate level, 16% were at postgraduate level, 22% were at diploma level and 20% at certificate level. This means that the organization employed quality workforce based on the high percentage of undergraduates and postgraduate employees. This information can be presented in a pie chart as follows.

Figure 2. 4.2: Showing the level of education of respondents

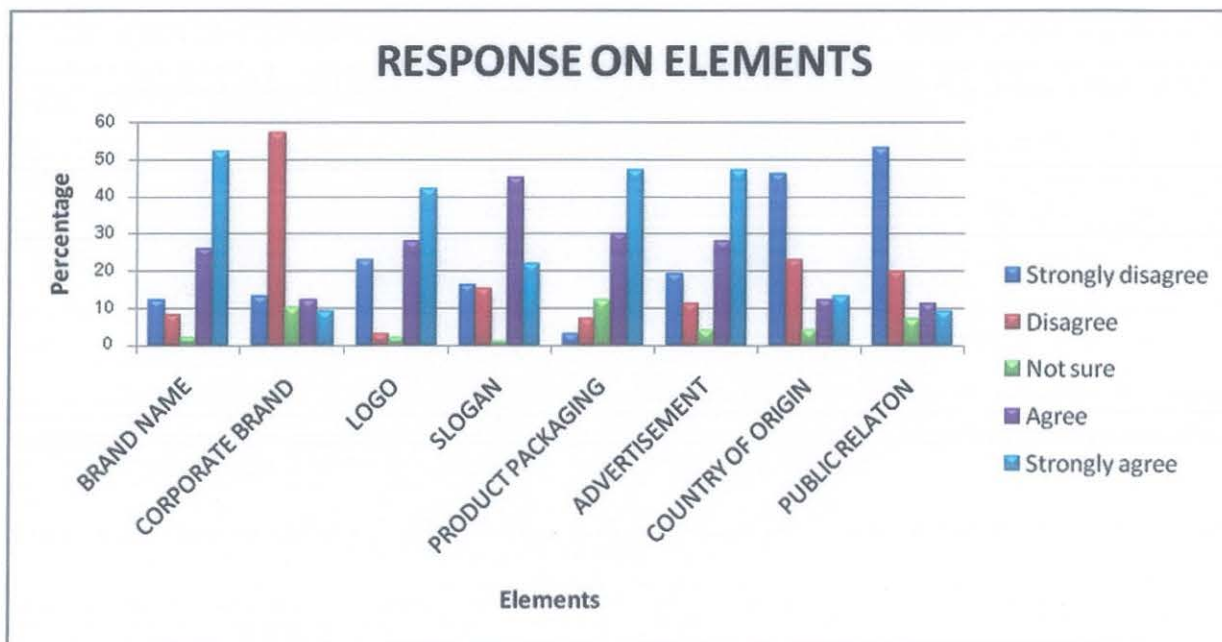


Source: Primary data

4.2 BRAND IMAGE

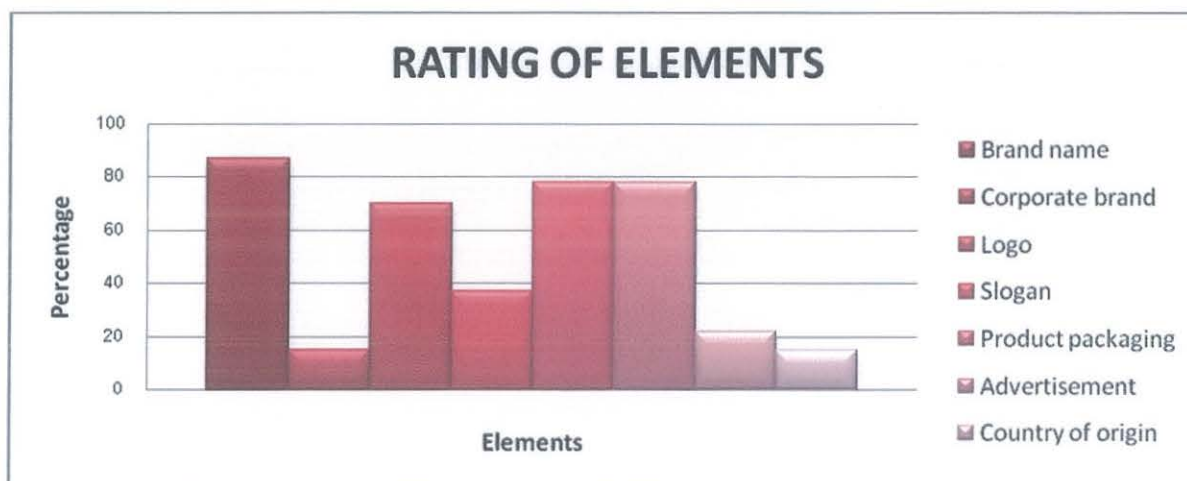
Findings on brand image from responses of the respondents were to show the effectiveness of the various elements of brand image in portraying brand image and this information can be presented in a bar chart as follows.

