A Review of Literature on Product Differentiation Strategy and Brand Loyalty

Angelyne Muthoni Mwabu K[1], Justus Munyoki[2]*

[1]School of Business and Economics, Machakos University

[2]School of Business, University of Nairobi

Abstract

The concept of product differentiation goes back to the early 20th century when there were hardly any models of differentiated products. Incremental differentiation of products and services is the main variable that helps define the key aspect of value that marketing adds to a product. Extant literature has no consensus on the relationship between differentiation of products and consumer loyalty to brands. This paper aimed at critically reviewing studies available on product differentiation. The study methodology used involved literature review where empirical studies in the field of product differentiation and brand loyalty were examined. The methodology also involved a critical review of relevant theories. A number of theories were discussed in search of a clear relationship between the two concepts. The measures of product differentiation that were used included the product quality, product innovativeness, product design and costs of products. Brand loyalty measures were product repurchase, top of mind product, advocacy metrics, business referral frequencies, extent of behavioral change, and the willingness to pay premium price. The grounding of the study was on the assumption that various measures of product differentiation would have a substantial effect on the brand loyalty. A conceptual framework for measuring product differentiation and to give more insight into what product differentiation really is was developed. The empirical review indicated that differentiated products are key to an organization's competitive advantage and to customers' satisfaction leading to customer loyalty. Theoretical review led to a conclusion that there is a strong relationship between product differentiation and brand loyalty. This critical review of empirical literature highlighted some gray areas hence future scholars should review critical issues like product differentiation and customer satisfaction, brand awareness and performance; and perceived service quality and reputation.

Keywords*: Product differentiation, Brand loyalty, Switching behavior, Brand equity*

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Product differentiation concept dates back to Shaw's (1912) school of thought that commodities are increasingly being differentiated in modern markets, even though much confusion still exists pertaining to what product differentiation actually is (Shelby, 2011). According to Alderson (1957), the main variable that helps define the attribute of value that marketing contributes to commercial products is the process of their differentiation. Product differentiation is the specific way that one organization's products can be identified from another organization's products or services in a marketplace. Any distinguishing criteria, such as label or place of production, sale, or consumption, can be used to convey to the buyer the differences of one firm's product from products of other firms that operate in the same environment. Wooliscroft, Tamilia, and Shapiro

(2006) argue that product differentiation can be of many varieties or come in many shapes and forms. The differentiation can be based on observable and unobservable characteristics of a product itself, e.g., the features regarding taste, patents, trade-marks, and trade names, or product containers sizes, colours and designs, among many others. Product differentiation could further be defined by the situations surrounding a product's sale or conditions thereof. For example, proximity to the seller's location, reputation and stability, all of which can serve to first attract and then attach the customer to a specific firm. Despite competition, a seller who offers a differentiated product – that is, a product that is viewed by buyers as different from others, does actually occupy a monopoly position in among other products. Every firm would like to occupy a monopoly position in the market place. However, a monopoly position is not sufficient for a strong sales base, without which a firm cannot grow.

Brand loyalty is an essential variable in any organization's success because without brand loyalty, a steady, adequate or reliable inflow of revenue is at risk, especially in the modern business environment where rivalry is a fierce one. Brand loyalty is formed when customers' expectations are satisfied by the purchases they make so that a re-purchase from same brand occurs frequently or at least regularly. According to Aaker (1991), brand loyalty can reduce marketing costs and thus enhance the financial base of a company. In this sense brand loyalty is key in contributing to brand equity, that is, a financial worth associated with a particular brand of a product over and above the market value of that product. Thus, brand loyalty is an important contributor to the financial stability and sustainability of a company. The purpose of this review is to critically assess differentiation of products and services and their relationships with consumers' loyalty to product brands. The main idea is that product differentiation is the source of brand loyalty and brand equity. Thus a company's marketing division needs product and service differentiation strategies that will give the company a market edge over its competitors.

Product Differentiation

The term 'product differentiation' is increasingly being used to refer to a practical objective that a marketing strategy should be designed to achieve (McDonald, 1996). It is a deliberate effort to make a product from a staple commodity in order to increase demand for it and sell it at the highest possible price. A marketing strategy changes a familiar product and makes it to look different to consumers. There are numerous ways of making products which are essentially the same good in terms of content look distinctly different in the eyes of the consumer (Shaw, 1912). Despite this observation, it should be acknowledged that even the slight product modifications induced by a marketing strategy render a product better adapted to the use to which it is put. To achieve that end, niceties of packaging and trimming are employed.

