

**MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF BRANDING IN SUSTAINING
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
(A CASE STUDY OF DANGOTE CEMENT, PLC)**

BY

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work has been completed, read through and approved as meeting the requirement of the Department of Business Administration and Management, Institute of Finance and Management Studies, Kwara State Polytechnic in Partial fulfillment for the Award of (ND) National Diploma in Business Administration and Management.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to almighty God for giving me the grace to accomplish this work.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In performing this research work, the help of God and some respected people who deserve my greatest gratitude were taken.

I would like to show my deepest gratitude to my Supervisor; MR. IMAM R. A. and other lecturers in the Department for sharing their pearls of wisdom with me during the course of this research work.

In the same vein I want to thank my colleagues who provided insight and expertise knowledge that greatly assisted the research.

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ABSTRACT

This study has examined the effectiveness of branding in sustaining competitive advantage in the context of Dangote Cement, Plc. In the course of the study, the researcher developed a structured questionnaire to amass information from the respondents so as to find out how branding has been employed to sustain competitive advantage. However, it was discovered that more female are employed in the marketing department to be able to converse with their customers, particularly on the importance of their product design, and to strengthen the relationship with the customers. Also, majority of the respondents were within the working age 24-29 years and 30-35 years with 50.0% and 23.9% respectively.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Competition in today's business environment is becoming increasingly intense. While a company may be a market leader today, the status quo might change overnight. Many researchers and business people might ask themselves a simple question: —What is the secret of a successful company? For years researchers from all over the world spend their efforts trying to find out why some companies are successful on a market and why others fail. By analyzing successful and failed companies they try to find out what the commonalities of the leaders are and what strategies they follow. There is a considerable amount of literature on strategic management, which gives useful advices for business people about how to be successful in a market. Different authors agree that reason of successful performance in a market for many companies is a possession of a Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA). Having competitive advantage alone is not sufficient.

The key determinant for prolonged growth is sustainability – the ability to maintain a competitive advantage. Time is also of the essence. While others are merely finding their orientation to stay abreast with the latest innovations, the winning company is already moving up to the next level. Threats of competition arise from a multitude of sources, defying geography, sectors, and converging technologies among others. Organizations can seek consolation in the fact that most competitors are also struggling to survive in this turbulent business environment. Future Brand Asia Pacific, a New York-based brand consulting company, suggests that the ability to differentiate a company's proposition is crucial in ensuring a sustainable competitive advantage. Datuk Jackson Tan, Managing Director of Silver Bird Group Berhad (one of Malaysia's most successful home grown brands), had this to say: *“In this global marketplace, the battle for competitive advantage is unending. We need to constantly ask ourselves, how we can attain and sustain that advantage in such a competitive environment?”*

Effective corporate branding is, undoubtedly, the main thrust behind this ability. Brands, by their very nature, define differentiation in a relevant and credible manner. In the corporate world this is what separates brands like Sony, Coca Cola, and Harley Davidson from the pack.

Branding is important in marketing a product. Without branding a product will not sell very well in the market. Branding is needed to position a product in the market. Good position in the market will determine profits for manufacturer. Manufacturer will then get the bigger size

of the market shares. Brand is the manufacturers guaranteed or promised to consistently deliver a specific set of features of a product or services. The best brand conveyed a warranty of quality (Kotler, et. al, 2002). Besides functioning as a symbol of quality, a brand also carries different meaning. One of the meanings is a brand give the product or services an image. Mercedes car for example has portrayed as an exclusive image for the owner. Before now, Mercedes carries the symbol of wealth, success; prestige and satisfaction especially in Nigerian culture. Brand also gives the manufacturer a positive image.

This image helps the company to gain more profits by selling other brands produced by the same manufacturer or company and also sustain competitive advantage. A branded product or services is a symbol of quality, quality helps to create the feeling of trust on the customer. Trust proves that the products or services are reliable. The feeling of trust and reliability among customer towards the products and services lead to brand loyalty and hence competitive advantage. Declining brands tend to lose buyers while the brands' loyalty and purchase rates stay stable among remaining buyers. Also brand equity creates a relationship and a strong bond that grows over time.

It is often so strong that it compensates for performance flaws, such as an out-of-stock situation, poor customer service, a product that falls apart, inconvenient store hours, or a higher-than-average-price. In the end, you want to deliver good quality and good value, innovation, relevant differentiation, convenience, and accessibility with your brand. However, we must never forget that building brand equity is like building a close friendship. It requires a consistent relationship over time, trust, and an emotional connection.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Brand competitiveness has been studied as a strategic aspect of a brand's marketing and operational activities and is explained as a condition under which a brand successfully satisfies its customers through brand value, and positions itself competitively in a marketplace (Webster, 1992; Bharadwaj et al., 1993; Winzar et al. 2018). Scholarly studies such as Tong and Wang (2011) describe brand competitiveness as the ability of the brand to compete in a market using its uniqueness from competing brands based on aspects such as internal features, external image and regional characteristics.

Similarly, Biaowen (2014) explains brand competitiveness as the integration of market share and value creation capability that help the company to gain recognition and build its overall image quality. As discussed by Bharadwaj et al. (1993), the purpose of building brand competitiveness is to enhance the overall performance of the business, based on the distinctive marketing skills and resource management tools used by the brand. Both aspects

of business, i.e. marketing and operations, when strategically managed together by brand managers, can provide a competitive edge to the brand (Hensel, 1990).