Figure 3 4.3: Showing responses on the strength of the various elements of brand image



Source: Primary data

Figure 4 4.4: Showing rating of elements



Source: Primary data

4.2.1 Discussion of findings on brand image

Results above showed that though brand image, corporate brand, logo, slogan, product packaging, advertisement, country of origin and public relation were elements of brand image, they all related differently in order of their ability to compliment the brand image of products.

Brand name rated highest with 87% and this was because a brand name identifies and differentiates a product from those of competitors and gives a product connection to their customers. This accounted for the fact that everyday, 150 million people choose Unilever brands to feed their families and to clean themselves and their homes. (www.unilever.com)

Product packaging was rated second with 78%. This meant that packaging was an important element of brand image as it supports the brand by conveying the appropriate message to the appropriate target audience to illicit cognition of the brand.

Advertisement was also rated second with 78% just like product packaging. Respondents agreed that advertisements created awareness and influenced consumer choice by creating attention grabbing advertisements that reinforced the brand image.

The logo and slogan rated third and fifth respectively with 70% and 37% respectively. Respondents agreed that the two elements reinforced brand image by creating brand recognition and conveying the brand promise.

Corporate brand, country of origin and public relation rated the least with 15%, 22% and 15% respectively. Respondents agreed that despite the fact that the three are elements of brand image, their value had not been put into practice.

4.3 CONSUMER CHOICE

Findings on what consumer choice is based on were considered with the various questions raised and responses noted were as below.

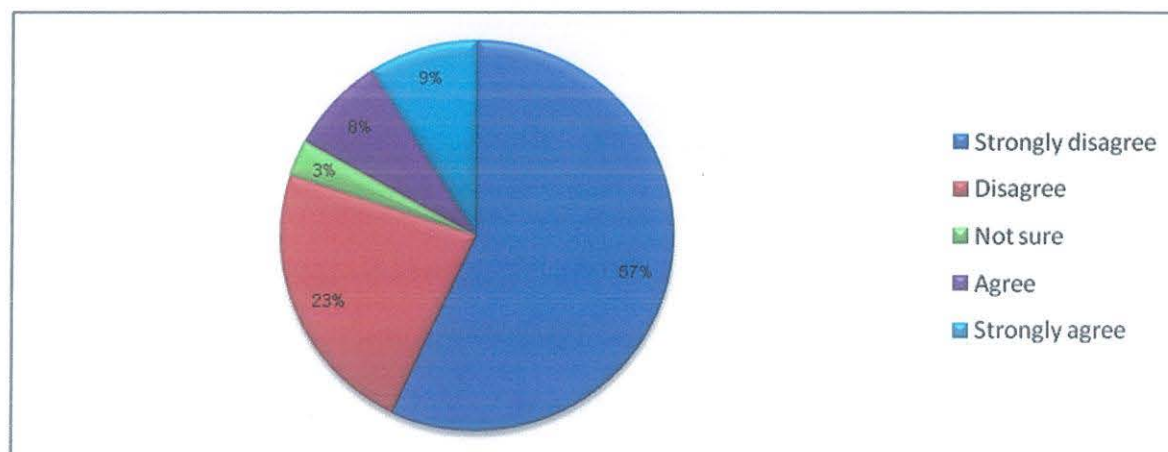
Table 4 4.4: Responses on consumer choice based on expected outcome of their decision

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 34.2 | 57 |
| Disagree | 13.8 | 23 |
| Not sure | 1.8 | 3 |
| Agree | 4.8 | 8 |
| Strongly agree | 5.4 | 9 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 57% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 23% disagreed, 3% were not sure, 8% agreed and 9% strongly agreed. This meant that the biggest percentage agreed that consumers were typically not completely rational or consistent and had difficulty in translating their choices into probabilities. This can be illustrated in a pie chart as follows.

Figure 5 4.5: Showing responses on consumer choice based on expected outcome of their decision



Source: Primary data

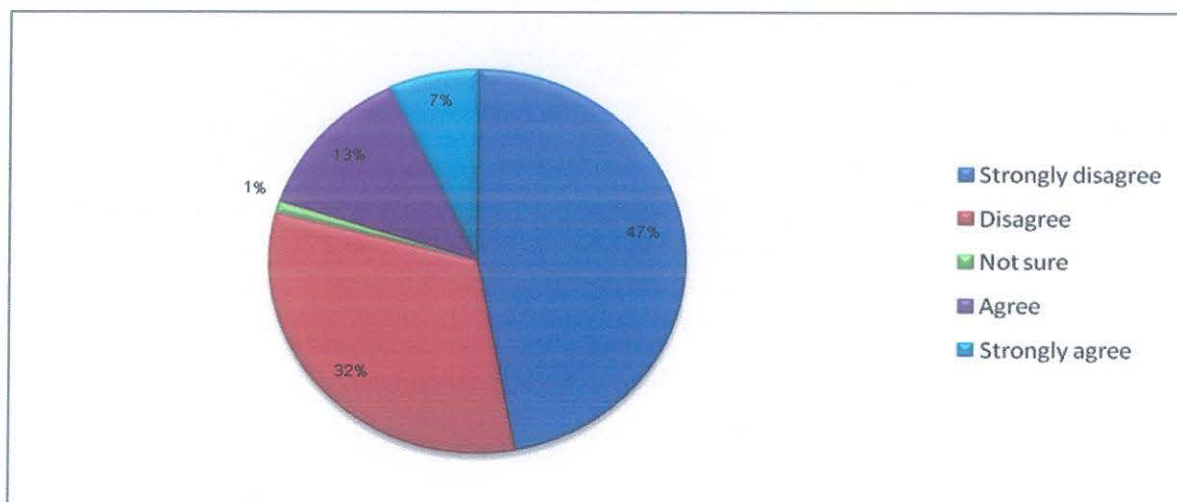
Table 5 4.5: Responses on consumer knowing what they want and making choices based on their wants