Moreover, a product distributor occasionally builds up a pleasant atmosphere around a good as to taste or quality that assures the consumer of satisfaction upon consumption. A good or service for example might be shown by an advertisement as having superior qualities of good health or strength even when it is not different from similar goods and products on offer in the market place. At times, the distributor might differentiate the product by appealing on to service or special conveniences of the consumer and provide them as a collateral to the commodity at the point of sale or after sale. It is for this reason that many clothing stores offer private fitting rooms to customers to assure them they will be satisfied by the purchase. A distributer can also offer

repair services before the product leaves the store because he knows that it is of good quality and repairs would not be needed under normal circumstances.

Always, however, the aim of product differentiation is to distinguish a commodity from well-known commodities of considerably similar nature. Nearly always, the distributor achieves this purpose through the use of trademarks, brands, or trade names. Through a marketing strategy a distributor is in a position to convey to consumers the message that they are better off paying a higher price for his differentiated product than for the stock commodity. By calling attention to the unique qualities of his differentiated product, the distributor transfers to it a portion of the demand that was previously reserved for the stock commodity.

Product differentiation occurs if there exists a substantial basis for differentiating one marketer's products from another marketer's products. In addition to attributes specific to a product that marketing can help bring out, a marketing strategy can achieve product differentiation by highlighting the general tone or character of a seller's establishment, his way of doing business, his reputation for fair dealing, courtesy, efficiency, and all the personal links which attach his customers either to himself or to those employed by him (George, 2011). Porter (1985) views a differentiation strategy as a situation where buyers have willingness to pay for a firm's product whose value is unique in an industry. Consumers must first express their needs which enables a firm selects one or more product attributes which majority of the buyers perceive them to be important, and positions itself in order to meet the needs. This makes a firm's marketing strategy to be an effective one. As long as the firm meets these needs, loyal customers reward it by paying premium prices for its products. Porter (1985) argues that product differentiation strategies vary across industries so that a uniform differentiation approach would not work in all industries. Other attributes on which product differentiation is pegged on include the product, the product delivery system, the marketing strategy, to mention just a few.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty as a concept in marketing came to light in the 1920s (Bennett, 2001). The concept has been defined by several authors whose schools of thought tend to agree. Jacoby (1971) views brand loyalty as a function of consumers' mental processes in which consumers show biased or deliberate reaction within a given period of time by centralizing their decision with regard to optional products found in a group of products. Brand loyalty mirrors the likelihood of a consumer to change brands when there is a change either in price or product features. Therefore, it measures the bond that exists between a consumer and the brand (Aaker, 1991). According to Oliver (1999), brand loyalty is a strong commitment that a customer shows in rebuying or patronizing a product, good or service of his/her preference regularly in the future that leads to a repeat buying of the same brand regardless of situational factors and marketing efforts that can prompt switching behavior. Ishak and Ghani (2013) define brand loyalty as the inclination/biasness that the consumer shows in choosing a particular brand for purchase from a product category due to the view that the customer will get the best features of the product, tastes, images or level of quality at the best price. Loyalty is developed as a result of repeat buying which emanates from the perception. Thus, cultivated attachment to the brand by the customer and his/her likings about the brand are related to brand loyalty over a period of time.

Switching Behavior

Although companies are striving to create common associations with clients by offering higher value and achieving their obligations, the competition in the marketplace is making it difficult for these organizations to do so (Zikiene & Bakanauskas, 2006). According to Solomon et al. (2006), customers' behaviors relate to a situation where they, alone or with others, including their peers and non-peers identify, search, select and consume products so as to fulfill their human needs and wants. This behavior is the determinant of how consumers make a decision to buy products and the various forces behind this inclination (Bhasin, 2010). It is basically the study of the maximizing behavior concerning the when, how and the why of consumers in marketplaces. Consumer switching behavior is found between firms and consumers since, because of the influences of marketing strategies it limits both groups from having a long or lasting relationship and it can even stop permanently the pre-developed long-term relationships at the expense or advantage of companies that operate within the same industry. It is the process by which consumers terminate their relationships with a current retailer or firm and replaces it with a competitor completely or partially (Nimako, 2012a).