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is aim to assess the effectiveness of branding as a major factor in sustaining competitive advantage. Specifically, it is aimed:

- i. To examine the importance of branding in sustaining competitive advantage.
- ii. To examine the various branding strategies that an organization can use to sustain competitive advantage.
- iii. To determine how do brand and design elements gain attention and instill favorable attitudes from the consumers.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purpose of this research work, the following questions were asked:

- i. What are the importance of branding in sustaining competitive advantage?
- ii. What are the various branding strategies that an organization can use to sustain competitive advantage?
- iii. To what extent do brand and design elements gain attention and instill favorable attitudes from the consumers?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

According to Leedy & Ormord (2010), a hypothesis is a preliminary and as-yet-untested theory that may be advanced as a possible answer to or explanation of a particular problem. The research is then instituted to further test the hypothesis. For this research work, the following hypotheses were be tested:

Hypothesis I

H₀: Branding does not have significant impact in sustaining competitive advantage.

Hypothesis II

H₀: Branding strategies is not a necessary tool in determining competitive advantage.

Hypothesis III

H₀: Brand and design elements do not have significant impact in gaining attention and instilling favorable attitudes from the consumers.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Today the manufacturing industry is most important and extensive active industries in the global economy. Increasing growth of competition and a variety of brands, on the final consumers in this sector has a significant impact. The brand name and creation of brand in many organizations is considered the most important organizational capital.

The real value of a company is formed in the minds of potential buyers and this reveals important of intangible assets role in the effectiveness of organizational activity. Major goals of managers and marketers is strategic brand management and brand building that remain for decades and could be leverage in different classes of goods and markets. According to researcher's views, having brand that can form enduring relationships with customers is of significant and consumers are winning card in today's competitive complex markets. Trusted their brands which has attracted customer satisfaction, can be somewhat competitive strength and stability in the market.

In view of the above explanation, this study will therefore make it possible for organizations to develop effective branding strategies and survive among their competitors. Specifically, the outcome of this project will:

1. Provide empirical information on the extent to which branding is effective in sustaining competitive advantage in the global market.
2. Provide recommendations to Dangote Flour Mills, Plc and other related corporate organizations on the importance of branding in sustaining competitive advantage.

In broad sense, the outcome of this project will enable various individual's business organizations, banking industry, public corporation and other manufacturing companies to have a real picture and importance of branding for organization survival in the global market.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is focusing on finding out the effectiveness of branding in sustaining competitive advantage, which is required to establish the concept of branding and explore the branding strategies used by organizations. In pursuance of the objective of the study, attention were focused on the approaches in which branding is being incorporated among organizations, using Dangote Cement, Plc as a case study.

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The major limitations to this research work were: the timeframe within which the research work is to be carried out is short, financial constraint, and inability of the case study company to give adequate data about the company.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPT OF BRAND AND BRANDING

Brands are often thought of as a single message, logo, or slogan; however a brand can be much more. Dorothy (2010) asserted that —brand encompasses these tangible attributes, along with consumer interactions, and public relations. In short, a brand is the sum totals of every experience people, consumers, clients, and target populations have with a company/organization, their products and services.

As argued by Kotler and Gertner, the American Marketing Association defined brand as a —*name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition*” (Kotler & Gertner as cited in Morgan & Pritchard 2004). This definition has elements such as name, sign and symbol which distinguished one brand from another but no emotional attachment of the brand is mentioned because a brand is more than just a logo or symbol.

Keller (2003) also stressed that —*a brand is therefore a product, but one that adds other dimensions; that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need. These differences may be rational and tangible —related to product performance of the brand—or more symbolic, emotional, and intangible-related to what the brand represents* “. The meaning is that a branded product has attributes and elements that link a product to its consumers. What they referred as —tangible element here is infrastructure, accommodation and other attractions while the —intangible elements are experiences and feelings that attract consumers to buy the product. These attributes as evaluated are unique elements that categorized a brand (Kapferer (2009).

2.3 TYPES OF BRANDING

2.3.1 Individual Branding

This is also called individual product branding or multi-branding. It is the marketing strategy of giving each product in a portfolio its own unique brand name. This contrasts with family branding, corporate branding, and umbrella branding in which the products in a product line are given a single overarching brand name. The advantage of individual branding is that each product has an image and identity that is unique. This facilitates the positioning of each product, by allowing a firm to position its brands differently. Examples of individual product branding include Procter & Gamble, which markets multiple brands such as Pampers, and Unilever, which markets individual brands such as Dove.

2.3.2 Umbrella Branding

An umbrella brand (or family brand) is where a group of products possess the same brand name. Different products having different images are put together under one major brand or parent brand and are marketed by the firm. Umbrella branding does not mean that the whole product portfolio of a firm will fall under one brand name as company can go for different approaches of branding for different product lines. Some examples are Johnson & Johnson baby care products and Tata tea, automobiles and salt.

Advantages

1. Promotion is very cheap and easy for products falling under umbrella branding. This strategy is generally implemented by firms coming up with a new product.
2. For all the different products and services, advertising, promotion and Integrated Marketing Communications tools can be combined.
3. Also, launching of a new product under umbrella gains recognition easily as it is introduced in the market which has already accepted the brand image.

Disadvantages

1. If any one product under umbrella branding does not do well in the market then it can affect the overall brand.
2. Different brands in umbrella branding will have different qualities which will vary and thus it can be an obstacle for smooth functioning of brand as well as firm.
3. Also, if there is negative publicity for any product or even new product it can affect the other brands under umbrella branding.