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 28.2 | 47 |
| Disagree | 19.2 | 32 |
| Not sure | 0.6 | 1 |
| Agree | 7.8 | 13 |
| Strongly agree | 4.2 | 7 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 47% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 32% disagreed, 1% was not sure, 13% agreed and 7% strongly agreed. This meant that the biggest percentage disagreed on the fact that consumers were aware of their wants and made choices basing on their wants. This was because the satisfying theory was not conclusive and still left room for improvement on prediction. This can be illustrated in a pie chart as follows.

Figure 6 Figure 4.6: Responses on consumer knowing what they want and making choices based on their wants



Source: Primary data

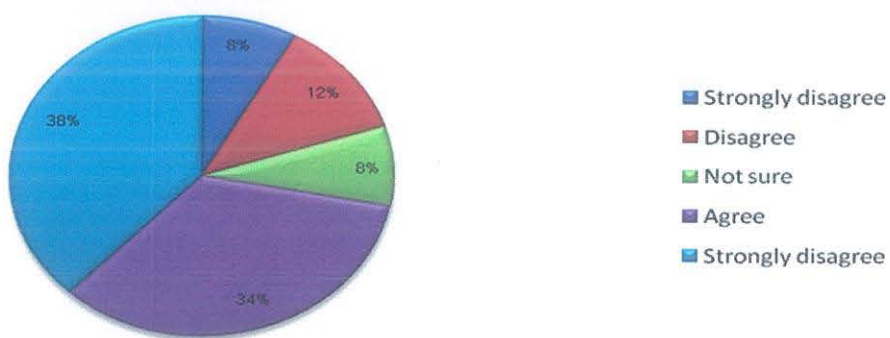
Table 6. 4.7: Responses on consumers making choices based on endowment and value of products

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 4.8 | 8 |
| Disagree | 7.2 | 12 |
| Not sure | 4.8 | 8 |
| Agree | 20.4 | 34 |
| Strongly agree | 22.8 | 38 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 8% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, 8% were not sure, 34% agreed and 38% strongly agreed. This meant that the biggest percentage agreed that value and endowment were the reference points to which consumers made their choices. This was because the prospect theory encompassed the best aspect of other theories while solving the problems that each presented to give a true presentation as to what consumer choice was based on. This can be presented in a graph as follows.

Figure 7 4.7: Showing responses on consumers making choices based on endowments and value of products



Source: Primary data

4.4 BRAND IMAGE AND CONSUMER CHOICE

Findings on the relationship between brand image and consumer choice were to show the response to the questions from various respondents and this is indicated as below.

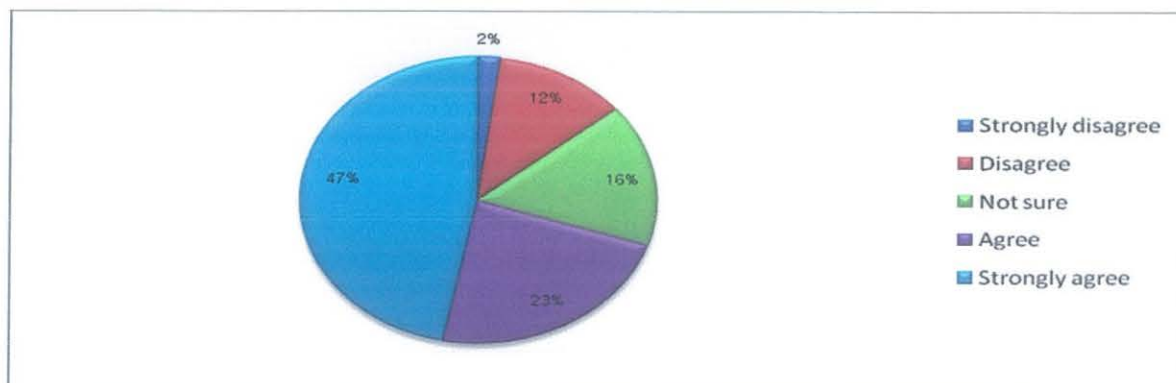
Table 7 4.7: Responses on whether consumers buy products not only for what they can do but also for what they mean

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1.2 | 2 |
| Disagree | 7.2 | 12 |
| Not sure | 9.6 | 16 |
| Agree | 13.8 | 23 |
| Strongly agree | 28.2 | 47 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, 16% were not sure, 23% agreed and 47% strongly agreed. This meant that consumers attached meaning to various brands giving rise to brand associations that influenced their choice. This can be illustrated in a pie chart as follows.