Brand equity

This concept made its appearance in the writings of marketing in the 1980s. Since then business strategists have expressed interest in the concept because there is a strong bond between brand loyalty and brand preferences depicted by the consumers (Thiripurasundari & Natarajan, 2011). Successful firms boast of having market competitive advantages as a result of producing successful brands. This means that companies need to have the right brand equity for their products so as to remain successful for as long as they exist. Brand Equity describes the link/connection between the brand and the bundle of its strengths and weaknesses; brand name and its symbol have been known for some time now to increase or decrease the benefits drawn from a product by an organization and /or by the organization's target market (Aaker, 1991). In another view, Yoo and Donthu (2001) state that brand equity is the monetary value of the difference in the ordinary goods chosen by the consumer and the branded goods given the same level of product features. This means that brand loyalty represents the utility difference enjoyed by the consumer in terms of positive consumption outcome which is created by branded products compared to that of the generic version of the same products. Brand equity is both financial and customer-based. (Thiripurasundari & Natarajan, 2011).

Financial brand equity is the additional cash received as a result of selling branded products compared to the additional cash received after selling unbranded products. It is not useful for the marketing purposes because it has a monetary measure hence it does not explain the value of the brand from the consumer's perspective. Customer-based brand equity is the assessment of the buyer's reaction to the name of a brand (Keller 1993; Shocker et al. 1994). It is the unique influence that a brand knowledge has on a consumer or the reaction that a consumer gives to a brand due to its marketing. A brand is viewed as having a positive (negative) customer-based brand equity when the response of the buyers towards the brand is more (less) favorable and the way it is marketed after the identification of the brand than when it is not, for instance when the brand is attributed to a fictitiously named or unnamed version of a good (Keller, 1993).

Brand equity has five dimensions namely brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets. The first four relate to buyer's behavior towards the brand whereas, in contrast, proprietary brand assets are not typically consumer behavior based (Aaker, 1991). The main aspect of brand equity is brand loyalty. Product differentiation is therefore very important for competitiveness of a firm in modern markets. Brand loyalty increases a company's long-term value because it creates a large pool of customers that stakeholders expect to remain loyal to the company's products or services for a long time.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Disaggregate Discrete Choice Theory

The analyses in this theory are done using aggregate models that assume that all consumers have the same preferences. The outcome of the analyses gives a model of choice behavior of a representative or average consumer (Renken, 1997). In most cases, consumers' preferences on brands differ greatly in terms of the features they look for, packages they prefer, response to price changes, promotions, etc. These differences lead consumers to fall into small homogeneous groups (segments) which can lead the marketing manager to know the behavior of each of the segments hence helping the manager decide on which segments to target and the marketing strategy that can appeal to the targeted segments. Disaggregate discrete choice model takes into consideration of various market segments that emerge because of the great differences that consumers portray in choosing the brands to buy. It provides a more accurate representation of consumers while at the same time allowing marketers to cluster consumers into segments with similar choice behavior. This paper will therefore be based on disaggregate discrete choice theory since it focuses more on how consumers make their choices given the variety of differentiated products that they are exposed to in the market and how companies target these consumers differently.

Brand Loyalty Theory

Brand loyalty is a positive biasness that an individual shows in responding to a branded, labelled or graded product as the consumer, the selector or the purchasing agent. The biasness can be as a result of affection, evaluation or reaction that the individual portrays towards a product (Sheth and Park, 1974). This definition tends to differ from several other definitions of brand loyalty which focus more on repeated buying behavior. Sheth and Park (1974) summarized the differences as follows: The limitation of brand loyalty is not only in situations whereby consumers reactions in terms of product purchase is the only focus when measuring brand loyalty. This is because loyalty toward a product can occur in situations where consumers have never bought the brand or product. For instance, children may be loyal to a brand because of their consumption experiences as opposed to buying experiences. Hence, brand loyalty may arise by learning from information, imitative behavior, generalization and consumption behavior and not from buying behavior experiences.

Brand loyalty is anchored on repeat purchase buying behavior even though the consumer or the buyer may have no evaluative (cognitive or attitudinal) structure underlying his brand loyalty. However, one can observe emotive tendencies (affect, fear, respect, compliance, and so forth) associated with this type of loyalty. The loyalty can occur at the non-behavioral level (emotive or evaluative level) for the products which are never bought by some consumers. It is possible for

instance, for urban residents to be positively attracted emotionally towards high-end residential houses although they may not purchase them. On the other hand, some customers may have positively biased non- behavioral tendencies towards certain vehicles, mobile phones, electronics etc. even though they may never buy them.