2.3.3 Corporate Branding

This is the practice of using a company's name as a product brand name. It is an attempt to use corporate brand equity to create product brand recognition. It is a type of family branding or umbrella brand. Dangote, for example, includes the word "Dangote" in the name of many of its products; other examples include IBM and Heinz. This strategy contrasts with individual product branding, where each product has a unique brand name and the corporate name is not promoted to the consumer. Corporate branding can result in significant economies of scope since one advertising campaign can be used for several products. It also facilitates new product acceptance because potential buyers are already familiar with the name. However, this strategy may hinder the creation of distinct brand images or identities for different products: an overarching corporate brand reduces the ability to position a brand with an individual identity, and may conceal different products' unique characteristics.

Corporate branding is not limited to a specific mark or name. Branding can incorporate multiple touch-points. These touch-points include; logo, customer service, treatment and training of employees, packaging, advertising, stationery, and quality of products and services. Any means by which the general public comes into contact with a specific brand constitutes a touch-point that can affect perceptions of the corporate brand.

It has been argued that successful corporate branding often stems from a strong coherence between what the company's top management seek to accomplish (their strategic vision), what the company's employees know and believe (lodged in its organizational culture), and how its external stakeholders perceived the company (their image of it). Misalignments between these three factors may indicate an underperforming corporate brand. This type of corporate brand analysis has been labeled the Vision-Culture-Image (VCI) Alignment Model. Changes in stakeholder expectations are causing an increasing number of corporations to integrate marketing, communications and corporate social responsibility into corporate branding.

2.3.4 Ingredient Branding

This describes a concept in marketing, which involves creating a brand for an ingredient or component of a product. With this kind of product policy the idea is to project the high quality and performance of the ingredient perceived by the customer onto the end product, thereby taking advantage of the customer's brand awareness. Some well-known examples for Ingredient Branding are:

- i. Intel Inside for processors and chipsets in computers of various producers;
- ii. NutraSweet and Canderel, a brand name for the artificial sweetener Aspartame in the food industry (Coca-Cola light) Teflon as a coating for pots and pans and Gore
- iii. Tex for sportswear (both products are brand names for polytetrafluoroethylene);
- iv. Makrolon, a plastic produced by Bayer
- v. Material Science Bitrex, a bitter substance discovered by MacFarlan Smith Ltd.

In marketing Ingredient Branding takes a special position, as it cannot be clearly allocated to either industrial or consumer goods marketing. On the one hand, the consumer is the end user of the ingredient, but at the same time is not part of the buying decision for the component, as this is up to the producer of the end product. On the other hand the producer will only decide on the usage of the ingredient - or at least take it into account in the communication policy - if the image of this ingredient will have an effect on the consumer, meaning a positive influence on his or her buying decision.

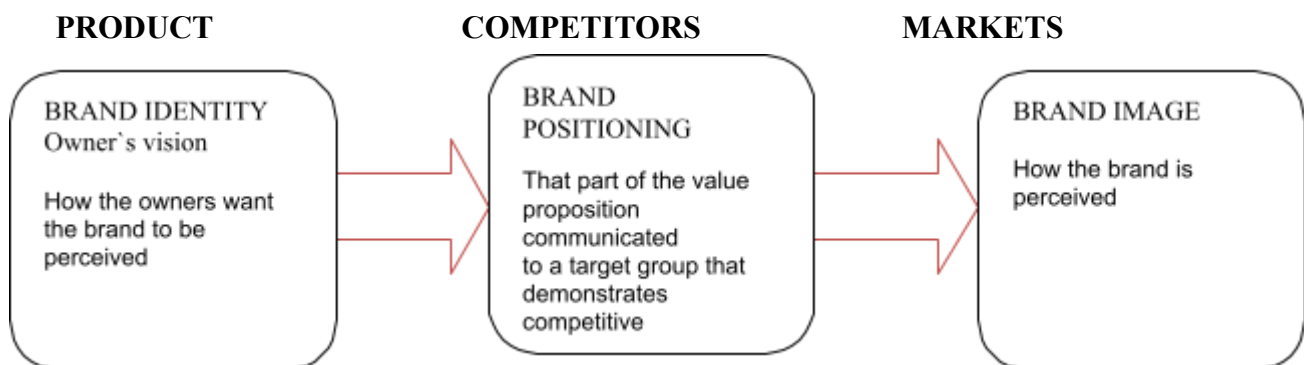
2.3.5 Generic Branding

These are products that do not carry a company identity. They are generally sold in supermarkets and discount stores. Companies that manufacture and sell generic brands do not heavily advertise or promote these products, and therefore they can pass on savings to customers.

2.4 COMPONENTS OF BRANDING

Brand identity, brand positioning and brand image are concepts in branding that are interwoven to one another. Kavaratzis & Ashworth (2005) described brand identity, brand positioning and brand image as factors that make up the brand as they are connected in different dimension.

Aaker (1996) on his part argued that branded products need a brand identity, brand differentiation and brand personality, (Aaker as quoted in Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005). Furthermore, Kavaratzis & Ashworth asserted that, brand identity, brand positioning and brand image are attributes of the same features though from different perspectives. Identifying and clarifying the brand identity is an instrument of distinguishing a product from another and recognizing its brand position in relationship to competing product within a competitive environment. The below diagram is an illustration of brand identity, brand positioning and brand image as adopted from (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2005) model.