Figure 8 Figure 4.8: Showing responses on whether consumers buy products not only for what they can do but also for what they mean



Source: Primary data

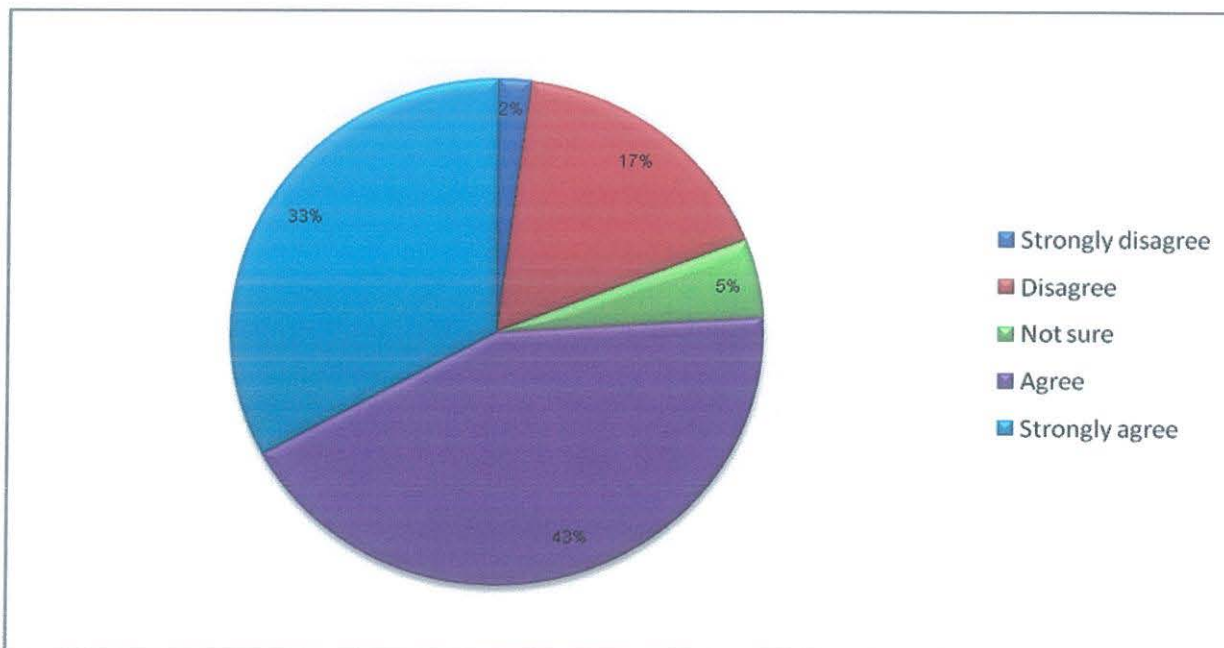
Table 8 4.8: Responses on whether a rational benefit of the product is part of consumer decision process

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 1.2 | 2 |
| Disagree | 10.2 | 17 |
| Not sure | 3 | 5 |
| Agree | 25.8 | 43 |
| Strongly agree | 19.8 | 33 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: primary data

Results above showed that 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 17% disagreed, 5% were not sure, 43% disagreed and 33% strongly agreed. This implies that some consumers chose products because of what they expected to gain from such products. This can be illustrated in the following pie chart.

Figure 9 4.9: Showing responses on whether a rational benefit of the product is part of consumer decision process