There are three different dimensions contained in the definition of brand loyalty namely emotive tendency, evaluative tendency and behavioral tendency. Emotive tendency is the affective (like-dislike), fear, respect or compliance tendency which is systematically exhibited more in favor of a brand than other competing brands. Evaluative tendency towards the brand is the positively biased evaluation of the brand on a set of criteria relevant to define the brand's utility to the consumer. This therefore means that the evaluation criteria focus on the features of the product that are relevant to the consumer. Behavioral tendency, is the biased positive reaction that a customer has towards the brand with regard to searching, buying and consuming it. The theory holds that it is not every circumstance where there is brand loyalty that all the three dimensions may necessarily be found. Brand loyalty dimensionality can be a simple one made up of any of the three scopes, one or a complicated one including the three scopes but this is dependent on the product class and the consumer.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Product differentiation strategy

Dirisu, Iyiola and Ibidunni (2013) studied the association concerning product differentiation and ideal organizational performance of Unilever Nigeria PLC. Their objective was to establish whether product differentiation strategy can lead to achievement of competitive advantage while influencing organizational performance within the manufacturing industry. A significant positive relationship was found to be existing between product differentiation and organizational performance. However, it is worth noting that brands are built by customers and not companies hence it is important to consider what would make consumers to continue using a company's product or referring other people into use it. On the other hand, Valipour, Birjandi and Honarbakhsh (2012) examined the relationship between cost leadership strategy, product differentiation and firms' performance accepted at Tehran Stock Exchange. Its purpose was to investigate the business strategies effects on the financial leverage and company's performance relationship. Analysis of the findings led the researchers to conclude that a positive relationship exists between product differentiation and firm's performance. Whereas the study considers product differentiation as a critical component of the firm's performance, it fails to bring the customer into perspective, hence leaving a gap as to how the firm's performance is achieved.

Nolega, Oloko, Sakataka, and Oteki (2015) investigated product differentiation strategies' effects on firm product performance. This was a case study of Kenya Seed Company (KSC) in Kitale. The study findings indicated that a positive relationship exists between product differentiation and a firm's performance and its sales growth. This study was focused more product differentiation and firm's performance relationship. The findings are not clear on whether the firm's positive performance is as a result of the loyalty that agents and staff have on the various brands of seeds that the Kenya Seed company distributes to farmers. This therefore gives a gap as to whether differentiated products can lead to brand loyalty by consumers. Shafiwu and Mohammed (2013) studied on product differentiation effects on profitability in Ghana's

petroleum industry. The findings indicated that product differentiation and profitability in Ghana's petroleum industry have a positive relationship. Therefore, it implies that firms that differentiate their products are likely to better their profits.

Arasa and Gathinji (2014) sought to examine the relationship between competitive strategies and firm performance. The study aimed at examining whether competitive strategies and organizational performance among firms in the mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya have an existing relationship. The findings of the study indicated that there was high competition in the industry and that the most commonly used strategies are product differentiation and low cost leadership. The recommendation of the study is that when using product differentiation strategy, a company should be consistent in providing unique product or service to improve customer loyalty. The main focus of this study was find out how competitive strategies and firm performance relate therefore product differentiation and brand loyalty were not highly factored in. This begs the question: is there a relationship between product differentiation and brand loyalty.

Rahma (2011) studied on service differentiation to achieve competitive advantage. The focus of the study was on how airlines differentiated their services to fulfill the physically challenged persons' needs. The study aimed at enriching understanding of how airlines can distinguish their services and achieve competitive advantage by satisfying the needs of physically challenged individuals and to develop the model of the same. According to the findings of the study, differentiation of the airline services to suit the physically challenged persons' needs was found to be a source of competitive advantage to these firms since this niche market is growing. Kimando, Njogu and Sakwa (2012) studied the analysis of the competitive strategies employed by private universities in Kenya. Their objectives were to determine how technology has been employed as a competitive strategy by private universities and also to determine how these universities attain competitive advantage by use of a differentiation strategy. The findings of the study indicate that use of a differentiation strategy has enables these universities to gain a competitive advantage which has made them to stand out from the public universities. This study has not addressed the issue of brand loyalty and product differentiation which is the key focus of this paper.