Source: Adopted from (Kavaratzis & Ashworth model 2025)

From the above model, there are three angles that would be analyzed in the study. The product would embody the forest and the other products in the forest such as bird watching, beavers, sporting events, other activities which represent the owner's vision of the brand (brand identity). These are the attributes that must be unique in order to position the brand, so as to have a competitive advantage over other similar products in order to attract the market. Brand positioning would involve an attempt to make product distinctive or unique from other similar brand or brands. Whereas brand image, would embody either the negative or positive perception that the market have toward the brand. Therefore by identifying the brand

means that it has to be associated with attributes or qualities that would give the brand the benefits that differentiate it from other competitors.

2.5 CORE ELEMENTS FOR BRANDING

Branding is an element of an overall marketing and outreach strategy. Developing and building a brand depends on multiple variables, such as type of services, products, type of industry, target population, competitive or similar services, and private or public sector, among others. Effective brands are composed of core elements and have unique aspects that make them successful.

2.5.1 Integrating Brand Elements

Brands identify and differentiate a company's offerings to customers and other parties. A brand is more than a name (or "mark"). Other brand elements such as logos and symbols (Nike's swoosh and McDonalds' golden arches), packaging (Coke's contour bottle and Kodak's yellow and black film box), and slogans (BMW's —Ultimate Driving Machine and Visa's —It's Everywhere You Want to Be) play an important branding role as well.

A number of broad criteria are useful for choosing and designing brand elements to build brand equity (Keller 2003): 1) memorability; 2) meaningfulness; 3) aesthetic appeal; 4) transferability (both within and across product categories and across geographical and cultural boundaries and market segments); 5) adaptability and flexibility over time; and 6) legal and competitive protectability and defensibility. Brand elements vary in their verbal vs. visual content and product specificity. Although a robust industry exists to help firms design and implement these various brand elements (Kohli and LaBahn 1997), comparatively little academic research attention, even in recent years, has been devoted to the topic of designing and selecting brand elements other than brand names.

Brand name properties have been studied extensively through the years. For example, researchers studying phonetic symbolism have demonstrated how the sounds of individual letters can contain meaning that may be useful in developing a new brand name (see Klink 2000 and Yorkston and Menon 2004 for reviews). Other research has examined global and cross-cultural implications of brand names (e.g., Zhang and Schmitt 2001; Tavassoli and Han 2002).

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following two theories; industrial organization theory and source-oriented theory.

Industrial Organization Theory

According to this theory, the external structure of the industry determines the economic performance of the company. The theory of industrial organization or the attitude of

industrial organization first emphasizes the external analysis of competition, which is best expressed by the framework of Porter's five competitive forces in industry. In models that are based on the attitude of the industrial organization, competitive advantage is the opportunity to achieve superior performance through the supply of non differentiated products at a low price or by offering differentiated products that the customer is willing to pay the price difference., In this model, strategy is considered as a company's intentional response to industry / market requirements.

Source-Oriented Theory

Empirical evidence consistently has been stating that the structure of the industry might not be the sole determinant factor of competitive strategy and competitive performance. Thus, a group of resource-oriented theorists have emerged to prove that retaining the distinct gifts of strategic resources is the ultimate determinant factor of strategy and performance. This attitude is exactly in line with the phenomenon of competition based on knowledge. Such a kind of competition states that the long-term success of an organization depends on what it knows and understands. Thus, competitors look at capabilities and competencies as the key to success against their competitors (Attaran et al., 2012).

2.7 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Barney (2021), the purpose of this paper is to analyze the relationship between brand and competitive advantage (through differentiation) and the mediating effect of positioning and market orientation in this relationship. An empirical study was developed using a quantitative methodological approach. The object of the study was Portuguese exporting companies in the footwear industry, to which a questionnaire survey was applied.

Akbar F. B. (2019); Achieving competitive advantage in the automobile manufacturing companies in the world to remain stable in the current atmosphere in consideration of complex and competitive environment of today's markets is considered as one of the critical issues in manufacturing companies. The main problem in this research is to identify the competitive advantages of brand and model their competitive advantage in the automotive industry. In this regard, the study of theoretical foundations of research in the field of competitive advantages of brand, components have been identified and by using Delphi techniques and structures final interviews added to Inventory and native competitive advantages of brand models in the automotive industry has been identified. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS software. The results of data analysis totally indicated in the answer to this question could be deduced that in the final version is extracted using Smart PLS software, was observed that due to the three outcome measures 0.01, 0.25 and 0.36, as

quantities of weak, medium and strong for GOF, of the 0.60 show is a fitting strong model that indicates that fitted the pattern of competitive advantage brand.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design provides the plan or framework for data collection and analysis. It is a plan for a research work, which aims at providing guidelines, which the research work is being conducted. A research design is defined as the specification of procedures for collecting and analyzing data necessary to help solve the problem at hand such that the difference between the cost of obtaining the various levels of accuracy and the expected value of the information associated with each level of accuracy is minimized.

In this research, questions were developed to secure specific kinds of data, capable of explaining the phenomenon under study to a significant level of accuracy. However, the researcher, apart from describing the effectiveness of branding in sustaining competitive advantage as at the time of the study, will also go ahead to analyze (using hypotheses) the relationship between effective branding strategies and sustainable competitive advantage, the relationship between brand and design elements in relation to gaining attention and instill favorable attitudes from the consumers.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

This is generally taken to be the totality of all the elements, subject or number which posses a common and specific characteristic within a given geographical location. Ugochukwu (1994) define population as the aggregate or totality of the units in the universe. In line with this definition, Okeke (1995) defined population as the collection of elements, units or individuals for which information is sought.