Source: Primary data

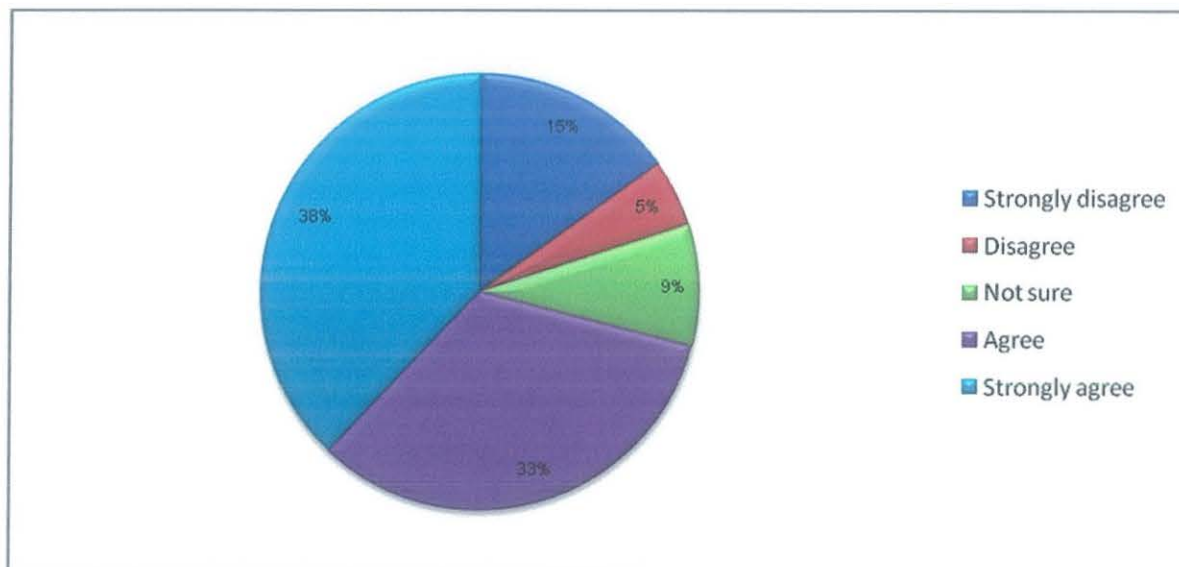
Table 9 4.9: Responses on whether product attributes generated by brand image influence consumer choice

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 9 | 15 |
| Disagree | 3 | 5 |
| Not sure | 5.4 | 9 |
| Agree | 19.8 | 33 |
| Strongly agree | 22.8 | 38 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 15% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 5% disagreed, 9% were not sure, 33% agree and 38%strongly agreed. The majority of the respondents agreed that an attribute that offered something extra could influence consumer choice. This can be illustrated in the following pie chart.

Figure 10 4.10: Showing Responses on whether product attributes generated by brand image influence consumer choice



Source: Primary data

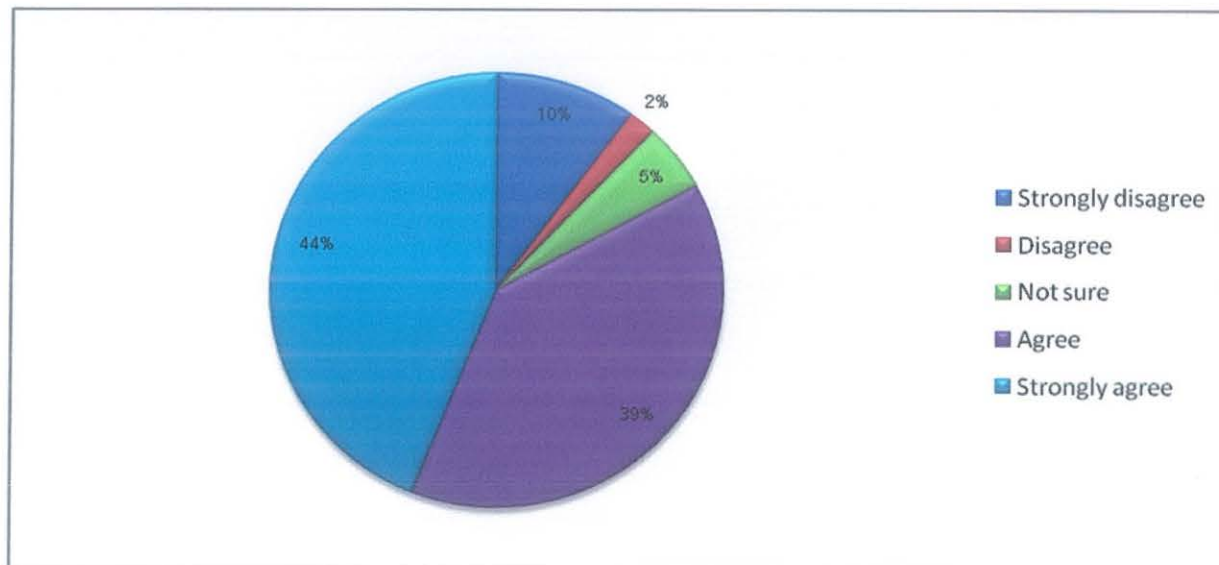
Table 10 4.10: Responses on whether a consumer can associate a brand with a particular use

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 6 | 10 |
| Disagree | 1.2 | 2 |
| Not sure | 3 | 5 |
| Agree | 23.4 | 39 |
| Strongly agree | 26.4 | 44 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above show that 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 2% disagreed, 5% were not sure, 39% agreed and 44% strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents agreed that a brand could be associated with a particular user as a means of segmenting the market to focus on a given target. This can be illustrated in the following pie chart.