Brand Loyalty

Kinuthia, Mburugu, Muthomi and Mwihaki (2012) carried out a study that focused on the factors influencing brand loyalty of swimwear among Kenyan University students. Price and variety, attractiveness and size and brand reputation were the factors that showed a significant relationship with brand loyalty. This implies that when a firm differentiates its product on one or more of these factors, customers can develop some level of loyalty can be developed by the customers to the brand. Mise, Nair, Odera and Ogutu (2013) explored brand loyalty determinants in global FMCG soft drinks markets in Kenya and India. The study aimed at investigating and doing a comparison of the soft drinks market in both African and Asia. This study has not focused on differentiation hence giving a gap that this paper seeks to bridge.

Auka (2012) focused on service quality, satisfaction, perceived value and loyalty among customers in commercial banking in Nakuru Municipality in Kenya. He aimed at examining the extent to which brand loyalty in commercial banks can be influenced by service quality,

perceived value and satisfaction. A positive significant relationship was found to exist between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Hence, service quality, customer value and satisfaction were found to be the critical success factors that influence the competitiveness of an organization. Nawaz and Usman (2011) studied the Telecommunication sector of Pakistan in order to unearth what makes customers brand loyal. Service quality was found to be the most essential factor of brand loyalty in mobile phone network market. It was however confirmed that an indirect positive relationship existed between service quality and satisfaction; and brand loyalty.

This section has shown that product differentiation matters for a firm's survival. In particular, companies that did not have well differentiated products like Arthur Andersen Limited went bankrupt. The section has reviewed empirical approaches that other researchers can use to conduct new studies. The gaps identified in this section demonstrated that little research has been done on product differentiation and brand loyalty relationship. Most of the studies for instance, Nolega, Oloko, Sakataka, & Oteki (2015); Dirisu, Iyiola & Ibidunni (2013); and Valipour, Birjandi & Honarbakhsh (2012) focused on product differentiation and the firm performance relationship. The findings of these studies indicated that firms whose products were differentiated had better performance compared to the firms whose products were not differentiated. Among the studies that were done on brand loyalty, there is none that showed its relationship with product differentiation, for example Mise, Nair, Odera and Ogutu (2013); Kinuthia, Mburugu, Muthomi & Mwihaki (2012); Auka (2012); and Nawaz & Usman (2011). There is a clear indication that there is need to delve into the research on product differentiation and brand loyalty relationship.

Conceptual Framework

Wooliscroft, Tamilia, and Shapiro (2006), argued that product differentiation is the main determinant of power that a firm has at the marketplace. Despite competition, a seller who offers a differentiated product – that is, a product that is seen by buyers as distinctly different from others, does actually occupy a position of monopoly power in the market. Brand loyalty is a key variable in any company's success because without it, a constant and steady inflow of cash for a firm is at risk, especially in situations where firms face stiff competition from their rivals. Brand loyalty is created when customers' expectations as to the quality of the products being offered are satisfied by the purchases the customers make so that a re-purchase from same brand becomes a norm (Chamberlin, 1933). This paper looked at the relationship between a firm's product differentiation, and the brand loyalty it experiences. Product differentiation is examined from the perspectives or aspects of product quality, innovation, design, and cost. Brand loyalty arises from product repurchase**,** business referral, advocacy, willingness to pay premium price and from customers' reluctance to switch from accustomed products. The relationship between the two variables is as shown in the figure below.