The population of the study consists of all the managers and marketing staffs of Dangote Flour, Plc. The staff strength of the case study is 145.

3.3 SAMPLING DESIGN AND SAPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling is the selection of a subset of individual from within a statistical population to estimate characteristics of the whole population. The sample taken must be representative of the population from which the sample was drawn and the sample must have good size to warrant statistical analysis. Since it is practically impossible to study the whole population, parts of it were sampled to warrant unbiased judgment. Hence, the sample size, according to Okoko (2000) will be determined using Taro Yamini Formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

N=sample size

N=population of the study

E=tolerable error (5%)

n= 145

$$\frac{145}{1+145(0.05)^2}$$

n=107.42

n≈107

Hence, the sample size is 107 staffs member of Dangote Flour Mill Plc, Ilorin.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, divided into two sections using close ended questions (Likert Scale). Section A targeted the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section B focused on the questions relating to field study.

3.5 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of questionnaire.

However, in order to test the research hypotheses earlier formulated for this study, multiple regression analysis were used with the aid of statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS).

The model formulated for this is given below:

$$Y = a + bx_1 + b_2 + bx_3$$

Where: Y is the dependent variable, representing Sustainability of Competitive Advantage,

X is the independent Variables, representing the branding strategies that will affect

Sustainability of Competitive Advantage, with the following indices:

X₁ impact of branding on organization

X₂ branding strategies

X₃ brand and design elements

Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis is adopted because it is appropriate for establishing the degree of relationships of phenomenon involving more than two independent variables. This will allow the study to analyze the level or degree of relationship between the variables and thereby predict for organizational performance in the market.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DANGOTE FLOUR MILLS PLC

Dangote Flour Mills Plc commenced operations in 1999, as a division of Dangote Industries Limited-one of Nigeria's largest and fastest growing conglomerates, following the strategic decision of Dangote Industries Limited to unbundle its various operators, Dangote Flour Mills Plc was incorporated in 2003. The rethinking was completed in January 2006 when the Federal High Court sanctioned a scheme of arrangement wherein all the assets, liabilities and undertakings of the erstwhile flour division of Dangote Industries was transferred to Dangote Flour Mills Plc. From an installed capacity of 500 metric tonnes per day, at its Apapa mill, the company has expanded rapidly by opening in quick successions, three flour mills in Kano, Calabar and Ilorin.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Below is the tabular presentation of responses to personal information on the questionnaires distributed to respondents. It is important to note that out of the one hundred and seven (107) questionnaires distributed to the respondents, eighty eight (88) representing about 82.2% were filled and returned, while the remaining nineteen (19) representing 17.8% were not touched at all.

Table 4.1.1: ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS TO GENDER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MALE	38	43.2	45.8	45.8
	FEMAL	45	51.1	54.2	100.0
	E				
	Total	83	94.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	5.7		
Total		88	100.0		

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.1 shows that out of eighty eight (88) questionnaires filled and returned by the respondents, thirty eight (38) representing about 43.2% were male and forty (45) representing about 51.1% were female, while five (5) representing 5.1% do not give information about their gender. This implies that more female are employed in the marketing

department to be able to converse with their customers, particularly on the importance of the product design, and to strengthen the relationship with the customers.

Table 4.1.2: ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS TO AGE DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-23	12	13.6	14.3	14.3
24-29	44	50.0	52.4	66.7
30-35	21	23.9	25.0	91.7
36-41	5	5.7	6.0	97.6
42&ABOVE	2	2.3	2.4	100.0
Total	84	95.5	100.0	
Missing System	4	4.5		
Total	88	100.0		

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.2 shows that out of eighty eight questionnaires filled and returned by the respondents, twelve (12) representing 13.6% were between the age range of 18 – 23, forty four (44) representing about 50% were between the age range of 24 – 29, twenty one (21) representing about 23.6% were between the age range of 30 – 35, five (5) representing about 5.7% were 36-41 and two (2) representing 2.3% were 42 years and above, while four (4) representing 4.5% do not give information about their age. It can be deduced from the above analysis that majority of the respondents were within the working age in Nigeria. This implies that the organization employed people with high drive and are still full of energy to achieve the organizations' goals.

Table 4.1.3: ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS TO EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SSCE	2	2.3	2.5	2.5
	NCE/OND	17	19.3	15.2	17.7
	BSC/HND	44	50.0	55.7	73.4
	MBA/PHD	12	13.6	21.5	94.9
	OTHERS	4	4.5	5.1	100.0
	Total	79	89.8	100.0	
Missing	System	9	10.2		
Total		88	100.0		

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.3 shows that out of eighty eight questionnaires filled and returned by the respondents, two (2) representing about 2.3% were SSCE holder, seventeen (17) representing about 19.3% were NCE/OND holder, forty four (44) representing 50% were Bsc/HND holder and twelve (12) representing about 13.6% were MBA/PHD holder. It can be deduced from the above analysis that majority of the workforce are qualified employees, making them more likely to be dedicated and apt to do the job effectively.