Figure 11 4.11: Showing responses on whether a consumer can associate a brand with a particular use



Source: primary data

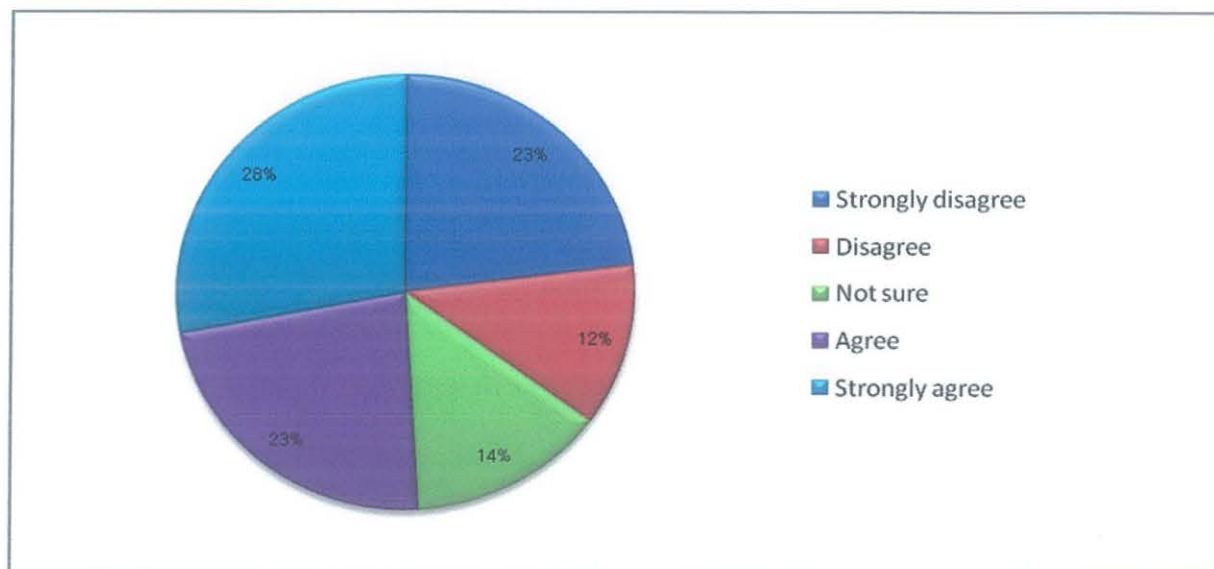
Table 11 4.11: Responses on whether a celebrity who endorses a brand can transfer associations

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 13.8 | 23 |
| Disagree | 7.2 | 12 |
| Not sure | 8.4 | 14 |
| Agree | 13.8 | 23 |
| Strongly agree | 16.8 | 28 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 23% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, 14% were not sure, 23% agreed and 28% strongly agreed. Most of the respondents agreed that linking a product with a celebrity would transfer associations like reliability and the extent would depend on how credible the person was perceived by the consumers. This can be illustrated in the following pie chart.

Figure 12 4.12: Showing responses on whether a celebrity who endorses a brand can transfer associations



Source: Primary data

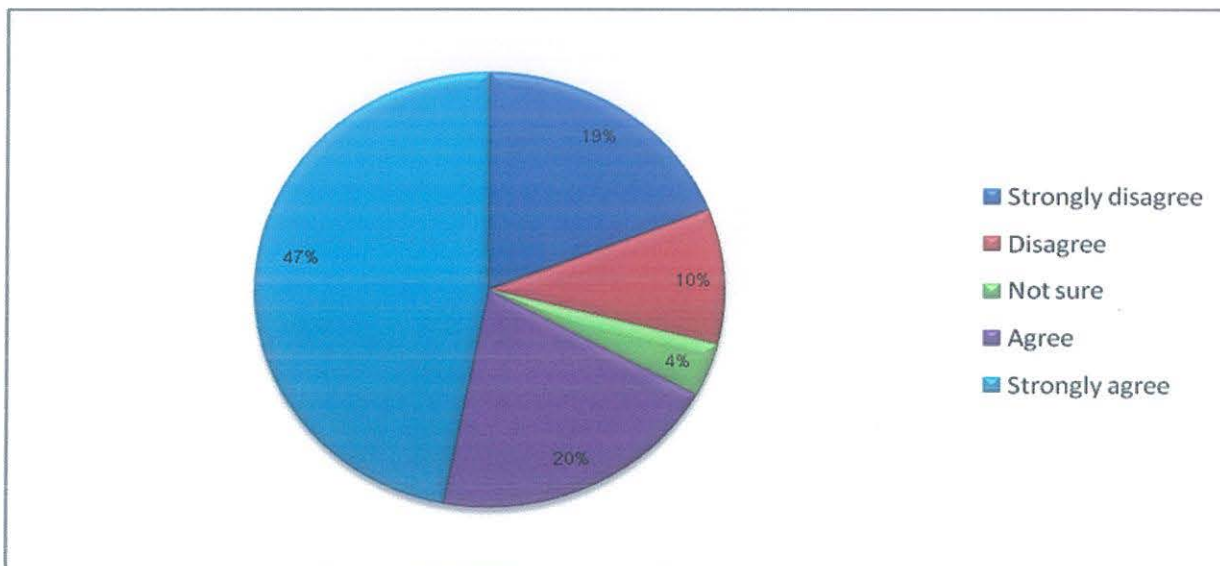
Table 12 4.12: Response on whether positioning a brand in relation to competitors is important

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagreed | 11.4 | 19 |
| Disagreed | 6 | 10 |
| Not sure | 2.4 | 4 |
| Agreed | 12 | 20 |
| Strongly agreed | 28.2 | 47 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 19% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 10% disagreed, 4% were not sure, 20% agreed and 47% strongly agreed. This showed that it was not important how good consumers thought of a firm was but how they believed it was better than a given competitor. This can be illustrated in the following pie chart.