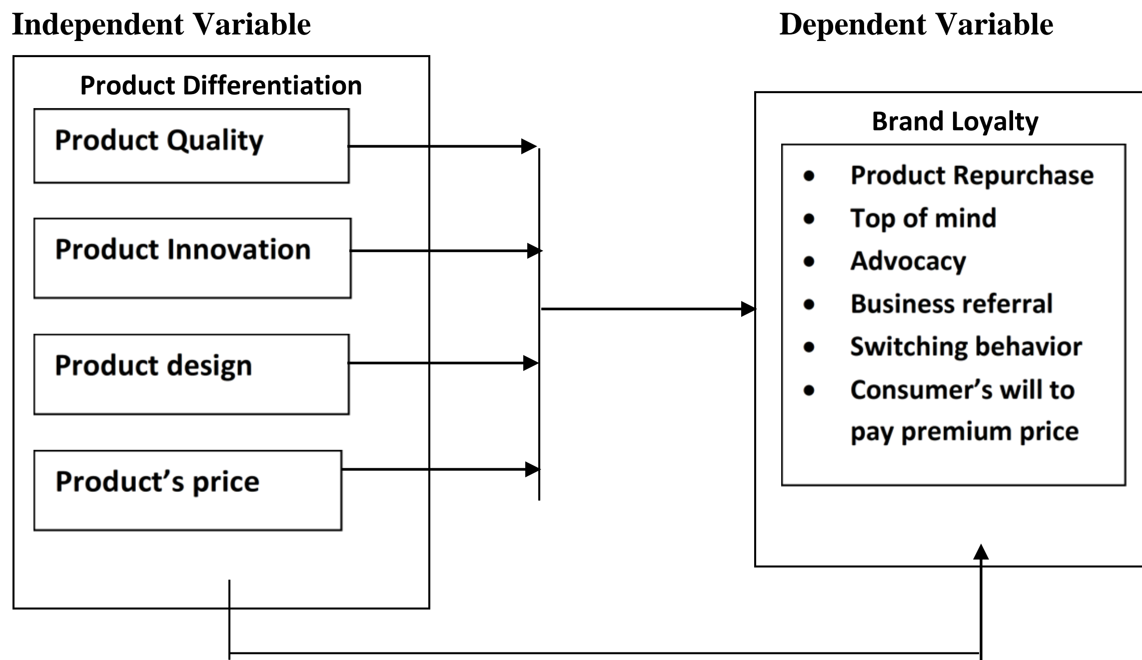

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This paper aimed at bringing to light the relationship that exists between product differentiation and brand loyalty for various brands. It is believed that companies that differentiate their products add value to these products making them attractive to the existing customers as well as potential customers. These sentiments are supported by Alderson (1957) and Chamberlin (1933) in their views as to what product differentiation is.

Conclusion

The paper outlined the key measurements of product differentiation which give a clear understanding of relationship between product differentiation and brand loyalty. Measurements of brand loyalty have also been highlighted in the paper. The conceptual model developed has its usefulness in examining the contribution of product quality, branding, innovation, design, customer service and cost to brand loyalty. It is important to note that differentiated products are key to an organization's competitive advantage and to customers' satisfaction. This is according to Rahma (2011) and Nawaz and Usman (2011) respectively. In most cases, a satisfied customer will most likely make a repeat purchase, refer other customers, patronage the brand, be willing to pay a premium price or will be unwilling to switching from a product. Consumer behavior exhibited in this manner is a reflection of brand loyalty. More empirical studies need to be done on the measures and dimensions of product differentiation.

Suggestions

Analysis of the literature shows that product differentiation is important in every company's undertaking because it enables an organization to set its products apart from the competitors' products in a way that it wins the attention and acquisition of most of the customers. Among the key areas that the company should concentrate on when differentiating its products include

product quality, branding, innovation, design, quality customer service and cost. Customers go for products that will give them value for their money. In the course of offering value to customers, organizations undertake various activities to ensure that the value is delivered in a unique and appealing way to the customers. If the customer's perceived value is met by the differentiated product, the customer will be happy with the firm's product; otherwise customer dissatisfaction will set in. A satisfied customer will in the future consider buying the product from the same organization. Other likely behavior that the customer will exhibit include speaking well about the product, giving business referrals, patronizing the brand, paying a premium price, etc. If the customer consistently exhibits all or some of these behavior, it will lead to brand loyalty. This justifies why firms should consistently aim at differentiating their products to ensure that they attract customers and while offering them value that they expect.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D.A. (1991). Managing brand equity. *Free Press New York*, NY, 19-32.

Alderson, W. 1957. *Marketing behavior and executive action*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin.

Arasa, R. & Gathinji, L. (2014), "The Relationship between Competitive Strategies and Firm Performance: A Case of Mobile Telecommunication Companies in Kenya", *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management,* 2 (9): 1-15.

Auka, D. O. (2012), "Service quality, satisfaction, perceived value and loyalty among customers in commercial banking in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya," *African Journal of Marketing Management. 4(5):* 185-203.