Table 4.1.4: ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS TO WORKING EXPERIENCE

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-2YRS	15	17.0	18.1	18.1
	3-5YRS	47	53.4	56.6	74.7
	6-8YRS	19	21.6	22.9	97.6
	9YRS AND ABOVE	2	2.3	2.4	100.0

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.4 shows that out of eighty eight (88) questionnaires filled and returned by the respondents, fifteen (15) representing about 17% have 0 – 2 years working experience, forty seven (47) representing about 53.4% have 3 – 5 years working experience, nineteen (19) representing about 21.6% have 6 – 9 years working experience, two (2) representing about 2.3% have 9 years and above working experience, while five (5) representing about 5.7% do not give information about their working experience. The implication of this is that majority of the respondents have been in the organization for long, they are well experience in their job and able to handle change in situations, unlike fresh recruited employee.

Table 4.1.5 ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS TO MARITAL STATUS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SINGLE	42	47.7	50.0	50.0
MARRIED	41	46.6	48.8	98.8
SEPERATED/DIVORCE	1	1.1	1.2	100.0
Total	84	95.5	100.0	
Missing System	4	4.5		
Total	88	100.0		

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.5 discloses that forty two (42) representing about 47.7% were single, forty one (41) representing 46.6% were married, one (1) representing 1.2% was divorced, while four (4) representing about 4.5% do not give data about their marital status. This implies that the organization employed more single staff who have less responsibility at home and will be able to concentrate to their job, unlike married workers who have other responsibilities like catering for the family.

Table 4.1.6: Goods and services produced in your organization are based on customer satisfaction.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	41	46.6	46.6	46.6
A	27	30.7	30.7	77.3
U	8	9.1	9.1	86.4
D	6	6.8	6.8	93.2
SD	6	6.8	6.8	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.6 reveals that majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to this statement. Forty one (41) representing about 46.6% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty seven (27) representing about 30.7% agreed, eight (8) representing about 9.1% were undecided, six (6) disagreed and strongly disagreed. The implication of this response is that production of goods and services are based on what the customers are expected from them. Hence, they are customer-oriented organization to sustain brand loyalty.

Table 4.1.7: Your brands have given you more edge to compete effectively with your competitors.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	42	47.7	47.7	47.7
A	23	26.1	26.1	73.9
U	9	10.2	10.2	84.1
D	3	3.4	3.4	87.5
SD	11	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.7 reveals that Forty two (42) representing about 47.7% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty three (23) representing about 26.1% agreed, nine (9) representing about 10.2% were undecided, three (3) representing 3.4% disagreed and eleven (11) strongly

disagreed. The implication of this statement is that the organization has been able to sustain competitive edge through their branding strategies.

Table 4.1.8: Practical benefits are associated with your product.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	46	52.3	52.3	52.3
A	23	26.1	26.1	78.4
U	6	6.8	6.8	85.2
D	9	10.2	10.2	95.5
SD	4	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.8 reveals that Forty six (46) representing about 52.3% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty three (23) representing about 26.1% agreed, nine (9) representing about 10.2% were undecided, six (6) representing 6.8% disagreed and four (4) strongly disagreed. The implication of this statement is that the organization do gives other benefits like buy pack get one packages, scratch and win promos, raffle draws, etc. the essence of this is to increase the sales volume, and thereby increase the profit.

Table 4.1.9: The company sales are improving mainly because the organization has created long term brand loyalty than those of its competitors.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	58	65.9	65.9	65.9
A	15	17	17	82.9
U	6	6.8	6.8	89.7
D	9	10.2	10.2	100.0
SD	0	0	0	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.9 reveals that Fifty eight (58) representing about 65.9% strongly agreed to the statement, fifteen (15) representing about 17% agreed, six (6) representing about 6.8% were undecided, nine (9) representing 10.2% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed the statement. The implication of this statement is that the organization has been able to sustain a good market share competitive edge as a result of the branding strategy adopted.

4.1.10 : Branding strategy operate between business planning and marketing mix.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	46	52.3	52.3	52.3
A	21	23.9	23.9	76.1
U	12	13.6	13.6	89.8
D	6	6.8	6.8	96.6
SD	3	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.10 reveals that majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to this statement. Forty six (46) representing about 52.3% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty one (21) representing about 23.9% agreed, twelve (12) representing about 13.6% were undecided, six (6) disagreed and only one(1) representing 3.4% strongly disagreed. The implication of this is that consideration are given to branding strategies when formulating business planning, and this strategies are planned together with their marketing mix.

4.1.11 : All the elements of your branding strategy integrate with one another.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	38	43.2	43.2	43.2
A	41	46.6	46.6	89.8
U	6	6.8	6.8	96.6

D	3	3.4	3.4	100.0
SD	0	0	0	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.11 reveals that majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to this statement. Thirty eight (38) representing about 43.2% strongly agreed to the statement, forty one (41) representing about 46.6% agreed, six (6) representing about 6.8% were undecided, three (3) representing 3.4% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. This implies that there is integration among the elements in branding strategy as outlined by Collins (2001) that developing a brand and branding first begins with the brand decision, to brand or not to brand, and it follows this sequence; branding approach, Market assessment, Creating a brand name, Defining who they are, and Outreach, promotion, and education.

Table 4.1.12: Your company's branding effort take into account different cultural aspects.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	32	36.4	36.4	36.4
A	20	22.7	22.7	59.1
U	21	23.9	23.9	83.0
D	12	13.6	13.6	96.6
SD	3	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.12 reveals that thirty two (32) representing about 36.4% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty (20) representing about 22.7% agreed, twenty one (21) representing about 23.9% were undecided, twelve (12) representing 13.6% disagreed and three (3) representing 3.4% strongly disagreed. This implies that, to some extent, special consideration is given to different cultural aspect before products are being designed.