Figure 13 4.13: Showing response on whether positioning a brand in relation to competitors is important



Source: Primary data

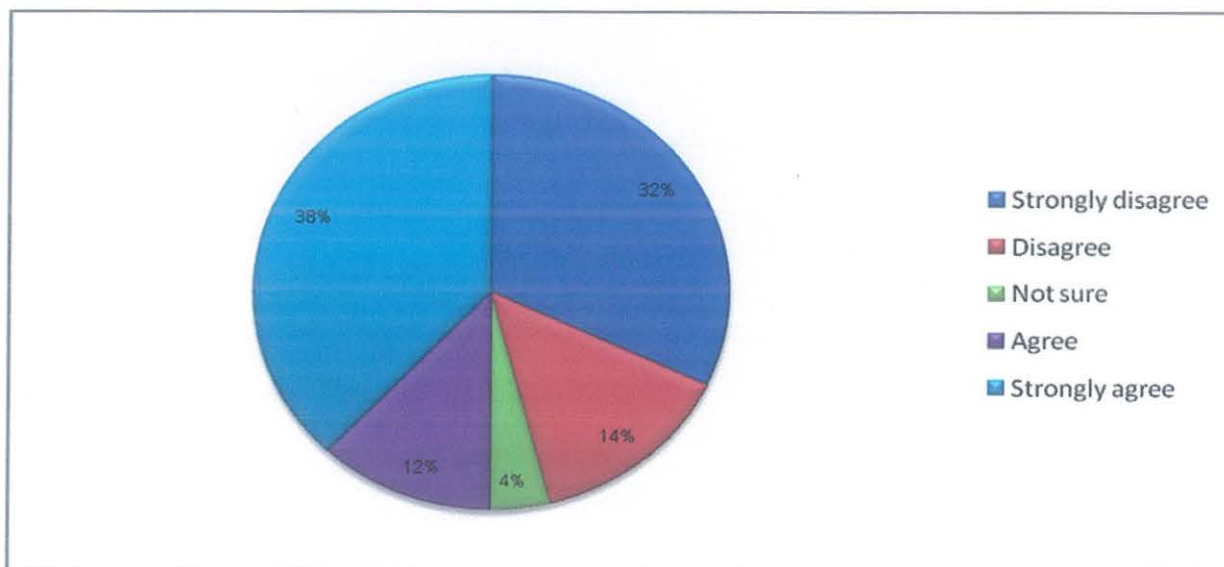
Table 13 4.13: Response on whether country of origin has an effect on perception of a product

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly disagree | 19.2 | 32 |
| Disagree | 8.4 | 14 |
| Not sure | 2.4 | 4 |
| Agree | 7.2 | 12 |
| Strongly agree | 22.8 | 38 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Primary data

Results above showed that 32% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 14% disagreed, 4% were not sure, 12% agreed and 38% strongly agreed. Majority of the respondents agreed that country of origin had an effect on the consumer perception. This was because of the reason that when consumers become aware of the country of origin there was a possibility that the place of manufacture would affect brand image. This can be illustrated in the following pie chart.

Figure 14 4.14: Showing response on whether country of origin has an effect on perception of a product



Source: Primary data

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of the background of the objectives, methodology and findings. The chapter also presents the conclusions that are derived from the findings and recommendations on the impact of brand image on consumer choice.

5.1 SUMMARY

In this section, the researcher discusses the three main objectives of the study in the summary.

5.1.1 To assess the elements of brand image in relation to Unilever Uganda products

The elements of brand image that were assessed by the researcher included the corporate brand, product packaging, the brand name, slogan, logo, advertising, country of origin and public relation. The elements were discovered to rate differently in relation to how each contributed to the building of brand image. Country of origin effect and public relation rated the least due to their under utilization in enhancing brand image in the organization.

5.1.2 To examine the theories of consumer choice relating to Unilever Uganda products

The theories of consumer choice that were examined included the *utility theory*, *satisfying theory* and *prospects theory*. From the findings, consumer choice of Unilever Uganda products was found to be based on the *prospect theory* that evaluated choice in terms of endowment and value provided by a product.

5.1.3 To examine the relationship between brand image and consumer choice relating to Unilever Uganda

In examining the relationship between brand image and consumer choice, the research was focused on the brand associations that included, customer benefit, product attributes, use of product, customer celebrity, personality, competitors and country of origin. Findings revealed that associations created aspects to which consumers could relate to in order to influence their choice of products.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the measurement and management of brand image have become top priority marketing issues in recent years, as evidenced by the growing literature on the subject. Firms need empirical evidence of the consequences of brand image. The present study demonstrated that the elements of brand image contributed to brand image building though at different rates.