Bhasin, H. (2010) Factors Affecting Consumer Buying Behavior, [Online], Available:http://www.marketing91.com/factors-affecting-consumer-buying-behavior.

Chamberlin, E. H. (1933) "Monopolistic competition: *A Re-orientation of the Theory of value* (6Th Ed.), Havard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, USA.

Dirisu, J. I., Iyiola, O. & Ibidunni, O. S. (2013), "Product Differentiation: A Tool of Competitive Advantage and Optimal Organizational Performance (A Study of Unilever Nigeria Plc)", *European Scientific Journal,* 9 (34): 258-281.

Hunt, Shelby D. (2011), "The Theory of Monopolistic Competition, Marketing's Intellectual History, and the Product Differentiation Versus Market Segmentation Controversy", *Journal of Macro marketing*, 31(1): 73-84.

Ishak, Faridah & Abd Ghani, Noor Hasmini (2013) *A review of the literature on brand loyalty and customer loyalty.* In: Conference on Business Management Research 2013, December 11, 2013, EDC, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok.

Keller, K. L. (1993), "Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity", *Journal of Marketing,* 57(1) 1-22.

Kimando, L. N., Njogu, G. W. & Sakwa, M. (2012) "An Analysis of the Competitive Strategies Employed by Private Universities in Kenya: A Case Study of Private Universities in Nairobi", *Management Science and Engineering*, 6 (2): 55-70.

Kinuthia L. N., Mburugu K. G., Muthomi H. N. & Mwihaki M., (2012) "Factors influencing Brand Loyalty in Sportswear among Kenyan university students: The Case of Swimmers", *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 1 (4):* 223-231.

Mise J. K., Nair C., Odera O. & Ogutu M., (2013) "Exploring the determinants of brand loyalty in global FMCG markets of soft drinks consumers in Kenya and India," *International Journal of Research in Management. 3(2):* 1-15.

Nawaz, N., A. & Usman A., (2011), "What makes customers brand loyal: A study on telecommunication sector of Pakistan," *International Journal of Business and Social science, 2(14):* 213-221.

Nimako, S. G. (2012a). "Towards a Comprehensive Definition and Typology of Consumer Switching Behaviour: Unearthing research gaps," *Research Journal of Social Science and Management, 2*(3): 67-73.

Nolega, K. S., Oloko, M., Sakataka, W. & Oteki, E. B., (2015) "Effects of Product Differentiation Strategies on Firm Product Performance: A Case of Kenya Seed Company (KSC), Kitale", *International Journal of Novel Research in Marketing Management and Economics, 2 (3):* 100-110.

Rahman, Md. S., (2011) "Differentiation of services to achieve competitive advantage: airlines meeting the needs of the physically challenged persons", DBA thesis, Southern Cross University, Lismore, NSW.

Shafiwu, A. B. & Mohammed, A., (2013) "The Effect of Product Differentiation on Profitability in the Petroleum Industry of Ghana", *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research, 1(4):* 49-65.

Shaw, Arch W. (1912), "Some Problems in Market Distribution," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (August), 703- 65.

Sheth, J. N. & Park C. W. (1974), "A Theory of Multidimensional Brand Loyalty", *Advances in Consumer Research*, 01: 449-459.

Thiripurasundari, U. & Natarajan, P., (2011), "Conceptual and contextual dimensions of brand equity", *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research,* 1(3) 116-128.

Valipour, H., Birjandi, H. & Honarbakhsh, S., (2012) "The Effects of Cost Leadership Strategy and Product Differentiation Strategy on the Performance of Firms", *Journal of Asian Business Strategy,* 2 (1): 14-23.

Wooliscroft, B., Tamilia, R. D. & Shapiro, S. J. (2006). "A Twenty-First Century Guide to Aldersonian Marketing Thought". In Alderson, Wroe (Ed). *Marketing Behavior and*

Executive Action: A Functionalist Approach to Marketing (Pp. 101-120). Richard D. Irwin Inc., Homewood, Ill.

Yoo, B. & Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and validating a multidimensional consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Business Research, 52*(1), 1–14.

Zikiene, K. and Bakanauskas, A.P. (2006) Research of Factors influencing loyal customer Switching behavior, [Online], available: http://www.mediastudies.lt/sites/default/files/Bakanauskas%20Zikiene.pdf