4.1.13: Your brand identities are unique such that customers can easily recognize it in the market.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SA	41	46.6	46.6	46.6
	A	26	29.5	29.5	62.5
	U	12	13.6	13.6	76.1
	D	9	10.2	10.2	89.8
	SD	0	0	0	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.13 reveals that forty one (41) representing about 46.6% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty six (26) representing about 29.5% agreed, twelve (12) representing about 13.6% were undecided, nine (9) representing 10.2% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. The implication of this statement is that the organization design their products in such a way that their customers can easily recognize them and differential them from their competitors. This certify the argument made by Kotler and Gertner (2009) in the definition given by American Marketing Association that brand is a *—name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition—*.

Table 4.1.14: Your brands determine and control the relationship you have with your customers.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SA	41	46.6	46.6	46.6
	A	32	36.3	36.3	83.0
	U	12	13.6	13.6	96.6
	D	3	3.4	3.4	100.0
	SD	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.14 reveals that forty one (41) representing about 46.6% strongly agreed to the statement, thirty two (32) representing about 36.3% agreed, twelve (12) representing about 13.6% were undecided, three (3) representing 3.4% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. The implication of this statement is that the relationship the firm has with their customers depends on their brands, that is, do the product meet the expected qualities attached by the customers. As noted by Kristin (2009), a brand is not an icon, a slogan, or a mission statement. It is a promise—a promise your company can keep. This is the promise you make and keep in every marketing activity, every action, every corporate decision, and every customer interaction.

Table 4.1.15: Your organization consistently seeks information, insights and ideas about how customers feel on your products.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	43	48.9	48.9	48.9
A	29	33.0	33.0	81.8
U	6	6.8	6.8	88.6
D	7	8.0	8.0	96.6
SD	3	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.15 reveals that Forty three (43) representing about 48.9% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty nine(29) representing 33.0% agreed, six (6) representing about 6.8% were undecided, seven (7) representing 8.0% disagreed and three (3) strongly disagreed. The implication of this statement is that the organization consistently seeks information, insights and ideas about how customers feel on your products in order to be customer-oriented and this will strengthen their relationship.

Table 4.1.16: Your products are differentiated to meet your customer needs and desires.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	39	44.3	44.3	44.3

A	20	22.7	22.7	67.0
U	12	13.6	13.6	80.7
D	6	6.8	6.8	87.5
SD	11	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.16 reveals that thirty nine (39) representing about 44.3% strongly agreed to the statement, twenty (20) representing 22.7% agreed, twelve (12) representing about 13.6% were undecided, six (6) representing 6.8% disagreed and eleven (11) strongly disagreed. The implication of this statement is that products are differentiated to meet customer needs and desires. Invariably, their competitive edge has been sustained as a result of being customer-oriented.

Table 4.1.17: Your Organization design and redesign new products and services to meet the market needs.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SA	35	39.8	39.8	39.8
A	35	39.8	39.8	79.5
U	9	10.2	10.2	89.8
D	5	5.7	5.7	95.5
SD	4	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.1.17 reveals that thirty five (35) representing about 39.8% strongly agreed to the statement, thirty five(35) representing about 39.8% agreed, nine (9) representing about 10.2% were undecided, five (5) representing 5.7% disagreed and four (4) representing about 4.5% strongly disagreed. The implication of this statement is that the organization tries to meet the changing needs of their customers by designing and redesigning new products and existing products.

4.3 TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The primary focus of this study is to empirically verify the presence of theoretical relationships posited among the research constructs presented in chapter three. These research constructs include Branding, Competitive Advantage and organization performance. These constructs were captured in the study's model presented in chapter three.

4.3.1 HYPOTHESIS I

H₀: Branding does not have significant impact in sustaining competitive advantage.

The tables below provide the analysis of responses to item statements using simple percentage and the regression results for significant of branding in sustaining competitive advantage.

Table 4.2.1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.797 ^a	.635	.622	.81454

a. Predictors: (Constant), Q6, Q7, Q9

Source: SPSS Regression Result, 2024

Table 4.2.1 shows that the coefficient of multiple determination is 0.635; the implication of this is that about 63.5% of the variation in sustaining competitive advantage is explained by variables in the model; that is production of goods and services are based on customer satisfaction (Q6), Your brands have given you more edge to compete effectively with your competitors (Q7) and practical benefits associated with product (Q9), while the remaining 36.5% is explained by other factors which are not included in the model. The regression equation (model formulated) appears to be very useful for making predictions since the value of R^2 is close to 1.

4.2.2 ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.132	3	32.377	48.800	.000 ^a
	Residual	55.732	84	.663		
	Total	152.864	87			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Q6, Q7, Q9

4.2.2 ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	97.132	3	32.377	48.800	.000 ^a
	Residual	55.732	84	.663		
	Total	152.864	87			

b. Dependent Variable: Q10

Source: SPSS Regression Result, 2024

The calculated ANOVA table 4.2.2 is analyzed to see if *any* of the variables are significant. The F-statistic is compared with 3 and 84 degrees of freedom using stats tables. From the ANOVA table,

$F = 48.8$, $p\text{-value} = 0000 < 0.0001$ (sig.)

Since $p\text{-value} < 0.001 \leq 0.05$ (critical value), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted. This implies that at least one of the predictors is functional for sustaining competitive advantage; therefore the model is useful.