Investing in brand image sits at the heart of marketing strategies but the difficulty lies in how it affects attitudes and behavior of consumers to influence choice. The value of brand image is very well recognized. Individual consumers appreciate the brand and when it comes to the valuation of what to consume, brand image plays an important role in increasing awareness and overall sales.

Brand associations are created by both the marketer and the consumers of the products, the brand marketer create attributes through brand design, positioning and promotions. Consumer opinion on brand association depends on the matter of “conversation” they have with the promoter of the brand, the general market conditions and history of the brand plus the communications they receive from competing brands.

5.3 Managerial and Policy recommendations

Marketing managers should develop a better understanding of the dynamics within the market and especially the way in which the elements attached to brand image are manipulated and moulded by the market. While they cannot control all the influences within the market, they should seek to influence those influences.

Brand managers should attempt to get a measure of brand image, especially given its importance to the firm. They should break down brand image into its respective elements like brand name and slogan in relation to their product and analyze the relative contribution of each element in defining its position in the market more effectively.

Marketers should consider the non-functional elements of brand image like public relation and country of origin effect to ensure that all elements are effectively used to add value to the brand image in order to effectively influence consumer choice.

Brand image should be reviewed from an economic point of view to ensure that the investment of a firm's scarce resources in enhancing brand image should translate into consumer preferences and profitability.

5.4 Area of further research

Future studies should examine more closely the elements of brand image, particularly the role that the elements play in adding value to the brand image and in helping great brands live forever.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE TIME FRAME OF THE STUDY

| ACTIVITY | PERIOD |
|--|--|
| Visit Unilever Uganda Head Office (Kampala town) | Dec 6 th – Dec 23 rd 2009. |
| Kampala International University Library | Nov 8 th –Nov 15 th 2009. |
| Collecting Data | 1 Month |
| Writing proposal | 3 Months |
| Submitting proposal | April 2 nd 2009. |

APPENDIX B

ACTUAL RESEARCH BUDGET

| ACTIVITY | ITEM | COST (UGX) | TOTAL COST (UGX) |
|--|-----------------------|------------|------------------|
| 1. Visiting Unilever Uganda offices | Transport for 17 days | 200 x 17 | 3400 |
| 2. Library research | Research for 7 days | 200 x 7 | 1400 |
| Sub-total (UGX) | | | 4800 |
| 1. Stationary | i) Printing services | 30 x 50 | 1500 |
| | ii) 2 dozens of pens | 200 x 2 | 400 |
| | iii) Researcher's bag | 2000 x 1 | 2000 |
| | iv) 2 boxes of files | 250 x 2 | 500 |
| Sub-total (UGX) | | | 4400 |
| Total (UGX) | | | 9200 |

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEADS OF UNILEVER UGANDA

1. To what extent does brand image affect consumer choice?
2. What measures does Unilever Uganda enforce in maintaining high sales in regard to brand image?
3. To what extent does Unilever Uganda invest its surplus funds on brand image?
4. Do you feel that there are any solutions that can help improve brand image in Unilever Uganda?
5. What are the factors affecting brand image and profitability in Unilever Uganda?
 - a) Technology b) Effective management c) Globalization
 - d) Deregulation e) Marketing mix
6. How would you rate the contribution of the above factors to Unilever Uganda brand image and profitability?
 - a) Poor b) Fair c) Medium d) Good e) Excellent
7. What are the management strategies put in place for improving brand image in Unilever Uganda?

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is MUBICHI NGESU DENNIS, a student of Kampala International University. I'm conducting research on the impact of brand image on consumer choice, a case study of Unilever Uganda. The purpose of this study is to fulfil my academic requirements. Therefore I kindly request you to answer for me the following questions:

Note: Your responses will be treated with the highest degree of confidentiality.

Background information:

Please tick in the most appropriate box

1. Age

- a) 18-25 ☐
c) 36-45 ☐

- b) 26-35 ☐
d) 46 and above ☐

2. Sex

- a) Male ☐
b) Female ☐

3. Marital status

- a) Married ☐
b) Single ☐

4. Level of education qualification

- a) Primary level ☐
b) Professional certificate ☐

- c) Secondary level ☐
d) Diploma ☐

5. Departments

- a) Education ☐
b) Health ☐

- c) Administration ☐
d) Finance ☐

OTHER QUESTIONS

1. How do you find the Brand image of Unilever Uganda?

- a) Clear ☐
- b) Not clear ☐
- c) None ☐
- d) Others (specify).....

2. How long does it take a consumer to understand the Unilever Uganda brand image?

- a) Instant
- b) A day ☐
- c) A week ☐
- d) A month ☐
- e) None ☐
- f) Others (specify).....

3. How is brand image done in Unilever Uganda?

- a) Packaging ☐
- b) Branding ☐
- c) Others (specify).....

4. Does the consumer always understand the brand image?

- a) Yes ☐
- b) No ☐
- c) Others (specify).....