Table 4.2.3: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.745	.296		2.518	.014
	Q6	.318	.078	.359	4.068	.000
	Q7	.182	.127	.189	1.431	.046
	Q9	.333	.143	.348	2.332	.022

a. Dependent Variable: Q10

Source: SPSS Regression Result, 2024

The table 4.2.3 —Coefficients provides information effect of individual variables (the "Estimated Coefficients" or —beta) on the dependent variable.

The coefficient of production of goods and services are based on customer satisfaction (Q6) is 4.068 with p-value of 0.000 less than 0.05% (critical value), the coefficient of Your brands have given you more edge to compete effectively with your competitors (Q7) is 1.431 with p-

value of 0.046 less than the 0.05% (critical value) and the coefficient of Your brands have given you more edge to compete effectively with your competitors (Q7) is 2.348 with p-value of 0.022 less than the 0.05% (critical value). This implies that each of the variables has contributed to the model.

Overall, the results provide support for the alternative hypothesis, that is; Branding have significant impact in sustaining competitive advantage. This confirmed the view of Betty (2010) that —Brands are the single most important asset any manufacturer has in today's selling environment and can be used to sustain competitive advantage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This study has examined the effectiveness of branding in sustaining competitive advantage in the context of Dangote Cement, Plc. In the course of the study, the researcher developed a structured questionnaire to amass information from the respondents so as to find out how branding has been employed to sustain competitive advantage. However, it was discovered that more female are employed in the marketing department to be able to converse with their customers, particularly on the importance of their product design, and to strengthen the relationship with the customers. Also, majority of the respondents were within the working age 24-29 years and 30-35 years with 50.0% and 23.9% respectively.

On examining the importance of branding in sustaining competitive advantage, it was discovered that the production of goods and services are based on customer satisfaction in order to sustain brand loyalty. The result of the findings also reveals that organization has been able to sustain competitive edge through their branding strategies with 73.9% support, as well as given other benefits like buy pack get one packages, scratch and win promos, raffle draws, etc. to increase the sales volume, and thereby increase the profit with 85.2% support. Multiple regression analysis was employed further to test the relationship between branding and sustainability of competitive advantage and the result shows a positive relationship of 63.5% significant level. This confirmed the view of Betty (2010) that —Brands are the single most important asset any manufacturer has in today's selling environment and can be used to sustain competitive advantage.

On examining the various branding strategies that an organization can use to sustain competitive advantage, the result reveals that consideration are giving to branding strategies when formulating business planning, and this strategies are planned together with their marketing mix with 76.1% support from the respondents. The result of the study also shows positive support for integrating elements among the branding strategy as outlined by Collins (2001) that developing a brand and branding first begins with the brand decision, to brand or not to brand, and it follows this sequence; branding approach, Market assessment, Creating a brand name, Defining who they are, and Outreach, promotion, and education solely to sustain competitive advantage. Special consideration is also given to different cultural aspect before products are being designed. The multiple regression analysis shows 51.8% significant relationship between. This implies that branding strategies are necessary tools in determining competitive advantage.

Finally, the result of the finding reveals that brand and design elements are used to gain attention and instill favourable attitudes from the customers with 69.7% significant level. This supported Charles (2007) argued that the challenge for all brands is that they have a *clear, distinct, and desirable* image that matters to the customers and truly differentiates them from the rest. A company's brand is the primary source of its competitive advantage and a valuable strategic asset.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that sustainable competitive advantage can be achieved through effective branding strategy. Viewed in this way, the study has shown that:

1. An effective branding is a vital component of any successful organization in sustaining competitive advantage and can give the organization a strong edge against its competitors.
2. An organization need to be customer-oriented to sustain brand loyalty in the market.
3. Given other benefits like buy pack get one packages, scratch and win promos, raffle draws, etc. tend to increase the sales volume and profitability of an organization.
4. Considerations should be given to branding strategies when formulating business planning and these strategies are planned together with their marketing mix.
5. Branding strategies should follow the sequence; branding approach, market assessment, creating a brand name, defining who they are, and outreach, promotion, and education since they have significant impact in sustaining competitive advantage, also, consideration is given to cultural aspect of the environment.
6. Sustainable competitive advantage is needs-based whereby the economic activity of the organization must be concerned with the need of the market for the goods and services produced from such an economic activity.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations made based on the findings:

1. Organization must consider branding as one of the most important aspects of any business, large or small, retail or business to business. An effective brand strategy gives organization a major edge in increasingly competitive market. To succeed in branding, it is of paramount importance to have an understanding of the needs and wants of both your present and prospective customers. This could be done by incorporating brand strategies through point of every public contact. Every time there is contact with a customer, customer service should be impeccable

2. Firms should undertake a careful analysis of its operating market for an efficient partitioning of its customers in order to effectively design its product offering. In a highly competitive and dynamic environment such as Nigerian, the survival and success of firms can only be assured through an efficient branding strategy which encompass a clearly defined ‘customer valuation’ process and designing of products based on this customer valuation.
3. Firms must build trust and think local. The feeling of trust and reliability among customer towards the products and services lead to brand loyalty and hence competitive advantage. Declining brands tend to lose buyers while the trust built help to sustain brands’ loyalty and purchase rates stay stable among remaining buyers.
4. Organizations should develop relationships that can reinforce their brand. Organizations must understand that brand needs to be connected to appropriate communities, affiliations, and partnerships. Establishing and maintaining a network of partners, intermediaries, and customers is important.
5. Organizations must ensure continuous renewal of brand through innovation. A brand is based on current needs with room to meet new and/or different needs in the future. This can only be achieved through identification of changing needs of the market and being innovative to sustain competitive advantage.

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